

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

**Grant Number:** T-3 **Segment Number:** 1  
**Project Number:** 7.10  
**Project Title:** Marine mammal conservation planning coordination  
**Project Duration:** July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2009  
**Report Period:** July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008  
**Report Due Date:** September 30, 2008  
**Partner:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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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 1A: 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 1B: 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 Stellar sea lion mitigation committee develop revised Reasonable and Prudent Alternative plans to implement fisheries.

JOB/ACTIVITY 1C: 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 Stellar sea lion critical habitat, 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 revision of the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Conservation Plan and other beluga whale plans that may be developed.

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, 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 2A:** 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 2B:** 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 1A:** The Steller Sea Lion Recovery Team (SSLRT) was disbanded in June 2007 by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) following completion of the draft revised Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan for the eastern and western populations of SSL by the SSLRT. Thus, no further work was accomplished under this activity.

**JOB/ACTIVITY 1B:** No work performed under this activity 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 1C:** Prepared documents for and held discussions with ADF&G Commissioner's office staff on proposed ESA listings of polar bears and Cook Inlet beluga whales. Additionally, discussions were held regarding summarizing ADF&G information on walrus and the four species of ice seals (ribbon, ringed, bearded, and spotted) following petitions to list those species under the ESA.

**JOB/ACTIVITY 1D:** Reviewed the 2008 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 research prioritization workshop for Cook Inlet beluga whales, and attended the annual Alaska Beluga Whale Committee meeting.

**JOB/ACTIVITY 1E:** Contributed information towards the revision of the Alaska harbor seal research plan by the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC), NMFS, and ADF&G. Briefed the Alaska Scientific Review Group on the harbor seal population decline in the Aleutian Islands.

**JOB/ACTIVITY 1F:** Participated in two meetings of the sea otter Recovery Team (USFWS) and held discussions with NMFS personnel regarding research

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prioritization of marine mammals in Alaska. Contributed as an invited panel member on a review of co-management of marine mammals in Alaska organized by the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. No activity requested under the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring Program in the Gulf of Alaska.

**OBJECTIVE 2:**

**JOB/ACTIVITY 2A:** Supervised the three program leaders (one Wildlife Biologist IV, one Wildlife Biologist III, and one Wildlife Physiologist III) of the principal marine mammal programs of ADF&G, and a Biometrician III, which including the review of research priorities, improvements in administrative support, and acquisition of funding through NMFS, State of Alaska, and SWG.

**JOB/ACTIVITY 2B:** 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.

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**Date:** 29 September 2008