

NMFS DRAFT
ESA Section 7 Consultation
BIOLOGICAL OPINION
Chapters 1-4,6, & 12

- **BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs**
- **State of Alaska Parallel Fisheries**



Process

Initiation of Consultation



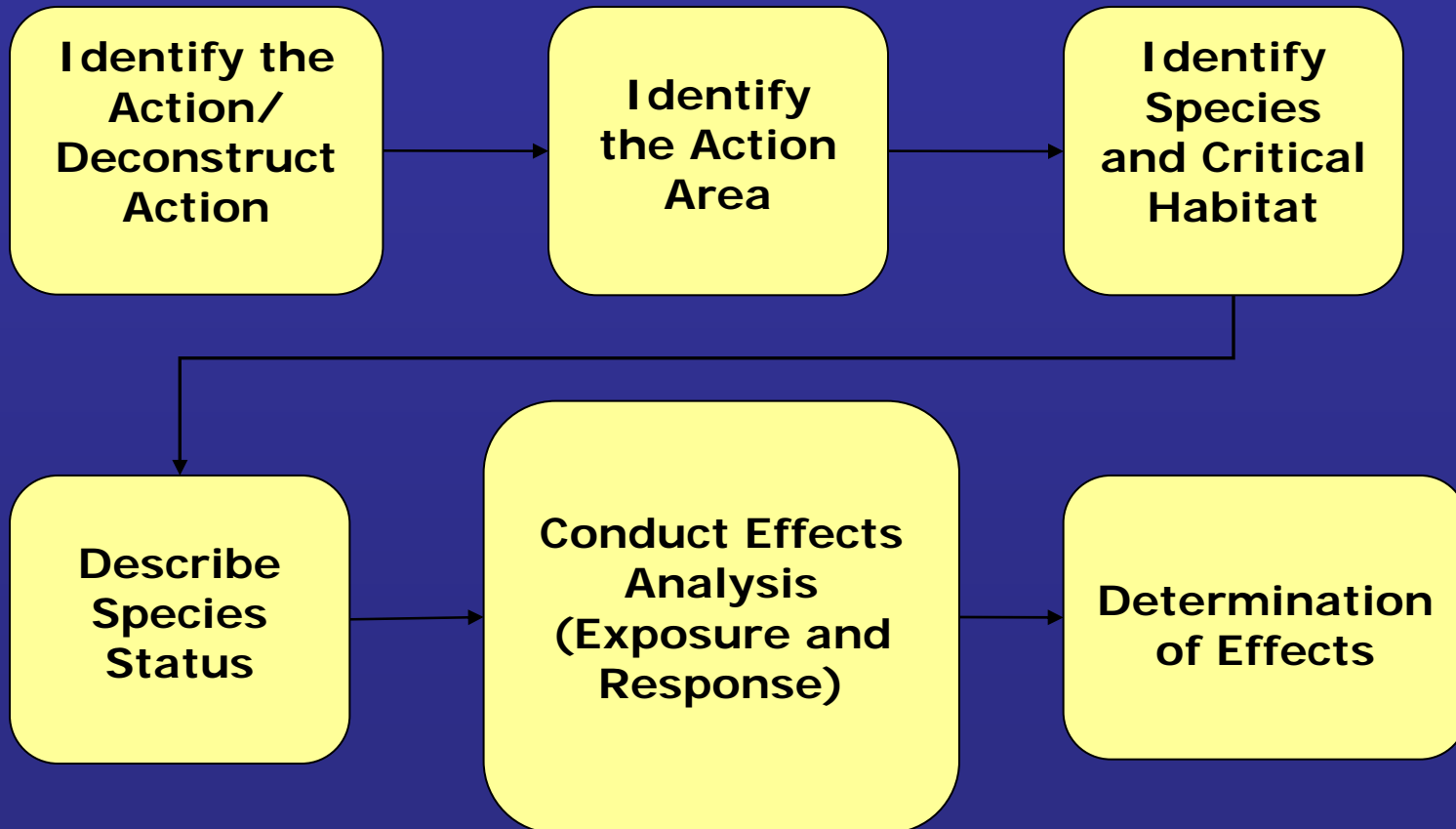
Photo: ADF&G

- April 19, 2006 SFD requested reinitiation of formal consultation on the 2000 Biological Opinion (based in part on a request by the Council); also March 31 request by State for parallel fisheries
- PRD concurred and formally initiated consultation on June 21, 2006
- PRD requested an extension of the statutory deadlines, SFD concurred
- Sept. 7 - Draft chapters provided to SFD for review by Action Agency

Background for Consultation

- BA provided by SFD
- PSEIS
- Response to "Questions" posed by PRD/Region; NMFS 2006b
- Literature
- Draft Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan
- Goodman et al. 2002 (description of Action)

Overview of Process



An underwater photograph of several Steller sea lions swimming in clear blue water. One sea lion is prominently featured in the center, looking towards the camera. Other sea lions are visible in the background and foreground. The water is clear, and the lighting is bright, suggesting a shallow depth. The sea lions have dark, sleek fur and are seen swimming near a rocky reef structure at the bottom of the frame.

Species -- Formal Consultation

- western DPS of Steller sea lion
- eastern DPS of Steller sea lion
- Steller sea lion critical habitat
- north Pacific humpback whale
- north Pacific sperm whale

Other species reviewed in BA

Elements of the Opinion

Chapter 1- Background and Consultation History

Chapter 2- Description of the Proposed Action

Chapter 3- Status of Species and Critical Habitat

Chapter 4- Environmental Baseline

Chapter 5- Effects of the Federal Action

Chapter 6- Cumulative Effects

Chapter 7- Conclusions

Chapter 8- RPA(s) if necessary

Chapter 9- Incidental Take Statement

Chapter 10- Conservation Recommendations

Chapter 11- Reinitiation/Closing Statement

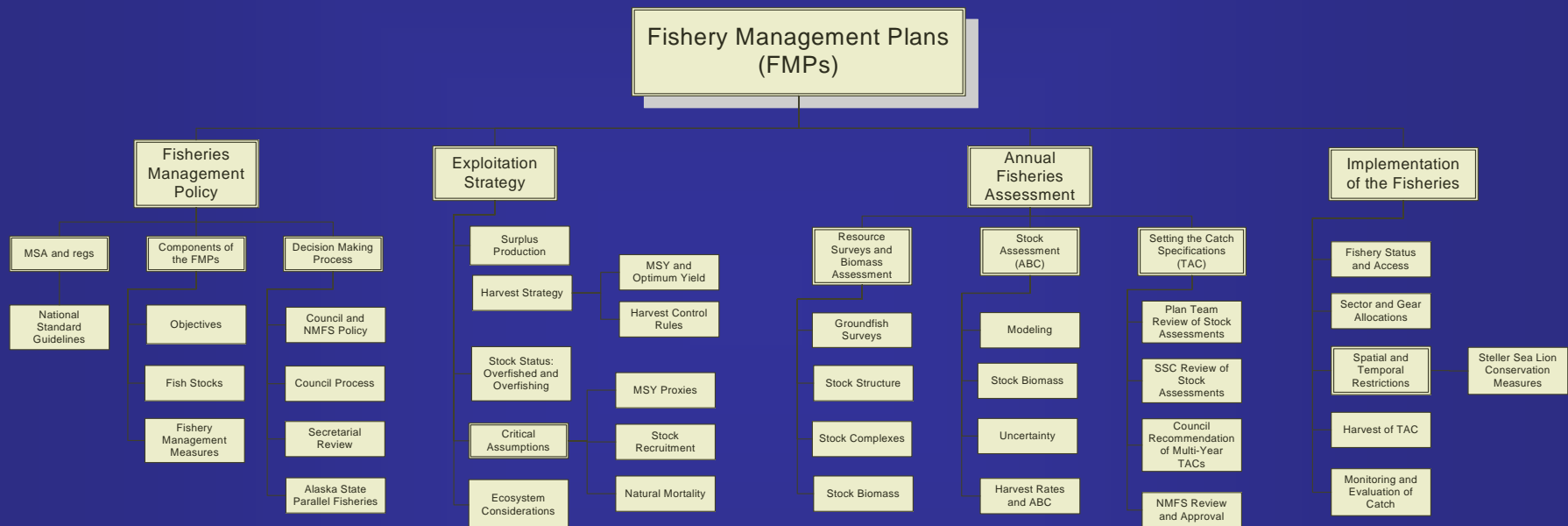
Chapter 12- Literature Cited

Basis for Adverse Modification of Critical Habitat

- not based on regulatory definition
- based on statutory definition
- based on "conservation"
- Nov. 7, 2005 Guidance from Dr. Hogarth

Chapter 2

Description of the Action & Deconstruction



Fisheries management policy

Exploitation Strategy (Goodman et al 2002)

Annual Fisheries Assessment

Implementation of the Fisheries

Note:

This chart represents the deconstruction of the Fishery Management Plans and the outside factors which influence actions which result in effects to listed species

Status of Species and Critical Habitat

- Population status
- Review of population structure/distribution (3.1.3)
- Sea lion life cycle
- Demographic modeling/vital rates and PVAs
 - Juvenile and adult survival likely rebounded to at or near pre-decline 1970s levels
 - Female reproductive rates have steadily declined; likely to slow or impede population increase
- Telemetry
- Nutritional stress/junk food
- Projections
- Important sites

Baseline

- Climate and Biological Regime Shifts
- Response of sea lion prey to changes in environment
- Killer whale predation
- Status of sea lion prey resources
- Impacts of human activities
- Impacts of fisheries/ state and federal (incomplete)
- Summary of conservation measures
- Response of other pinnipeds
- Synthesis of effects

Baseline is unfinished, fisheries effects, removal of the action from the baseline

Synthesis of Baseline Table 4.8

Hypothesis	What We Knew in 2000		What We Know Now	
	Contributor to Decline	Current Stressor	Contributor to Decline	Current Stressor
Environmental Change	Possible	Possible	Likely	Likely
Indirect Fisheries Effects	Possible	Possible	Likely	Likely
Direct Human Effects	Likely	Possible	Yes	Unlikely
Predation				
Killer Whales	Possible	Possible	Possible	Unlikely
Sharks	Possible	Possible	No	No
Inter-specific Competition	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
Disease	Possible	Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely
Contaminants	Possible	Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely

Effects of the Action

- **Exposure Analysis:** Will a species or Critical Habitat be exposed to environmental effects (direct and indirect) of the action?
- **Response Analysis:** If exposed, what is the response of individuals; populations; and species or Critical Habitat?