



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

25 July 2016

Dr. Nature McGinn, ACA Permit Officer
Permit Office, Room 755
Division of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. McGinn:

On 18 July 2016 the National Science Foundation (NSF) published a notice (81 Fed. Reg. 46715) requesting comments on a permit modification application from Dr. Allyson Hindle, Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Hindle is seeking authorization under the Antarctic Conservation Act (the ACA) to amend her ACA permit to conduct research on Weddell seals in Antarctica. The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the permit request with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA) and the ACA.

Dr. Hindle is authorized to conduct research on Weddell seals on the Antarctic Peninsula during the austral summers of 2015–2018. Dr. Hindle is authorized to harass, capture, handle, sedate, weigh/measure¹, and/or collect various samples² from up to 38 Weddell seals (14 adults and 24 pups of either sex) during the three-year period. She also is authorized to harass incidentally non-target Weddell seals during the proposed activities. In addition, Dr. Hindle is authorized for up to two unintentional mortalities³ of Weddell seals during that three-year period.

Dr. Hindle is requesting to collect samples from an additional 12 live Weddell seals (six adults and six pups of either sex) during the remainder of the ACA permit period. Those samples would allow her to validate results over time and between seasons. The additional samples would be collected⁴ following the currently permitted protocols, handling procedures, and disposition of samples. Therefore, the Commission believes that the activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and ACA and recommends that NSF issue the ACA permit modification, as requested.

¹ Including morphometrics, blubber depth via ultrasound, and intraocular pressure.

² Blood, blubber, muscle, skin, hair, vibrissae, swabs, umbilical tissue, and/or expended placenta would be collected from live seals and various tissues and bones would be collected from dead seals.

³ Includes euthanasia for humaneness purposes.

⁴ Which also are authorized under the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) permit 19439.

Dr. Nature McGinn
25 July 2016
Page 2

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca J. Lent". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Amy Sloan, NMFS