

Agency Caucus: NMFS, FWS, MMC, NSF, CCC, Navy, MMS

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

- Large uncertainties in all areas of the issue fuel public controversy
 - Stranding causes (acute and systemic)
 - Behavioural responses of different species
 - Effectiveness of management and mitigation
 - Difficult to assess population-level effects (use individual-level effects as surrogate)
- Acute problems with beaked whales and mid-frequency sonar
- Potential impacts of environmental compliance and uncertainties to (1) research, (2) security, and (3) economics.

GETTING INFORMATION NEEDED

- Fill information gaps (including baselines):
 - Marine mammals (populations, distributions, behavior, anatomy, etc)
 - Sound sources (ambient levels, source characteristics and distributions, etc)
 - Effects/Level of risk (behavioural and physiological impacts, etc)
→ CEEs (needs clarification)
 - Management and mitigation (effectiveness, risk assessment methods, etc)
- Fund the research/information gathering:
 - Partnerships like NOPP
 - Stock assessments
 - Other
- Adopt permitting and authorizations appropriate to level of risk and what is known now
 - Streamline processes

MITIGATION/MANAGEMENT (SENSIBLE)

- Current mitigation and management are best that can be done with existing information
 - Spatial-temporal requirements
- Evaluate effectiveness of mitigation/management strategies
- One size does not fit all
- Incorporate new information as it becomes available
 - *E.g.*, noise exposure criteria
- Public perception and education