



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE599

Marine Mammals; File No. 19638

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Paul Ponganis, Ph.D., University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA, 92093, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*).

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before *[insert date 30 days after date of publication in the **FEDERAL REGISTER**]*.

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. 19638 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.PrIComments@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: Sara Young or Amy Sloan, (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 purpose of this research is to determine the role of blood oxygen store depletion in the dive behavior and foraging ecology of California sea lions. This research would help determine the ability of these animals to adapt to environmental change. Over the course of five years, up to 70 lactating females would be captured, flipper tagged, anesthetized, and equipped with a venous or arterial blood oxygen recorder, a velocity-acceleration-depth recorder, kinematic recorders, intravascular lactate sensor, or intravascular thermistor probe during foraging trips to sea. Animals would be recaptured after the foraging trip to remove the recorders. The pups of the females would also be captured and marked for ID purposes. Research would occur on San Nicolas Island off

the coast of California. Annually, up to 4,000 California sea lions, 100 harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), 200 northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and 30 northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*) may be incidentally harassed during research. A limited number of California sea lion mortalities (one per year) are requested. The permit would be valid for five years.

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: May 10, 2016.

Julia Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2016-11311 Filed: 5/12/2016 8:45 am; Publication Date: 5/13/2016]