



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

3 March 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. 22306  
(Southwest Fisheries Science 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). Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) is seeking to renew its permit to conduct research on marine mammals in the U.S. territorial and international waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, and Indian Oceans during a five-year period—permit 19091 authorized similar activities.

SWFSC proposes to conduct research on six species of pinnipeds and over 50 species of cetaceans on a year-round basis in various locations worldwide. The purpose of the research is to investigate the (1) abundance and distribution, (2) stock structure, (3) movement patterns, (4) foraging ecology and dive behavior, (5) body condition and health, (6) life history parameters and recruitment trends, and (7) demography of marine mammals. SWFSC would harass, observe, photograph/videotape<sup>1</sup>, record acoustically, sample<sup>2</sup>, and/or instrument<sup>3</sup> individuals of both sexes and various age classes of numerous marine mammal species (see the application and take tables for details). Samples could also be imported or exported for analysis, and various species of marine mammals could be harassed incidental to the proposed activities. SWFSC would use various measures to minimize impacts on marine mammals and would be required to abide by the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) standard permit conditions. SWFSC's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has reviewed and approved the research protocols.

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<sup>1</sup> Including photogrammetry with unmanned aircraft systems.

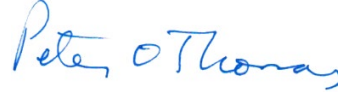
<sup>2</sup> Including biopsy samples, exhaled air, feces, and sloughed skin from cetaceans. Feces and spew could be collected from pinnipeds during ground surveys.

<sup>3</sup> Including instrumenting cetaceans with suction-cup and/or dart tags.

Ms. Jolie Harrison  
3 March 2021  
Page 2

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