

**Council Motion on the Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan
August 3, 2007**

The Council moves that a letter be drafted and sent to the Secretary regarding the Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan. The Council endorses and appends the SSC's comments on the May 2006 and May 2007 Recovery Plan drafts. The letter should highlight the following concerns and issues:

1) Modify the wDPS recovery criteria as follows:

a) Modify the downlisting criteria: The population will be downlisted from endangered to threatened if the population is determined to be stable or increasing over a period of 1.5 generations (equivalent to the Team's 15 years) in U.S. jurisdiction, without requiring subarea consideration (current data indicate this period would start in 2000).

b) Modify the delisting criteria: The population will be delisted if the population is determined to be stable or increasing over a period of 3 generations (current data indicate this period would start in 2000).

c) The recovery criteria requirements to keep in place current fishery mitigation regulations at 50 CFR 679 should be modified to accommodate appropriate adaptive management and mitigation measures based on the best available science. The agency should modify the criteria to focus on adaptive management measures appropriately scaled to localized conditions instead of large scale experimental design. Further, the criteria should call for *appropriate* rather than *current* mitigation measures.

2) Modify the Threats Assessment such that the standard for determining the likelihood of extinction is modified from the standard of 1% chance of extinction in 100 years (10 generations) to 10% chance over three generations (30 years).

3) Reinstate the Recovery Team recommendation that the killer whale predation threat be "Potentially High" rather than "Medium", and conduct additional research and scientific workshops to resolve issues with the assessment of the effects of transient killer whales on the current wDPS population and the impact on the population's recovery. This process should include a broad cross section of scientists with views on all sides of this issue.

4) Increase priority of Critical Habitat redesignation to 2a from level 3.

5) Adopt SSC recommendations on prioritizing actions and developing the Implementation Plan designed around a multiple hypothesis testing framework, including lower carrying capacity.

6) The current analysis is based on the unsupported assumption that conditions leading to the steep decline through the 1980s will occur again. The Council disagrees. The Council recommends a reevaluation of this assumption underlying the PVA. Further, the Council recommends model results excluding periods of high incidental and intentional takes be presented for comparison with results presented in the current draft.

7) Include in the Recovery Plan a provision for an annual report from NOAA regarding the actions taken pursuant to the plan, any new information regarding the status of SSL populations relative to recovery factors, and any new information regarding the status of the species under the listing criteria.

8) Delete ABC adjustment sub-task from Section 2.6.6, and retain 2.6.7 as a priority 3 task.

9) The Council recommends that the draft recovery plan summarize and incorporate recent field work on localized depletion.