

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

PERMITS, CONSERVATION, AND EDUCATION DIVISION

The Permits, Conservation, and Education Division supports conservation and recovery of protected species by issuing permits to internal and external scientists to conduct research under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Division is in a unique position to view the entire suite of research activities being conducted on protected species. As a result, the Division coordinates and facilitates sound scientific research.

Division Goals

- Coordinate and facilitate sound scientific research on protected species by issuing permits and authorizations
- Minimize and monitor impacts of non-fishery-related commercial activities on marine mammals

Programs and Activities

Endangered Species Act: Issues permits for scientific research and enhancement related to recovery of threatened and endangered marine species, including sea turtles, shortnose sturgeon, and smalltooth sawfish.

Develops environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, and biological opinions to evaluate the effects of activities it permits and authorizes.

Marine Mammal Protection Act: Issues permits to allow scientific research, enhancement (captive breeding, reproductive research, etc.), and commercial and educational photography activities on cetaceans and pinnipeds.



Issues authorizations for minimizing harassment of marine mammals incidental to non-fishery commercial activities including military readiness exercises, offshore energy exploration, and marine geophysical surveys.

Maintains national inventory of captive marine mammals, issues permits and authorizations for international transport of marine mammals among public display facilities, and facilitates placement of non-releasable stranded marine mammals into display facilities.

Recent Accomplishments

- Issued 43 new MMPA and ESA permits in FY09, including for research critical to NOAA's management of marine mammals, sea turtles, shortnose sturgeon and smalltooth sawfish, including studies of distribution, population dynamics, and ecology. The Division also processed over 100 modifications, amendments and authorizations for active permits in the past year.
- Updated and expanded online permit system, Authorizations and Permits for Protected Species (APPS). APPS has improved constituent service and transparency of the permit process by providing information on types of permits, advice on when and how to apply, and ways to search the database for current and pending permits.
- Continued to support minimization and reporting of impacts on marine mammals from oil & gas exploration, alternative energy development, military readiness, marine research, and coastal construction through timely issuance of MMPA authorizations to a rapidly growing field of applicants.
- Completed seven in a series of 12 regulations and authorizations for major Navy military readiness activities, including the first for use of mid-frequency active sonar. Established a requirement that the Navy implement specific protective measures, conduct robust marine mammal monitoring, and submit comprehensive reports detailing training activities and monitoring.

Partners and Constituents

- Marine research community
- Nongovernmental organizations
- Commercial industry
- Academia
- State and local governments
- Native and tribal groups
- Federal regulatory agencies
- U.S. Military (Navy and Air force)



Researcher measuring shortnose sturgeon

Budget

	FY09 Actual
OR&F & PAC	\$ 3,136,277
Reimbursables	
Total FTEs	15

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<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/>

