

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
4340 East-West Highway, Room 700
Bethesda, MD 20814-4447

13 March 2008

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: Request for Amendment of Permit
No. 1039-1699 (Ann Zoidis)

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 Commission offers the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the permit amendment request, provided that the conditions contained in the current permit remain in effect.

BACKGROUND

Permit No. 1039-1699 authorizes the permit-holder to conduct research (photo-identification, behavioral observations, and passive acoustic studies) on humpback whales in waters off Hawaii. The purpose of the research is to study the social sound production of the species. The permit also authorizes the harassment of several species of small cetaceans incidental to conducting acoustic studies on humpback whales.

The permit-holder requests that the permit be amended to authorize the taking by harassment of up to 100 minke whales annually (from January through April) in Hawaiian waters. The permit-holder intends to photo-identify individual whales to investigate the abundance, distribution, and behavior of the species. The amended permit would expire on 30 June 2009. We understand from the Service that the permit-holder intends to request a one-year extension.

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 and other applicable laws.

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Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'T'.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director