

**MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

September 2014



Vaquita

Photo by Thomas A. Jefferson from the joint research project with the Coordinación de Investigación y Conservación de Mamíferos Marinos/Dr. Lorenzo Rojas Bracho of the Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE) in Ensenada.

The Marine Mammal Commission

<https://www.mmc.gov/>

Table of Contents

Foreword

The Marine Mammal Commission Annual Report for 2013: A new format

Chapters

- 1) Performance and Accountability Report for 2013 (available upon request)
- 2) [Commission letters and responses for 2013](#)
- 3) [Research projects funded by the Commission in 2013](#) and list of [publications from projects that received Commission funding in past years](#)
- 4) [Species of Special Concern](#)
- 5) Special reports prepared or activities conducted in 2013
 - a. [Hill briefing on strandings in summer 2013](#)
- 6) [The 2013 Annual Meeting – Agenda](#)

Foreword

The Marine Mammal Commission Annual Report for 2013: *A new format*

The Marine Mammal Protection Act's (MMPA) requirement that the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission) prepare “a report on the Commission’s activities and accomplishments and Commission recommendations and responses thereto” was superseded in 1999 by the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995. Although no longer required, the Commission opted to continue publishing annual reports. As issues covered in the reports expanded and evolved, the scope and length of the reports increased to the point where timely report production began to undermine the Commission's ability to meet other, more pressing responsibilities.

Concerns about the utility of continuing to produce comprehensive, stand-alone annual reports include their scope and timeliness and the increased availability of much of the information traditionally included in the reports from other sources, including the Commission's website. The Commission already provides updates or compiles information on its activities equivalent to what would be included in an annual report. The Commission produces a concise Performance and Accountability (PAR) Report every year for the Office of Management and Budget, which mirrors many of the elements envisioned in the original MMPA reporting requirement. All Commission letters that include recommendations are posted on the website soon after they are sent and the Commission monitors and can now post or provide links to agency responses and subsequent related actions. Research grant activity also is summarized on the website.

The Commissioners, in consultation with the Committee of Scientific Advisors and Commission staff, determined that production of the annual report in its current form was no longer effective. As such, the 2013 Annual Report represents a new approach designed to make better use of the agency Web site to provide much of the information included in past reports. Basic elements include the PAR report, posted letters and agency responses, and information on the Commission's research program. Supplemental reporting is being provided on selected issues or species for which we have a high profile project or workshop in the relevant year, or for which needed information and syntheses cannot be found elsewhere. These elements may be updated on an annual or a more, or less, frequent basis. Issue or species-based menus provide links to stand-alone reports, relevant Commission letters, and websites of other agencies and organizations.

This new approach will require updating the Commission's website to provide a modern “living,” user-friendly portal to Commission activities and issues. The Commission intends to update its website so that it makes efficient use of links to source material found other websites that, in the past, would have been included in annual report discussions. The Commission hopes that this new approach to reporting will be more timely and useful to users, will promote more frequent updates, and will be consistent with the intent and spirit of the MMPA’s original reporting requirements. The Commission invites readers of the 2013 Annual Report to provide feedback on this new format by writing to mmc@mmc.gov.