



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

26 August 2011

Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief
Permits, Conservation, and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 16443
(David Honig, Duke University)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Mr. Honig is requesting authorization to import bones from two sperm whales and one minke whale for purposes of scientific research. The permit would be valid for five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the requested permit, provided that it advises Mr. Honig to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Antarctic Conservation Act before collecting the bones and exporting and importing any of them.

RATIONALE

Mr. Honig proposes to collect, export, import, possess, and analyze certain sperm whale and minke whale bones. He will use the bones to study the ecological importance of whales and characterize the impacts of whaling on invertebrates that are nutritionally dependent on whale remains in the Antarctic. The bones in question are from a sperm whale taken in a fishing trawl in Swedish waters, a minke whale stranded along the Swedish coast, and a sperm whale stranded along the Chilean coast. Sweden and Chile authorized the initial acquisition of the bones. The bones were deposited on the Antarctic seafloor, where they have been colonized by various invertebrate species. Some of the bones have been retrieved from the seafloor, with the remainder to be retrieved next year. Mr. Honig plans to import all the bones and invertebrates into the United States for stable isotope and genetic signature analyses. All appropriate permits were obtained for the previous activities, including permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Antarctic Conservation Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the requested permit, provided that it advises Mr. Honig to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the

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Antarctic Conservation Act before collecting the remainder of the bones and exporting and importing any of the whale bones.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director