



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

4 March 2010

Ms. Hope Grey
Information Collection Clearance Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS-222 ARLSQ
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington VA 22203

Dear Ms. Grey:

The Marine Mammal Commission has reviewed the notice regarding the planned survey of national wildlife refuge visitors (75 Fed. Reg. 5341). As stated in the notice, information obtained through this survey should provide refuge manager, planners, and others with scientifically sound data that can be used for a number of purposes, including the preparation of conservation planning documents and better protection of refuge resources.

In the Commission's opinion, the data that would be obtained through this survey would be valuable in furthering protection and conservation of vulnerable marine mammal species. The knowledge of how refuge visitors are using marine mammal habitat would be important in determining the potential effects of such use. This is especially true for the endangered Hawaiian monk seal but is also true for manatees, right whales, sea otters, and a number of other coastal species. Habitat loss is a major threat to the survival of these and other species, and understanding how people use this habitat is therefore critical to their conservation.

For these reasons, the Marine Mammal Commission endorses the Service's plan to survey visitors to our national wildlife refuges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Montgomery for".

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director