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October 6, 2020

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch

**SUBJECT:** Update on sea lion permit status and operations

### BACKGROUND:

**Presenter:** Kessina Lee, Regional Director, SW Washington, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sheanna Steingass, Marine Mammal Program Leader, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Joe DuPont, Clearwater Region's Fisheries Manager, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Doug Hatch, Deputy Manager Fishery Science Department, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, will provide an update on permit activities regarding the removal of California sea lions (CSL) and Steller sea lions (SSL) that are located in the Columbia River and select tributaries.

**Summary:** In June 2019 the IDFG, WDFW, ODFW, NPT, CTUIR, CTWSRO and YN requested authorization under Section 120(f) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act for more flexibility in effectively managing CSL and SSL predation. This request proposed to reduce the existing habituated CSL and SSL numbers and through proactive management prevent new animals from habituating within the mainstem Columbia River and select tributaries. The expected benefit of the sea lion removal program in the Columbia River basin is to reduce this significant source of mortality to listed and non-listed fish species, e.g., salmonids and eulachon, and lamprey and white sturgeon, respectively.

At the June 2020 Council meeting, Robert Anderson, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), West Coast Region, program manager for pinniped-fishery interactions on the West Coast provided an overview and status update on the application requesting authority to remove CSL and SSL in the Columbia River and select tributaries.

On August 14, 2020 the NMFS issued a permit to the three Northwest states, and six regional tribes that were co-applicants to lethally remove sea lions in some areas of the Columbia River basin.

**Relevance:** One of the Council’s emerging priorities from the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program addresses “preserving program effectiveness by supporting expanded management of predators

**Workplan:** Fish and Wildlife Division preliminary work plan 2020; Program Implementation (2014 Program and 2020 addendum); Other program implementation.

**More Info:**

- [Permit Authorizing the Intentional Taking on the Waters of the Columbia River and its Tributaries of California Sea Lions and Steller Sea Lions.](#)