



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

17 December 2009

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

Re: Permit Application No. PRT-226641
(Natalija Lace, University of Southern Mississippi)

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.

The applicant requests authorization to take by harassment up to seven manatees being maintained for rehabilitation at the Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa, Florida. The purpose of the research is to study the effects of underwater sounds (i.e., artificial broadband sound, boat noise, and manatee calf calls, not to exceed a source level of 113.5 dB re 1 μ Pa) on manatee sleep patterns. The applicant indicates that an activity would be stopped immediately if any of the subject manatees exhibits a behavior not observed during baseline observations (e.g., a startle response, rapid calling, etc.). The proposed research, to be conducted over a one-year period, has been reviewed and approved by the University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the requested permit to authorize the proposed activities as described in the application.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen".

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director