



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

6 July 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 Application No. 13602
(Terrie Williams, Ph.D., Long Marine Laboratory)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit amendment request with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The permit holder currently is authorized to take by harassment specified numbers of several species of captive and rehabilitated non-threatened and non-endangered marine mammals during research on the energetics and diving physiology of odontocetes and pinnipeds. The applicant is authorized to take two animals annually by accidental mortality. The permit, issued for five years, is valid through 7 September 2014.

The permit holder is requesting authorization to—

- (1) conduct physiological research on up to 18 non-releasable Hawaiian monk seals maintained in facilities in the United States. In addition to the research procedures currently approved in Permit No. 13602, the permit holder would (1) conduct deuterium oxide studies in conjunction with blubber ultrasound measurements to validate the use of ultrasound as a measure of body condition, and (2) administer thyroid-stimulating hormones and collect fecal analysis samples to validate the measurement of thyroid hormone metabolites;
- (2) conduct opportunistic energetic assessments (using methods approved in the existing permit) on threatened and endangered marine mammals, including Guadalupe fur seals, Steller sea lions, and cetaceans brought to Long Marine Laboratory from local stranding events or transferred from The Marine Mammal Center. Up to 10 animals per species per year (with fewer than six animals of any one species to be held at Long Marine Lab at any one time) would be involved in the proposed studies; and
- (3) transfer and use tissues (brain and skeletal muscle) from Hawaiian monk seal carcasses and other endangered or threatened marine mammal species to assess oxygen stores and aerobic dive limits.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the requested permit amendment, provided that—

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- the proposed activities have been reviewed and approved by the permit holder's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee in accordance with § 2.31 of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Animal Welfare Act regulations, and
- 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 black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Gorkin for". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director