Alaska Stranding Network

Cook Inlet Beluga Recovery Team Stakeholders Meeting
30 Sep 10

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Staff Veterinarian & Stranding Program Manager
Alaska SeaLife Center
Overview of Stranding

- What authorizes stranding response?
- Who are stranding responders?
- How does it work?
Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program

• Formalized by 1992 amendment to 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act in response to 1987-88 bottlenose dolphin die-off

• Allows working with stranded marine mammals that would otherwise be prohibited by the MMPA

• Program goals
  – Collect & disseminate health & health trends data
  – Correlate health/trends data with biological, physical, and chemical environmental
  – Coordinate effective responses to mortality (and morbidity) events
Stranding Definition

• A marine mammal is dead and is:
  – On a beach or shore of the US
  – In waters under the jurisdiction of the United States

• A marine mammal is alive and:
  – On a beach or shore of the US & unable to return to the water
  – On a beach or shore of the US and, although able to return to the water, is in need of apparent medical attention
  – In the waters under the jurisdiction of the US, but is unable to return to its natural habitat without assistance.
Stranding Authorizations

- **Stranding Agreements**: allow working with stranded marine mammals not listed as threatened or endangered species
  - 112(c) Agreements with private organizations
  - 109(h) authorizations for state & local governments
- **ESA Response occurs under NMFS permit #932-1489**
  - CI belugas, steller sea lions, large whales (except grays)
  - Outside the scope of the Stranding Agreement
  - All ESA species response should receive verbal authorization from NMFS
Nationwide Network
The AK Stranding Network

**Stranding Agreement (SA) Holders**
- Alaska SeaLife Center
- Alaska Whale Foundation
- Glacier Bay NP&P (Gabriele)
- North Gulf Oceanic Society
- The Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission
- UAS Sitka (Straley)
- Tribal Government of St. Paul
- UAF Museum of the North
- UAF Marine Advisory Program/AK Sea Grant (Frietag)
- UAF Marine Advisory Program/AK Sea Grant (Wynne)
- Alaska Veterinary Pathology Services, Kathy Burek, D.V.M.
- Bridge Veterinary Services, Rachel Dziuba, D.V.M.
- Petersburg Marine Mammal Center
- UAA- Pending Member

**109(h) Responders**
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- NMFS Enforcement
- NMFS AK Fisheries Science Center and Regional Office
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- Tribal Governments
- U.S. Coast Guard
- City officials (harbormasters, etc.)
173 Stranding Events in 2009
Reporting Stranded Marine Mammals

• ASLC 24-Hour Number
  – 1-888-774-SEAL
  – (1-888-774-7325)

• NOAA Regional Number
  – 1-877-9-AKR-PRD
  – (1-877-925-7773)

• New phone application
New Phone Application

Cook Inlet Beluga Responses

• Because listed under ESA, each response must be individually approved by NMFS
• For safety, a minimum of two people respond
  – NMFS Employee
  – Veterinary pathologist or a veterinarian
  – Other support personnel if road access