



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

29 April 2019

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. 22293
(Alaska SeaLife Center)

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). The Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) is requesting authorization to conduct research on Steller sea lions during a five-year period—permit 14324 authorized similar activities.

The purpose of the research is to investigate Steller sea lion (1) health, (2) physiology, (3) diet, (4) behavior, (5) reproductive parameters, and (6) life-history characteristics to better understand factors limiting the recovery of the western population. ASLC would harass, observe, handle, restrain, measure/weigh, photograph/video, mark, sample, and conduct photogrammetry and ultrasound on numerous individual Steller sea lions of either sex and any age class each year (see the take table for specifics). ASLC also requested up to four annual unintentional or intentional¹ mortalities not to exceed 12 during the five-year period. Researchers would use various measures to minimize impacts on the sea lions and also would be required to abide by the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) standard permit conditions. ASLC's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has reviewed and approved the proposed research protocols. 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.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,

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

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

¹ Via euthanasia for humaneness purposes.