



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

31 May 2017

Ms. Jolie Harrison, Chief  
Permits and Conservation Division  
Office of Protected Resources  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 20523  
(National Museum of Natural History)

Dear Ms. Harrison:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the 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 (the MMPA). National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) is requesting authorization to import, receive, possess, and export samples from marine mammals during a five-year period—permit 14628 authorized the same activities.

NMNH proposes to import, receive, possess, and export samples<sup>1</sup> from up to 1,000 pinnipeds (except walruses) and 5,000 cetaceans per year. Those samples could be obtained from marine mammals (1) killed during legal subsistence hunts, (2) held in public display or research facilities, (3) captured during permitted research activities, and (4) killed incidentally in legal commercial fishing operations in the United States and in foreign countries. Samples also could be obtained from marine mammals stranded dead or alive or that died in rehabilitation in foreign countries. In addition, samples could be sent to NMNH that have been seized by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement or that are in other curated museum collections. The purpose is to enhance understanding of marine mammals by conducting in-house research and by providing specimens to researchers. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the NMFS issue the permit, as requested.

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<sup>1</sup> Including but not limited to, whole carcasses, bone, baleen, teeth, muscle, skin, skulls, gonads, brain, hair, blood, serum, milk, and DNA.

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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