

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

9 January 2009

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman  
Chief, Branch of Permits  
Division of Management Authority  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4401 North Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203

Re: Permit Application No. MA195274  
(U.S. Geological Survey, National Wildlife  
Health Center)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The applicant is requesting authorization to export frozen tissue samples from northern sea otters found dead or dying of natural causes along the coasts of Washington and Alaska for purposes of scientific research. The samples would be exported to a laboratory operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, to test for morbilliviruses. Up to 26 tissue samples from 8 sea otters found dead along the Washington coast would be exported in 2009. Up to 5 tissue samples from each of up to 6 sea otters annually (3 animals from Washington and 3 from Alaska) would be exported annually in subsequent years. The permit is requested for five years. The purpose of the research is to determine causes of disease and mortality in the Washington and Alaska sea otter populations.

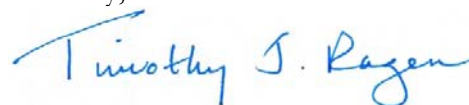
## RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service approve the permit request.

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.

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

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director