



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

2 July 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 Amendment Application 20430
(James Harvey, Ph.D.,
Moss Landing Marine Laboratories)

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 amendment application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Dr. Harvey is authorized to conduct research on cetaceans off California during a five-year period—permit 20430 expires on 31 March 2022. The purpose of the research is to investigate (1) abundance and distribution, (2) foraging ecology, (3) social and genetic structure, (4) movement patterns and habitat use, and (5) acoustic behavior of cetaceans and their responses to vessels. Researchers are authorized to harass, observe/track, photograph/videotape, record acoustically, biopsy sample, and/or instrument numerous species of cetaceans of both sexes and various age classes.

Dr. Harvey has requested to (1) add the use of unmanned aerial systems and photogrammetry and (2) increase the numbers of takes of humpback whales and California sea lions (see the amendment application for details). The purpose of the amendment request is to examine body condition and health of cetaceans and to account for increased numbers of humpback whales in Monterey Bay, which also could result in incidental harassment of a greater number of sea lions. Moss Landing Marine Laboratories' Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee currently is reviewing the proposed research protocols—the approval is expected to be received within the month. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit amendment, contingent on inclusion of the current permit conditions.

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