



Annual Report of Marine Mammal Monitoring at Ugak Island

**Compliance with National Marine Fisheries Service Final Rule
(50 CFR Par 217, Subpart H)**

1 April 2015 through 31 March 2016

Submitted on 4/21/2016

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Attachments

- Attachment 1 (3Q CY15 Ugak Quarterly Monitoring Report (4 Sep 2015))
- Attachment 2 (4Q CY15 Ugak Quarterly Monitoring Report (16 Nov 2015))
- Attachment 3 (1Q CY16 Ugak Quarterly Monitoring Report (18 Mar 2016))
- Attachment 4 (2Q CY15 Ugak Quarterly Monitoring Report (23 Apr 2015))

Introduction

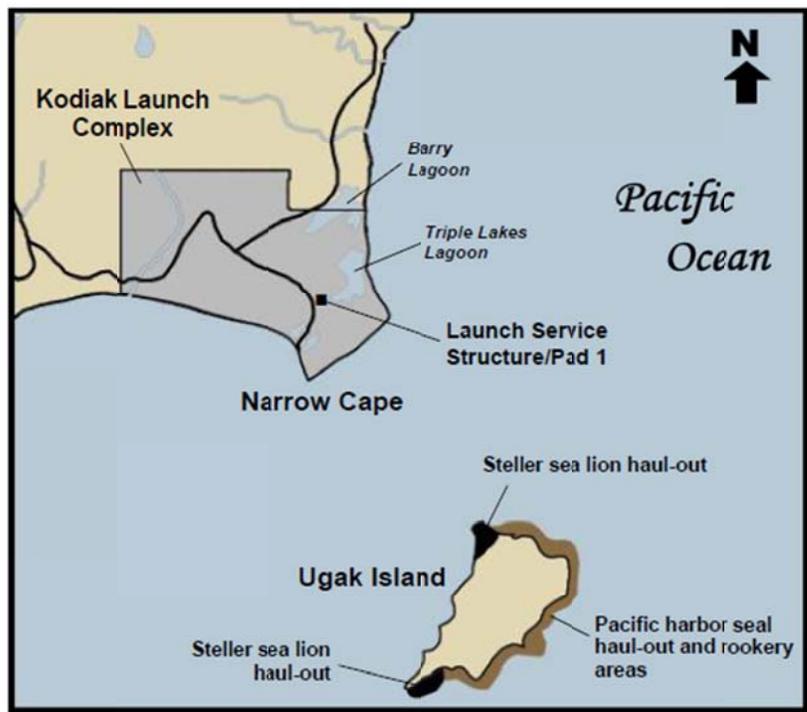
The Alaska Aerospace Corporation (AAC) owns and operates the Pacific Spaceport Complex Alaska (PSCA) (formerly Kodiak Launch Complex (KLC)) at Narrow Cape, Kodiak Island, Alaska. AAC is licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration to launch rockets from PSCA. PSCA is adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, and marine mammals are known to occupy land on Ugak Island. Therefore AAC is subject to the Marine Mammal Protection Act and oversight by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for harassment and incidental take of marine mammals. NMFS has issued a final rule which will govern AAC mitigation, monitoring and reporting requirements from 2011 to 2016. These reporting requirements include an annual report summarizing the annual activities at PSCA with regards to rocket launches and marine mammal monitoring. This document is the annual report for May 2014 through May 2015.

Overview

PSCA is a spaceport that launches both orbital and suborbital rockets on a southern trajectory for government and commercial customers.

AAC monitors the effects of launch operations on the environment. For marine mammals, the main focus is on the pinniped population on Ugak Island, about 3.5 miles south of the launch pad along the flight azimuth. Rockets are usually eight miles in altitude when they pass over the island. Ugak Island is a known haul-out area for both Steller sea lions and harbor seals.

According to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Regulations Governing Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities, and the conditions of previous Letters of Authorization (LOA), AAC must perform the following monitoring activities for the NMFS in accordance with the final rule (50 CFR Part 217, Subpart H):



Source: Modified from USASMDC, 2003

Figure 1: Narrow Cape and Ugak Island site overview.

- Deploy a remote camera system designed to detect pinniped responses to rocket launches for at least the first five launches.
- Conduct visual monitoring of pinniped response two hours before launch, during launch, and two hours after launch.
- Conduct visual monitoring of harbor seal rookery if the launch is during pupping season.
- Conduct quarterly aerial surveys of haulout sites.
- Monitor sound pressure and exposure time for new classes of rockets.

A summary of these monitoring activities follows.

Launch Operations and Monitoring

There were no launches during this reporting period (April 2015 – March 2016).

Pupping Season Monitoring

There were no launches during seal pupping season (15 May – 30 June).

Quarterly Aerial Surveys

The following aerial surveys of Ugak Island were performed this last year:

Quarter	Date	Time (local)	# Sea Lions	# Harbor Seals	Notes
3 rd (Jul-Sep)	24 Aug 2015	1520-1610	0	726	Results Typical
4 th (Oct-Dec)	18 Oct 2015	1100-1154	0	609	Results Typical
1 st (Jan-Mar)	18 Mar 2016	1100-1200	0	898	Results Typical
2 nd (Apr-Jun)	23 Apr 2015	1230-1330	0	631	Results Typical

See Attachments 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the full quarterly monitoring reports.

New Vehicle Sound Pressure

No new launch vehicles were launched from PSCA this year.

Contact

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