



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

Dear friends and colleagues,

High quality science is fundamental to NOAA Fisheries as a science-based agency. To maximize the transparency and effectiveness of its science and its value to the nation, we are conducting yearly peer reviews of scientific activities at each of our six Science Centers. This year, the Alaska Fisheries Science Center is conducting a review of its marine mammal research. We would like to invite you to attend and participate in this review, which is taking place at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle from March 16-20, 2015.

The objective of this review is to examine and evaluate our science programs that are directed to provide information for the conservation and management of species protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, and Magnuson-Stevens Act. During 2015, all six of NOAA Fisheries' Science Centers will conduct similar reviews.

The reviews will include presentations by NOAA Fisheries scientists. Reviewers will then provide technical input on the direction and quality of the data collection and assessment programs as well as the resulting scientific information both for species with substantial amounts of data and those where the data and information is limited.

The experts reviewing the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's marine mammal science program are respected members of the scientific community. They include both internal NOAA scientists and external experts. This program review is open to the public. Because public input is important to the success of the review process, we have set aside time on March 16-18 for input from stakeholders and the public. For those of you who wish to listen to the meeting remotely, webinar and teleconference information will be posted on the [Alaska Fisheries Science Center website \(www.afsc.noaa.gov/program_reviews/2015/default.htm\)](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/program_reviews/2015/default.htm) prior to the start of the meeting.

The terms of reference describing what the reviewers will consider during the review are posted on this site along with documents provided to the reviewers and presentations prepared for the review. After the review is complete, reviewers' reports and the AFSC's response also will be available on this webpage.

We look forward to a productive review of this important part of the Center's work. If you have questions, please contact NMML.Director@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Douglas P. DeMaster, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director

