

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
State Wildlife Grant**

Grant Number: T-21 **Segment Number: 1**
Project Number: 12.0
Project Title: Marine mammal conservation planning and coordination
Project Duration: 16 April 2011 – 30 June 2015
Report Period: 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014
Report Due Date: 1 September 2014
Principle Investigator: Robert J. Small, ADF&G
Project Location: Statewide

Objective 1: Participate on marine mammal advisory committees and provide information to commissions for use in updates or revisions to marine mammal conservation plans.

Job/Activity 1a: Serve on the Science Panel of the Cook Inlet Beluga Recovery Team to help draft the recovery plan for the endangered Cook Inlet beluga Distinct Population Segment.

Job/Activity 1b: Provide information on the biology and ecology of sea lions and information about marine mammal/fish interactions and coexistence.

Job/Activity 1c: Provide information to and advise the ADF&G Commissioner's staff on the Marine Mammal Protection Act reauthorization, ESA listed populations of marine mammals, marine mammal observer program, and list of fisheries.

Job/Activity 1d: Serve on the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee and provide information on the biology and ecology of beluga whales, and assist in developing science based recovery actions for the endangered Cook Inlet beluga whale.

Job/Activity 1e: Provide information on harbor seal conservation and management issues to various groups and commissions (e.g., Alaska Scientific Review Group, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission) and contribute to developing a research plan for harbor seals in Alaska.

Job/Activity 1f: Monitor and provide input into other marine mammal programs, especially those of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Alaska, and Alaska SeaLife Center.

Accomplishments:

JOB/ACTIVITY 1A: Robert Small was removed from the Science Panel of the Cook Inlet Beluga Recovery Team in late April 2011 by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), due to a conflict with ADF&G policies.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1B: Coordinated dissemination of ADF&G research results on Steller sea lions, including interactions with Commercial Fisheries, for the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Steller sea lion Mitigation Committee, Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) Director, and ADF&G Commissioners office.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1C: Held discussions with DWC Director and Chief Scientist on ESA associated issues with ice seals, walruses, and Cook Inlet beluga whales, and increased attention and concern regarding the competitive interaction between the southeast stock of sea otters and State of Alaska shellfish fisheries. No activities were performed regarding Marine Mammal Protection Act reauthorization or list of fisheries.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1D: Participated in meetings and discussions with the NMFS and ADF&G regarding research priorities for Cook Inlet beluga whales. Coordinated with Alaska Beluga Whale Committee members the development and implementation of a pilot study to detect beluga whales in Kotzebue Sound using acoustic moorings.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1E: Coordinated the contribution of ADF&G research results to revise the Alaska harbor seal research plan prepared by the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC), NMFS, and ADF&G.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1F: Held discussions, and coordinated discussions through ADF&G Marine Mammal Program Leaders, regarding research prioritization of marine mammals in Alaska with personnel from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Alaska, and Alaska SeaLife Center. Contributed information on Cook Inlet belugas and Steller sea lions to the Alaska Scientific Review Group.

Objective 2: Supervise and coordinate marine mammal staff, develop the ADF&G marine mammal research program, and assist in securing the funds necessary to conduct the program.

Job/Activity 2a: Supervise two Wildlife Biologist IVs and one Wildlife Biologist III that lead marine mammal research programs, and also supervise a Wildlife Physiologist III, a Biometrician III, two Analyst Programmer IVs, and a Research Analyst III. Provide guidance on research objectives, methods, and analyses and help develop annual and multi-year research plans for the marine mammal program.

Job/Activity 2b: Work with Commissioner's office staff in preparing information on the ADF&G marine mammal program to discuss with NOAA/NMFS staff and Alaska congressional delegation staff to secure funding.

Accomplishments:

JOB/ACTIVITY 2A: Supervised the three program leaders (two Wildlife Biologist IVs and one Wildlife Biologist III) of the principal marine mammal programs of

ADF&G, along with the staff that analyze data from those programs (i.e., Biometrician III, Analyst/Programmer IVs, and Research Analyst III), which required the review of research priorities, improving database management and establishment of a network database, continued improvements in administrative support, and the integration of grant applications for acquisition of funding through NMFS.

JOB/ACTIVITY 2B: Through discussions with the DWC Chief Scientist and Director, and ADF&G Marine Mammal Program Leaders, provided information to the Commissioner's office staff on the contributions from the ADF&G Marine Mammals Program used for management and conservation, and current research prioritization to secure future funding.

I. PUBLICATIONS

N/A

II. ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID-FUNDED WORK NOT DESCRIBED ABOVE THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED ON THIS PROJECT DURING THIS SEGMENT PERIOD

None

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

None

Prepared by: Robert J. Small, ADF&G

Date: 26 September 2014