

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XE009

Marine Mammals; File Nos. 18722, 18897, 19425, and 19497

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the following entities have applied in due form for a permit to receive, import, and export specimens of marine mammals for scientific research:

File No. 18722: Cornell University, 157 Biotechnology Building, Ithaca, NY 14850 [Responsible Party: Sharron Mitchell, Ph.D.];

File No. 18897: Kathleen Colegrove, Ph.D., University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine, Zoological Pathology Program, LUMC Room 0745, Building 101, 2160 South First Street, Maywood, IL 60153;

File No. 19425: Melissa McKinney, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, Center for Environmental Sciences and Engineering, 3107 Horsebarn Hill Road, U-4210, Storrs, CT 06269;

File No. 19497: University of Florida, Aquatic Animal Health Program, College of Veterinary Medicine, Gainesville, FL 32608 [Responsible Party: Thomas Waltzek, Ph.D.].

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before July 27, 2015.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting the appropriate File No. from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on these applications should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The following Analysts at (301) 427-8401: Rosa L. González (File No. 19497), Carrie Hubbard (File No. 19425), Brendan Hurley (File Nos. 18722 and 18897) and Jennifer Skidmore (File Nos. 18722, 18897, 19425, 19497).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permits are requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

File No. 18722: The applicant is proposing to: (1) Import/export and receive marine mammal DNA samples from dead beach-cast carcasses, and (2) receive, import/export specimens from scientists in academic, federal, and state institutions involved in marine mammal research under their own permits. The samples will be used for genotyping by sequencing to analyze single nucleotide polymorphisms in studies of genetic variation. Unlimited samples from up to 2000 pinnipeds (excluding walrus) and 2000 cetaceans would be received, imported, or exported during the duration of this permit. This permit is only for the import/export/receipt of DNA samples. Import/export activities would occur world-wide. No live animals would be harassed or taken, lethally or otherwise, under the requested permit. The permit is requested for a five-year period.

File No. 18897: The applicant is proposing to import marine mammal parts (bones and organ tissue samples) from: (1) Foreign animals either euthanized, found stranded, or in captivity (including animals in rehab), or (2) animals captured/sampled by other researchers under separate permits for such activities. The purpose of the proposed research includes diagnostic testing to determine the causes of outbreaks or unusual natural mortalities and investigations into the ecology of diseases in free-ranging animals or unexpected mortalities in captive populations. Unlimited samples from

up to 100 pinnipeds (excluding walrus) and 100 cetaceans would be imported during the duration of this permit. Import activities would occur world-wide. There would be no live or lethal taking resulting from the importation of samples. The permit is requested for a five-year period.

File No. 19425: The applicant proposes to study marine mammal contaminant levels, specifically using fatty acid and stable isotopes to examine diets and contaminant loads and how they are affected by climate change. Tissue samples would come from remote biopsy sampling, captured animals, and animals collected during subsistence harvests. Samples would originate in the United States, Canada, and Greenland/Denmark. Cetacean and pinniped samples (up to 50 of each species group per year, except for those species specified below) would be analyzed, with a focus on the following Arctic species: ringed seal (30 per year), bearded seal (10 per year), and narwhal (10 per year). No takes of live animals would be authorized under this permit. The permit would be valid for five years after issuance.

File No. 19497: The applicant proposes to receive, import, and export tissue and other specimen materials (e.g., body fluids) to research the etiologies and cofactors of emerging marine mammal infectious diseases, utilizing standard molecular and sequencing approaches. Unlimited samples from up to 300 individual cetaceans and 700 individual pinnipeds (excluding walrus) would be received, imported, or exported annually on an opportunistic basis. Samples would be obtained from the following marine mammal sources: (1) Killed during legal U.S. or foreign subsistence harvests; (2) stranded dead or that died during rehabilitation in foreign countries; (3) died incidental to commercial fishing operations in foreign countries where such taking is legal; (4) died incidental to commercial fishing operations in the U.S. where such taking is legal; (5) in captivity where samples were taken as a result of routine husbandry procedures or under separate permit; and (6) from other authorized researchers or collections in academic, federal, state or other institutions involved in marine mammal research in the U.S. or abroad. Samples collected from stranded animals in the U.S. and received under separate authorization may be exported and reimported. No takes of live animals are requested or would be permitted. The applicant has requested a five-year permit.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42

U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the applications to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: June 23, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-15753 Filed 6-25-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Application for Commercial Fisheries Authorization under Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0293.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Number of Respondents: 600.

Average Hours per Response: 15 minutes.

Burden Hours: 150.

Needs and Uses: This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires any commercial fisherman operating in Category I and II fisheries to register for a certificate of authorization that will allow the fisherman to take marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing operations. Category I and II fisheries are those identified by NOAA as having either frequent or occasional takings of marine mammals. All states have integrated the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) registration process into the existing state fishery registration process and vessel owners do not need

to file a separate federal registration. If applicable, vessel owners will be notified of this simplified registration process when they apply for their state or Federal permit or license.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Annually.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Dated: June 22, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2015-15681 Filed 6-25-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD505

Endangered Species; File No. 18688

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), 1601 Kapiolani Boulevard, Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814 [Responsible Party: Michael Tosatto], has been issued a permit to take hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), leatherback (*Dermochelys imbricata*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and green (*Chelonia mydas*) sea turtles for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone: (301) 427-8401; fax: (301) 713-0376.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Hapeman or Courtney Smith; phone: (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 22, 2014, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (79 FR 56573) that a request for a scientific

research permit to take hawksbill, olive ridley, leatherback, loggerhead and green sea turtles had been submitted by the above-named organization. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

NMFS PIRO has been issued a five-year research permit to conduct research on sea turtles bycaught in three longline fisheries in the Pacific Ocean around Hawaii and American Samoa to assess sea turtle post-hooking survival, movements, and ecology in pelagic habitats. The permit authorizes examination, morphometrics, biological sampling, and tagging of live sea turtles and the collection of carcasses, tissues and parts from dead sea turtles. Authorized take numbers for these activities are consistent with the number of turtle captures analyzed in the incidental take statement of the biological opinion prepared for each fishery.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered or threatened species, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: June 23, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-15749 Filed 6-25-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: List of Gear by Fisheries and Fishery Management Council.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0346.

Form Number(s): None.