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Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
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CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF PETITION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 2073.3 of the Fish and Game Code, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), on January 23, 2020, received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and the Turtle Island Restoration Network to list Pacific leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) as an endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act.

Pacific leatherback sea turtles (leatherbacks) spend nearly their entire lives in the ocean's pelagic zone (*i.e.*, the water column of the open ocean). Some females may forage year-round in tropical habitats near nesting beaches; others undertake a lengthy migration to exploit temperate foraging habitats like that off central California. The latter forage in temperate waters except during the nesting season, when gravid females migrate to tropical beaches to lay eggs. Recent research discovered distinct migration corridors used by the leatherback which follows seasonally abundant aggregations of prey along the temperate continental shelf. In summer and fall leatherbacks are known to exploit dense aggregations of jellyfish throughout the nearshore regions from Central California to Northern Oregon. Additionally, leatherbacks are known to exploit convergence zones and upwelling areas where aggregations of prey commonly occur. Oceanographic retention zones and upwelling shadows, such as those in the neritic waters off Central California, are particularly favorable habitat for leatherback prey. Leatherbacks are most frequently observed feeding on Pacific sea nettle (*Chrysaora fuscescens*), purple-striped jelly (*Chrysaora colorata*), and common or moon jellies (*Aurelia* spp.) which are especially common in retention areas between Point Reyes and Monterey Bay, California.

Pursuant to Section 2073 of the Fish and Game Code, on February 3, 2020, Commission staff transmitted the petition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) for review pursuant to Section 2073.5 of said code. The Commission will receive the petition at its February 21, 2020 meeting in the Natural Resources Building Auditorium, First Floor, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California. It is anticipated that the Department's evaluation and recommendation relating to the petition will be received by the Commission at its June 24-25, 2020, meeting. The exact location of the June 24-25, 2020 meeting has not yet been determined.

Interested parties may contact John Ugoretz, Pelagic Fisheries and Ecosystem Program Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9, Santa Barbara, CA 93109, telephone (805) 568-1226, or email John.Ugoretz@wildlife.ca.gov for information on the petition or to submit information to the Department relating to the petitioned species.

February 3, 2020

Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director