

# Office of Protected Resources

NOAA Fisheries -- Managing Marine Ecosystems

Permits, Conservation and  
Education Division

Marine Mammal & Sea Turtle  
Conservation Division

Endangered Species  
Division

Planning & Program  
Coordination Division

## MARINE MAMMAL AND SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION DIVISION

The Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division conserves sea turtles and marine mammals by working with NMFS regional offices and science centers as well domestic and international partners to implement the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA).

### Programs and Activities

**Conservation and recovery:** The Division develops conservation and recovery plans for marine mammals and marine turtles. These plans identify actions needed to improve the status of marine mammals and marine turtles.

The Division is working with regional colleagues to develop recovery/conservation plans and regulations for monk seals, Steller sea lions, right whales, Puget Sound Southern Resident killer whales, Cook Inlet beluga whales, loggerhead turtles, and Kemp's ridley turtles.

**Fisheries interactions:** The Division identifies ways to reduce bycatch of marine mammals and marine turtles in fisheries. Bycatch in fishing gear is a significant cause of mortality to sea turtles and marine mammals.

The Division works with regional counterparts to develop take reduction plans, coordinate research on gear modifications, and develop a strategy to reduce sea turtle bycatch in Atlantic fisheries.

**Marine animal health and strandings:** The Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program responds to marine animal strandings and entanglements. The program gathers information to determine the cause of strandings and unusual mortality events, focusing primarily on marine mammals and marine turtles. The program works closely with more than 100 stranding response network partners.

### Division Goals

- Recover marine mammals and marine turtles
- Reduce bycatch of marine mammals and marine turtles in fisheries
- Understand causes of marine mammal and marine turtle stranding events
- Understand and manage the effects of increased ocean sound
- Promote responsible marine wildlife viewing through effective education and outreach



*Humpback whales are protected by the MMPA and ESA*

## Recent Accomplishments

- Promulgated a rule to protect critically endangered North Atlantic right whales from ship strikes. The rule requires most ships greater than 65 feet long to travel at 10 knots/hour or less near certain Atlantic ports at specific times of the year.
- Released the Revised Recovery Plan for the Northwest Atlantic Population of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle, providing a blueprint for recovery that integrates the best available science and a detailed threats analysis to guide conservation and recovery.
- Promulgated a rule authorizing the placement of observers on fisheries determined to be of interest relative to marine turtle bycatch. This accomplishment will allow for a more coordinated and comprehensive program to evaluate marine turtle bycatch in both state and federal waters.
- Provided John H. Prescott Grants to 36 partners in the marine mammal stranding network to support their work responding to marine mammals.

## Partners and Constituents

- Native and tribal groups
- Environmental organizations
- Resource user organizations
- Commercial fishing industry
- Academic and marine research community
- Marine mammal stranding network partners
- State and local governments
- Federal regulatory agencies



*Beluga whale mother and calf pair*

## Budget

	FY09 Actual
OR&F & PAC	\$8,538,187
Reimbursables	\$60,000
Total FTEs	17



*Hawaiian monk seal*

## For more information contact:

David Cottingham, Division Chief  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Tel: 301-713-2322  
[David.Cottingham@noaa.gov](mailto:David.Cottingham@noaa.gov)



[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/overview/mm.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/overview/mm.html)

