

Dated: March 16, 2005.

Stephen L. Leathery,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030905D]

Marine Mammals; Files No. 522-1785 and 633-1778

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

ACTION: Receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that
two applicants have applied in due form
for a permit to take marine mammals for
scientific research purposes or for an
amendment to an existing permit.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail
comments must be received on or before
April 20, 2005.

ADDRESSES: The applications and
related documents are available for
review upon written request or by
appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education
Division, Office of Protected Resources,
NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room
13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone
(301)713-2289; fax (301)427-2521;

File No. 633-1778 - Assistant
Regional Administrator for Protected
Resources, Northeast Region, NMFS,
One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA
01930-2298; phone (978)281-9328; fax
(987)281-9394; and

Files 522-1758 and 633-1778 -
Assistant Regional Administrator for
Protected Resources, Southeast Region,
NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St.
Petersburg, FL 33701, phone (727)824-
5312; fax (727)824-5309.

Written comments or requests for a
public hearing on these applications
should be mailed to the Chief, Permits,
Conservation and Education Division,
F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources,
NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room
13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those
individuals requesting a hearing should
set forth the specific reasons why a
hearing on this particular request would
be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by
facsimile at (301)427-2521, provided
the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy
submitted by mail and postmarked no

later than the closing date of the
comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by
e-mail. The mailbox address for
providing email comments is
NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Include
in the subject line of the e-mail
comment the following document
identifier: File No. 522-1785 or File No.
633-1778.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ruth Johnson (*Ruth.Johnson@noaa.gov*)
or Carrie Hubard
(*Carrie.W.Hubard@noaa.gov*) or phone
(301)713-2289.

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.), and the regulations governing
the taking, importing, and exporting of
endangered and threatened species (50
CFR 222-226).

Dr. Randall Wells (File No. 522-1785)
requests a permit to take bottlenose
dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) for
scientific research. The take would
include capture, examination, sample,
mark, tag and release of up to 120
individual bottlenose dolphins in the
shallow coastal waters of central west
Florida and remotely biopsy sample 100
dolphins annually for five years. This
work is a continuation of research
activities since 1984. The activities
would provide crucial background
information on individual
identification, sex, age, reproductive
status, and genetic relationships to
support ongoing long-term observational
studies of population structure,
population dynamics, life history, social
structure, genetic structure including
paternity patterns, and human
interactions. Tissue samples and
veterinary examinations would support
investigation of biomarkers of
environmental contaminants and their
effects as part of an ongoing study in
collaboration with NMFS. Other
components of the collaborative
program involve studies of health
assessment, contaminant loads and
associated medical effects, immune
system function, detection of
brevetoxin, assessments of thermal
status, identification of prey species,
nutritional status, and predation events,
studies of whistle development and
function, measures of hearing ability,
and behavior associated with sound
production.

Center for Coastal Studies (File No.
633-1778), (Julie Robbins (PI), requests
a permit to approach, photograph (1600
animals) and collect tissue samples (200
animals) from humpback whales
(*Megaptera novaeangliae*). Humpbacks
would be biopsy sampled up to three
times per year. Activities would take
place in all U.S. waters of the North
Atlantic Ocean, but would focus on the
U.S. and Canadian Gulf of Maine. The
Center for Coastal Studies maintains a
long-term catalog and life history
database for the Gulf of Maine
humpback population. In the next five
years, those data are expected to be
applied to the following areas of
research: (1) to monitor trends in
abundance and vital rates, (2) to study
movement and habitat use patterns,
including individual exchange with
other populations, (3) to study
entanglement rates and human-related
impacts, (4) to perform molecular
genetic investigations into demography
and reproductive success, (5) to perform
hormone-based studies into
reproduction and neonatal mortality,
and (6) to perform stable isotope
investigations into foraging ecology and
nutritional stress. Authorization is also
requested to import, export and re-
export tissue samples between the U.S.
and Canada and collect sloughed skin.
Additionally, six other cetacean species
would be approached and biopsy
sampled on an opportunistic basis
during the proposed research. Samples
would be used to increase scientific
understanding of local populations and
to clarify oceanic population structure.
The six species include approach,
photo-id and biopsy sample once up to
25 each of fin whales (*Balaenoptera
physalus*), minke whales (*Balaenoptera
acutorostrata*), sei whales (*Balaenoptera
borealis*), blue whales (*Balaenoptera
musculus*), sperm whales (*Physeter
macrocephalus*), and 50 each of killer
whales (*Orcinus orca*).

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

Dated: March 15, 2005.

Stephen L. Leathery,

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

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