



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Conserving Marine Mammals

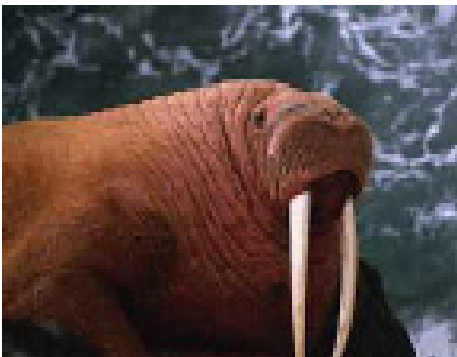
Fisheries and Habitat Conservation Program



Above: Cooperative relationships with industry minimize impacts of energy development activities on polar bears.



Above: Manatees are a favorite attraction for visitors to the Florida coast and intracoastal waterways.



Above: Marine mammals in Alaska, such as the walrus, play an important traditional role in the culture and livelihood of Native Alaskans.



Above: Sea otters play an extremely important role in the California coastal ecosystem.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), enacted in 1972, prohibits the taking (i.e., hunting, killing, capture, and/or harassment) of marine mammals and enacted a moratorium on the import, export, sale and possession of marine mammals parts and products. There are exceptions to the prohibitions notably for Alaska Natives, who may hunt marine mammals for subsistence purposes, and may possess, transport and sell marine mammal parts and products, as well as for entities that apply for and are granted incidental take authorization.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the conservation and management of sea and marine otters, polar bear, walrus, manatee, and dugong. The MMPA requires that marine mammals be maintained at, or returned to, their optimum sustainable populations. Management of marine mammals requires coordination among a variety of interests, including Federal and State agencies, commercial industries, Native Alaskans, and international governments.

What does this program do?

- Ensures conservation and management of sea and marine otters, polar bear, walrus, manatee, and dugong.
- Enables coordination and facilitation of information and data exchange among interested parties.

How do we do it?

- Create partnerships to monitor the status of marine mammal and provide information to the public on population trends of marine mammals.
- Facilitate international conservation efforts for transboundary stocks.

What have we done already?

- Provided stock assessment reports for marine mammal species.
- Worked with Alaska Natives to develop cooperative agreements to conserve marine mammals.
- Assisted in development of an international agreement to conserve the Bering/Chukchi Sea polar bear population.
- Worked with the oil and gas industry to develop regulations to minimize the impacts of their activities on polar bear and walrus.

How does the public benefit?

- Marine mammal populations are maintained for public enjoyment.

What more can we do?

- Improve our capacity to assist our partners with marine mammal stranding and rescue response.
- Increase our capacity to monitor the status and health of marine mammal populations that occupy remote areas.
- Work more closely with our partners to recover threatened and endangered stocks of marine mammals.

For more information about the Fisheries and Habitat Conservation Program, contact:
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