

Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/laws/mmpa/>

Overview: All [marine mammals](#) are protected under the MMPA. The MMPA prohibits, with certain exceptions, the take of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the U.S.

- Some marine mammal species or stocks may be in danger of extinction or depletion as a result of human activities;
- These species or stocks must not be permitted to fall below their optimum sustainable population level (depleted);
- Measures should be taken to replenish these species or stocks;
- There is inadequate knowledge of the ecology and population dynamics; and
- Marine mammals have proven to be resources of great international significance.

The MMPA was amended substantially in 1994 to provide for:

- Certain exceptions to the take prohibitions, such as for Alaska Native subsistence and [permits and authorizations](#) for scientific research;
- A program to authorize and control the taking of marine mammals incidental to [commercial fishing operations](#);
- Preparation of [stock assessments](#) for all marine mammal stocks in waters under U.S. jurisdiction; and
- Studies of pinniped-fishery interactions.

The following information and documents are available at

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/laws/mmpa/>

Policies, Guidances, and Regulations:

- MMPA Regulations (50 CFR 216)
- Guidelines for Differentiating Serious and Non-serious Injury of Marine Mammals Incident to Commercial Fishing
- Guidelines for Preparing Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports
- Marine Mammal Health & Stranding Program Policies & Guidance

Additional Information:

- Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports
- Marine Mammals Listed Under the Endangered Species Act