



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

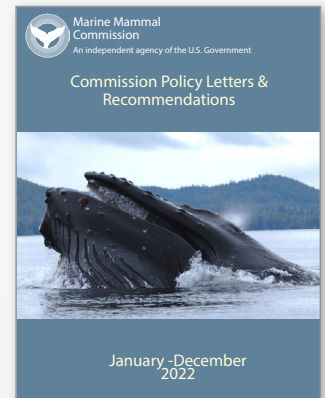
About Us

The Marine Mammal Commission is an independent federal agency charged under the [Marine Mammal Protection Act \(MMPA\)](#) with providing comprehensive oversight of federal government science, policy, and management actions affecting marine mammals and their ecosystems. The MMPA acknowledges the integral role marine mammals play in the world's oceans and in some freshwater habitats.

Legal and Policy Oversight: The Commission reviews actions proposed by federal and state agencies and other stakeholders to further the MMPA's policies. We recommend measures to minimize adverse impacts on marine mammals and their habitats and promote science-based, practical, cost-effective, solutions to conservation and management issues related to marine mammals. In 2022, the Commission sent [over eighty letters](#) commenting on and providing recommendations concerning proposed policies and actions under the MMPA and [related laws](#). The Commission tracked proposals to expand the range of sea otters on the West Coast and assisted Fish and Wildlife Service efforts to assess feasibility of reintroduction. The Commission engaged with National Marine Fisheries Service and Congress to provide advice on the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program and continued to participate on the Working Group for Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events, focusing on the gray whale, North Atlantic right whale, and Florida manatee unusual mortality events.

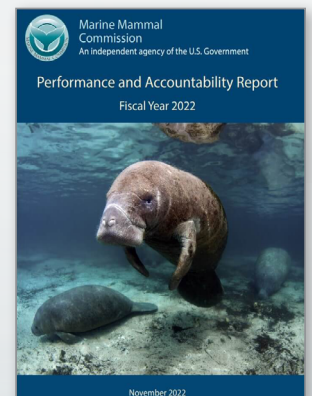
Community & Stakeholder Engagement: The Commission facilitates cooperation and communication among government agencies, marine mammal scientists, conservation advocates, and ocean resource users through meetings, webinars, briefings and other outreach. In 2022, the Commission held a webinar on federal agency approaches to reducing vessel strike of cetaceans. Throughout 2022, we consulted with and provided briefings for Congressional offices, federal agencies, and NGOs to encourage partnerships and explore solutions to complex marine mammal conservation challenges, including those involving [effects of climate change](#), North Atlantic right whales, [Florida manatees](#), and the preparation of marine mammal stock assessments. The Commission serves on the Administration's Bering Task Force and advanced Administration priorities and Executive Orders by developing or updating policies on diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility, and [COVID-19 workplace safety](#).

Letters

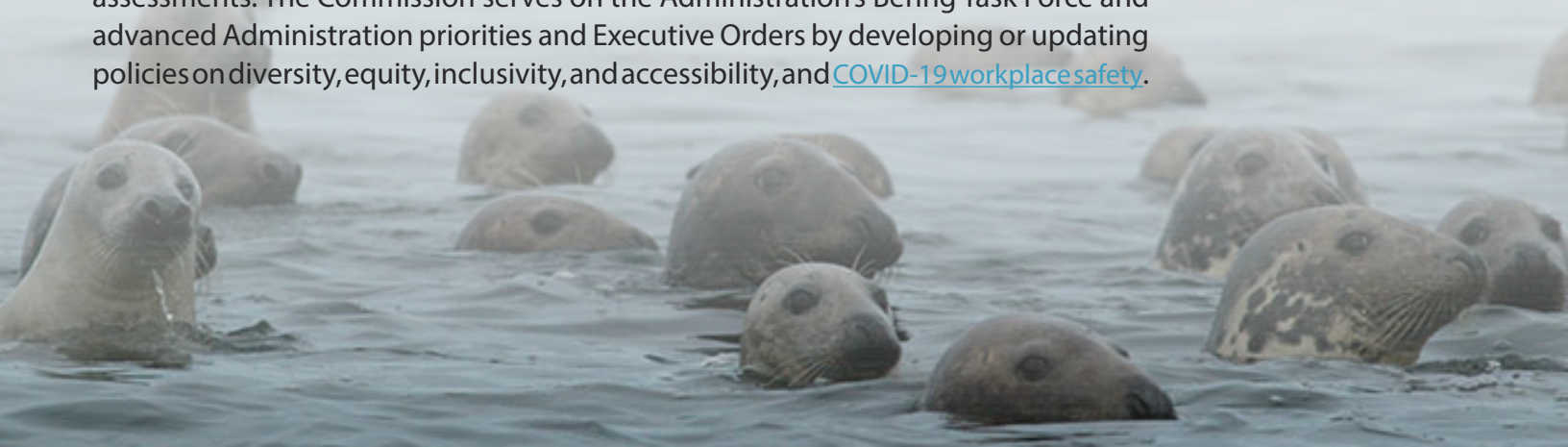


Read our [science and policy recommendations](#) from this year's oversight letters.

Performance and Accountability Report



Review our FY2022 [Performance and Accountability Report](#) for an overview of our accomplishments.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022

Reducing Marine Mammal Bycatch Globally: The Commission addresses global marine mammal bycatch at multiple levels through our [policy work](#), [grants program](#), and participation in take reduction teams. In 2022, we continued to focus on preventing the extinction of [North Atlantic right whales](#), mitigating entanglement risks to humpback and blue whales on the West Coast, and reducing bycatch of [false killer whales](#) in the Hawaii longline fishery. We collaborated with the Atlantic Large Whale and False Killer Whale [Take Reduction Teams](#) in developing and recommending bycatch mitigation measures, advised stakeholders addressing large-whale entanglement in California, and provided input on federal budget priorities concerning these issues.



Learn more about our work on [North Atlantic right whales](#).



Learn more about our [2022 Grant Awards](#).

Supporting Marine Mammal Research and Collaboration: The Commission's small [grants and research program](#) funds novel, low-cost, small-scale projects designed to leverage available funding and catalyze future work. In 2022, we [funded eight projects](#) that further the conservation and management goals of the MMPA and study the effects of climate change on marine mammals. The Commission supported an intensive learning experience in Hawai'i for underrepresented, minority high school students to learn about marine mammal science, as well as young researcher attendance at the 2022 international Biennial Conference of the Society for Marine Mammalogy. The Commission partnered with the Office of Naval Research to support an internship program

to increase diversity and inclusion in the field of marine mammal science. In 2022, we also engaged with federal and state agencies and the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee on efforts to assess beluga populations in the Western Arctic and promote the development and implementation of harvest management plans.

International Conservation: The Commission supports and participates in many international efforts that further the goals of the MMPA. Commissioner Gulland continued to lead the [global network of marine mammal stranding responders](#) and the Executive Director continued serving on the Arctic Council Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Network. Following a major stranding of Southern right whales in Argentina, the Commission contributed resources to researchers investigating the cause of death. The Commission continued to participate in efforts to persuade Mexico to enforce gillnet bans in the northern Gulf of California, the key for avoiding extinction of the critically endangered [vaquita](#). The Commission also played a leadership in the [Rare Pinniped Conservation Network](#) and supported conservation of Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins in Cambodia through training of local scientists.



Learn about our work on [vaquitas](#).

Emphasizing Science-Based Decision Making: The Commission promotes the use of the best-available science in decision-making as mandated by the MMPA and related statutes. We track and report on relevant research funding by federal agencies through our [Survey of Federally Funded Marine Mammal Research](#). The Commission engaged with and funded the Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC) Marine Mammal Working Group to advance research and management of marine mammals and safeguard cultural, economic, and subsistence values in this Alaskan region. The Commission also served as a resource to Congress during the reauthorization of marine mammal health and stranding provisions in the MMPA. The Commission commented on the methods used to [model sound propagation from pile driving used to construct wind energy turbines](#), estimate associated marine mammal takes resulting from wind farm construction activities, monitor and mitigate the impacts of offshore energy development, as well as [military training activities](#), on marine mammals.



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

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