Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Application Form 8g
Marine Mammals: Filming with a Drone

The Department recommends that you contact the Department of Conservation permissions office listed below to discuss the application prior to completing the application forms. Please provide all information requested in as much detail as possible. The Department will advise you if further information is required before this application can be processed by the Department.

This form is only to be used when the activity you wish to do:

- involves only filming of marine mammals with a drone; and
- involves filming a marine mammal closer than 150m horizontally and would contravene regulation 18(h) in Part 3 of the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992.

Please complete this application form, attach **Form 8** and any other applicable forms and information and send to:

Permissions Advisor (Support)

Private Bag 4715

Christchurch Mail Centre

Christchurch 8140

Ph +64 3 371 3700

Email: permissionschristchurch@doc.govt.nz

The Department will process the application and issue a permit if it is satisfied that the application meets all the requirements for granting a permit under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978.

A. Applicant name (as per Form 8)

GCH UAV

B. Proposed Filming Operation (please read Appendix 1)

Purpose, outputs and benefits of the proposed filming

Please note the purpose of the filming activity (advertisement, movie, documentary etc), and describe in detail the proposed filming activity.

Collection of stock, promotional and research imagery as required

Proposed term

(Up to three years)

3 Years

Location information

Base of operation:

Blenheim

Proposed area or areas of operation:

Marlborough Sounds, Cook Strait, Kaikoura

Specific locations where contact with marine mammals is likely:

Entire Marlborough Sounds, Cook Strait & Kaikoura Peninsula

Species

Marine mammals you propose to encounter and film:

X all species of whales
X all species of dolphins
X all species of seals

Please specify the species you intend to target at each location

All species in all locations

Filming details

Please provide the following additional information where applicable. Please be thorough and include relevant information for each species of marine mammal. In particular, describe how you intend to mitigate any potential adverse effects on marine mammals.

When do you propose to undertake filming at each location?
(please be a specific as possible, including dates and times during the day)

As we are seeking a broad permit to conduct non-intrusive filming in multiple locations over the course of 3 years this question is not possible to answer beyond “in daylight hours, within the locations identified” The frequency of filming is likely to be around twice per month in most situations.

Maximum time spent with marine mammals per individual encounter:

Individual encounter time of 1 hour per pod or individual

Maximum cumulative time with marine mammals during a day:

Maximum of 3 hours per day with 3 or more pods or individuals

How will you approach, film and depart from marine mammals using a drone?

Is the drone being launched from:

☐ land
☐ boat
X both

Approach speed

5m/s

Horizontal distance from marine mammals in the water

0m

Vertical distance from marine mammals in the water

5m for filming – 1m if required to do so for approved research projects (i.e whale secretion collection)

Horizontal distance from seals on land

30m

Vertical distance from seals on land

50m

Height above sea level during transit along the coast or across the sea

30m

Height above sea level while filming marine mammals

20m

Orientation of approach

From directly behind, or at no more than 45° from individual or pods 6 o’clock position

What other actions you will take to minimise disturbance

Position RPAS so as not to cast any shadow onto any mammal or directly in front of mammal. Turn off or tape over LED navigation lights on UAV where practical to do so. Avoid sudden control inputs to minimise propeller noise. Use small RPAS that are typically quieter and have less visual footprint.

Type and number of drones (Copy and paste details for additional drones)

Maximum number of drones operating at any one time:

At most 2, but generally 1.

Drone 1 description:

Model: DJI Inspire 2	Noise level: 65db @ 7.5m (anecdotal)

Drone 2 description:

Model: DJI Phantom 4 Pro	Noise level: 56db @ 7.5m (anecdotal)

Drone Operator(s)

Please fill in for every person that may come into contact with marine mammals throughout the course of the proposed filming. (Copy and paste details for additional crew)

Full Name: Colin Aitchison	Job Title: UAV Operations Manager, UAV Pilot
Has this person had any convictions or prosecutions for offences against the Act or any other Act involving the mistreatment of animals?	☐ Yes X No
If yes please provide details:	
Relevant experience with marine mammals: Please see form 8	
Relevant knowledge of the local area and sea conditions: Please see form 8	

Full Name:	Job Title:
Has this person had any convictions or prosecutions for offences against the Act or any other Act involving the mistreatment of animals?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes please provide details:	
Relevant experience with marine mammals:	
Relevant knowledge of the local area and sea conditions:	

Full Name:	Job Title:
Has this person had any convictions or prosecutions for offences against the Act or any other Act involving the mistreatment of animals?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes please provide details:	
Relevant experience with marine mammals:	
Relevant knowledge of the local area and sea conditions:	

C. Other

Is there any further information you wish to supply in support of your application?

The attached “Reactions_NFMS_OA.doc” Ocean Alliance research paper on the reaction of whales to RPAS overflights found that in 258 overflights only 10 possible reactions were observed to the RPAS presence and of

the 10, only 5 included startle responses before continuing normal, pre RPAS exposure behaviour. These reactions were observed when the RPAS was at a height of 3.5m or less. All other overflights carried out at 6m or above did not prompt any reaction from the whales. We would actively monitor all species where practical and immediately cease operations where startle response was witnessed. Any such incident would be documented as per the Ocean Alliance document that is attached and be readily available.

We believe, as does the scientific community, that RPAS are the least invasive method of collecting high quality data of marine mammals and we look forward to engaging with them. As highly experienced, responsible, Part 102 certificated RPAS operators we believe that we can provide exceptional data and imagery as unobtrusively and safely as is currently possible.