



Priorities for Marine Mammal Science and Conservation

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Outline

- **Strategic Plan**
- **Priorities Report**
- **Outcomes from the Annual meeting**



Strategic Plan 2015-19

- **First ever for the Commission**
- **Interagency and stakeholder input**
- **Five outcome-based strategic objectives:**
 - **Arctic changes**
 - **Offshore Energy Development**
 - **Marine Mammal Health and Strandings**
 - **International Threats**
 - **Human Impacts**
- **High priority projects reflect these objectives**



Priorities Report

- **Objective – to provide advice on prioritizing science and conservation of marine mammals**
- **Focus on NMFS**
- **Target audience - Congress, Dept. of Commerce, NOAA, NMFS and OMB**
- **Regional and HQ Meetings**



Priorities Report, cont.

Guiding Principles

Prevent loss of species, habitats, & ecosystem function

Maintain marine mammals as ecosystem components

Monitor marine mammal populations long-term

Conserve marine mammal species globally

Minimize impacts of human activities on marine mammals



Priorities Report, cont.

Prioritization Criteria

Value. Exceptional biological, cultural or economical

Status. Rare, rapid decline, or MMPA/ESA designated

Vulnerability. Highly vulnerable to stressors

Uncertainty. Lack of knowledge or ability to recover

Institutional capacity. Cost and/or stakeholder support



Priorities Report, cont.

Recommended Areas of Priority

Impacts of climate change and ocean acidification

Conservation needs of species with greatest concern

Direct and indirect interactions with fisheries

A system for prioritizing stock assessment

Acquisition and use of stranding data

Research/monitoring associated with energy development



Priorities Report, cont.

Conclusion

- **Future federal budgets unlikely to cover resource needs for marine mammals**
- **Funding shortages will continue to impact NMFS's ability to meet its marine mammal mandates**
- **Ensure good coordination, avoid redundancy, and share resources within and among agencies**
- **Increase opportunities for non-agency resources, public and private**



Commission's 2014 Annual Meeting

- Good participation, wide variety of participants
- Opening session called for collaboration
- Inspiration to “reignite the passion”





Theme 1: Arctic

- The “new normal” and its impacts on marine mammals
- Collaboration is critical



Theme 2: Offshore Energy Development

- **Impacts of offshore energy development remain uncertain and vary regionally**
- **Caution needed to minimize impacts**
- **Partnerships can help address challenges**



Theme 3: Marine Mammal Strandings

- **Need for data integration, including terrestrial wildlife and human health data**
- **Proposed marine mammal health mapping tool will enhance utility of data**
- **Timely information exchange is key**



Theme 4: Marine Mammal Bycatch

- **Greatest direct global threat to marine mammals**
- **Multilateral and market-based efforts can be effective**
- **U.S. unilateral measures to ensure U.S. market is not a driver**



Theme 5: Increasing Marine Mammal Stocks

- Perception vs. Reality
- Need clearer policies interpreting Optimum Sustainable Population
- Workshop as a first step



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Collaboration on Smart Gear Prize for Marine Mammal Bycatch Reduction

The Marine Mammal Commission is pleased to announce that we, along with NMFS, the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Center for Biological Diversity, are supporting a special prize as part of the WWF Global Smart Gear Competition. This special prize will be awarded to the winning proposal for gear modifications or alternative fishing gear designed to reduce marine mammal bycatch in gillnet fisheries.