

**Center for Independent Experts:
Terms of Reference for Review of the draft Steller Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*)
Recovery Plan dated May 2007**

The first Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Recovery Plan was completed in 1992 and provided recovery guidance to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the species, which at that time was listed range-wide as threatened.

NMFS organized a new SSL Recovery Team in January 2002, and charged the new Team with writing a revised Plan to reflect the current view of stock structure and the differences in stock status under the ESA (eastern Distinct Population Segment (DPS) listed as threatened, and western DPS listed as endangered). The Team completed its draft of the second Plan in February 2006, at which time the Team sought an external peer review from 5 highly qualified experts (see Attachment 1).

Upon receipt of the peer reviewer comments, the Team revised the Plan and submitted it to NMFS. NMFS released the Plan for public review in May 2006 and received detailed written comments from 18 parties or individuals. Based on these comments and those of the expert reviewers listed above, NMFS revised the Plan into the document being presented to the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) for an additional peer review (document dated May 2007).

The CIE experts' comments will assist NMFS in making recovery decisions for the Steller sea lion based upon the best scientific and commercial data available (as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended).

Reviewer Requirements

The CIE shall provide three expert reviewers. Each reviewer's duties shall require a maximum of five days of effort, including time to read the relevant document and to produce an individual written report consisting of his/her comments and recommendations. No travel is required; each reviewer shall work from his/her home location. Each reviewer's report shall reflect his/her area(s) of expertise, and no consensus opinion (or report) will be required.

Expertise of the reviewers needed to review the subject document includes the following:

* Familiarity with relevant sections of the Endangered Species Act (http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode16/usc_sup_01_16_10_35.html), and as applicable, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and related wildlife management legislation (e.g. NEPA).

In particular,

* Experience as a Recovery Team member, contributor, or reviewer of Recovery Plans developed for other listed species; as a current or recently retired employee of a federal or state agency holding a position implementing ESA regulations; or from an academic position that has focused on ESA statutes and implementation.

* In depth expertise in the biology and management of marine and/or other large; specifically population dynamics, reproductive and foraging biology and physiological ecology.

* NMFS requests that former reviewers and former SSL Recovery Team members and support staff be specifically excluded from consideration as reviewers of this document. See Attachment 1, below.

Specific Reviewer Tasks and Schedule

The Alaska Region shall provide the CIE with copies of the May 2007 draft revised SSL Recovery Plan for the review, or a link to it, by May 31, 2007. Delay in meeting this schedule will result in a minimum of an equivalent delay in delivering the final CIE reviews. The document to be reviewed will be approximately 200 pages in length.

1. The CIE reviewers shall read and assess the May 2007 draft revised Steller Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) Recovery Plan.
2. The CIE reviewers shall focus on and address the following questions in their review reports:
 - Does the Plan thoroughly describe what is known about potential threats to both the eastern and western populations of Steller sea lion? Are there additional significant threats to the species? Does the evidence presented in the Recovery Plan support the threats assessment?
 - Is the ecological and biological information presented in the Plan adequate, thorough, and scientifically defensible?
 - Does the Plan adequately present an ecologically and biologically defensible recovery strategy for the western population of Steller sea lion? Describe any shortcomings in the recovery strategy.
 - Are the recovery actions described within the Plan appropriate to meet recovery goals? Are the recovery actions consistent with the SSL life history information, population dynamics and threats assessment presented in the Plan? Are there other recovery actions that have not been included in the Plan that should be included to achieve recovery?
 - Are the recovery tasks in the Plan's Implementation Schedule appropriately prioritized to facilitate recovery?
 - Does the information in the Plan appropriately support the recovery criteria described in the Plan? Are the recovery criteria consistent with and do they meet the requirement of the ESA to ensure the conservation of the species (i.e., recovery and ultimate delisting: "conservation" as defined in the ESA 16 USC § 1532 (3))?
3. No later than June 29, 2007 each CIE reviewer shall submit a written report¹ to the CIE that addresses the points in item 2 above. See Annex I for additional details on the report outline.

¹ Each written report will undergo an internal CIE review before it is considered final.

Each report shall be sent to Dr. David Die, via email at ddie@rsmas.miami.edu, and to Mr. Manoj Shivlani, via email at mshivlani@rsmas.miami.edu

Submission and Acceptance of CIE Reports

The CIE shall provide the final individual reviewer reports for review for compliance with this Statement of Work and approval by NOAA Fisheries to the COTR, Dr. Stephen K. Brown (Stephen.K.Brown@noaa.gov), no later than July 13, 2007. The COTR shall notify the CIE via e-mail regarding acceptance of the reviewers' reports. Following the COTR's approval, the CIE shall provide pdf format copies of the reviewers' reports to the COTR.

ATTACHMENT 1.

STELLER SEA LION RECOVERY TEAM MEMBERS (October 24, 2001-2007)

Dr. Robert J. Small
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526
Tel: 907-465-6167
Fax: 907-465-6142
E-mail: bob_small@fishgame.state.ak.us

Mr. Vernon Byrd
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2355 Kachemak Bay Drive, Suite 101
Homer, AK 99603-8021
Tel: 907-235-6546
Fax: 907-235-7783
E-mail: vernon_byrd@fws.gov

Mr. Donald Calkins
Steller Sea Lion Program Manager
Alaska SeaLife Center
301 Railway Avenue
P.O. Box 1329
Seward, AK 99664
Tel: 907-224-6325
Fax: 907-224-6320
E-mail: don_calkins@alaskasealife.org

Dr. David Hanson
3468 22nd St. NW
Hackensack, MN 56452
Tel: 218-675-5231
Fax: 218-675-5231
E-mail: dave_hanson@psmfc.org

Ms. Donna Parker
Arctic Storm
400 North 34th Street, Suite 306
Seattle, Washington 98103
Tel: 206-547-6557, EXT 116
Fax: 206-547-3165
E-mail: dparker@arcticstorm.com

Ms. Lianna Jack
Alaska Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission
6239 "B" Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99518
Tel: 907-274-9799
Fax: 907-274-9022
E-mail: asoc@alaska.net

Dr. Terrie Williams
Department of EE Biology
Center for Ocean Health - Long Marine Lab
100 Shaffer Road
UCSC
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Tel: 831-459-5123
Fax: 831-459-3383
E-mail: williams@biology.ucsc.edu

Dr. Alan Springer
Institute of Marine Science
Room 262 AHRB
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99775-1080
Tel: 907-474-6213
Fax: 907-474-7204
Email: ams@ims.alaska.edu

Dr. Thomas Loughlin
NMFS National Marine Mammal Laboratory
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4
Seattle, WA 98115
Tel: 206-526-4040
Fax: 206-526-4004
E-mail: tom.loughlin@noaa.gov

Mr. Dave Fraser
High Seas Catchers' Coop
111 First Avenue South #205
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel: 206-399-0742
Fax: 708-575-0382
E-mail: dfraser@olympus.net

Mr. Ken Stump
5033 Brooklyn Ave, NE
Apartment A
Seattle, Washington 98105
Tel: 206-517-5657
Fax: 206-517-5657
E-mail: magpie@speakeasy.net

Ms. Kate Wynne
University of Alaska
Sea Grant Program
118 Trident Way
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Tel: 907-486-1517
Fax: 907-486-1540
E-mail: ffkmw@aurora.alaska.edu

Dr. Shannon Atkinson
Alaska SeaLife Center
P.O. Box 1329
Seward, Alaska 99664-1329
Tel: 907-224-6346
Fax: 907-224-6320
E-mail: shannon_atkinson@alaskasealife.org

Mr. Lowell Fritz
National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Building 4
Seattle, Washington 9815-6349
Tel: 206-526-4246
Fax: 206-526-4004
E-mail: lowell.fritz@noaa.gov

Dr. Andrew W. Trites
North Pacific Universities Marine Mammal Research
Consortium
Hut B-3, 6248 Biological Science Road
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
V6T 1Z4
Tel: 604-822-8181
Fax: 604-822-8180
E-mail: trites@zoology.ubc.ca

Dr. Douglas Eggers (left in 2004)
replaced by: Mr. Denby Lloyd (ADF&G)
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

Peer Reviewers of the 2006 Draft Plan:

Mr. Ed Bangs (US Fish and Wildlife Service)
Dr. Bob Hofman (Retired, U.S. Marine Mammal
Commission)
Dr. Don Siniff (Retired, University of Minnesota)
Dr. Don Bowen, and (Bedford Institute of Oceanography)
Dr. Terry Quinn (University of Alaska Fairbanks and
member of the North Pacific Fishery Management
Council's Science and Statistical Committee).

Contributors

Dr. Dan Goodman, Montana State University

Dr. Tom Gelatt
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526
Tel: 907-267-2182
Fax: 907-267-2859
E-mail: tom_gelatt@fishgame.state.ak.us

Mr. Robin Samuelson
P.O. Box 412
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
Tel: 907-842-2743
Fax: 907-842-5939
E-mail: sockeye1@nushtel.com

Dr. Ken Pitcher
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526
Tel: 907-267-2182
Fax: 907-267-2859
E-mail: ken_pitcher@fishgame.state.ak.us

Linda Behnken
Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
403 Lincoln Street, Suite 237
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Tel: 907-747-3462
Fax: 907-747-3462
E-mail: alfafish@ptialaska.net

Dr. Dan Hennen, Alaska Sealife Center

Members of the first Recovery Plan (issued 1992):

Dayton L. Alverson, Natural Resources Consultants

Jim Branson, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

Vernon Byrd, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Donald Calkins, Alaska Dept. Fish and Game

Robert Gisiner, Dept. of the Navy

Carolyn Heath, Fullerton College

Pete Isleib, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Jack Lentfer, Marine Mammal Commission

Lloyd Lowry, Alaska Dept of Fish & Game

Donald Siniff, University of Minnesota

ANNEX 1. Contents of CIE Reviewer's Report

1. The reviewer's report shall be prefaced with an executive summary of findings and/or recommendations.
2. The main body of the reviewer's report shall consist of a background, description of the review, summary of findings, and conclusions/recommendations. The summary of findings shall address each Term of Reference.
3. The reviewer's report shall include as separate appendices the bibliography of materials provided for the review and a copy of the CIE Statement of Work.

Please refer to the following website for additional information on report generation:
<http://www.rsmas.miami.edu/groups/cie/cierevrep.htm>