



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

3 February 2021

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. 25462
(America Films)

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). America Films is requesting authorization to conduct filming activities on gray whales in southern California for an upcoming series on the National Geographic Channel highlighting the wildlife of North America.

America Films is requesting authorization to film¹ gray whale female-calf pairs for two weeks between April and May 2021. Individuals of any age class and either sex could be harassed (see application and take table for specifics). Several pinniped and other cetacean species could be opportunistically filmed if encountered. Ms. Alisa Schulman-Janiger of the Gray Whale Census and Behavior Project has served as an off-site advisor and would also help identify gray whales for the filmmakers to target in the field while she conducts the 2021 Gray Whale Census. The filmmakers would implement 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. 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,

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

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

¹ Including filming from a vessel and with unmanned aircraft systems.