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E 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XG191]

Marine Mammals; File No. 29902

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Michelle Shero, Ph.D., Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543, has applied in due form for a permit to import and export specimens of gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) for scientific research.

DATES: Written 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 upon written request via email to *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. Please include File No. 29902 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Skidmore or Sara Young, (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 applicant requests a 10-year permit to import and export gray seal parts to and from Canada for the purpose of studying the role of metabolic phenotype – and its plasticity – in early-life performance and survivorship. Sources of parts would include samples collected during authorized field research at Sable Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, opportunistic salvage of animals that died of natural causes in Canada, and from the archives at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. In addition, the applicant requests authorization to export samples back to Canada. Requested parts include blood, milk, whiskers, claws, fur, blubber, muscle, scat, spew, saliva, swabs, teeth and organs. See application for requested numbers of animals based on sample origin.

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: November 17, 2026.

Nature McGinn,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,

Office of Protected Resources,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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