

**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.: 1.0

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT DURATION: 1 October 2002 – 30 June 2004

PROJECT REPORTING PERIOD: 1 October 2002 – 30 June 2003

PROJECT TITLE: Marine Mammal conservation planning coordination

Project Objectives:

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 State of Alaska Steller sea lion restoration team to provide information on the biology and ecology of sea lions, 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: 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 d: 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 e: 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.

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 four Wildlife Biologist IIIs 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:

Originally, this project was to have ended on June 30, 2003, however it has been extended one year. This report covers accomplishments during the 9-months of the initial project period, Oct. 1, 2003 – June 30, 2003.

1. a. Chaired 3 meetings of the Steller sea lion (SSL) Recovery Team with discussions focused on determining current threats to the recovery of SSLs, and was the lead on revisions to the Recovery Plan. The State of Alaska SSL restoration team did not meet during the reporting period. Participated in numerous teleconferences with members of the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund as the representative for ADF&G, resulting in a Request for Proposals and subsequent granting of funds for 6 projects after completion of the review process. Participated in the annual meeting of the Eskimo Walrus Committee and discussed development of population assessment techniques and harvest monitoring. Assisted in planning the development of a new Commission for ice seals, and helped organize a working group meeting to be held in July 2003.
1. b. Represented the SSL Recovery Team in discussions on possible interactions between SSLs and fisheries. The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) RPA committee did not meet during the reporting period, but was reorganized as the NPFMC SSL Mitigation Committee, with meetings planned for the next reporting period.
1. c. Participated in the annual meeting of the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee and discussed recent population assessment results, harvest monitoring, and development of research priorities.
1. d. Met with members of the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission, NMFS, and the Alaska SeaLife Center to revise the Alaska Harbor Seal Research Plan (attached) and developed a joint proposal for cooperative research. Discussed status of new scientific information on the population structure of harbor seals at the autumn meeting of the Alaska Scientific Review Group, with a focus towards revising harbor seal stock structure in Alaska.
1. e. Discussed with the USFWS the population status of sea otters in Alaska and a proposed listing under the Endangered Species Act. Synthesized ADF&G marine mammal staff input on research priorities for the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB), and reviewed proposals for both the NPRB and the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring Program.
2. a. Supervised the four principal marine mammal programs of ADF&G, including the review of research priorities, improvements in administrative support, investigation into acquiring new laboratory facilities, 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. Discussed integration of marine mammal conservation and management into the state Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, including status of current conservation plans for marine mammals.

Project Costs: Federal share \$38,996 + state share \$12,999 = total cost \$ 51,995

Prepared By: Robert J. Small, Principal Investigator, Marine Mammals Coordinator

Date: 18 September 2003