

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
4340 East-West Highway, Room 700
Bethesda, MD 20814-4447

10 March 2009

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman
Chief, Branch of Permits
Division of Management Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203

Re: Permit Application No. MA067116-0
(Renewal of Permit No. PRT-067116)
(University of Florida, College of Veterinary
Medicine, Aquatic Animal Health Program)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

The Marine Mammal 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. We offer the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the requested permit, provided that—

- the applicant be required to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting any marine mammal parts;
- the applicant maintain detailed records indicating the source of each specimen and the circumstances under which it was collected;
- the applicant periodically provide reports to the Service sufficient to demonstrate that each specimen was taken in accordance with the laws of the country of origin, was not taken in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act or other applicable U.S. laws, and is being used only for bona fide scientific purposes; and
- the Service ensure that the activities to be conducted under this permit and those of other permit-holders who might be carrying out research on the same species or in the same areas are coordinated and, as possible, data are shared to avoid unnecessarily duplicative research and unnecessary disturbance of animals.

BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting authorization to obtain or receive samples from up to 250 manatees annually. The applicant would collect samples from animals to be taken under other permits or authorizations by state or federal biologists or veterinarians conducting field work or by

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman
10 March 2009
Page 2

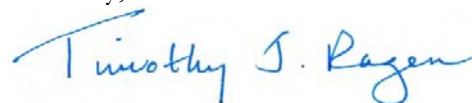
veterinarians at accredited rehabilitation or exhibition facilities. The samples would include, but would not be limited to, blood, other tissues, skin, urine, and feces. The applicant would use the samples for various research projects focusing on increasing the biomedical database available to veterinarians treating manatees, validating current medical practices for manatees, investigating infectious diseases, and documenting changes related to reproductive states that would affect medical diagnosis and treatment. The proposed research is a continuation of work conducted under the applicant's earlier permit. The applicant is requesting that the permit be issued for a five-year period. The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the requested permit, provided that—

- the applicant be required to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting any marine mammal parts;
- the applicant maintain detailed records indicating the source of each specimen and the circumstances under which it was collected;
- the applicant periodically provide reports to the Service sufficient to demonstrate that each specimen was taken in accordance with the laws of the country of origin, was not taken in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act or other applicable U.S. laws, and is being used only for bona fide scientific purposes; and
- the Service ensure that the activities to be conducted under this permit and those of other permit-holders who might be carrying out research on the same species or in the same areas are coordinated and, as possible, data are shared to avoid unnecessarily duplicative research and unnecessary disturbance of animals.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and other applicable laws.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director