



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

7 July 2015

Ms. Jolie Harrison, Chief
Permits and Conservation Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 19497
(University of Florida)

Dear Ms. Harrison:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the 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 MMPA). The University of Florida is requesting authorization to import, receive, possess, and export samples from cetaceans and pinnipeds during a five-year period—permit 14514 authorized similar activities.

The University of Florida proposes to import, receive, possess, and export samples¹ from up to 300 cetaceans and 700 pinnipeds² per year. The objective is to investigate the etiologies and cofactors associated with emerging infectious diseases utilizing standard molecular and next-generation sequencing approaches. The samples could originate from individuals of either sex and any age class from marine mammals (1) killed during legal U.S. or foreign subsistence hunts, (2) stranded alive or dead in the United States and foreign countries, (3) that died incidental to commercial fishing operations in the United States and foreign countries, (4) in captivity where samples were taken as a result of routine husbandry procedures or under separate permit, and (5) that were sampled by other authorized researchers or academic, federal, state or other institutions involved in marine mammal research in the United States or abroad. Samples also would be exported to researchers collaborating in marine mammal disease detection or analysis.

The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit, as requested. 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

¹ Including tissue, bodily fluids, and swabs.

² Except walruses.