

National Marine Fisheries Service Marine Mammals

Instructions for a Marine Mammal Public Display Permit

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Introduction

These instructions are for requesting a Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) public display permit to take¹ or import National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) marine mammals:

- Cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, and whales)
- Pinnipeds (seals and sea lions, except walrus)

Public display permits are required for:

- capture of marine mammals from the wild in the United States
- import of marine mammals into the United States

These instructions are **NOT** for:

1. Taking or importing [marine mammals listed as depleted under the MMPA or threatened or endangered under the ESA](#);
2. Maintaining or receiving marine mammals **within** the United States for the [purpose of public display](#);
3. Conducting [intrusive scientific research or enhancement](#) on captive marine mammals;
4. [Exporting marine mammals for public display](#);
5. Obtaining a [non-releasable stranded marine mammal](#); or
6. Obtaining [CITES \(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora\) permits](#).

Have questions?

We recommend you visit our [public display permit web page](#) or see the FAQ starting on page 21.

When filling out your application:

- Your application must be a stand-alone document that describes all proposed activities and is readable to a layperson.
- If you do not follow these instructions, your application will be returned and you will be asked to resubmit a new application that includes the information required.

¹ A take under the MMPA means to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill any marine mammal. This includes, without limitation, any of the following: the collection of dead animals, or parts thereof; the restraint or detention of a marine mammal, no matter how temporary; tagging a marine mammal; the negligent or intentional operation of an aircraft or vessel, or the doing of any other negligent or intentional act which results in disturbing or molesting a marine mammal; and feeding or attempting to feed a marine mammal in the wild.

- If you believe any of the questions are not applicable; indicate this with N/A and explain why the question is not applicable.

Need help?

We encourage you to contact us with questions before submitting your application.

Application Instructions

I. Project Information

- A. **Project Title** (up to 255 characters): Provide a concise title that includes activity, species, location, and purpose. For example: *Import of four harbor seals from ABC Aquarium in Country X to XYZ Zoological Park for the purpose of public display.*
- B. **Previous Federal Permit #:** If applicable, state your most recent and closely related NMFS permit number. Otherwise leave blank.
- C. **Where Will the Activities Occur?** List the locations of your activities.
1. For wild captures: list the geographic area of collection, the location of temporary staging, and the final destination of the animals. You must include a map of the collection site.
 - For captures, attach a high quality map(s) with the correct scale that clearly shows the capture location and any environmental areas of interest. If possible, include a shapefile, Google Earth kmz/kml, or ASCII text file with lat/long data and the associated basic metadata with your electronic application submission.
 2. For imports: list the country of export and the receiving facility's address.
- D. **Timeframe:** Enter the desired start and end dates of the proposed activities in the following format: MM/DD/YYYY. The start date cannot be before the date you submit the application and should be at least 6 months (for imports) or 1 year (for captures) after the date you submit. The end date must be within 5 years of the start date because public display permits may be valid for a maximum of 5 years.
- E. **Sampling Season/Project Duration** (up to 1,000 characters)
1. For wild captures: describe the field season(s) including the months and frequency of collections. When and how many times per year will you conduct your activities?
 2. For imports: when do you anticipate the import will occur?

- F. **Abstract** (up to 2,000 characters): a short summary that must include:
1. Purpose.
 2. Target species and any non-target species that may be affected (common names).
 3. Proposed take activities (*e.g.*, capture or import).
 4. Numbers of animals to be taken or imported, by species, annually.
 5. Specific geographic locations of captures or location from which animals will be imported.
 6. Requested duration of the permit. The maximum is 5 years.

II. **Project Purpose: Objectives and Justification** (up to 64,000 characters)

- A. Discuss the **purpose** of your activity including your objectives and justification for the capture or import.
- B. Explain:
1. For captures from the wild, why animals cannot be obtained from captive collections in the United States or abroad.
 2. For imports, why animals cannot be obtained from captive collections in the United States.
- C. Provide the information required for maintaining marine mammals for public display purposes:
1. Specify the professionally recognized standards² of the public display community upon which the education or conservation program offered by the applicant is based. Describe the educational program and include educational materials as attachments or provide a webpage where this information is available.

² Standards for education and conservation programs developed and endorsed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, formally the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (Alliance), representing approximately 60% of the U.S. marine mammal public display community at the time, were published in the Federal Register on October 6, 1994 (59 FR 50900). If applicable, these AZA/Alliance standards may be referenced as the standards on which your education or conservation program is based. However, please note that while these professionally recognized standards have been provided by the AZA and Alliance, they represent only one example of such standards. Other professionally recognized standards of the public display community may differ from this example. If your education or conservation program is based upon different professionally recognized standards of the public display community, please provide a copy of these standards.

2. Include a copy of your current Animal Welfare Act license issued by APHIS³. If you are a new facility in the process of applying for your APHIS license, please contact us for guidance.
3. Provide your hours of operation and cost of admission. This may include copies of facility brochures or public notices (e.g., webpage) advertising this information.

III. Project Description (up to 64,000 characters)

A. Capturing Marine Mammals from the Wild (If Applicable - If not, skip to Section III B)

Be sure to provide the following information:

1. Describe the animals to be captured including:
 - a. Number and species of animals to be captured annually
 - b. Estimated or known age (including an explanation how age classes [e.g., neonate, calf/pup, juvenile, subadult, adult] are distinguished by taxa or species)
 - c. Minimum and maximum sizes/masses of animals
 - d. Sex or sex ratio, if multiple animals
 - e. Reproductive condition of the marine mammals⁴
 - f. The stock the animals will be taken from.
2. Give a detailed description of the manner of **capture**, including gear to be used. Describe the techniques and equipment to be used to approach, capture, and restrain; including any drugs to be used. You may use figures and photographs that illustrate your methods, included as attachments to your application. In addition, provide citations for methods where applicable, but do not substitute a literature citation in lieu of a complete description of the methods.

See below for the types of information you must include when describing your procedures/methods, as applicable.

³ As issued under 7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.

⁴ Permit holders may not capture a marine mammal that is pregnant, lactating, or either unweaned or less than 8 months old, whichever comes later, unless the Office Director determines that such capture is necessary for the protection and welfare of the animal.

If administering drugs or other substances (e.g., sedatives), provide:

Name of each drug/chemical and its purpose
Name of any drug reversal
Emergency response drugs and protocols
Dosage of each drug/chemical
Delivery method and route (e.g., dart gun, inhalation, intramuscular, intravenous, subcutaneous, optical); if dart gun, distance of animal to water
Location of administration on body
Duration of drug
Personnel that would administer drug (e.g., veterinarian or veterinary technician; state license requirements)
Post drug administration monitoring

For aerial and vessel surveys (e.g., to locate animals in the wild), provide:

Type of survey craft and vessel
Type of survey (e.g., line transect, photogrammetry)
Number of surveys per year
Minimum and maximum altitude/approach distance
Air/vessel speed
Protocols for breaking track to ID species
Duration spent with group or individual/day

If using unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), answer the aerial questions above and provide:

Type of UAS – fixed wing or vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL)
Payload components – what is the UAS carrying and for what purpose?
Ground control station description (what it is, where it will be located - on shore or on vessel, number of stations, and how close the station will be to animals)
Encounter duration
How many UAS will be operating at the same time?
Do you have the appropriate FAA permits/authorizations (including pilot licenses)?

For capture and restraint, provide:

Type of capture (e.g., hand, hoop net, trap) and gear description (e.g., net dimensions and mesh size)
Deployment methods (e.g., on foot or boat approach and net deployment)
Configuration, duration, and monitoring of net sets (how often net is checked)
Number of animals captured at a time
Number of animals processed at a time
Anesthesia/sedation (see Administer Drugs above)

Dimensions and type of holding container

Number and roles of personnel (must be adequate to perform all activities without harming excess captured animals; else they must be released immediately)

Additional equipment or personnel necessary for capturing and handling excess numbers

Duration of restraint/holding from capture to transport

3. If, after capture, an animal is determined to be unsuitable for captivity, give details regarding the specific protocol for return to the wild, including:
 - a. The maximum length of time the animals could be held;
 - b. Description of post-release monitoring protocols;
 - c. Prevention of disease transmission between released animals and the wild population;
 - d. Assessment of the animals to forage and protect themselves from predators; and
 - e. Desensitization of animal to eliminate behaviors that could prove detrimental to the released animals or the social structure of local populations.

4. **Non-target species and conspecifics:** Indicate the estimated number and type of non-target species (NMFS and/or USFWS protected species) that may be encountered during wild captures annually, and whether and how they may be incidentally harassed, captured, or otherwise affected.
 - a. Explain how you will avoid them or minimize impacts to them (e.g., not in area during time of study; would not approach closer than 100 meters; would halt operations until non-target species moved out of study area).
 - b. As applicable, specify the Distinct Population Segment of ESA species that are likely to be encountered.
 - c. If takes to non-target conspecifics may occur, include these on separate rows in the Take Table as incidental take (e.g., harassment or capture).

B. Importing Marine Mammals into the United States (If Applicable)

For importing marine mammals into the United States, please include the following information:

1. Locations including country of origin, exporting facility, ports of entry (<https://www.fws.gov/le/designated-ports.html>), and final destination/facility. Indicate if you will be requesting a port of entry exemption.

2. Identify the animal(s)⁵ to be imported including:
 - a. Animal identification,
 - b. Estimated or known age,
 - c. Size (length and/or weight),
 - d. Sex, and
 - e. Reproductive condition (pregnant or lactating).
3. You must provide the animal's complete transport history (e.g., NOAA Marine Mammal Data Sheet, Species 360 specimen report, statement from the shipping facility) including dates, the manner and circumstances of transport.
4. For wild-caught animal(s):
 - a. Describe how the animal was captured and maintained in the country of origin. You must demonstrate that these activities are humane.
 - b. Indicate the wild stock and the geographic location the animal was collected from. Include latitude/longitude coordinates and/or waterbody location.
 - c. Provide documentation that the take was legal in accordance with the capture country's laws.
5. For captive-born animals:
 - a. Provide documentation of the animal's birth.
 - b. Identify the parents of the animal and provide documentation of their origin (e.g., lineage), including the wild stock and geographic location the animals were collected from. Use NOAA ID numbers if applicable.
6. Submit a statement from the exporting facility and, to the extent practicable, documentation concerning whether the marine mammal to be imported is presently being held in compliance with the laws of the country of exportation.
7. Provide a statement from the exporting facility explaining if the requested import will likely result in the taking of marine mammals beyond those proposed. Will marine mammals be acquired to replace the marine mammals to be imported? Will the proposed import result in an increased demand for marine mammals? Provide justification for your statement.
8. If the import is necessary for the protection or welfare of the marine mammals¹, discuss the circumstances involved and any alternatives considered.

¹

C. Transport: Thoroughly describe your transport procedures:

1. Describe the method of transportation to the **receiving facility** (your institution):

⁵ Permit holders may not import a marine mammal that is pregnant, lactating, or either unweaned or less than 8 months old, whichever comes later, unless the Office Director determines that such importation is necessary for the protection and welfare of the animal.

- a. Mode of transportation and name of transportation company.
 - b. Description of the pen, tank, container, cage, cradle, or other device used (e.g., material of container, dimensions, photos or illustrations).
 - c. Description of climate-control or other environmental parameters.
2. Describe any special care during transport.
 3. Include the total transport time and time per each transport leg if stop-overs are included.
 4. Describe quarantine procedures and the acclimation plan for the animal(s) and how the animal(s) will be incorporated into your public display program. Include contingency plans if adverse responses are observed.
 5. Describe the exhibit and the social group for this animal(s) at the destination facility, including the number, sex, and age of the resident animals.

IV. Project Supplemental Information

A. Status of the Affected Species (up to 2,000 characters)

NOTE: MMPA-depleted and ESA-listed species cannot be captured or imported for public display purposes. This also includes progeny from individuals with this status.

1. Indicate the status of the species or stock under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) - Appendix I, I, or III

Species information is available at the following web sites:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species-directory>

<http://www.fws.gov/>

<http://www.cites.org/>

B. Lethal Take (up to 2,000 characters)

If authorization for serious injury⁶ or mortality⁷ (accidental/unintentional or humane euthanasia/intentional⁸) is proposed:

1. What activities could result in mortality?

⁶ A serious injury is an injury that will more likely than not result in mortality.

⁷ Caused by the presence or actions of personnel including but not limited to deaths or serious injuries sustained during capture and handling, while attempting to avoid or escape capture, or from injuries sustained during transport.

⁸ This includes unintentional euthanasia for humane reasons (e.g., due to serious injury caused during permitted activity).

2. Justify the number of mortalities.
3. How is euthanasia decided, conducted, and who conducts it?
4. What are the protocols for necropsy and carcass disposal?
5. What are the protocols for disposition of dependent pups or calves if lactating females may die as a result of your actions?

C. Anticipated Effects on Animals (up to 64,000 characters)

1. Discuss how each take action and procedure in the take table will affect target and non-target animals. Use the **best available science** (i.e., peer-reviewed literature or other cited data sources) and your experience (e.g., personal communication).
2. Include a description of:
 - a. Typical **behavioral and physiological responses** resulting from capture or import and the time it takes animals to recover from stress associated activities.
 - b. As applicable, also include an assessment of such things as:
 - i. recovery from sedation and handling
 - ii. repopulating rookeries/haul outs after flushing
 - iii. the use of novel procedures
3. Briefly summarize any **mortalities or serious injuries** that have occurred during any previously permitted import or wild capture conducted by your facility and staff identified in the application using the same or similar techniques; include circumstances and cause of death.
4. Discuss the anticipated **effects on the species or stock**, especially if mortalities or reproductive effects are possible.

D. Humane Take or Import and Measures to Minimize Negative Effects (up to 64,000 characters)

1. **Humane determination:** Explain how you determined your methods involve the least possible degree of pain and suffering possible and why there are no feasible alternative methods to achieve your objectives.
 - a. Provide alternatives to the proposed manner of capture and/or transport, and explain why the proposed methods are considered humane.

- b. Attach a written statement from the responsible veterinarian certifying that the methods of capture and/or transport, facilities, and methods of care and maintenance will be adequate to ensure the well-being of the animals and will comply with all care and transport standards established under the AWA.
2. **Mitigation and monitoring:** You may include mitigation and monitoring protocols here, or in the Project Description section or Anticipated Effects section above. If included in another section, simply reference the section where the following information is found:
 - a. For each proposed activity, describe your standard **mitigation measures to avoid or minimize the potential for adverse impacts** identified above.
 - b. Describe your short- and long-term **post-capture or import monitoring** protocols.
 - c. If monitoring or mitigation is not feasible for specific procedures, species, situations, etc., explain why.
3. **Coordination:** For captures, describe how you collaborate or coordinate with others in your action area or in captivity for your species. Who are they?

E. Attach a References File

Attach a **bibliography** of references cited in this application, if applicable. Referenced materials must be made available upon request, as needed for evaluation of the application, or preparation of any necessary NEPA analyses.

F. Resources Needed to Accomplish Objectives (up to 2,000 characters and attach files if necessary)

1. Explain how your expertise, facilities, and resources are adequate to accomplish your proposed objectives and activities.
2. List relevant proposals, contracts, grant awards, or letters of agreement that would demonstrate financial or logistical resources.
3. Indicate the status of any other international, federal, state, or local authorizations you have applied for, secured, or will apply for.

V. Take Table

The take table summarizes the **estimated number of animals** you expect to import or capture **annually**. Create a new take table for each location and list the species you expect to encounter and the procedures you will conduct.

Example take tables are provided below.

Columns you will fill out in the take table:

- A. **Species:** Provide the common and scientific name for each species you wish to import or collect from the wild.
- B. **Listing Unit/Stock:** Provide the listing unit or stock for your species. You may refer to our website (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species-directory>) for species listed under the MMPA.
- C. **Production/Origin:** Enter the original source of the animal – Wild (captured or stranded) or Captive (captive born) as applicable.
- D. **Life Stage:** Identify from below as appropriate.

Cetacean	Pinniped	
Adult	Adult	Subadult
Adult/Juvenile	All	Pup
All	Juvenile	
Calf	Juvenile/Subadult	
Juvenile	Non-Adult	
Non-neonate	Non-Pup	
	Pup/Juvenile	

- E. **Sex:** For captures, create separate rows for males and females. For imports, create separate rows for each individual animal.
- F. **Expected Take:** This represents the maximum number of individuals you will take or import, annually. For wild captures, you will additionally need to add take rows to account for incidental harassment of non-target species or animals, capture/release of animals that are captured but not selected, or unintentional mortality. If you have questions, contact the Permits Division at 301-427-8401 for guidance.
- G. **Takes Per Animal:** For animals targeted for import or capture from the wild, the takes per animal should be one (1). If you have other take actions, estimate the number of times the same individual will be taken annually, if known.

- H. **Take Action:** The “take action” is a generalized overview of how animals will be taken or imported. If more than one action is proposed, you must enter the takes on separate rows.
1. For imports, enter “Captive animals (public display)”.
 2. For capture from the wild, your options are:
 - a. Removal from wild (permanent) – for animals that will be captured
 - b. Capture/Handle/Release – for target animals that are captured but not selected for public display
 - c. Harass – for non-target species or conspecifics that may be harassed by the capture operations, and
 - d. Unintentional mortality – for cases of accidental deaths associated with capture activities.
- I. **Observe/Collect Method:** Identify the method (e.g., import or capture). Use only one Observe/Collect method per row. If various methods will be used, you must provide take information in separate rows for each observe method.
1. For imports, enter “captive.”
 2. For capture from the wild, choose the appropriate option from below:

Capture Methods	
Net, hoop	Trap, floating
Net, seine	Underwater lasso
Net, other	Other
If using “net, other” or “Other”, please explain what you mean	

- J. **Procedures:** Provide specific information on the activities that will be conducted.
1. For imports, enter “captive maintain” and “transport.”
 2. For capture from the wild, enter “captive maintain” and “transport” for the row associated with removal.
 3. If you choose to include other take actions:
 - a. For harassment rows, the associated procedure would be “Incidental harassment.” Animals captured but not retained, would experience “Incidental harassment” as well. Please note that if you wish to collect data on animals captured but not selected for permanent captivity, you must select the procedures associated with your activities and clearly describe in the narrative.
 - b. For Unintentional mortalities (including euthanasia as necessary and necropsy), the procedure would “Unintentional mortality.”

Example take table for Import activities: Import of one bottlenose dolphin from Foreign Facility Name in Foreign Country to Facility Name, City, State, United States.

Species (common name/scientific name)	Stock/Listing Unit	Production/Origin	Lifestage	Sex	Expected Take	Take Action	Observe/Collect Method	Procedures	Details
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Atlantic Ocean	Captive	Adult	Female	1	Captive animals (public display)	Captive	Captive, maintain; Transport	Animal identified as "Rosey" (ID No. XY123; NOA0012345); 15 year old captive born female. Offspring of dam, NOA0012000, "Honey" (wild capture, Indian River Lagoon Estuarine stock) and sire, NOA00102201, "Fred" (wild capture, California Coastal stock).

Example table for Capture activities: Proposed captures of up to three bottlenose dolphins in Florida over 2 years.

Species (common name/scientific name)	Stock/Listing Unit	Origin	Life Stage	Sex	Expected Take	Take Action	Observe/Collect Method	Procedures	Details
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Indian River Lagoon Estuarine System Stock	Wild	Juvenile	Female	2	Removal from wild (permanent)	Net	Captive, maintain; Transport	Two females over duration of permit
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Indian River Lagoon Estuarine System Stock	Wild	Juvenile	Male	1	Removal from wild (permanent)	Net	Captive, maintain; Transport	One male over duration of permit

Species (common name/ scientific name)	Stock/Listing Unit	Origin	Life Stage	Sex	Expected Take	Take Action	Observe/Collect Method	Procedures	Details
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Indian River Lagoon Estuarine System Stock	Wild	All	Male and Female	10	Capture/Handle/Release	Net	Incidental Harassment	Animals that may be caught with target animals, no sets will be made on groups larger than 4 animals
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Indian River Lagoon Estuarine System Stock	Wild	All	Male and Female	40	Incidental Harassment	Net	Incidental Harassment	Animals that may be with the target animals, but not caught in the set.
Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	Indian River Lagoon Estuarine System	Wild	Juvenile	Male and Female	1	Unintentional Mortality	Net	Unintentional Mortality	One mortality over the life of the permit. Includes euthanasia for humaneness purposes and necropsy.

VI. Anticipated Effects on the Environment

1. Will you be working in or near areas with unique environmental characteristics or important scientific, cultural or historical resources? Examples include:
 - Animals used for subsistence
 - Archaeological resources
 - [Critical Habitat of ESA-listed species](#)
 - [Essential Fish Habitat](#) including wetlands, coral reefs, sea grasses, and rivers
 - Federally recognized Tribal and Native Alaskan lands, cultural or natural resources, or religious or cultural sites
 - [Marine Protected Areas](#)
 - Minority or low-income communities
 - [National](#) or State Parks
 - [National Marine Sanctuaries](#) and [National Monuments](#)
 - [National Historic Landmarks](#)
 - Sites listed in or eligible for listing in the [National Register of Historic Places](#)
 - [Wild and Scenic Rivers](#)
 - [Wilderness Areas](#)
 - [Wildlife Refuges](#)
 - a. If yes, please list those areas. As applicable, mention if you will need to or have already obtained permission (licenses, permits, authorizations) to work in these areas.
 - b. How would your activities affect such resources? What measures will you take to ensure your work does not cause loss or destruction of such resources?
 - c. For marine mammal activities in Alaska or Washington, how will you ensure your project does not adversely affect the availability (e.g., distribution, abundance) or suitability (e.g., food safety) of marine mammals for subsistence uses. (1200 characters max).
2. Discuss if your activities have the potential to impact the physical or biological environment, in particular coastal and marine environments. Impacts can be positive or negative. Examples of potential impacts include:
 - Altering substrate while anchoring vessels and buoys.
 - Using bottom trawls or other types of nets.
 - Erecting blinds or other structures.
 - Ingress and egress of researchers.
 - Injuring or killing benthic organisms (e.g., sea grass, corals).
 - Altering the physical or chemical characteristics of water (e.g., oil spills)
 - Affecting a species' abundance or distribution.

3. Does your project involve activities known or suspected of introducing or spreading invasive species, intentionally or not? Examples include transporting animals or other biological specimens, discharging ballast water, and using boats/equipment at multiple sites.

Describe measures you would take to prevent the possible introduction or spread of non-indigenous or invasive species, including plants, animals, microbes, or other biological agents.

4. Will your activities involve collecting, handling, or transporting potentially infectious agents or pathogens, such as biological specimens (animals, blood, tissues)?

Will your activities involve using or transporting hazardous substances, such as toxic chemicals?

If yes to either question, describe the protocols you will use to ensure that public health and human safety are not adversely affected, such as by spread of zoonotic diseases, chemical injuries, or contamination of food or water supplies.

5. Do your activities involve equipment (e.g., scientific instruments) or techniques that are new, untested, or have unknown or uncertain impacts on the biological or physical environment?

If yes:

- a. Briefly describe the equipment or techniques and provide any information about the use of these in your study area, other areas, and/or with other taxa.
- b. Discuss the degree to which they are likely to be adopted by others for similar activities or applied more broadly.

VII. Project Contacts

Please provide information about the personnel who will be working under the permit.

- Identify the personnel under Project Contacts who will accompany the animals.
- Include a table (see example Table 2) listing the names of the PI and CIs, and the specific procedures they will oversee or conduct.
- Attach a Qualifications Form for the PI and each CI. See Qualifications and Experience below.

A. Descriptions of Personnel Roles

A project must have a **Responsible Party if the Applicant/Permit Holder is an organization, institution, or agency**. The Responsible Party or Applicant/Permit Holder is an official who has the legal authority to bind the organization, institution, or agency and is ultimately responsible for the activities of any individual operating under the authority of the permit.

1. The **Principal Investigator (PI)** is the individual primarily responsible for the take and any related activities conducted under the permit, such as the curator. There can only be one PI on a permit. The PI:
 - must have qualifications, knowledge, and experience relevant to the activities authorized by the permit
 - must be on site during activities conducted under the permit unless a Co-Investigator is present to act in place of the PI
 - may also be the Applicant/Permit Holder and Primary Contact.
2. The **Primary Contact** is the person who we contact with questions or updates about the application. This may be the registrar or other person responsible for maintaining the marine mammal inventory records at the facility. Please include full name, title, and contact info for this person.
3. **Co-Investigators (CIs)** are individuals who are qualified and authorized to conduct or directly supervise activities conducted under a permit without the on-site supervision of the PI, such as the team lead or veterinarian overseeing the transport.
 - You may add CIs to the application if the PI will not always be present during the permitted activities.
 - CIs can also be added or removed once a permit has been issued.
4. The **Veterinarian** is responsible for: 1) overseeing the medical care of the animal(s) being imported or collected from the wild and 2) providing the written statement (required in the Project Description) certifying that the methods of import/capture and post-import/capture care will be adequate to ensure the well-being of the animal(s).

Table 1. Personnel Roles and Requirements

Project Contact	Must be named in the permit	Able to make changes to the application, request changes to the permit, and submit reports; will receive automatic emails from APPS.	Description of qualifications required
Applicant/ Permit Holder	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responsible Party	Yes	Yes	Required only if also serving as the PI or a CI
Principal Investigator	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary Contact	Yes	Yes	No
Co-Investigator	Yes	No	Yes
Veterinarian	Yes	No	Yes

B. Qualifications and Experience

The PI and each CI must have a Qualifications Form (QF). Previously we accepted CVs, resumes, and biosketches, but often these did not include sufficient information about the person's experience. The QF is designed to give us the information we need.

Persons authorized as the PI or CIs must have qualifications corresponding to their duties. Each person's QF must specify the number and species of animals they have transported and by what methods (e.g., air, land).

If you do not provide sufficient information, we will not authorize the person(s) to conduct the relevant activities.

In addition, you must submit a table (see Table 2) defining the roles and activities to be performed for the PI and each CI listed in the application.

Table 2. Example table showing personnel and their roles.

Name/Affiliation	Role	Activities
John Doe, Institution A, City, State	Responsible Party	Director of Institution A
John Smith, Ph.D., Institution A, City, State	Principal Investigator	Supervise and perform all activities under the permit
Jane Smith, D.V.M., Institution A, City, State	Veterinarian	Attending veterinarian
Jane Doe, Ph.D., Institution A, City, State	Co-Investigator	Team lead overseeing the transport

VIII. Certification, Signature, and Submission of Application

- A. The following Certification, followed by the Signature, Name, and Title of the Applicant or Responsible Party, must be submitted as the concluding section of the application.

"I hereby certify that the foregoing information is complete, true, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that this information is submitted for the purpose of obtaining a permit under the following statute and the regulations promulgated thereunder, as indicated in section I. of this application:

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and regulations (50 CFR Part 216).

I also understand that any false statement may subject me to the criminal penalties of 18 U.S.C. 1001, or to penalties provided under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972."

Signature of Applicant and Date of Signature

Typed or Printed Name of Applicant

Title of Applicant

- B. Submit an electronic copy of the application by email: nimm.inventory@noaa.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I apply?

- Imports: at least 6 months before the import will begin (longer if animals to be imported were captured from the wild)
- Captures: at least 1 year before the captures will begin

What is the process for getting a public display permit?

1. Follow these instructions and contact the Permits and Conservation Division at 301-427-8401 with any questions.
2. Submit your application:
 - a. By email: nimm.inventory@noaa.gov (preferred), or
 - b. By mail: Office of Protected Resources, Permits and Conservation Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13805 Silver Spring, MD 20910.
3. A permit analyst will review your application and assign your application a File Number (e.g., File No. 12345).
4. Your permit analyst will contact you regarding the status of your application. If deficiencies are identified in your application, you must address them within 60 days or your application will be returned to you without action. To facilitate processing, reference the application File No. in all correspondence.
5. Once we consider your application complete:
 - a. We will publish a notice in the [Federal Register](#), which starts a mandatory 30-day public comment period.
 - b. Concurrently, we will send your application to the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and subject matter experts at partner institutions and agencies for review.
6. We may receive substantive comments during the public comment period. We will forward these comments to you, as appropriate, for your response.
7. We will draft documentation (including National Environmental Policy Act analyses and documentation of MMPA issuance criteria)
8. The documents will be reviewed by various NMFS offices including a legal review.
9. The Office Director will decide whether to issue or deny your permit.

Additional Information

Under section 104(c) of the MMPA, persons may be authorized to take or import marine mammals for public display purposes. Interested persons are required to submit an application in accordance with the Act and the implementing regulations at 50 CFR part 216, subpart D. These instructions for applying for a public display permit are drawn from, but do not substitute for, the MMPA and MMPA regulations. These regulations are available at the following web site: <http://www.gpo.gov/> and are summarized below. MMPA section 104 is available at the following web site: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/marine-mammal-protection-act>. Under NEPA, Federal agencies must assess the effects of federal actions on the environment.

NMFS regulations implementing the permit provisions of the MMPA are in 50 CFR Sections 216.33 through 216.35, and 216.12. Section 216.33 contains requirements for application submission, the process for application review, and issuance or denial procedures. Section 216.34 specifies issuance criteria, specifically indicating that the applicant must demonstrate how their proposed activity meets the criteria. Section 216.35 specifies permit restrictions, including limitations on importation. Section 216.12 specifies conditions under which importation of marine mammals is prohibited, including by permit.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The information requested in this application is required and is used to determine whether the activities described in the application are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Act and their implementing regulations.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, F/PR1, NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

All permit documentation, including the application, permit and amendments, reports, inventory information, and any other associated documents are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.