

Dated: June 17, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-14275 Filed 6-23-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

RIN 0648-X144

Marine Mammals and Endangered Species; National Marine Fisheries Service File No. 10074; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service File No. PRT-165304

AGENCIES: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Michael Etnier, Ph.D., Box 353100, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98227 has been issued a permit to import marine mammal specimens for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit 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;

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0700; phone (206)526-6150; fax (206)526-6426; and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 212, Arlington, VA 22203 (1-800-358-2104).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kate Swails or Amy Sloan, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 25, 2008, notice was published in the *Federal Register* (73 FR 4540) that a request for a scientific research permit to take marine mammals had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit has 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.*).

The permit authorizes Dr. Etnier to possess and import/export marine mammal and endangered and threatened species parts (hard and soft) from the orders of Cetacea, Pinnipedia, and Carnivora (sea otter, *Enhydra lutris*). Specimens (teeth, bone, and whiskers) will be obtained from museums and private collections or collected from carcasses of beach stranded animals or federally sponsored subsistence harvests. No animals will be taken or killed for the purposes of this research. The objectives are to combine osteometric, chemical, and genetic analyses to test hypotheses regarding the stability of ecological adaptations among marine mammals in the eastern north Pacific Ocean throughout the Late Holocene.

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 activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit: (1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: June 18, 2008.

P. Michael Payne,

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

Dated: June 18, 2008.

Timothy J. Van Norman,

Chief, Branch of Permits Division of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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BILLING CODES 3510-22-S, 4310-55-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) Program (Formerly Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) Pilot Program)

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the continuing information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before August 25, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* Susan.Fawcett@uspto.gov.

Include "0651-0058 comment" in the subject line of the message.

- *Fax:* 571-273-0112, marked to the attention of Susan Fawcett.

- *Mail:* Susan K. Fawcett, Records Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Customer Information Services Group, Public Information Services Division, United States Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

- *Federal Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information should be directed to Robert A. Clarke, Director, Office of Patent Legal Administration, United States Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450; by telephone at 571-272-7735; or by e-mail at Robert.Clarke@uspto.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) pilot program was originally established between the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the Japan Patent Office (JPO) on July 3, 2006. The PPH program allows applicants whose claims are determined to be patentable in the office of first filing to have the corresponding application that is filed in the office of second filing be advanced out of turn for examination. At the same time, the PPH program allows the office of second filing to exploit the search and examination results of the office of first filing, which increases examination efficiency and improves patent quality. The USPTO and the JPO agreed at the November 2007 Trilateral Conference to fully implement the PPH program on a permanent basis starting on January 4, 2008.

The USPTO entered into a PPH pilot program with the United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO) on September 4, 2007. Additional PPH pilot programs have also recently been established between the USPTO and the