



NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

RESOURCE PROTECTION INITIATIVE



Endangered Species Act Recovery Planning

NOAA requests an increase of \$5.1 million in FY 2000 to recover protected marine species endangered by human activities. This request is a key component of NOAA's Ocean 2000 Resource Protection Initiative, and complements and supports other components requested under this initiative.

fewer than 1,000 females nesting annually. Evidence now suggests that the drift net and longline fisheries of the Pacific may be largely responsible for these dramatic declines.

The Problem

Since efforts began in the 1970s, there have been success stories in marine species conservation - gray whales, northern elephant seals, and humpback whales have all staged recoveries in recent years. "Dolphin State" fishing practices imposed under the International Dolphin Conservation Act have saved dolphins while maintaining a viable fishing industry. This demonstrates how conservation and recovery can work in cooperation with the needs of industry. The fate of many species however, is of great and continuing concern. These include the North Atlantic and Pacific right whales, the Hawaiian monk seal, and several species of marine turtles. The threat of extinction comes from a variety of sources: fatal interactions or competition with commercial fishing, impacts of emerging diseases and marine pollution, and behavioral changes brought on by increased ship traffic and noise, as well as ship strikes.



Leatherback sea turtle. Photo credit: Scott A. Eckert.

NOAA Budget	FY 2000 Change \$M
National Marine Fisheries Service	
Conservation and Management Operations	
(ESA Recovery Planning/Salmon)	\$22.4
(ESA Recovery Planning/Other Species)	\$ 5.1
(Conserving Ocean Biodiversity)	\$ 2.6
(Enforcement and Surveillance)	\$ 1.0
Other Accounts	
(Pacific Coastal Salmon Conservation Fund)	\$100.0
NOAA Resource Protection Initiative - -Total	\$131.1

- NOAA will better protect the northern nesting population of U.S. loggerhead sea turtles from extinction. Immediate, proactive efforts are needed to reverse the observed decline due to incidental takes in U.S. coastal and international fisheries of the Eastern Atlantic.
- At one time, several thousand right whales lived in the North Atlantic Ocean. Today, only about 300 occur there. An even smaller number are believed to exist in the North Pacific Ocean. The species is faced with the very real threat of extinction. NOAA has invested heavily in research to learn more about this species and the human activities that affect it. With increased funding, NOAA will better understand why these populations are growing so slowly and to increase ongoing efforts to reduce the likelihood of collisions by ships and entanglements in fishing gear.

Responding to the Problem

NOAA and its partners will stem or reverse declines of species through aggressive recovery efforts that include targeted research and conservation actions:

- NOAA will rescue the critically endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle from extinction. During the last decade the nesting population has declined by 90%, to

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- The Hawaiian monk seal could be on the verge of extinction in 20 years. The number of monk seals has declined by 60% since the late 1950s. The threats to the only endangered marine mammal located entirely within U.S. waters stem from an altered ecosystem due to human impacts from habitat modifications, competition for their food source, or changes in the balance of available prey through commercial fishing.
- NOAA will work with international parties through Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to conserve species and reduce threats from illegal and unsustainable trade including sharks, sturgeon and marine turtles.
- NOAA will implement cooperative management with Alaskan Natives to conserve marine mammals subject to subsistence take and threatened by changes in their ecosystem.



Hawaii monk seals at the Pearl and Hermes Reef.
Photo credit: Chad Yoshinaga, Photographer.
NMFS Honolulu Laboratory.

- NOAA will identify and reduce the impacts of human activities such as noise pollutants and chemical pollutants (including endocrine disrupters) on marine protected species through its Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program.
- NOAA will reduce marine mammal interactions with commercial fishing through the take reduction plan process cooperating with industry and State governments to do so. NOAA will develop new gear technology and identify practices which reduce marine mammal bycatch in commercial fishing operations.
- NOAA will invest in improved outreach strategies to marine resource users and the general public for more effective implementation of RPS regulations and policies. The most well-reasoned conservation measures are minimally effective if it is not clear to the public why they are necessary and how they can comply. Issues of concern include swimming with and feeding dolphins, regulations to implement marine mammal take reduction plans, and guidelines for whale watching.

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