

**FEDERAL AID
INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

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

Grant Number: T-1 **Segment Number:** 3
Project Number: 7.10
Project Title: Marine mammal conservation planning coordination
Project Duration: July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2009
Report Period: 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007
Report Due Date: September 30, 2007
Partner: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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 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, ESA listed Southwest stock of sea otters, new proposals for state-water fisheries in Steller sea lion critical habitat, 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

Objective 1:

JOB/ACTIVITY A: As Chair of Steller Sea Lion Recovery Team (SSLRT), held several discussions with personnel from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding revisions of the draft revised Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan for the eastern and western populations of SSL. NMFS officially disbanded the SSLRT in June 2007.

JOB/ACTIVITY B: No work performed because the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) SSL Mitigation Committee did not request any information regarding Steller sea lions during the reporting period.

JOB/ACTIVITY C: Prepared documents for and held discussions with ADF&G Commissioner's office staff on the following issues on the proposed ESA listing of polar bears and Cook Inlet beluga whales.

JOB/ACTIVITY D: Reviewed the April 2007 version of the draft conservation plan for Cook Inlet beluga whales and provided comments to Commissioner's office staff and participated in meetings with the NMFS regarding new research proposals on Cook Inlet beluga. Also attended the first International Workshop on beluga whale research and also a meeting of beluga scientists involved with research on belugas across the circumpolar region as part of the International Polar Year.

JOB/ACTIVITY E: Met with members of the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC) and members of the ADF&G Commissioner's office to discuss research prioritization for harbor seals and all other pinnipeds in Alaska. Participated in the annual meetings of the Ice Seal Committee and the Eskimo Walrus Committee.

JOB/ACTIVITY F: Served as an invited expert at a workshop held by the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission to develop a monitoring program for Arctic marine mammals. Met with members of the USFWS and the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund (PWCF) regarding the future direction of the PWCF. Attended a workshop sponsored by the Minerals Management Service to identify research priorities and mitigation measures for marine mammals in the Chukchi Sea related to oil and gas development.

OBJECTIVE 2:

JOB/ACTIVITY A: Supervised the three program leaders (two Wildlife Biologist IIIs and one Wildlife Physiologist III) of the principal marine mammal programs of ADF&G, and

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a Biometrician III, which including the review of research priorities, improvements in administrative support, and acquisition of funding.

JOB/ACTIVITY B: No direct involvement with the ADF&G Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS), because it was completed prior to the reporting period. Discussed project ideas and reviewed proposals for marine mammals under the CWCS.

Prepared By: Robert J. Small

Date: 5 September 2007