

## Zero Mortality Rate Goal

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<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/zmrg/>

### Overview

The [Marine Mammal Protection Act \(MMPA\)](#) was enacted in 1972 with the ideal of eliminating mortality and serious injury of marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing operations.

In 1994, Congress amended the MMPA to govern the taking of marine mammals during commercial fishing operations, including the Zero Mortality Rate Goal. The Zero Mortality Rate Goal (MMPA section 118(b)) includes four parts:

1. Commercial fisheries shall reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 7 years after the date of enactment of this section [April 30, 2001].
2. Fisheries which maintain insignificant serious injury and mortality levels approaching a zero rate shall not be required to further reduce their mortality and serious injury rates.
3. Three years after such date of enactment [April 30, 1997], the Secretary [of Commerce] shall review the progress of all commercial fisheries, by fishery, toward reducing incidental mortality and serious injury to insignificant levels approaching a zero rate. The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the results of such review within 1 year after commencement of the review. The Secretary shall note any commercial fishery for which additional information is required to accurately assess the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the fishery.
4. If the Secretary determines after review under (3) the rate of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in a commercial fishery is not consistent with the (1), then the Secretary shall take appropriate action under the Take Reduction Program.

The requirement that the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals be reduced to insignificant levels approaching a zero rate by April 30, 2001 (1 above) is commonly referred to as Zero Mortality Rate Goal (ZMRG).

To implement the MMPA, NMFS established a threshold level for mortality and serious injury that would meet this requirement. NMFS defined the "Insignificance Threshold" in regulations as 10 percent of the ["Potential Biological Removal \(PBR\) level"](#) for a stock of marine mammals.