



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

27 April 2015

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman, Chief
Branch of Permits, MS: IA
Division of Management Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041-3803

Re: Permit Application No. 03086A
(Robert Rockwell, Ph.D.,
American Museum of Natural History)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

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). Dr. Rockwell is requesting authorization to import, possess, and export samples from polar bears during a five-year period—permit 03086A authorized the same activities in previous years.

Dr. Rockwell proposes to import, possess, and export an unlimited number of hair and feces samples¹ from polar bears of either sex and any age class. Shed hair and feces would be collected from vacant day beds and dens in Canada. The objectives are to better understand population ecology, genetic structure and relatedness, habitat use, and diet of the western Hudson Bay polar bear population, including impacts from global climate change. Researchers would approach most collection sites via helicopter. If polar bears are present within 1 km of the target collection site, they would not land the helicopter or access the site.

The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the Fish and Wildlife 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 DNA samples extracted from hair or feces.