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# Update on the Eastern Pacific Stock of Laaquadan (Northern Fur Seals): Conservation Plan updates

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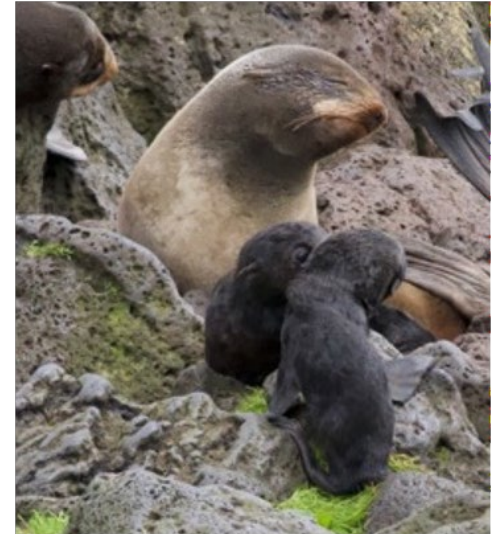
Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

**NMFS Management Report**  
**April 4, 2024**



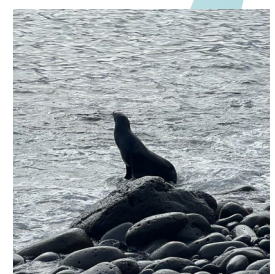
# Outline

- Conservation Plan Update
  - Co-management and Plan Revision
  - Process Remaining
  - Timeline
  - Proposed Threats Prioritization Workshop



# Co-management & Conservation Plan Revision

- Co-management provided the opportunity for greater Tribal involvement in Conservation Plan revision
- ACSPI requested involvement in the finalization of the draft plan
- ACSPI has many ongoing co-management projects that created the foundation for greater participation in the Plan revision process



# Conservation Plan revision Updates

- Process remaining: revision of Plan text in response to public comments, internal NMFS review, preparation of *Federal Register* notice
- Timeline update: anticipated publication in *Federal Register* mid 2024



# Conservation Plan revision Updates

- 6 entities commented on the draft Plan
- Revisions to Plan were made in response to comments
- Three specific comments required either data collection, analyses, or public input that would have unacceptably extended the finalization schedule:
  - Optimum sustainable population/Carrying capacity
  - Indirect effects of commercial fishing
  - Ranking and prioritization of threats



# Northern Fur Seal Threats Prioritization

Traditionally NMFS has internally prioritized threats (previous two Plans)

Process envisioned moving forward:

- Complete Threats Prioritization via Expert Elicitation -
  - Identify participants, facilitator, social scientist, statistician
  - Create steering committee to develop questions and scoring rubric
  - Use expert elicitation to score threats (options for in-person or survey)
  - Review threats scoring and prioritization with experts (option to rescore)
  - Develop framework for managing highest threats: data and analysis needs
- Addresses NPRB issues of particular interest 2024:

***“cumulative environmental and anthropogenic drivers of northern fur seal declines in the Pribilof Islands”***

- Goal: Submit to NPRB by May 2024



# Northern Fur Seal Threats Prioritization

- **Heads Up:** We invite the NPFMC to participate in this effort to prioritize threats and develop a framework for managing highest threats.
- We thank the Council for ensuring regular communication regarding northern fur seals and possible future management or conservation actions to stabilize and recover the population.



# Summary

- Co-management relationship strengthened partnership and created opportunities for tribal involvement in conservation planning by NMFS
- Public comments identified opportunity for expanding involvement of Tribal, fisheries, and NGO involvement in implementing conservation initiatives
- Involvement of non-NMFS participants in the Threats Prioritization process improves inclusivity and diversity of actions in marine mammal conservation





# Qaġaasakuq, Thank you!

