

**FEDERAL AID  
INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 25526  
Juneau, AK 99802-5526

**STATE WILDLIFE GRANT (SWG)**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.:** T-1- 10

**PROJECT NR.:** 1

**WORK LOCATION:** Statewide

**PROJECT DURATION:** 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005

**PROJECT REPORTING PERIOD:** 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005

**PROJECT TITLE:** Marine Mammal conservation planning coordination

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**Project Objectives**

**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 a:** Serve on advisory committees and the chair the Steller sea lion Recovery Team to provide information on the biology and ecology of sea lions and to cooperatively revise the National Marine Fisheries Service's Recovery Plan for the Steller Sea Lion.

**Job/Activity b:** Serve on advisory committees to provide information on the biology and ecology of sea lions and information about marine mammal/fish interactions and coexistence and help the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Steller sea lion mitigation committee develop revised Reasonable and Prudent Alternative plans to implement fisheries.

**Job/Activity c:** Provide information and advise the ADF&G Commissioner's staff on the Marine Mammal Protection Act reauthorization, the declining southwest stock of sea otters, marine mammal observer program, and list of fisheries.

**Job/Activity d:** Serve on the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee and provide information on the biology and ecology of beluga whales, and assist in revision of the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Conservation Plan and other beluga whale plans that may be developed.

**Job/Activity e:** 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 f:** Monitor and provide input into other marine mammal programs, especially those of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, University of Alaska, and Alaska SeaLife Center, and assist in the selection and direction of research and monitoring for the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring Program in the Gulf of Alaska.

**Objective 2:** Supervise and coordinate marine mammal staff in development of ADF&G research and contributing to development of state wildlife conservation plans.

**Job/Activity a:** Supervise one Wildlife Biologist IV, two Wildlife Biologist IIIs, and a Biometrician III that lead marine mammal research programs giving guidance on research objectives, methods, and analyses and helping them to develop annual and multi-year research plans for the marine mammal program.

**Job/Activity b:** Provide information on marine mammal conservation and management issues for ADF&G staff developing the state Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.

### Summary of Project Accomplishments

1. a. Chaired 2 meetings of the Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Recovery Team with discussions focused on determining priority research and management actions needed for the recovery of SSLs, and was the lead on revisions to the Recovery Plan. Assisted in further development of the new Ice Seal Committee, helping identify research and management priorities.
1. b. Represented the SSL Recovery Team in discussions on possible interactions between SSLs and fisheries. Attended 1 meeting held by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) SSL Mitigation Committee on additional sea lion mitigation measures.
1. c. Prepared documents for the ADF&G Commissioner's office on priority issues for the State regarding reauthorization of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Prepared an overview of the ADF&G SSL research program in response to a request by the Governor's office. Also briefed or prepared documents for Commissioner's office staff on issues related to (1) the proposed ESA listing of the southwest stock of northern sea otters, (2) the oil spill from the Selendang Ayu, (3) proposed oil and gas leases, (4) Kensington Mine, and (4) the proposed Kink Arm Crossing.
1. d. Participated in the annual meeting of the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, and discussed recent population assessment results, harvest monitoring, and development of research priorities, and was also the speaker at the annual banquet associated with the meeting. Prepared the ADF&G comments on the draft Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Conservation Plan.
1. e. Met with members of the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC), NMFS, and the Alaska SeaLife Center to revise the Alaska Harbor Seal Research Plan and developed a revised joint proposal for cooperative research. Attended a two-day workshop on the population structure of Alaska harbor seals, followed by discussions outlining a timeline for drafting revised population stocks to be reviewed and approved by NMFS and the ANHSC through the co-management process. Attended the autumn meeting of the Alaska Scientific Review Group, with a focus towards revising harbor seal stock structure in Alaska.
1. f. Attended the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the US-Russia working group on Marine Mammals to discuss conservation and research priorities between the two countries. Reviewed research proposals for the NPRB, NFWF, and the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring Program, and manuscripts submitted for publication to the Society of Marine Mammalogy.

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2. a. Supervised the three principal marine mammal programs of ADF&G, including the review of research priorities, improvements in administrative support, and acquisition of funding. Met with entire ADF&G marine mammal staff to discuss overall research direction and planning, and enhanced integration with Division of Wildlife Conservation.
2. b. Worked with Division of Wildlife Conservation staff to finalize the marine mammal sections of the ADF&G Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

**Project Costs (includes indirect cost)**

**Stewardship Investment items:** None

**Total costs:** Federal share \$39,258 + state share \$13,086 = total cost \$ 52,344

**Prepared By:** Robert J. Small

**Date:** 31 August 2005