

Best Available Data: MMPA and GAMMS

Marine Mammal Protection Act

- Section 117(a) – “...Each draft stock assessment, based on the *best scientific information available*, shall—
 - (2) provide for each such stock the minimum population estimate, current and maximum net productivity rates, and current population trend, including a description of the information upon which these are based; ...
 - (6) estimate the potential biological removal level for the stock, describing the information used to calculate it, including the recovery factor.”

Guidelines for Assessing Marine Mammal Stocks (NMFS 2005)

“Clearly, projections of current abundance estimates become less dependable with time after a survey has occurred. When abundance estimates become many years old, at some point estimates will no longer meet the requirement that they provide reasonable assurance that the stock size is presently greater than or equal to that estimate.”

“Therefore, unless compelling evidence indicates that a stock has not declined since the last census, the minimum population estimate of the stock should be considered unknown if 8 years have transpired since the last abundance survey of a stock. “

Guidelines for Assessing Marine Mammal Stocks (NMFS 2005)

“Eight years was chosen, in part, because a population that declines at 10% per year from carrying capacity would be reduced to less than 50% of its original abundance after 8 years. A 10% decline per year over at least 8 years represents the greatest decline observed for a stock of marine mammals in U.S. waters.”

“If N_{\min} is unknown, then PBR cannot be determined, but this is not equivalent to considering PBR equal to zero. If there is known or suspected human-caused mortality of the stock, decisions about whether such stocks should be declared strategic or not should be made on a case-by-case basis. Stocks for which N_{\min} becomes unknown should not move from "strategic" to "not-strategic", or v.v., solely because of an inability to estimate N_{\min} .”