

**FEDERAL AID
INTERIM 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-3 **Segment Number:** 1
Project Number: 7.10
Project Title: Marine mammal conservation planning coordination
Project Duration: July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2011
Report Period: July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009
Report Due Date: September 30, 2009
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 1A: 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 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:

JOB/ACTIVITY 1A: 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.

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: 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.

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: 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.

Prepared documents for and held discussions with ADF&G Commissioner's office staff on (1) the proposed ESA listing and designation of critical habitat of Cook Inlet beluga whales and (2) petitions to list ice seals and walrus under the ESA.

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.

Participated in meetings with the NMFS regarding research priorities for Cook Inlet beluga whales and attended the annual Alaska Beluga Whale Committee meeting.

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.

Contributed information towards the revision of the Alaska harbor seal research plan prepared by the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (ANHSC), NMFS, and ADF&G. Completed a publication on the harbor seal population decline in the Aleutian Islands and provided an overview of the primary results to NMFS and the Alaska Scientific Review Group.

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.

Participated in two meetings of the sea otter Recovery Team (USFWS) and held discussions with NMFS and ADF&G personnel regarding research prioritization of marine mammals in Alaska. No activity requested under the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring Program in the Gulf of Alaska.

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.

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 included the review of research priorities, continued improvements in administrative support, and the integration of grant applications for acquisition of funding through NMFS and SWG.

JOB/ACTIVITY 2B: Provide information on marine mammal conservation and management issues for ADF&G staff developing the state Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.

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 Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) relative to priorities under the CWCS.

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