



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

9 July 2012

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

Re: Request for Amendment, Permit No. 16163  
(Northwest Fisheries Science Center)

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. Permit 16163 authorizes the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to conduct research on 42 species or groups of marine mammals in U.S. and international waters in the Pacific Ocean during a five-year period. The current permit expires on 6 June 2017. The Center is requesting to increase the number of short- and long-beaked common dolphin takes each year.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit amendment, provided that the conditions contained in the current permit remain in effect.

## **RATIONALE**

The Northwest Fisheries Science Center is authorized to survey, observe, harass, photograph, videotape, acoustically record, sample (including biopsy sampling), conduct ultrasound on, instrument, and conduct acoustic playback studies on various species of marine mammals in U.S. and international waters of the Pacific Ocean, including waters of California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, and other U.S. territories. The objectives of the proposed research are to continue a long-term research project of more than 20 years to study (1) population size, structure, and social organization; (2) range, movement patterns, and habitat use; (3) responses to anthropogenic impacts; (4) disease prevalence and contaminant concentrations; and (5) prey dynamics.

The Center is requesting to increase the Level B harassment takes of both short- and long-beaked common dolphins from 25 to 2,500 dolphins per year. The purpose of the take increase is to correct an error the Center made in its original permit application. The Service has determined that the proposed increase in takes would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that a supplemental environmental assessment is not required. The Marine Mammal

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Commission agrees and recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit amendment, provided that the conditions contained in the current permit remain in effect.

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 prominent initial 'T'.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director