



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

20 July 2018

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. 21485  
(Jooke Robbins, Ph.D.,  
Center for Coastal Studies)

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). Dr. Robbins is seeking to renew her permit to conduct research on large whales in the western North Atlantic Ocean during a five-year period—permit 16325 authorized similar activities.

Dr. Robbins proposes to conduct research on large whales, primarily humpback whales, in the Gulf of Maine, along the east coast, and off Puerto Rico. The purpose of the research is to (1) investigate population dynamics, (2) movement patterns and habitat use, (3) demography, genetics, and aging, (4) foraging ecology, (5) disease and health, and (6) impacts of human activities. Researchers would harass, observe, photograph/videotape, and biopsy sample marine mammals of various age classes and each sex (see the take tables and application for specifics). Researchers would use various measures to minimize impacts on marine mammals and also would be required to abide by the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) standard permit conditions. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and recommends that NMFS issue the permit, as requested.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter O. Thomas".

Peter O. Thomas, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director