

Additional improvements include:

- The division of the public display permit application into separate applications for capture and import helps clarify the instructions for applicants. The Commission supports NMFS's decision to separate the two forms, however, some inconsistencies remain between the two applications in terms of organization and information requested. NMFS should ensure consistency between all permit application instructions so that the same level of detail is being requested of and provided to all applicants that are proposing to conduct similar procedures.
 - o For example, the Introduction section of the import application contains some basic information and criteria for public display that is not included in the capture application. Similarly, the Timeframe section of the import application contains specific information about start dates and when to apply, while the capture (and research) application simply references the permit webpage.
 - o Information included in the capture application that is relevant and should be included in the import application includes:
 - Transport Information – the name of the transportation company, if applicable, and the qualifications of the common carrier to transport live animals; describe any procedures to acclimate the animals to the transport equipment, containers, personnel, etc.; identify who will accompany the animal during transport.
 - Status of the Affected Species – entire section was omitted; the Commission believes this section should be retained because MMPA-depleted species cannot be imported for public display. As the Commission has stated in its letters, it believes that an applicant has an obligation to demonstrate that the affected stock is not depleted before importation can be authorized.
 - Mortalities – entire section was omitted; would you euthanize animals under any circumstances?; briefly summarize any mortalities or serious injuries that have occurred during any previous import conducted by your facility and staff using the same or similar techniques; what are the protocols for necropsy and carcass disposal?

- Effects and Mitigation – describe the anticipated responses during and after transport and acclimation into the destination facility’s enclosure/pool (include the time it takes to resume normal behavior after transport or handling) and during introductions to the existing collection animals; provide alternatives to the proposed manner of transport and explain why the proposed methods are considered humane; attach a written statement from the responsible veterinarian certifying that the methods of 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.
 - Additional Information – activities not covered by these instructions, when to apply, process for getting a permit, process for requesting an amendment to a permit.
- Personnel roles – PI/CI personnel roles were removed from the import for public display application and replaced with Veterinarian and Transport Lead roles. Since transport could also occur under the capture for public display and research permits, the Transport Lead and Veterinarian roles should be options for those applications too.
- Active acoustics –
 - o The Active Acoustics box for counting takes should specify the threshold as 120 dB rather than 120db and should clarify “Refer to our current acoustic guidance for more information” consistent with Table 1.
 - o Table 1 Active acoustics –
 - Beam width and water depth or depth range, if applicable, were included in the previous application instructions but omitted from the proposed instructions. These parameters need to be included in the application instructions again, as they are used to inform the Level A and sometimes Level B harassment zones particularly for HRG or prey mapping sources.
 - For Maximum source level, it should state “(specify metric in SEL, SPL peak, and/or SPL RMS)”. SEL (usually 1-, 5-, 10-, or 60-sec for continuous sources) or SELss (for impulsive sources)

are used for estimating the Level A harassment zones, not SELcum. SELcum is the metric for the threshold, not the SL. SPL peak results in the larger Level A harassment zones (HF, VHF, OW, and often PW) for seismic and alternative seismic sources, so it too is needed for estimating the Level A harassment zones.

- IACUC review – It appears that the request for IACUC protocols, recommendations, and approvals was removed from the research permit application. The Commission recommends maintaining that requirement because it is an important part of helping to ensure that the humaneness criterion has been met.
- General Authorization Letter of Intent – Effects and Mitigation – The prompt questions in this section have been reduced to the point where the only mitigation efforts requested are to mitigate impacts to non-target protected taxa. The Commission recommends retaining a question requiring applicants to describe any mitigation they will take to avoid or minimize impacts to target species, including sensitive life stages, similar to how mitigation measures are handled for activities involving Level B harassment in the research permit application.
- There are some minor section numbering, formatting, and spelling errors and inconsistencies throughout the application instructions. Another round of QA/QC should be conducted before the instructions are finalized, including ensuring consistency in the section/subsection numbering scheme used in the public display applications compared to the other application types.