MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

18 September 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. 21425
        (Point Blue Conservation Science)

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). Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) is seeking to renew its permit to conduct research on pinnipeds in California during a five-year period—permit 17152 authorized similar activities.

Point Blue proposes to conduct research year-round on multiple pinniped species at Point Reyes and the Farallon Islands, California. The purpose of the research is to investigate pinniped population trends, diet, health, reproductive parameters, and responses to changes in the environment. Researchers would harass, observe, capture/handle, restrain, measure/weigh, sample[1], and mark[2] pinnipeds of both sexes and various age classes (see the take tables and application for specifics). Point Blue would use various measures to minimize impacts on pinnipeds and also would be required to abide by the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) standard permit conditions. The National Park Service's and/or Point Blue's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee will review and approve the proposed research protocols prior to the researchers conducting the activities. Thus, 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,

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

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[1] Including collecting various swabs and scat.
[2] With flipper tags and/or dye.