

Best Practices for Marine Mammal Response, Rehabilitation, and Release

Glossary of Terms

Animal Care Supervisor– Responsible for overseeing prescribed treatments, maintaining hospital equipment, and controlling drug supplies. The person should be adequately trained to deal with emergencies until the veterinarian arrives, be able to direct the restraint of the animals, be responsible for administration of post-surgical care, and be skilled in maintaining appropriate medical records. It is important that the animal care supervisor should communicate frequently and directly with the attending veterinarian to ensure that there is a timely transfer of accurate information about medical issues.

Assessment Team – The team of individuals who collectively assess the rehabilitation case and make a release determination recommendation. This team could include the attending veterinarian, lead animal care supervisor, and/or consulting biologist with knowledge of species behavior and life history).

Attending Veterinarian - U.S. licensed veterinarian [i.e., graduated from a veterinary school accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education, or has a certificate by the American Veterinary Graduates Association’s Education Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates or has received equivalent formal education as determined by NMFS Administrator (adapted from the Animal Welfare Act Regulations 9 CFR Ch. 1)] who has the responsibility to oversee veterinary medical aspects of live animal care and is also responsible for assuring the health of marine mammals released back to the wild following rehabilitation.

Authorized Representative- Individual with signatory authority for the stranding organization. This individual may be the signatory of the stranding agreement (e.g., Executive Director, President, CEO, etc.).

Bite - An injury from an animal that results in a break in the skin (epidermis).

Cohorts- Belonging to same species.

Conspecifics- Belonging to same species.

Diseases of Public Health and Safety Concern- Diseases that have been identified by Federal and State agencies (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state public health agencies) that pose a significant risk to public health.

Diseases of Zoonotic Concern- Diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans.

Ecological Status- A concept to consider when making release determinations. This concept attempts to integrate the medical and behavioral evaluations into an extrapolation of how the animal would likely do in the wild when exposed to typical ecological pressures

Emerging Diseases- Newly recognized serious disease, the cause of which may or may not yet be established, that has the potential to spread within and between populations.

Epidemic (adjective)- Affecting or tending to affect an atypically large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time.

Epizootic (noun)- An outbreak of disease affecting many animals of one kind at the same time (similar to epidemic and term typically used in for animals)

ESA- Endangered Species Act

Ethogram- A catalogue of the discrete behaviors typically employed by a species. These behaviors are sufficiently stereotyped that an observer may record the number of such acts, or the amount of time engaged in the behaviors in a period of time.

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) - The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

FWS Division of Management Authority (DMA)- The Division of Management Authority implements domestic laws and international treaties to promote long term conservation of global fish and wildlife resources. In response to ever-increasing global pressures of wildlife trade and habitat loss on species worldwide, the office dedicates its efforts to conserving species at risk through trade and implementing policies that have a broad impact on conservation overall.

FWS Field Offices- The program operations of the FWS are performed at various types of field installations within FWS Regional Offices. The FWS Field Offices that are involved with health and stranding of marine mammals under jurisdiction of the FWS are identified in Appendix H.

FWS Letter of Authorization (LOA) - LOAs are issued by the FWS Division of Management to authorize under a “permit” network individuals, facilities, and agencies to rescue, rehabilitate, and release species under their jurisdiction that are in need of assistance. Authorizations and requirements are specific to the species, the organization, and the activity being conducted.

Humane Care- Treatment of an animal in such a way to both minimize pain and suffering and (by providing for proper care and use of the animal) to maximize well being of the individual and the population into which it is to be released.

Human Interaction- Physical signs or evidence (e.g., wounds, marks, gear, etc.) of direct human associated interaction that may or may not be related to the stranding.

Key Personnel – Individuals who represent the stranding organization and serve in key positions such as the authorized representative, primary responder, animal care supervisor, and attending veterinarian.

Letter of Concurrence from the NMFS Regional Administrator (RA) - The official notification from the NMFS regional office that concurs with the release determination recommendation.

Letter of Intent- A letter from a prospective permanent care facility requesting custody of a non-releasable animal. This letter must be sent to the NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Permits, Conservation and Education Division (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/mmpa_permits.htm).

MMPA- Marine Mammal Protection Act

MMPA/ESA Permit No. 932-1489-09- A permit issued by the NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Permits, Conservation and Education Division to the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP). The permit covers some of the MMHSRP’s activities, including emergency response activities for threatened and endangered species, large whale disentanglement activities, health assessment studies, and other research projects.

Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Event- A stranding that is unexpected, involves a significant die-off of any marine mammal population, and demands immediate response.

Necropsy Team Leader- A NMFS approved team leader, responsible for all aspects of the necropsy. The Necropsy Team Leader assigns task during the necropsy and is responsible for the gross report and final necropsy report.

NMFS- National Marine Fisheries Service

NMFS National Stranding Coordinator- Develops national policy and guidance and oversees the national marine mammal stranding program (part of the NMFS Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program)

NMFS Office Director- Office Director for the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources

NMFS PR1- NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Permits, Conservation and Education Division

NMFS Regional Director- Regional Administrator for the National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office (regional specific)

NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinator- Coordinates administration of the stranding program within the region.

NMFS Stranding Agreement- The official written agreement between NMFS and Stranding Network Participant as allowed under section 112(c) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Primary Responder – Oversees all aspects of each stranding response and be on-site or supervising when live or dead animals are being examined or handled (i.e., paid staff and unpaid staff). If working with live animals, be in direct contact with the attending veterinarian if necessary.

Panmictic- Referring to unstructured populations (random mating).

Pre-Release Health Screen- Required to be completed prior to release of animals following rehabilitation in accordance with these guidelines

Reasonable Social Group- Refers to in association with conspecifics of similar age, sex, and/or relatedness as would be found in social groups observed in the wild.

Release Determination Recommendation- The official written recommendation for release or non release signed by the attending veterinarian and signatory rehabilitation facility and sent to the NMFS Regional Director.

Release Plan- If release is recommended and NMFS concurs, the release plan will include a timeline, release site, method of transport and tagging/post release monitoring. Conditional releases will require an expanded release plan including a justification and detailed description of the logistics, tagging, location, timing, crowd control, media coordination (if applicable), and post release monitoring. NMFS may require contingency plans, should the release be unsuccessful, including recapture of the animal following a specified time after release.

Reportable Diseases- Diseases that pose a significant concern to public health, agriculture, and marine mammal populations and are required to be reported to NMFS and state agencies.

Responsible Party of Record- This is the official who has the legal authority to make acquisition and disposition decisions on behalf of an organization, institution, or agency that is holding marine mammals in captivity. This person's signature is required on the Letter of Intent to permanently retain or acquire a nonreleasable animal.

Signatory- The individual who signed the official stranding agreement between the stranding organization and NMFS (e.g., Executive Director, President, CEO).

Stranding Network Participant - A nongovernmental entity authorized by an agreement (Stranding Agreement) with NMFS to respond to stranded marine mammals under section 112(c) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which provides special exemption from the take prohibition.

Sub Designee- An entity acting under the authority and oversight of the Stranding Network Participant.

Surveillance Program- A method of surveillance that generates a source of information on the animal health status of populations.

Transfer Authorization Letter- The letter issued by NMFS PR1 to the receiving facility which authorizes retention or acquisition of a marine mammal that has been deemed nonreleasable.

USGS – United States Geological Survey

Working Group on Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Events- An official panel of scientific experts established by the Marine Mammal Protection Act to who advise the NMFS and FWS regarding unusual mortality events.

109(h) Stranding Participant- State or local government official who can respond to a stranded marine mammal for the protection or welfare of the marine mammal and protection of public health and welfare during the course of their official duties. Section 109(h) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act provides special exemption from the take prohibition.

Zoonotic- Diseases caused by infectious agents that can be transmitted between (*or are shared by*) animals and humans.