



**Marine Mammal Commission
2015 Annual Meeting**

**5-7 May 2015
Francis Marion Hotel
387 King St, Charleston, South Carolina 29403**

Tuesday, May 5

8:30-11:30 am: Executive Session (closed to the public).

1:00 pm: Daryl Boness, Chairman, Marine Mammal Commission. Opening remarks (5 minutes).

1:10-2:30 pm: Setting the Stage – Ocean and Coastal Issues Impacting Marine Mammals and their Environment in the Carolinas and the Broader Atlantic Region.

Moderator: Rebecca Lent, Marine Mammal Commission.

Presentations: 1:10-2:00 pm

- David Whitaker, Assistant Deputy Director for Marine Resources, SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Overview of SC DNR and history of Fort Johnson Road research complex (10 minutes).
- Jeff King, Acting Director, NOAA Hollings Marine Lab. Overview of Hollings/CCEHBR labs highlighting science, policy, and management issues related to marine mammals (10 minutes).
- Rick Devoe, Executive Director, SC Sea Grant. Sea Grant Program overview highlighting ocean/coastal issues impacting the marine environment and marine mammals (10 minutes).
- Andy Read, Stephen Toth Professor of Marine Biology, Duke University Marine Lab. Overview of marine mammal science, policy, and management issues in the Mid-Atlantic (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 2:00-2:30 pm

2:30-3:00: Afternoon Break

3:00-4:30 pm: Marine Mammal Health in the Southeast–Spotlight on the Specialties and Integrated Research Approach in this Region. Moderator: Frances Gulland, Marine Mammal Commission.

Presentations: 3:00-4:00 pm

- Lori Schwacke, Chief of the Ocean and Human Health Branch, NCCOS at Hollings Marine Laboratory. The role of live marine mammal health assessments in conservation and understanding health of coastal ecosystems: Lessons from the Southeast (10 minutes).
- Fran Van Dolah, Research Biochemist, NCCOS at Hollings Marine Laboratory. NOS's analytical specialties focusing on harmful algal blooms and molecular diagnostic approaches for understanding exposure and effects of coastal stressors on marine mammals (10 minutes).

- Wayne McFee, Research Wildlife Biologist, NCCOS at the Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research. The value of dead animal investigations for understanding marine mammal issues in the Southeast (10 minutes).
- Paul Becker, Site Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Hollings Marine Laboratory. NIST's role in marine mammal tissue banking, contaminant analysis, and development of measurement standards (10 minutes).
- Lou Guillette, Director of Marine Biomedicine and Environmental Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina. Hollings Marine Lab's partner research focusing on the influence of environmental factors on vertebrate reproduction and its applications to marine mammals (10 minutes).
- Teri Rowles, Coordinator, Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, NMFS Office of Protected Resources. Atlantic unusual mortality event updates with a focus on morbillivirus and the benefits of collaborative research (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 4:00-4:30 pm

4:30-5:30 pm: NMFS Office of Protected Resources Strategic Plan. Moderator: Randy Wells, Sarasota Dolphin Research Program.

Presentations: 4:30-5:00 pm

- Donna Wieting, Director, NMFS Office of Protected Resources. Overview of 1) the NMFS Office of Protected Resources 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and its four themes; and 2) vision for the Manage for Climate Change theme and the Improve External Collaboration theme (20 minutes).
- Sam Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS. Vision for the Recover and Conserve Priority Species theme (5 minutes).
- Nicole LeBoeuf, Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, NMFS Office of Protected Resources. Vision for and examples of initiatives under the Maximize Our Effectiveness theme (5 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 5:00-5:30 pm

Wednesday, May 6

8:30-10:00 am: Reducing Mortality and Injury of North Atlantic Right Whales from Ship Strikes and Entanglement in Fishing Gear.

A) Biological Status of North Atlantic Right Whales and Research Activities. Moderator: Laura Engleby, NMFS Southeast Regional Office.

Presentations: 8:30-9:10 am

- Peter Corkeron, Supervisory Zoologist, NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). NMFS right whale status and NEFSC research activities. Highlighting 1) abundance, calf counts, mortality, distribution shifts; and 2) passive acoustic studies and other NEFSC research activities and plans (15 minutes).

- Lance Garrison, Research Biologist Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). SEFSC research activities, including 1) revised SE Aerial Survey Program, 2) Mid-Atlantic right whale data compilation, and 3) results of tagging work, and tag redesign (20 minutes).
- Doug Nowacek, Associate Professor, Duke University Marine Laboratory. Recent D-tag studies and results (5 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 9:10-9:25 am

B) Critical Habitat and Ship Strikes. Moderator: Laura Engleby, NMFS Southeast Regional Office

Presentations: 9:25-9:45 am

- David Gouveia, Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Branch, NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO). Description, status, and schedule of the critical habitat rulemaking action (10 minutes).
- Nicole LeBoeuf, Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, NMFS Office of Protected Resources. Description and status of ship strike rule, status of petition to exempt dredged channels (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 9:45-10:00 am

10:00-10:30 am: Morning Break

10:30 am-12:00 pm: North Atlantic Right Whale Interactions with Fisheries

Moderator: Doug Nowacek, Duke University Marine Lab.

Presentations: 10:30-11:20 am

- Kari MacLauchlin, Fishery Social Scientist, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). Fishery management measures for the black bass pot fishery: Description of the fishery, entanglement risk to right whales and status of winter closure (10 minutes).
- David Gouveia, Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Branch, NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO). Review of Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Provisions: groundline and vertical lines, TRT review, and future modifications (10 minutes).
- Brian Morrison, Principal, Industrial Economics, Inc. NMFS Co-Occurrence Model: Purpose and model constructions, results, and data limitations (15 minutes).
- Hauke Kite-Powell, Research Specialist, Marine Policy Center, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). Description of WHOI/Maine Lobstermen Association's model and results: Purpose and model construction, results, and data limitations (15 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 11:20 am-12 pm

12:00-1:30 pm: Lunch Break

1:30-4:30 pm: Offshore Energy – New Developments in Wind Energy Development, Oil and Gas Leasing, and Exploration on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

A) Wind Energy Panel: Status of Development and Baseline Data Collection on Atlantic OCS. Moderator: Nicole LeBoeuf, NMFS Office of Protected Resources.

Presentations: 1:30-2:20 pm

- Walter Cruickshank, Deputy Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Status of current renewable energy projects in the Atlantic (10 minutes).
- Aileen Kenney, Vice President of Permitting and Environmental Affairs, Deepwater Wind, LLC. Wind energy turbine designs, installation methods, challenges to wind energy development, and mitigation and monitoring measures being implemented to minimize impacts on marine mammals (10 minutes).
- Kate Williams, Wildlife and Renewable Energy Program Director, Biodiversity Research Institute. Impacts of wind turbine construction and operations on marine mammals (10 minutes).
- Mike Simpkins, Chief, Protected Species Branch, Resource Evaluation and Assessment Division, NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Atlantic Marine Assessment Program for Protected Species (AMAPPS) - Phase I preliminary results and Phase II plans (10 minutes).
- Andrea Leshak, Ford Foundation Legal Fellow, Natural Resources Defense Council. Incorporation and expansion of mitigation measures agreed to by wind energy developers and NGO's to minimize impacts of wind energy site assessment surveys on right whales (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 2:20-2:45 pm

2:45-3:15 pm: Afternoon Break

B) Oil and Gas Panel: 2017-2022 Draft Program Plan and Proposed Seismic Surveys on Atlantic OCS. Moderator: Jill Lewandowski, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)

Presentations: 3:15-3:55 pm

- Michael Celata, Deputy Regional Director, Gulf of Mexico Region, BOEM. Overview of 2017–2022 Draft Program Plan, specifically Atlantic OCS planning areas, the geology of the Atlantic and potential characteristics of oil and gas reserves, and the scope and status of geological and geophysical (G&G) permit applications (10 minutes).
- Ken Wells, President, International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC). Overview of the seismic industry and how it functions, types of seismic surveys, and resource extraction the industry expects will proceed in the Atlantic (10 minutes).
- Doug Nowacek, Associate Professor, Duke University Marine Lab. Seismic surveys: Potential impacts on animals and ideas for mitigation, monitoring and management (10 minutes).
- Sierra Weaver, Senior Attorney, Southern Environmental Law Center. Perceptions and concerns regarding multiple proposed seismic surveys in the same area and at the same time of year (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 3:55-4:30 pm

Panel also include Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, NMFS Office of Protected Resources

4:30-5:30 pm: Economics of Offshore Energy Development. Moderator: Rebecca Lent.

Presentations: 4:30-4:50 pm

- Walter Cruickshank, Deputy Director, BOEM. Approaches to leasing for oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf and assurance of Fair Market Value (20 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 4:50-5:30 pm

Thursday, May 7

8:30-10:00 am: Management and Conservation of Florida Manatees.

Moderator: Ron Mezich, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Presentations: 8:30-9:05 am

- Leslie Ward, Research Administrator, Florida Wildlife Research Institute. Statewide monitoring: synoptic survey results, deaths, rescues (15 minutes).
- Mike Runge, Research Ecologist, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Population model: description of the model, limitations, plans for revising and rerunning the model (10 minutes).
- Jay Herrington, Field Supervisor, FWS North Florida Field Office. Down-listing petition and Peer Notice of Intent: description, response to date, and action plan (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 9:05-9:15 am

Presentations: 9:15-9:50 am

- Andrew Gude, Refuge Manager, FWS Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key National Wildlife Refuge. Management issues at the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge: Three Sisters Spring (description of the spring, 2015 research and management actions, 2016 management plans) and provisions for elsewhere in the refuge (15 minutes).
- Steve Lamb, Save Crystal River. Local management concerns in Crystal River (10 minutes).
- Pat Rose, Executive Director, Save the Manatee Club. NGO concerns (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 9:50-10:00 am

10:00-10:30 am: Morning Break

10:30 am-12:00 pm: Human Interactions with Marine Mammals. Moderator: Randy Wells, Sarasota Dolphin Research Program.

Presentations: 10:30-11:20 am

- Laura Engleby, Chief, Marine Mammal Branch, NMFS Southeast Regional Office. Human interactions with dolphins in the Southeast Region: status of interactions and actions to mitigate interactions (15 minutes).

- Jim Landon, Chief, Enforcement Sector, NOAA General Counsel Office. Recent NMFS efforts and constraints to enforcement of MMPA and ESA harassment provisions (10 minutes).
- Andrew Aloise, Resident Agent in Charge, Florida, FWS Office of Law Enforcement. Recent FWS efforts and constraints to enforcement of MMPA and ESA harassment provisions (10 minutes).
- Trevor Spradlin, Deputy Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, NMFS Office of Protected Resources. Update on NMFS nationwide marine mammal viewing regulations: review of past efforts to develop nationwide harassment regulations, review of species-specific approach regulations, and future plans for developing harassment regulations (15 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 11:20 am-12:00 pm

Panel: Laura Engleby (NMFS), Andrew Gude (FWS), Trevor Spradlin (NMFS), Ron Mezich (FWC), Jim Valade (FWS), Jim Landon (NOAA), and Andrew Aloise (FWS).

12:00-1:30: Lunch Break

1:30-3:00 pm: Marine Mammal and Fisheries Interactions – A Review of Take Reduction Teams in the Atlantic. Moderator: Meagan Dunphy-Daly, Duke University Marine Lab.

Presentations: 1:30-2:10 pm

- Sara McDonald, Duke University Marine Lab. Research findings regarding the performance of Atlantic TRTs (20 minutes).
- Patrice McCarron, Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA). Successes and challenges of the Large Whale TRT (10 minutes).
- Sharon Young, Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Successes and challenges of the Atlantic TRTs (10 minutes).

Questions and Discussion: 2:10-3:00 pm

Panel: Sara McDonald (Duke University), Andy Read (Duke University), Sharon Young (HSUS), Rich Seagraves (Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council), Patrice McCarron (MLA), David Gouveia (NMFS GARFO).

3:00-3:30 pm: Afternoon Break

3:30-4:30 pm: Panel on Vaquita – Update, Commission role, way forward

Panelists: Randy Reeves, Frances Gulland, Peter Thomas, Rebecca Lent, Andy Read

Moderator: Gary Magnuson, National Ocean Service.

4:30-5:00 pm: Chairman Boness- Closing remarks.

5:00 pm: Meeting Adjourns