



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

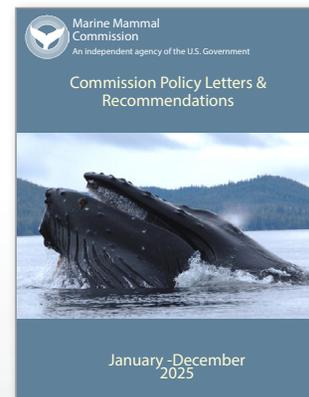
About Us

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission) is a small, 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.

Independent Oversight: The Commission reviews actions proposed by federal and state agencies and other stakeholders to further the provisions of the MMPA. 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 2025, the Commission sent [over thirty letters](#) commenting on and providing recommendations concerning proposed policies and actions under the MMPA and [related laws](#). The Commission tracked and reviewed proposed activities associated with [offshore energy development](#) to anticipate potential adverse impacts on marine mammals and provide recommendations to minimize such impacts. The Commission made strong recommendations for the continuation of agency partnerships and expanded use of emerging technologies to survey marine mammals.

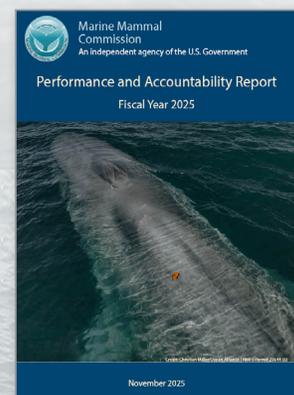
Community & Stakeholder Engagement: The Commission facilitates cooperation and communication among government agencies, marine mammal scientists, Alaska Native Organizations (ANOs), and ocean resource users through meetings, webinars, briefings and other outreach. The Commission's [2025 Annual Meeting](#) focused on emerging technologies to improve efficiency and support innovation for marine mammal stock assessments. Throughout 2025, we consulted with and provided briefings for Congressional offices, federal agencies, ANOs, and Tribes to encourage partnerships and explore solutions to complex marine mammal conservation challenges, including those involving [marine mammal health and strandings](#), North Atlantic right whales, Hawaiian monk seals, and more.

Letters



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

Performance and Accountability Report



Review our FY2025 [Performance and Accountability Report](#) for an overview of our accomplishments.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

Reducing Marine Mammal Bycatch Globally: The Commission addresses global marine mammal bycatch at multiple levels, including through its [grants program](#), and participation in take reduction teams. In 2025, we continued to focus on preventing the extinction of [North Atlantic right whales](#), mitigating entanglement risks to humpback whales on the West Coast, and reducing bycatch of [false killer whales](#) in the Hawaii longline fishery. We attended the first meetings of the West Coast Take Reduction Team, collaborated with the National Take Reduction Program, engaged in efforts to further innovative fishing technology, and provided input on federal budget priorities concerning these issues.



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



Learn more about our [2025 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 research to improve monitoring of marine mammals and to develop new and more effective approaches for mitigating threats. In 2025, we funded seven projects that develop novel, low-cost approaches to 1) estimating abundance of marine mammal stocks (populations or other management units), and/or 2) estimating marine mammal mortality and serious injury. The Commission reviewed more than 20 draft Stock Assessment Reports and participated in virtual meetings for Scientific Review Groups for all three stock assessment regions. The Commission also

collaborated with other federal and academic scientists on multiple projects, resulting in the publication of [three peer-reviewed journal articles](#). In 2025, the Commission also participated in multiple working groups and task forces to support collaborative marine mammal conservation, including groups to address ship strike risk reduction and provide advice to the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary.

International Conservation: The Commission supports and participates in many international efforts that further the goals of the MMPA. Commission staff are members of the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee and Commissioner Gulland continued to lead the [global network of marine mammal stranding responders](#). The Commission continued its work on the bycatch of small cetaceans in fishing gear, supporting the conservation of Mekong dolphins in Cambodia, monitoring work in the northern Gulf of California aimed at avoiding extinction of the critically endangered [vaquita porpoise](#), and closely followed NOAA's measures to implement MMPA import provisions to reduce marine mammal bycatch associated with international commercial fishing operations.



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 annual [Survey of Federally Funded Marine Mammal Research](#). The Commission continued engagement with ANOs to advance research and [co-management of marine mammals](#), and to safeguard cultural, economic, and subsistence values. Additionally, the Commission continued as a partner in the Arctic Watch program, a collaborative initiative to build critical real-time communication between Alaska Native subsistence communities and the Marine Exchange of Alaska on vessel traffic, subsistence hunting activities, and marine mammal occurrence in the Bering Strait region.