



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

9 February 2012

Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief
Permits, Conservation, and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Amendment No. 17029
(Matson's Laboratory, LLC)

Dear Mr. Payne:

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. Matson's Laboratory, LLC, is requesting authorization to receive, possess, import, export, and conduct analyses on pinniped teeth during a five-year period. The Laboratory is seeking to renew permit no. 10040.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the permit as requested, provided that it advises Matson's Laboratory of the need to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting pinniped teeth or microscopic slides of teeth from those species included in the Convention's appendices.

RATIONALE

Matson's Laboratory is requesting authorization to receive, possess, import, and export teeth and prepared microscopic slides of teeth from all pinniped species, except walrus. The purpose of the research is to provide age-related data to be used in research and population monitoring projects and occasional law enforcement actions.

The Laboratory would obtain teeth or microscopic slides of teeth from no more than 2,000 individual pinnipeds per year. Teeth could originate from individuals of any age class and both sexes worldwide. Those teeth would be collected from pinnipeds that are legally harvested or are taken during government permitted research activities by *bona fide* researchers or managed by government wildlife agencies. After the Laboratory receives the teeth or slides of teeth, it would conduct age-related analyses on the cementum of each tooth and provide age estimates to the relevant entity.

The Commission concurs with the need to assess the age distribution of pinnipeds taken during harvests and research activities. However, the importation and exportation of marine mammal parts requires certain authorizations. To ensure all requirements are met, the Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the permit as requested, provided that it advises Matson's Laboratory of the need to obtain all necessary

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permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting pinniped teeth or microscopic slides of teeth from those species included in the Convention's appendices.

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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director