



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

10 April 2015

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 Amendment Application No. 14856
(Bruce Mate, Ph.D., Oregon State University)

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 amendment application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Dr. Mate is requesting authorization to amend his permit that authorizes him to conduct research activities on marine mammals world-wide—permit 14856 expires 31 December 2018.

Dr. Mate is authorized to conduct research on cetaceans and pinnipeds year-round in the Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean (including the Gulf of Mexico), Arctic Ocean (including the Bering, Chukchi and Beaufort Seas), Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean, and Mediterranean Sea. The purposes of the research are to (1) identify migration routes and feeding and breeding grounds, (2) characterize local movements and dive habits during migration and in feeding and breeding grounds, (3) investigate movements and dive patterns and their relationships with prey distribution, time of day, geographic location, or physical and biological oceanographic conditions, and (4) characterize whale vocalizations and sound pressure levels to which whales are exposed. To account for all close approaches within 91 m, Dr. Mate is requesting to increase the number of humpback whales that may be taken by Level B harassment from 1,000 to 2,000 animals per year. The Commission believes that the proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that NMFS issue the permit amendment, provided that the current permit conditions remain in effect.

Kindly contact me if you have any questions concerning the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca J. Lent".

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director