

Hawaii 96720, have been issued minor amendments to Scientific Research Permit Nos. 14122 and 14585, respectively.

ADDRESSES: The amendments 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: Carrie Hubard or Amy Sloan, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The requested amendments have been granted under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and 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.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Permit No. 14122, issued on July 14, 2010 (75 FR 43150), authorizes research in Alaskan waters through July 31, 2015. The research is focused on humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*), and killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) and includes photo-identification, biopsy sampling, multiple tag types, and active and passive acoustics. The minor amendment (No. 14122-01) extends the duration of the permit through July 31, 2016, but does not change any other terms or conditions of the permit.

Permit No. 14585, issued on July 14, 2010 (75 FR 43150), authorizes research in the Eastern, Western and Central North Pacific Ocean, primarily Hawaii and Alaska, through July 31, 2015. The research is focused on humpback whales and includes photo-identification, underwater videogrammetry, underwater videography, passive acoustic recordings, Crittercam studies, and biopsy sampling. The minor amendment (No. 14585-01) extends the duration of the permit through July 31, 2016, but does not change any other terms or conditions of the permit.

Dated: August 25, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD856

Marine Mammals; File No. 18902

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Colleen Reichmuth, Ph.D., Long Marine Laboratory, University of California at Santa Cruz, 100 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on pinnipeds in captivity.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 30, 2015.

ADDRESSES: The application 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 File No. 18902 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 this application 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 File No. 18902 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: Amy Sloan or Courtney Smith, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to conduct comparative psychological and

physiological studies with captive California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), spotted seals (*Phoca largha*), ringed seals (*Pusa hispida*), and bearded seals (*Erignathus barbatus*) at Long Marine Laboratory (Santa Cruz, CA) and the Alaska SeaLife Center (Seward, AK). Up to four individuals per species may be studied at both facilities combined over the duration of the permit. Animals may participate in daily activities using behaviors established through operant conditioning and may refuse participation in an activity at any time. For psychological assessments, pinnipeds are trained to voluntarily participate in the research on land and in water. Controlled sensory cues are used to evaluate sensory and cognitive performance with an emphasis on the auditory sense to address conservation issues related to ocean noise. Electrophysiological methods may be used to monitor passive neuronal responses during exposure to similar sounds. Behavioral experiments will test hearing sensitivity in the presence or following the cessation of noise to determine how exposure to anthropogenic noise may influence the ability to detect various sounds.

The pinnipeds will also participate in physiological assessments to study their general biology including growth and development, nutritional requirements, health status, and environmental tolerance. Open-flow respirometry methods will be used to gather metabolic data from animals trained to rest and breathe under a plastic dome. Daily to weekly, animals may participate in voluntary physiological procedures including weighing, measuring, ultrasound, thermographic imaging, and sampling of hair, skin, feces, urine, and naturally shed vibrissae. Each month (up to 12 times per year), animals may be fed benign fecal markers and blood samples may be obtained. The applicant requests a 5-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 activity proposed is 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 application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: August 25, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

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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; issuance of permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that permits have been issued to the following entities to receive, import, and export specimens of marine mammals for scientific research:

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

Permit 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;

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

Permit No. 19497: University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Infectious Diseases and Pathology V3-100, VAB, PO BOX 110880, Gainesville, FL, 32611-0880 [Responsible Party: Thomas B. Waltzek, D.V.M., Ph.D.].

ADDRESSES: The permits 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: The following Analysts at (301) 427-8401: Rosa L. González (Permit No. 19497), Carrie Hubard (Permit No. 19425), Brendan Hurley (Permit Nos. 18722 and 18897) and Jennifer Skidmore (Permit Nos. 18722, 18897, 19425, and 19497).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 26, 2015, notice was published in the

Federal Register (80 FR 36768) that four requests for permits to receive, import, and export specimens of marine mammals for scientific research had been submitted by the above-named applicants. The requested permits have been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (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 parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Permit No. 18722 authorizes Cornell University to receive, import, or export unlimited samples from up to 2000 pinnipeds (excluding walrus) and 2000 cetaceans world-wide. These samples will be used for genotyping on marine mammals including trait mapping, population/ecological studies, and germplasm characterization. No live animals would be harassed or taken, lethally or otherwise, under the authorized permit. The permit is valid through August 10, 2020.

Permit No. 18897 authorizes Dr. Colegrove to import unlimited biological samples from up to 100 individual cetaceans and up to 100 individual pinnipeds (except walrus) world-wide. All samples (bones and organ tissue samples) are being imported for diagnostic testing to determine the causes of outbreaks or unusual natural mortalities, the ecology of diseases in free-ranging animals, or unexpected mortalities in captive populations. Samples will be from animals found deceased or euthanized in nature, collected opportunistically during the animals' capture by other researchers possessing permits for such activities, or legally held in captivity (including those held for rehabilitation) outside the U.S. No live animals would be harassed or taken, lethally or otherwise, under the authorized permit. The permit is valid through August 10, 2020.

Permit No. 19425 authorizes Dr. McKinney 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 from cetaceans and pinnipeds may come from remote biopsy sampling, captured animals, and animals collected during subsistence harvests and may originate in the United States, Canada, and Greenland/Denmark. Samples (up to 50 of each

species group per year, except for those species specified below) will 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 live animals would be harassed or taken, lethally or otherwise, under the authorized permit. The permit is valid through August 1, 2020.

File No. 19497 authorizes the University of Florida to receive, import, and export marine mammal 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) are authorized to be received, imported, or exported annually on an opportunistic basis. They will be collected by others under separate existing permits and may be obtained from the following sources: (1) Animals killed during legal U.S. or foreign subsistence harvests; (2) animals stranded alive or dead in foreign countries; (3) animals that died incidental to commercial fishing operations in the U.S. where such taking is legal (*i.e.*, bycatch); (4) animals that died incidental to commercial fishing operations in foreign countries where such taking is legal; (5) animals in captivity where samples were taken as a result of routine husbandry procedures or under separate permit; and (6) samples 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 re-imported. No takes of live animals are requested or would be permitted. The permit is valid through July 31, 2020.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

As required by the ESA, issuance of these permits was based on a finding that such permits: (1) Were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.