

Marine Mammal Commission 2015 Annual Meeting Vaquita Session Summary

In April 2015, the President of Mexico formally announced a two-year closure of the vaquita range to gillnets with a commitment to full enforcement and a program to compensate the fisherman and other sectors of the fishing community of the upper Gulf of California. Discussion is underway on a possible summit to explore alternative economic activities, including vaquita friendly fishing gear, and other further means and incentives to support fishing communities in the upper Gulf. Panel members provided an overview of recent actions taken by Mexico, including the Presidential announcement, increased enforcement, and compensation scheme for fishery sector stakeholders. The Commission has supported WWF Mexico's alternative fishing gear and blue market development projects and the development and deployment of the Mexican government's acoustic monitoring array, as well as fisheries monitoring, and planning activities to support sustainable fishing communities via a possible economic summit. While Mexico has taken major actions and dedicated major resources to protection of the vaquita the panel agreed that it remains to be seen if their efforts will be sustained and turned into recovery for vaquitas and sustainable livelihoods for the people of the Upper Gulf of California.