

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 16, 2023 MRC

6. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive public comment regarding topics that are not included on the agenda.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

MRC receives two types of correspondence or comment under general public comment: (1) requests for MRC to consider new topics and (2) informational items. As a general rule, requests for a regulation change must be submitted to the Commission on petition form FGC 1, *Petition to the California Fish and Game Commission for Regulation Change*. However, MRC may, at its discretion, request that staff follow up on items of potential interest for possible recommendation to the Commission.

Significant Public Comments

1. A member of the public is concerned about the survival of the southern resident killer whale population due to declining salmon populations. They request that the Commission and Department integrate southern resident killer whale salmon take into their analyses when setting quotas for commercial and recreational fisheries. In addition, they express concern about the future of sea otters in Morro Bay due to offshore wind development (Exhibit 1).

Recommendation

Staff recommends any new agenda items—based on issues raised and within the Commission's authority—be held for discussion under Agenda Item 7, Future Agenda Items.

Exhibits

1. [Email from Phoebe Lenhart, received November 2, 2023](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

From: Phoebe Lenhart [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 2:11 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Subject: FGC, November 16, 2023 meeting, Public Comment, #6 : SOUTHERN RESIDENT KILLER WHALES-CRISIS! And, "Off Shore Wind Turbines " ,in Morrow Bay, Threaten the Survival of Sea Otters!

Dear FGC Commissioners,

This email is sent to your attention regarding two grave matters, the survival of the Southern Resident Killer Whale pods and the survival of sea otters in Morrow Bay. I am appalled and dismayed by the dire status of both in CA.

First, the following information can be confirmed at NOAA. The Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) population has been in decline for years with the most recent population being only 74 killer whales. When broken down by pods, the counts being as follows: "J" pod 24; "K" pod 17; and "L" pod 33. Per the information provided, genome sequencing reveals that there's significant "inbreeding". Currently, it's estimated that there are only 30 "breeders" among the 74 killer whales.

There are numerous threats to this species mostly due to interference by human beings. Toxicology reports reveal numerous poisons in the killer whales (details available at NOAA). Further, the killer whale population is starving and dying due to a reduction in their prey. In the summer months, about 75% of their diet consists of chinook salmon. Salmon populations are far below any sustenance level in the ocean off the coast of CA.

Thus, my proposal to address the depletion of salmon populations available for the SRKW. When the FGC/DFW considers fishing quotas for salmon, I suggest that the FIRST "quota " to be determined, by the FGC/DFW, will be for the SRKW. Only after the quota for the SRKW is decided; then, I suggest that the quotas for commercial and recreational fishing can be determined.

Let's calculate (on an average) a killer whale can eat 20-25 salmon daily (minimum). With the SRKW currently having a population of 74; this sum will be 1,480-1,850 salmon (minimum). If we were to calculate the amount of salmon required daily by the SRKW by weight (with a salmon at 35 pounds) that would amount to 51,800-64,750 pounds of salmon per day (25.9-32.4 tons of salmon per day minimum). Then, I suggest that the FGC/DFW "reserves" a quota to provide for the survival (eventually hoping for "thriving" conditions) of the SRKW for 100 days annually. Thus, 2,590 -3,200 tons of chinook salmon are yearly reserved for the SRKW (to start). Please consider my proposal for reserving salmon for the SRKW in the approaching "salmon season" fishing quotas.

Second, in regard to the " romp" or "raft" of sea otters in the area of Morrow Bay and the "approved" 376 square miles of off shore wind turbines. I believe that the decision to build 376 square miles of "WEA" is absolutely, pathetically ludicrous and unduly incompetent. I think it's absolutely impossible for any federal or state agency to promise the public that they are able to "mitigate " any damages to the sea otter population during the installment and maintenance of off shore wind turbines. I send this email to the FGC's Marine Resources Committee with my request to review and respond to the above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Phoebe Lenhart



Sent from my iPad