

**Marine Mammal Commission 2015 Annual Meeting**  
**Human Interactions with Marine Mammals Session Summary**

The popularity of marine mammals with the public has increased interest in viewing marine mammals in the wild. In many cases, people seek to get as close as possible to animals to view, photograph, and interact with them. In the process, animals can be disturbed and their natural behavior altered in ways that put the animals at risk or cause unnatural, conditioned behaviors. In addition, people can risk being bitten as they try to get close to the animals. Human-dolphin interactions, including illegal feeding and harassment, has increased in the southeast U.S. Impacts to dolphins from human interaction risks include both short term behavior changes and long term biological consequences to individual animals and populations. This session followed the discussion of interactions with manatees and considered similar issues related to dolphins. In addition, this session addressed enforcement and outreach efforts from both NMFS and FWS, and plans for addressing such issues nationally.