Essential Guidance for the Survey of Federally Funded Marine Mammal Research and Conservation (request for information on fiscal years 2010 and 2011)

1. **<u>What is a "project"?</u>**
   For the purposes of the Survey, a typical project is one of two things: (a) a discrete activity or integrated/coordinated set of activities focused on or related to marine mammals; or (b) an effort or application of resources to support such activity(ies) as defined in (a). More specifically:
   a. A project can be a discrete activity or integrated/coordinated set of activities focused on, or related to, marine mammals. Some examples include: i) a three-year aerial survey of pinniped haul-out and rookery sites designed to estimate abundance, ii) a study of the physiological effects of deep-diving in cetaceans, iii) the design of a new satellite tag, iv) a surveillance program of fishing operations to ensure compliance with gear regulations designed to minimize bycatch, v) the development of educational materials to inform the public about whale-watching guidelines and regulations so as to reduce harassment. A project may have one or more characteristics, such as the following: i) it is called a project, ii) it has designated goals, objectives, products, milestones and/or outcomes, iii) it has a budget, iv) it has a project code, v) it has a project plan, vi) there is a team associated with it, etc.
      i. Who conducts the project?
         1. A project may be conducted by your agency; or
         2. A project may be conducted by a performing agency or organization that your agency funds through an award, grant, or contract.
      ii. What is the time-frame?
         1. A project is often a time-limited activity or set of activities where the time-frame is the period of performance or duration of the activity(ies), such as that for the examples listed above of a three-year survey, design of a satellite tag, or development of educational materials.
         2. However, a project may have an indefinite time-frame. It may be part of a permanent program that is intended to operate every year on an ongoing basis as long as the need exists (e.g. a stranding beach-survey, a contaminant monitoring program, or a subsistence harvest assessment program).
      iii. What should not be reported as a project?
         1. A program that is a collection or aggregation of projects should not be reported as a single project. For example, the National Marine Fisheries Service's National Marine Mammal Laboratory (http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/nmml/) has five programs, each of which has numerous projects. As another example, the Service's Exclusive Economic Zone Mammals and Acoustic Program, within the Southwest Fisheries Science Center's Protected Resources Division, lists several areas of focus, such as marine mammal acoustics, photogrammetric surveys of pinniped rookeries, or cetacean habitat spatial modeling.

Each project within these focal areas should be entered into the Survey as a separate project.

b. A project can be an effort or application of resources to support an activity(ies) as defined in (a). For example, if executing one or more marine mammal projects requires any type of direct or indirect support – such as infrastructure development or maintenance, capital investment, or information management/ database development and maintenance - then the funding to support those efforts can be entered into the Survey as a project. Alternatively, those funds can be included in the funding of the discrete project(s) being supported, if that is more compatible with the accounting system of the agency (inclusion should be noted as such in the project summary section).

2. <u>What types of activities constitute a project?</u>

A wide variety of activities can make up or be part of a project. The following list is not exhaustive, but is meant to give a sense of the breadth of activities on which an agency should report:

a. Research/Science
   - i. Basic and applied research (biology, ecology, physiology, ecosystem function, response to noise, fisheries interactions, diet, tracking movements, etc.)
   - ii. Surveys/assessment activities
   - iii. Technology development/testing/deployment

b. Conservation/Management
   - i. Monitoring
   - ii. Stranding/entanglement response
   - iii. Status-review/listing
   - iv. Restoration/recovery
   - v. Permitting
   - vi. Mitigation
   - vii. Regulatory compliance
   - viii. Surveillance/enforcement
   - ix. Evaluation of management activities
   - x. Outreach/education
   - xi. Communication/interaction (workshops, conferences, etc.)

c. Support
   - i. Administration
   - ii. Capital investment (e.g. acquisition of equipment)
   - iii. Infrastructure development/maintenance
     1. Buildings, labs, etc.
     2. Equipment
     3. Ships and aircraft
   - iv. Database development/maintenance

3. <u>How should funding be reported?</u>

The key data to be reported in the Survey are the funding associated with each project.

a. Total amount: The amount reported should be the overall total funding that an agency has *allocated or obligated* for that project, whether it is a single- or multi-year project.

b. Annual expenditures (actual or planned): The value(s) reported should be the amount(s) *expended or expected to be expended* during each fiscal year included between the project start and end dates, whether or not any funds were obligated during the fiscal year on which you are reporting. Where possible, actual expenditures should be provided for the fiscal year on which you are reporting. If this is not possible (or the project timeline extends beyond the fiscal year on which you are reporting), estimated or planned expenditures will suffice.

c. Reporting funding for single-year vs. multi-year projects:

    i. For a single-year project, the amount obligated to the project, and presumably expended, is reported as the total for that project.

    ii. For a multi-year project, the amount allocated or obligated to the project in its entirety should be entered as the total funding amount. The amounts actually expended during previous fiscal years, the focal (or reporting) year, and expected/planned/projected amounts to be expended in future years should be entered for the appropriate fiscal years as applicable. Importantly, the sum of the annual expenditures must equal the total amount of funding for the project. For example, consider the case where **t**he focal (or reporting) year of the Survey is 2010, and $500,000 was obligated to a four-year project in fiscal year 2009. The original project plan called for spending $200,000 in the first year (FY2009) and $100,000 in each of the subsequent years (FY2010-2012). However, the project expended $210,000 in FY2009 and $170,000 in FY2010. In this case, the projected expenditures for years three and four should be adjusted to account for the over-expenditures in years one and two, and might be entered as $80,000 and $40,000, respectively (as long as no additional funding has been added to the total project amount).

d. Reporting funding when marine mammals are not the sole or direct focus (e.g., research, conservation, management or support activities that include other species, such as plankton, fish, sea turtles, etc.):
Funding reported when marine mammals are not the sole or direct focus should be prorated to reflect the amount dedicated specifically to marine mammals. The amount entered as the "total project amount" in the Survey should estimate the percentage of the total cost that is allocated or intended specifically for marine mammal research, conservation, management or support efforts. As an example, two weeks of a three week cruise (total ship time costing $300,000) were dedicated to marine mammal surveys. Therefore the total amount entered in the Survey for this project would be $200,000.