



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

12 April 2010

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

Re: Request for Amendment, Permit No. 808-1735-01
(Andrew Read, Ph.D.)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the amendment request for Permit No. 808-1735-00 with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The existing permit authorizes the applicant to take by harassment (e.g., closely approach for vessel surveys, photograph, attach data-loggers using suction-cup tags, and follow) up to 15 humpback, 5 minke, 5 fin, 5 sei, and 5 blue whales annually in nearshore waters off the western Antarctic Peninsula. The tagging of cow-calf pairs was not requested and is not authorized. The purpose of the research is to study the foraging behavior of these species relative to krill patches. The permit is valid through 31 May 2012.

The permit holder is requesting that the permit be amended to authorize the take by harassment (e.g., closely approach for vessel surveys, photograph, observe behaviors, and incidentally harass) up to 200 adult and juvenile Arnoux's beaked whales annually in the Southern Ocean and to suction-cup tag with data-loggers up to five individuals annually. The purpose of the proposed research is to collect information on the distribution, biology, ecology, movement patterns, and behavior of the species and to generate a catalog of known individuals that can be used for future mark-recapture experiments.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the requested permit amendment, provided that the conditions contained in the original 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 this recommendation.

Sincerely,

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

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director