



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 2, 2008

Shaye Wolf, Ph.D
Martha Palomino Tovar, Ph.D Candidate
Brendan Cummings
The Center for Biological Diversity
1095 Market Street, Suite 511
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Dr. Wolf, Ms. Tovar and Mr. Commings:

On December 20, 2007, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) received your petition to list ribbon seals (*Histiophoca fasciata*) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The petition also requested that critical habitat be designated for ribbon seals, concurrent with the listing under the ESA.

The Secretary of Commerce will soon make a finding as to whether the petition presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing under the ESA may be warranted (ESA Section 4(3)(a) and 50 CFR 424.14). This finding will be published promptly in the Federal Register. If it is determined that listing under the ESA maybe be warranted, NMFS will commence a status review of ribbon seals.

If you have questions about this process, please contact Kaja Brix, Protected Resource Division, at (907) 586-7236.

Sincerely,

Dr. James W. Balsiger
Regional Administrator, Alaska Region

