



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

21 November 2011

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 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 16305
(John Wise, Ph.D., University of Southern Maine)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal 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. Dr. Wise is requesting authorization to receive, import, and export samples from specified cetacean species, unidentified *Mesoplodon* spp., and unidentified species of beaked whales, cetaceans, and pinnipeds for purposes of scientific research. The permit would be valid for five years. Dr. Wise is seeking to renew permit 1008-1637.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit, provided it—

- require Dr. Wise to maintain detailed records indicating the source of each specimen, the circumstances under which it was collected, and the researchers and associated institutions that receive cell lines; and
- advise Dr. Wise of the need to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting any marine mammal part.

RATIONALE

Dr. Wise proposes to receive, import, and export tissue samples from all age classes and both sexes of numerous species of marine mammals. (See take table in the application, detailing the proposed taking.) The purpose of the proposed research is to (1) determine trace element concentrations, genetic signatures, and pathogens in marine mammals and (2) establish a resource of marine mammal cell lines to investigate factors related to marine mammal health and to compare to human studies. Dr. Wise proposes to obtain tissues from stranded animals; animals that die while in rehabilitation, public display facilities, or captive research facilities; animals sampled by other permitted researchers; and animals killed during legal subsistence hunts. Frozen and formalin-fixed tissues would be collected from the same animals from which cell lines would be derived. Ideally, the bronchus, dermis, liver, kidney, and testes or ovary would be sampled. Cell lines would be

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derived from fibroblasts and epithelial cultures and stored at the University of Southern Maine and Mystic Aquarium to ensure duplicate storage at separate locations in case of a catastrophic event. After cell lines are established, they may be transferred by Mystic Aquarium to other researchers, who conduct *bona fide* scientific research worldwide. The cell lines would not be sold for profit or used for commercial purposes.

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit, provided it require Dr. Wise to maintain detailed records indicating the source of each specimen, the circumstances under which it was collected, and the researchers and associated institutions that receive cell lines. In addition, the Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service advise Dr. Wise of the need to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing or exporting any marine mammal part.

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 the Commission's recommendations.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director