

Marine Mammal Commission 2014 Annual Meeting

Executive Session—Monday May 5th

For Commissioners, Committee of Scientific Advisors (CSA), and Commission Staff only.

2:00–5:30 pm

Day 1—Tuesday May 6th Fellowship Hall, Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC

9:00–9:15 am Welcome, introductions, and logistics (Daryl Boness, Marine Mammal Commission Chairman)

9:15–9:45 am Keynote Speaker session (Moderated by Joe Geraci, University of Maryland, Ontario Veterinary College)

- Bob Hofman (Researcher Emeritus, Marine Mammal Commission): Brief overview of the first 40 years of the Commission, highlighting activities as well as shortfalls.
- Doug DeMaster (Director, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service; NMFS): Looking forward: How can the Commission ensure continued effectiveness in the next few decades, in the face of new challenges?

9:45 am–12:00 noon Interagency leadership roundtable discussion (Moderated by Joe Geraci)
(Break at 10:30)

1. What are the key challenges relating to marine mammals in your mission?
2. Identify two or three tools/fixes that would help you meet your top priorities today (other than more funding)—such as partnerships, regulatory or legislative amendments, etc.
3. Identify one success story in addressing marine mammals and provide the main reason(s) this success was possible.

Roundtable members

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Ellen Gilinsky (Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Water)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG): Steven Tucker (Deputy Chief for Marine Protected Resources)
- U.S. Navy (USN): Don Schregardus (Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Environment)
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM): Bill Brown (Chief Environmental Officer)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS): Anne Kinsinger (Associate Director, Ecosystems)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS): Gary Frazer (Assistant Director for Ecological Services)

- NMFS: Eileen Sobeck (Assistant Administrator)

12:00 noon–1:30 pm Lunch break

1:30–2:45 pm Theme 1: Arctic

1:30–2:15 pm Understanding and managing the impacts of climate change and increased human activities on Arctic marine mammals and subsistence activities (Moderated by John Farrell, Executive Director of the United States Arctic Research Commission)

- Sue Moore (NMFS Office of Science and Technology): Marine mammals and climate change with brief readout of IWC Arctic meeting
- Jim Kendall (BOEM Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region): Current outlook for oil and gas development and environmental studies in the U.S. Arctic
- Vera Metcalf (Alaska Eskimo Walrus Commission, with Jessica Lefevre): Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition efforts on Arctic shipping
- Julie Gourley (U.S. Department of State): Arctic Council work related to protection of marine mammals and Arctic marine habitat and plans for U.S. Chairmanship

2:15–2:45 pm Discussion panel including speakers above as well as John Oliver (USCG) and Teri Rowles (NMFS Office of Protected Resources)

1. What are the short- and long-term uncertainties in predicting the response of marine mammal populations to climate changes?
2. Given that the adverse effects of climate change will not be reversed in the near future even with stringent greenhouse gas mitigation measures, what can be done to mitigate the effects on Arctic marine mammals?
3. How will it be possible to reduce conflicts and ensure subsistence and cultural use of marine mammals in the face of ecosystem change and increasing commercial activity?

2:45–3:15 pm Break

3:15–4:30 pm Theme 2: Offshore energy development

3:15–4:05 pm Developing and expanding partnerships to better understand and address impacts of offshore energy development on marine mammals and the marine ecosystem (Moderated by Bill Brown, BOEM)

- Bill Brown: Status and plans for ongoing and new offshore energy initiatives and overview of BOEM's Environmental Studies Program
- Sharon Young (Humane Society of the United States): Summary of impacts of offshore energy development on marine mammals and key data gaps

- Panel: Key examples of partnerships to facilitate data collection and research to address key data gaps regarding impacts of offshore energy development on marine mammals:
 - Bill Brown (BOEM)
 - Sharon Young (HSUS)
 - Michael Macrander (Shell)
 - Jolie Harrison (NMFS Office of Protected Resources)
 - Gary Isaksen (ExxonMobil)
 - Jocelyn Brown-Saracino (New West Technologies, LLC, representing the Department of Energy (DOE) Wind and Water Power Technologies Office)

4:05–4:30 pm Discussion panel

1. What are the essential elements of an effective partnership?
2. What additional measures (legislative, regulatory, industry/voluntary incentives) would help facilitate or improve our ability to develop and expand these critical partnerships to better understand and address impacts of offshore energy development on marine mammals and the marine ecosystem?

4:30–5:05 pm Marine mammal science and conservation: an economist’s perspective (Robert Hicks, College of William and Mary)

5:05–5:30 pm Wrap-up, Q & A, public comment (Daryl Boness, Marine Mammal Commission Chairman)

5:30 pm End of Day 1

Day 2–Wednesday May 7th Fellowship Hall, Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC

9:00–10:15 am Theme 3: Marine mammal strandings—Maximizing their value for understanding ocean health, wildlife health, and connections to human health.

9:00–9:45 am Integrating data on marine mammal health into various forums (Moderated by Frances Gulland, The Marine Mammal Center)

- Stephanie Venn-Watson (National Marine Mammal Foundation): Overview of the stranding network, data obtained from strandings, and plans to integrate stranding data with the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)
- Paul Slota (USGS): Integration of marine mammal health data into the Wildlife Health Information Sharing Partnership-event reporting system (WHISPers)
- Paul Sandifer (National Ocean Service): Oceans and human health: Through a marine mammal lens

9:45–10:15 am Discussion panel including speakers above plus Teri Rowles (NMFS, Office of Protected Resources)

1. How can we maximize the value of existing data collected from stranded marine mammals?
2. What legislative or policy initiative might enhance network collaboration and data sharing across a broader range of public and private entities?

10:15–10:45 am Break

10:45 am–12:00 pm Theme 4: Marine mammal bycatch in U.S. and global fisheries

10:45–11:30 am Identifying major domestic and international bycatch issues for marine mammals on the high seas, other national exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and the U.S. EEZ—considering both research and management challenges (Moderated by Andy Read, Duke University Marine Lab)

- Andy Read: Overview of major bycatch problems in global fisheries, including U.S. fisheries
- Nina Young (NMFS Office of International Affairs): Role of the United States as a major seafood market in ensuring that U.S. imports do not become a driver for marine mammal bycatch problems
- Liz English (NOAA Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries): Progress at the multinational level in addressing marine mammal bycatch assessment and developing management measures
- Susan Jackson (International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, ISSF): Bottom-up solutions from the seafood industry—Examples of industry- and market-driven efforts to monitor and reduce bycatch, including ISSF’s role in testing alternative observing systems

11:30 am–12:00 noon Discussion panel including Andy Read, Susan Jackson, Nina Young, Steve MacLean (North Pacific Fisheries Management Council), and Dave Hogan (U.S. State Department)

1. How can the U.S. bycatch reduction process be improved and is it a useful model for other countries?
2. What are the most promising prospects for developing new bycatch measures under existing international agreements that will improve bycatch data collection and bycatch reduction measures for fisheries on the high seas?
3. What are the best ways to develop industry, non-governmental organization, and government partnerships for successfully advancing goals of marine mammal bycatch reduction and what impediments to such partnerships need to be addressed?

12:00 noon–1:30 pm Lunch break

1:30–3:00 pm Theme 5: Issues associated with increasing marine mammal stocks

1:30–2:30 pm Discussing “recovered” stocks within the context of the policies and provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) (Moderated by Mike Runge, USGS)

- Mike Runge: What is Optimum Sustainable Population (OSP)? How is it determined? What measure of carrying capacity should be used?
- Don Baur (Perkins-Coie): Management options for populations at OSP and consideration of other statutory provisions, including non-lethal deterrence of marine mammals, whether or not at OSP
- Gordon Waring (NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center): Status and management issues regarding gray seals in New England, including potential conflicts and research needed to resolve uncertainties

2:30–3:00 pm Discussion panel including above speakers

1. What steps should agencies take to assess whether marine mammal species/stocks have reached OSP?
2. Should management of populations to minimize conflicts between marine mammals and human activities be allowed before they reach OSP?
3. How can agencies address the social and political barriers to implementing the measures provided under the MMPA to minimize conflicts between marine mammals and human activities, including the waiver provisions?

3:00–3:45 pm Break

3:45–5:00 pm Recap, outcomes, and action items from Days 1 and 2 (Daryl Boness, Marine Mammal Commission Chairman)

Day 3—Thursday May 8th Congressional Meeting Room South, Capitol Visitor Center, First Street SE, Washington, DC

Allow 1 hour for security clearance procedures to enter the building.

9:00–11:30 am Morning Theme: Marine mammals and Capitol Hill—Mandates, resources, and challenges

9:15–10:00 am Congressional Keynote Speakers: Senator Lisa Murkowski and Representative Sam Farr address the role of Congress in ensuring healthy marine mammal populations and marine ecosystems

- 9:15 am Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- 9:30 am Representative Sam Farr (D-CA)

10:30–11:30 am Priorities for marine mammal science and conservation

- Daryl Boness (Marine Mammal Commission Chairman): Brief overview of the Commission's Strategic Plan, the Commission's Priorities Report for NMFS, and outcomes from the Annual Meeting discussions

- Lisa Ballance (NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center): Marine Mammal Science and Management Priorities
- Nicole Teutschel (Office of Senator Maria Cantwell): Key issues being raised by stakeholders, marine mammal-related activities underway on the Hill

Followed by discussion panel including above speakers (Moderated by Daryl Boness)

11:30 am–1:30 pm Lunch break

1:30–3:00 pm Afternoon Theme: New developments in marine mammal research and conservation
(Moderated by Peter Thomas, Marine Mammal Commission)

Scientists and managers engaged in research and implementation of new science, conservation and management tools provide brief presentations on their findings

- Christopher Clark (Cornell University): Using technology to build knowledge for management and science: Acoustics and telemetry
- Jason Gedamke (NMFS Office of Science and Technology): Partnerships for advanced research
- Michael Weise (Office of Naval Research): Exploring the frontiers of knowledge of marine mammals: What technology can tell us about these amazing and uniquely adapted creatures
- Robert Pitman (NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center): Cutting edge technology - what cookie cutter sharks can tell us about movements and stock identification in cetaceans

3:00–4:00 pm Break

4:00–5:00 pm Public comment period

NB: If you would like to provide a comment, please submit a comment request slip prior to 3:30 pm

5:00 pm Chairman Boness provides closing comments