



Marine Mammal Commission

An independent agency of the U.S. Government

Performance and Accountability Report

Fiscal Year 2023



November 2023

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15 November 2023

Message from the Chair

With this letter, I submit the Commission's Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023) Performance and Accountability Report, including financial and program performance results. The performance data in this report are complete and reliable and there are no material inadequacies. Prior to preparation of the report, the Commission evaluated its management controls and financial management system pursuant to the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. No material weaknesses were identified and the financial management system conforms to government financial system requirements. In accordance with OMB Circular 123, Appendix C, no improper payments were made. An independent, certified public accountant audited the Commission's financial statements, internal controls, and management systems and verified that they conform to generally accepted accounting principles, laws, regulations, and requirements.

The Commission's work is guided by its Strategic Plan, which helps the agency focus its attention on the most pressing issues pertaining to marine mammals and their environments.

On behalf of the Marine Mammal Commission, I am pleased to submit this FY 2023 Performance and Accountability Report to the Office of Management and Budget.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "F Gulland". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Frances M.D. Gulland, Vet. M.B. Ph.D.
Chair

The Marine Mammal Commission’s Performance and Accountability Report consists of two elements: 1) the Management Discussion and Analysis, presented here, and 2) the Financial Audit Report and Financial Statement provided in a separate document.

Management’s Discussion and Analysis

The Mission of the Marine Mammal Commission

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission) is an independent agency of the federal government charged by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) with furthering the conservation of marine mammals and their environment. We work to ensure that marine mammal populations are restored and maintained as significant functioning elements of healthy marine ecosystems in the world’s oceans. Our mission is to provide independent, science-based oversight of domestic and international policies and actions of federal agencies addressing impacts on marine mammals and their ecosystems. This promotes consistency with the MMPA and other relevant mandates to protect and conserve marine mammals. Our role is unique—we are the only U.S. government agency that provides comprehensive oversight of science, policy, and management actions affecting all species of marine mammals. To learn more about us and what we do [please visit our website](https://www.mmc.gov)¹.

Commission Structure

The Commission consists of three Commissioners, a nine-member Committee of Scientific Advisors, and a staff of 14 full-time employees (Fig. 1). A Special Advisor on Native Affairs serves the Commission under contract.

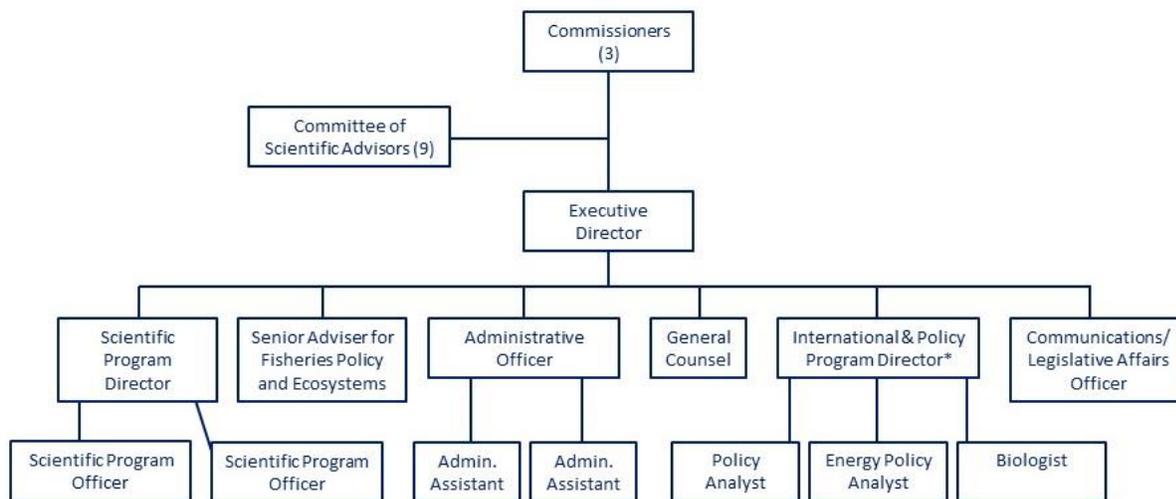


Figure 1. Organizational Structure of the Marine Mammal Commission (*position vacant)

¹ <https://www.mmc.gov/about-the-commission/our-mission/>

Financial Analysis: Overview of Commission Finances in FY 2023

The Marine Mammal Commission’s electronic financial systems are maintained by the General Services Administration (GSA), External Services Branch.

The Marine Mammal Commission complies with applicable federal financial laws, including the Antideficiency Act. The Administrative Officer has received appropriations law training and confers with the Executive Director and General Counsel to ensure that the agency remains in compliance.

Annual Appropriations and Distribution of Funds

Congressional appropriations are the only source of funding for the Commission. The Commission used its FY 2023 appropriation to meet its general oversight responsibilities as mandated by the MMPA. Total annual appropriations for the Commission from FY 2019 to 2023 are listed in Table 1. In FY 2023, the Commission’s appropriation was \$4,500,000. Approximately 62 percent of the Commission’s appropriation was used for salaries and benefits (including salaries for Commissioners and non-federal advisory Committee members, see

Commission Structure above), 23 percent for rent, administration, and communications, 10 percent to fund the Commission’s Scientific Program and research grants, and 5 percent for travel (Fig. 2).

Table 1. Annual Appropriations for the Marine Mammal Commission, FY 2019 to 2023

Fiscal Year	Appropriation
2019	\$3,516,000
2020	\$3,616,000
2021	\$3,769,000
2022	\$4,200,000
2023	\$4,500,000

Management of Commission Finances

The Executive Director oversees and assumes responsibility for all financial transactions. The Administrative Officer manages and is responsible for all day-to-day budgetary matters, including issuing purchase orders, processing time cards, and overseeing invoice payments. An Administrative Assistant processes all paperwork related to invoices and travel expenses and assists the Administrative Officer in day-to-day management of the Commission’s budget. A Scientific Program Officer oversees all day-to-day fiscal transactions related to Commission-sponsored research. The Executive Director works with a team of senior staff

to address key issues, including budget planning and management of the Commission’s finances. An independent, certified public accountant examined all financial systems and controls and completed a comprehensive audit for FY 2023. The audit found no material internal weaknesses in financial systems and controls. The audit report concluded that the Commission’s financial statements are presented fairly and in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. The financial statements for the Commission are included in the audit report.

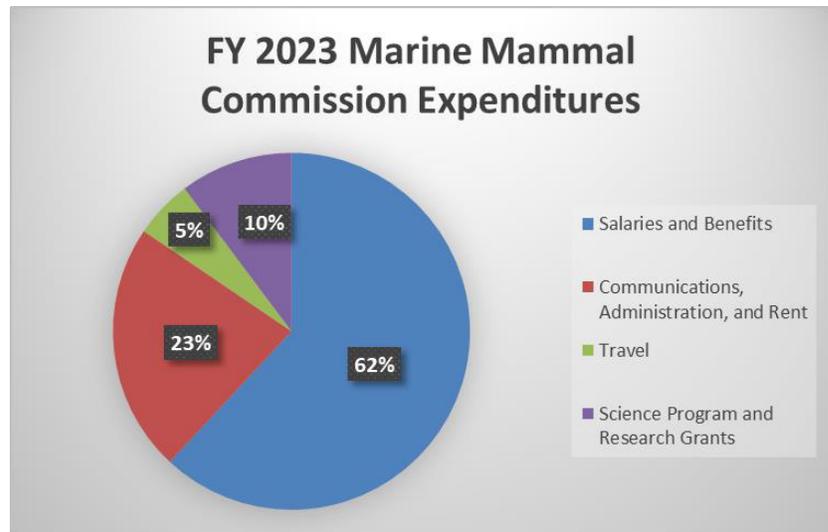


Figure 2. Distribution of Funds Appropriated to the Commission for FY 2023



15 November 2023

Analysis of Systems, Controls, and Legal Compliance

The Marine Mammal Commission management is responsible for managing risks and maintaining effective internal control to meet the objectives of Sections 2 and 4 of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. The Marine Mammal Commission conducted its assessment of risk and internal control in accordance with OMB Circular No. A-123, Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control. Based on the results of the assessment, the Agency can provide reasonable assurance that internal control over operations, reporting, and compliance was operating effectively as of September 30, 2023.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "F Gulland".

Frances M.D. Gulland, Vet. M.B. Ph.D.
Chair

Performance Goals and Results: Commission Accomplishments in FY 2023

The work performed by the Commission is centered around the five strategic goals set forth in the Commission's [Strategic Plan](#)². Below is a summary of accomplishments for FY 2023 under each strategic goal.

Provide Policy and Legal Oversight

- **Regulatory Agency Relationships:** In FY 2023, the Commission worked proactively with relevant regulatory agencies to ensure that emerging or ongoing issues were addressed expeditiously. It also worked with those regulatory agencies to help streamline the regulatory process. The federal agencies and their components with which the Commission engaged most frequently are the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Ocean Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), U.S. Navy, the National Science Foundation, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Department of State, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. It also engaged frequently with state agencies, coastal Native American Tribes, and Alaska Native Organizations.
- **Implementation of the MMPA:** The Commission oversaw actions of agencies to promote faithful and effective implementation of the MMPA by fostering a science-based, fully-informed regulatory process that adheres to Congressional directives and considers relevant stakeholder views. For example, the Commission reviewed and commented on proposed incidental take authorizations and associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents to assess potential impacts on marine mammals and to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are included to minimize those impacts. The Commission also reviewed and commented on permit applications submitted under the MMPA, including all scientific research permit applications, to ensure that the proposed research was *bona fide* and the taking of marine mammals was humane. In addition, the Commission continued to provide advice concerning a proposed waiver of the MMPA's taking moratorium that would authorize the Makah Tribe to hunt gray whales. Further, the Commission made recommendations concerning statutory requirements relating to reducing mortality and serious injury of marine mammals incidental to commercial fisheries and the preparation of stock assessment reports.
- **Science-Based Recommendations:** The Commission worked with other federal agencies to identify and support critical research that promotes well-informed decisions concerning marine mammal programs, including those designed to reduce threats from fisheries, climate change, offshore energy development, and other coastal and offshore activities. For example, the Commission was actively engaged in reviewing proposed offshore leasing in support of expanded wind energy development to anticipate and minimize potentially adverse impacts on marine mammals for activities regulated under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.

Improve Population Assessment and Health Surveillance

- **Marine Mammal Stock Assessments:** The Commission participated in review and evaluation of all aspects of assessing the health and status of marine mammal populations (hereafter, stocks), as required under section 117 of the MMPA. This included reviewing annual draft stock assessment reports, participating in regional scientific review group

² <https://www.mmc.gov/wp-content/uploads/Marine-Mammal-Commission-FY22-26-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

meetings, and developing strategic recommendations or plans in collaboration with other agencies to improve the information used to meet section 117 requirements.

- **Assessment of Climate Change Impacts:** The Commission developed recommendations concerning research needs to improve the availability and quality of data and related management strategies for addressing marine mammal conservation in the face of climate change. Building on the Commission's 2022 peer-reviewed scientific assessment of current knowledge about the impacts of climate change on marine mammals in U.S. waters, the Commission in 2023 held a meeting of experts in marine mammal health. The Commission began synthesizing information from that workshop to develop recommendations for establishing a nationwide health surveillance program to detect climate-related impacts to the health of marine mammal populations. To address data needs and knowledge gaps identified in the peer-reviewed assessment, the Commission is funding fifteen projects through competitive federal funding opportunities in FY2022 and FY2023 focused on effects of climate change on marine mammals, as well as marine mammal health in a changing climate. The Commission also continues to consult with the lead agencies to integrate climate research elements into the MMPA's stock assessment process and to begin to develop strategies to mitigate climate-related impacts. The Commission's goal is to summarize what is known about climate change impacts on marine mammals and identify related research needs and funding priorities in a format suitable for policy-makers, managers, private foundations, non-scientists, and the public.
- **Marine Mammal Health Monitoring and Analysis Platform (or Health MAP):** In FY 2023, Congress authorized NOAA to develop Health MAP, in consultation with the Commission. The Commission advised NOAA on the development of Health MAP, which is designed to maximize the availability and use of marine mammal health information, and integrate it with ecosystem data. The platform will give the public, scientists, and resource managers improved ability to understand health risks to marine mammals and the public arising in our changing ocean environment and to set priorities for management and conservation efforts. The Commission also worked with the NMFS Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program to highlight the need for enhanced marine mammal health surveillance around the U.S. coastline to detect impacts of climate change on marine mammal populations.
- **Restoration Efforts in the Gulf of Mexico:** The Commission has engaged at many levels to further efforts to restore Gulf of Mexico marine mammal populations impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Commission continued engagement with NMFS and BOEM to provide recommendations for cross-agency efforts to improve assessments of marine mammals and inform management efforts related to energy development. The Commission reviewed and commented on proposed large-scale restoration or development projects that have the potential to take marine mammals. The Commission also served as an advisor to a multiagency-funded project to inform restoration efforts and improve assessments of offshore marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico through the deployment of passive acoustic monitoring devices throughout the Gulf, including in Mexican waters.
- **Interagency Committee Participation:** Although a small agency, the Commission is an active participant in interagency work through, for example, the Sub-committee on Ocean Science and Technology, the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, and the

Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area Task Force. The Commission has led several interagency efforts to integrate marine mammal observations from local, regional, and federal sources to inform national needs and feed into the Global Ocean Observing System. In support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and in light of the increasing threats and challenges posed by a changing climate, the Commission worked to ensure the delivery of information from scientific observations.

- **Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events:**

The Commission served with other federal partners on the Working Group for Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events (UMEs). Recent marine mammal UMEs highlight the need to monitor marine mammal health and integrate that information into interagency efforts to promote a One Health approach to wildlife disease surveillance, which seeks to identify relationships among animal health, human health, and the environment. The need for a One Health approach was exemplified by the 2022 UME involving harbor and gray seals off the coast of Maine. In summer 2022, seals were dying from highly pathogenic avian influenza, H5N1. The pathogen has been detected in poultry, wild birds, and other wild mammals and has the potential to be transmitted to people and pets. Other ongoing UMEs remain a concern due to their impact on critically endangered populations, such as North Atlantic right whales, or their potential association with climate change, such as humpback whales in the northwest Atlantic.



California sea lions (The Marine Mammal Center).

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Assess and Address Threats Facing Marine Mammals

- **Impacts of Climate Change:** The Commission built upon its assessment of impacts (discussed above), in concert with management agencies, to implement measures designed to mitigate impacts of climate change, including those that exacerbate more direct threats to marine mammals (e.g., entanglements in fishing gear and ship strikes). The Commission engaged with the fifteen FY2022 and FY2023 grant recipients conducting projects focused on climate change effects on marine mammals, as well as marine mammal health in a changing climate, to ensure timely deliverables and availability of high-quality products, such as peer-reviewed publications, that address data needs and fill knowledge gaps.
- **Fisheries Interactions:** During FY 2023, the Commission worked closely with federal and state agencies, fishermen, scientists, and representatives of conservation organizations to identify and implement measures designed to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries of marine mammals that occur incidental to commercial fishing to biologically sustainable levels, as mandated by the MMPA. The Commission participates on all seven currently active Take Reduction Teams established by NMFS, assesses and provides recommendations on federal actions and policies related to managing interactions between fisheries and marine mammals, and sponsors research and workshops looking for innovative solutions to reduce interactions of marine mammals with commercial fishing gear. Further, in FY 2023, the Commission continued its work to understand the importance of fish populations as prey for marine mammals and the impact that fishing may be having on prey availability.

- North Atlantic Right Whales:** Entanglement in pot and trap fishing gear and vessel strikes are the two biggest threats to the survival and recovery of the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. The ongoing North Atlantic Right Whale UME remains active and the species' population remains below 350 individuals. The Commission remains committed to staving off the extinction of the North Atlantic right whale and ultimately achieving its recovery to the point where it no longer is endangered. In FY 2023, the provided oversight and recommendations to NMFS on necessary improvements to take-reduction regulations, support a transition to whale-safe “on-demand” fishing gear and other innovative gear developments, participate in deliberations of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, and provided advice to Congress on needed measures and priorities. The Commission also reviewed and provided recommendations on improvements to existing programs and regulations directed at reducing the risk of vessel strikes, which often result in deaths or serious injuries to right whales. In addition, the Commission co-hosted an experts' workshop with NMFS, the Office of Naval Research, and Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which gathered experts together to provide guidance on tagging technologies for surveying and tracking North Atlantic right whales.

- International Efforts to Conserve other Endangered Cetaceans:** The Commission continued longstanding collaborations with international scientific and conservation teams on initiatives to reduce threats to some of the world's most at-risk marine mammals. For example, the Commission participates in U.S. government and international organization work with the Government of Mexico to prevent extinction of the vaquita, works with a collaborative international team to address threats to Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins in Cambodia, and is a member of the Arabian Sea Whale Network seeking to conserve humpback and other whale species in that area. The Commission assisted in building international awareness of threats to particular species or groups of marine mammals and supplying expert technical assistance through its work with the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Cetacean Specialist Group, the Rare Pinniped Conservation Network (RAPCON) and other international and national bodies. The Commission also directs grant funds to support international projects on species of concern.



A critically endangered vaquita mother and calf alongside an illegal gillnet fishing boat in October 2019 (CONANP/Museo de la Ballena/Sea Shepherd).

- Renewable Energy:** The Commission supports the Administration's goal to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2030. As federal agencies work to achieve that goal, care must be taken to minimize the impacts of wind energy development on marine mammals and other marine resources. To that end, the Commission continued to work with federal and state agencies, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and academics to identify research and monitoring priorities and data gaps to inform additional research needs. The Commission also reviewed ongoing and planned wind farm construction projects to ensure effective mitigation, monitoring, and reporting of marine mammal interactions.

- **Southern Resident Killer Whale:** The Commission continued to monitor, assess, and provide advice regarding the ecological link between endangered and declining Southern Resident killer whales and their preferred prey, Chinook salmon, as well as on health assessments of these whales. It also continued to promote the restoration of key salmon populations, the protection of critical Southern Resident killer whale foraging grounds, and the mitigation of the impacts of vessel disturbance on these endangered whales.
- **Sea Otters:** The Commission tracked and attended stakeholder meetings on proposals to expand the range of sea otters on the West Coast and engaged with FWS following the release of its “Feasibility Assessment: Sea Otter Reintroduction to the Pacific Coast” mandated by the Consolidated Appropriation Act for 2021. That report focused on the feasibility of reintroducing sea otters to Oregon and/or the northern California coast. The Commission supports further consideration of such proposals and related research on sea otter contributions to coastal ecosystem health and carbon sequestration/storage, both in Oregon and in states with extant sea otter populations (Alaska, Washington, and California).

Improve Marine Mammal and Ecosystem Research

- **Small Grants Program:** With a relatively modest budget, the Commission’s Grants and Research program has filled an important niche in marine mammal research for many years by funding novel, low-cost, small-scale projects. The Commission is currently supporting 35 active research projects targeting marine mammal conservation, protection, and management, including seven new grants awarded under the FY 2023 request for proposals, which focused on marine mammal health in a changing climate. Funded projects typically align with the Commission’s MMPA duties and strategic objectives, and include topics such as emerging technologies (e.g., on-demand fishing gear, ‘Omics, and artificial intelligence), community engagement and social science, critical or emergent issues (species of conservation concern, specific geographic regions), threat reduction, filling data gaps and improving data quality and accessibility, including integration of Indigenous Knowledge, and measuring success of implemented actions.
- **Survey of Federally Funded Marine Mammal Research (the Survey):** The Commission manages an online survey and data repository to collect and collate information on federal funding of marine mammal research by agency, species, objective, and location. The Commission employs the Survey to identify gaps in research effort or funding, illuminate areas of strength in federal research investment, and inform recommendations on needed agency actions and budget priorities. In FY 2020, the Commission launched a new survey platform, designed with interagency input, to make data reporting easier. In FY 2023, the Commission completed the fourth year of data collection with the new platform and has released the results of the FY 2019-2022 surveys on the Commission’s website.



Humpback whale in the Hawaiian Islands entangled in gear thought to be used to trap crabs (NOAA, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary).

- **Right Whale Science:** The Commission reviewed the models and data used to assess the risks to North Atlantic right whales from entanglements in fishing gear, and identified steps needed to improve both data collection and modeling. The Commission supports additional ecosystem research, further development of whale detection and notification systems, and research into gear innovations. The Commission’s research grant program in recent years also has funded several complementary projects focused on vessel-strike reduction on both North Atlantic and North Pacific right whales, near-real time whale mapping tools, and response to a toxic algal bloom causing high mortality of Southern right whales in Argentina.
- **Arctic Marine Mammal Research:** The Commission worked with BOEM, NMFS, FWS, Office of Naval Research, North Pacific Research Board, USCG, and Alaska Native Organizations to address critical information needs regarding the effects of environmental change on Arctic ecosystems and the marine mammal species that reside in them, including the impacts of increased human activities in the Arctic. This information is of particular importance to Alaska Native communities dependent on marine mammals for subsistence foods and cultural practices. As a member of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) and in fulfilment of the Administration’s Arctic Research Plan 2022–2026 the Commission continued to support the development of systematic monitoring and other research to inform U.S. Arctic policies and priorities.
- **North Pacific Right Whale:** With an estimated 30 individuals remaining in the eastern North Pacific population of right whales, which occur in Alaskan waters, the Commission worked in FY 2023 to highlight its endangered status and extreme risk of extirpation. Significant gaps in our understanding of the population’s distribution and movements are preventing the risk assessment that is necessary to provide effective management and protection of the population. The Commission engaged with NMFS and other partners to foster conditions that will improve our knowledge of threats facing North Pacific right whales.
- **Rice’s Whale:** Rice’s whale, the only resident baleen whale species in the Gulf of Mexico, was significantly impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Commission worked with NMFS, BOEM, industry, and academic partners to determine the extent of the species’ range, beyond its core habitat off the coast of western Florida, using passive acoustic monitoring vessel surveys, and opportunistic sightings. The Commission also commented on the proposed designation of critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act and on measures to reduce the threat of vessel strikes.

Engage with Marine Mammal Protection Act Stakeholders

- **Collaboration with Agencies:** The MMPA was enacted into law in October 1972, while the Endangered Species Act was enacted into law in December 1973, and the Commission, along with NMFS and FWS, the other two agencies with primary responsibility for implementing the MMPA, have collaborated throughout FY 2023 on a series of briefings and other events to celebrate its 50th anniversary of these acts and to call attention to conservation successes. In particular, the Commission and its partners have planned a 50th anniversary reception and scientific symposium featuring endangered Rice’s whales, North Atlantic right whales, and North Pacific right whales. Also, in addition to sending more than 50 letters in FY 2023 to other federal agencies making recommendations on implementing

the MMPA and related laws, the Commission collaborated with and supported the work of those agencies in a number of other ways. For example, the Commission assisted in preparing and implementing recovery plans for endangered species (e.g., Rice's whales, and Cook Inlet beluga whales), developing approaches for reducing vessel strikes of cetaceans, understanding and reducing impacts of offshore wind energy and oil and gas development on marine mammals, and supporting NMFS and FWS implementation of the MMPA, including their work on the stock assessment process, marine mammal health and strandings, and the fish and fish product import rule.

- **Legislative Affairs:** During FY 2023, the Commission continued to serve as a resource for Congress on a variety of marine mammal issues. It responded to inquiries from Congressional committees and offices, consulted with and provided briefings for member offices, offered technical drafting assistance, and worked through the OMB legislative review process to formulate Administration testimony and views on proposed legislation and recommended measures to further the policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In FY 2023, the Commission also assisted in the confirmation of President Biden's nominees for Commissioners of the Marine Mammal Commission.



False killer whale mother and calf, October 2010
(Robin Baird, Cascadia Research).

- **Incorporating Views of Diverse Stakeholders:** In FY 2023, to facilitate engagement of Alaska Native hunters and community members in the refinement of vessel routing measures, the Commission supported and shared opportunities to bring hunters and community leaders together to meet with the Marine Exchange Alaska. This effort will continue into FY 2024. The Marine Exchange Alaska is an organization whose mission is to promote safe transport of vessels through Alaskan waters, and to minimize the risk of vessel groundings or other mishaps that could harm sensitive marine environments, jeopardize Alaska Native hunting activities, and cause harm to key subsistence species, including bowhead and beluga whales and walrus.
- **Promoting Co-Management:** The Commission tracked Alaska Native co-management issues through participation in meetings of the Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM), the Ice Seal Committee, the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, and other Alaska Native organizations. To further the engagement of Alaska Native youth in co-management, the Commission, in partnership with Alaska Sea Grant, sponsored a summer 2023 internship with IPCoMM. The Commission served as an advisor to the Chugach Regional Resources Commission, an Alaska Native Tribal organization located in the Prince William Sound area, to develop methods for assessing marine mammal stocks and obtaining better information on subsistence activities. The Commission is represented on the U.S. delegation to the International Whaling Commission and serves on the inter-agency team that develops U.S. positions on whaling issues, especially those regarding Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling. The Commission serves on U.S. delegations to meetings of the polar bear Range States (the parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears), which reviews progress on implementing the Circumpolar Action Plan and discusses research and management activities of mutual

interest, and to meetings of the U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission, which, although currently suspended, jointly manages the shared Chukchi Sea polar bear population.

- **The Value of Marine Mammals:** A central component of the Commission’s work is to conserve marine mammals for the benefit of their ecosystems, the American public, and the U.S. economy. Marine mammals contribute greatly to economic and societal well-being. For example, ecotourism has become a vital part of coastal economies and is continuing to grow globally. Marine mammals also provide important ecosystem services by enhancing primary productivity (in a process known as ‘the whale pump’) and sequestering carbon in the ocean. Certain species, such as sea otters, can also contribute to healthy coastal ecosystems by keeping sea urchin populations in check, thereby allowing kelp beds to thrive. By promoting co-management and conservation of Alaska marine mammals, the Commission helped to support the continuation of traditional lifeways and cultural identities among Alaska Native peoples, as well as food sovereignty. The Commission collaborated with NMFS, the office of National Marine Sanctuaries and other stakeholders to identify and understand the connections between the health of marine mammals and their ecosystems and human economies and communities, with increasing attention to issues of environmental justice and underserved communities.
- **Tribal Consultation:** The Commission has updated its tribal consultation action plan pursuant to the President’s 26 January 2021 memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships and has consulted with tribal representatives on the plan. The original action plan was developed in 2010 in response to the President Obama’s 5 November 2009 memorandum concerning tribal consultation and coordination under E.O. 13175. The Commission is a member of the Administration’s Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area which is working with the Bering Sea Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council. The Commission consulted on agency actions as appropriate, and promoted consultation efforts by other federal agencies.

Commission Outlook

Consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA, the Commission strives to ensure that global marine mammal populations are maintained at optimum sustainable population levels and as significant functioning elements of healthy marine ecosystems.

In FY 2024, the Commission will continue to look for ways to reduce operational costs and leverage its resources and expertise by working with a diverse set of partners. For example, we will continue to collaborate with other agencies, industry, foundations, and NGOs to facilitate participation of key stakeholders and experts to promote the success of workshops and meetings. We will continue to host fellows and interns to support multiple mission-critical projects at little or no cost to the Commission. We also plan to promote new partnerships through our research and grants program to enhance novel and ongoing investigations in the field of marine mammal science at research institutions around the world.



Marine Mammal Commission

An independent agency of the U.S. Government

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