

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. No. 092497B]

## Marine Mammals; Permits (758-1431 and 1024)

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

**ACTION:** Receipt of application for permit and amendment to permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen, Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks, P.O. Box 757000, Fairbanks, AK 99775-7000, has applied for a permit to take Northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*), and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038-0271, has applied for amendment to Permit No. 1024 to take Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) for purposes of scientific research.

**DATES:** Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before October 29, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment (see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**):

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on these applications should be mailed to the Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on these particular requests would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by email or other electronic media.

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

**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), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

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.

(758-1431) - Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen requests a permit to vaccinate two captive female Northern fur seals with a benign antigen, Fort Dodge tetanus toxoid, in order to elicit an antibody response (produce immunoglobulin). The immunoglobulin will be purified from the serum and used to validate an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). The ELISA will then be used to determine the antibody levels in frozen fur seal serum samples previously collected from free-ranging pups vaccinated with the same benign antigen. The research will provide a determination of the effects of environmental contaminants.

P772#69 - The Southwest Fisheries Science Center requests to amend section A.3. of Permit No. 1024 and to increase the number of animals taken annually. Permit No. 1024 authorizes: Level B harassment on southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*), Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*), crabeater seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*), and Ross seals (*Ommatophoca rossii*) annually during census surveys on Sea Island and Cape Shirreff; capture, handle and mark up to 105 *A. gazella* pups annually at Cape Shirreff, of which 100 would also be tagged with monel tags; section A.3. authorizes capture up to 50 perinatal female *A. gazella* and their pups. The females may be tagged and instrumented with TDRs and/or transmitters and recaptured to remove instruments, and the pups are authorized to be bleach marked and handled. Further, up to 110 pups may be collected on Seal Island and marked, handled and released; and samples, parts or whole specimens obtained from dead animals may be imported. The permit also authorizes the accidental mortality of one animal annually. The permittee now requests to amend A.3 by collecting one milk sample from 40 of the 50 perinatal females, and tagging and handling 40 of the 50 pups.

The permittee also wishes to increase the number animals to be taken in three additional studies. These studies are: Adult female foraging location and energetics, 40 female/pup pairs; pup energetics, 100 pups; and long-term tagging, 1000 pups.

For the adult female foraging location and energetics study, up to 40 adult females will be captured per year and tagged, instrumented with transmitters, anesthetized with diazepam and milk-sampled (up to 3 times, which includes injection of 5 I.U. oxytocin), given an enema, injected with tritiated water and oxygen-18 (90g isotopes), injected with Evan's Blue (1.5cc), and blood sampled (up to 4 times). Up to 40 pups will be captured per year and: tagged, bleach marked, gastrically intubated and lavaged, injected/intubated with 200g of doubly-labeled water (DLW), and blood sampled up to 3 times.

For the pup energetics study 100 pups will be captured, tagged, and bleached marked. Of these 100 pups, 30 pups will be: captured (9 additional times) gastrically lavaged and intubated (3 times), injected/intubated with 200g DLW (3 times), injected with 0.5cc Evan's Blue (3 times), and blood sampled (15 times).

For the long-term tagging study, the permittee requests to tag up to 1000 pups.

Additionally, the permittee requests to incidentally harass: up to 128 southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*), 3468 Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*), 2 crabeater seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), 16 Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*), and 2 leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*); and accidentally kill up to 2 adults and 2 pups *A. gazella* during the conduct of these activities.

Addresses: Applications and related documents are available in the following offices:

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

(758-1431) - Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, BIN C15700, Bldg., 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0070 (206/526-6150);

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-2166 (907/586-7221); and

(P772#69) - Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (310/980-4001).

Dated: September 24, 1997

**Ann D. Terbush,**

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

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