



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

14 September 2018

Dr. Nature McGinn, ACA Permit Officer
Permit Office, Room 755
Division of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Dr. McGinn:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed a permit amendment application from Dr. Jay Rotella, Montana State University, with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Antarctic Conservation Act (ACA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Dr. Rotella is seeking authorization under the ACA to amend his permit to conduct research on Weddell seals in Antarctica. Dr. Rotella is authorized to conduct research on Weddell seals¹ in Antarctica from 2017 to 2021. Researchers are authorized to harass, observe, handle/restrain, weigh, conduct photogrammetry on, sample, mark, and/or attach small instruments to Weddell seals (see the take table). He also is authorized to conduct ground-based surveys and collect samples from dead seals. Dr. Rotella is authorized for up to one pup and one adult Weddell seal mortality² per year.

Dr. Rotella has requested to increase the numbers of takes for various activities (see the take table for details) based on immigration of Weddell seals into the study area and an increase in overall pup production. Those requested increases have been authorized under permit 21158 issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and ACA and recommends that the National Science Foundation issue the ACA permit amendment, 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

cc: Amy Sloan, National Marine Fisheries Service

¹ Crabeater and leopard seals could be harassed incidental to the proposed activities.

² Either unintentional or intentional mortality (i.e., euthanasia for humaneness purposes).