



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

17 September 2015

Dr. Li Ling Hamady, ACA Permit Officer
Permit Office, Room 755
Division of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. Hamady:

On 18 August 2015 the National Science Foundation (NSF) published a notice (80 Fed. Reg. 50049) requesting comments on a permit application from Ms. Angela Sremba, Oregon State University. Ms. Sremba is seeking authorization under the Antarctic Conservation Act (the ACA) to collect bone samples in Antarctica and the South Shetland Islands. The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the permit request with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA) and the ACA.

Ms. Sremba proposes to collect bone samples, primarily from blue whale remains, at abandoned whaling stations and in bays along the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands during a five-year period. The purpose of the research is to determine the genetic diversity and population dynamics of Antarctic blue whales prior to commercial whaling. Ms. Sremba would import the samples into the United States to conduct genetic analyses.

MMPA permit 17030, issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), authorizes Dr. C. Scott Baker to import, receive, possess, and export marine mammal samples. For the proposed activities, Dr. Baker would need to request a minor amendment to that permit to include collection of samples and to add Ms. Sremba and/or Dr. Ari Friedlaender as co-investigators to collect the bone samples in his absence. Therefore, the Commission believes that the activities in the permit application are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and ACA and recommends that NSF issue the ACA permit, contingent on NMFS modifying permit 17030 to include both collection of samples and Ms. Sremba and Dr. Friedlaender as co-investigators. 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

Cc: Amy Sloan, NMFS