



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

29 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 Application No. 22835
(Scripps Institution of Oceanography)

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). Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) is requesting authorization to conduct research on cetaceans in the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico during a five-year period—permit 17312 authorized similar activities.

The purpose of the research is to investigate (1) abundance, (2) distribution and movement patterns, (3) behavior, (4) stock structure, (5) health and body condition, and (6) foraging ecology of cetaceans, with a particular emphasis on the effects of anthropogenic sound and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. SIO would harass, observe, photograph/videotape, passively record, instrument, sample¹, and/or conduct photogrammetry on numerous cetacean species of any age class and each sex (see the take table 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. SIO's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has reviewed and approved the proposed research protocols.

¹ Including biopsy samples and feces. For clarity and completeness, the final take table in the permit must stipulate that females with calves less than one year of age will not be biopsy sampled or tagged.

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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