NOTICE OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ACTION

Date 05/29/2013

Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL: Simon Szykman
FOR CLEARANCE OFFICER: Jennifer Jessup

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, OMB has taken action on your request received 04/19/2013

ACTION REQUESTED: New collection (Request for a new OMB Control Number)
TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED: Regular
ICR REFERENCE NUMBER: 201304-0648-005
AGENCY ICR TRACKING NUMBER:
TITLE: Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW) Economic Survey
LIST OF INFORMATION COLLECTIONS: See next page

OMB ACTION: Approved without change
OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0648-0668
The agency is required to display the OMB Control Number and inform respondents of its legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

EXPIRATION DATE: 05/31/2016 DISCONTINUE DATE:

BURDEN:	RESPONSES	HOURS	COSTS
Previous	0	0	0
New	2,621	814	0
Difference			
Change due to New Statute	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Discretion	2,621	814	0
Change due to Agency Adjustment	0	0	0
Change due to PRA Violation	0	0	0

TERMS OF CLEARANCE:

OMB Authorizing Official: Dominic J. Mancini
Acting Deputy Administrator,
Office Of Information And Regulatory Affairs

List of ICs			
IC Title	Form No.	Form Name	CFR Citation
Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW) Economic Survey	NA	The Future of Cook Inlet Beluga Whales - What is your opinion?	
Follow-up telephone survey			

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

Please read the instructions before completing this form. For additional forms or assistance in completing this form, contact your agency's Paperwork Clearance Officer. Send two copies of this form, the collection instrument to be reviewed, the supporting statement, and any additional documentation to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503.

1. Agency/Subagency originating request
DOC/NOAA/NMFS

2. OMB control number b. [✔] None
a. 0648 -

3. Type of information collection (*check one*)
a. [✔] New Collection
b. [ ] Revision of a currently approved collection
c. [ ] Extension of a currently approved collection
d. [ ] Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired
e. [ ] Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired
f. [ ] Existing collection in use without an OMB control number
For b-f, note Item A2 of Supporting Statement instructions

4. Type of review requested (*check one*)
a. [✔] Regular submission
b. [ ] Emergency - Approval requested by ____/____/____
c. [ ] Delegated

5. Small entities
Will this information collection have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities? [ ] Yes [✔] No

6. Requested expiration date
a. [✔] Three years from approval date b. [ ] Other Specify:____/____

7. Title Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW) Economic Survey

8. Agency form number(s) (*if applicable*)

9. Keywords

10. Abstract

The Endangered Species Act-listed population of Cook Inlet beluga whales is one of five distinct population segments in United States (U.S.) waters. No empirical estimates of U.S. public values for Cook Inlet beluga whales are currently available, but this information is needed for decision makers to more fully understand the trade-offs involved in evaluating population recovery planning alternatives and to complement other information available about the costs, benefits, and impacts of alternative plans. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) plans to conduct a survey of f Alaska households to collect data for estimating the economic benefits associated with changes in extinction risk resulting from protection actions for the Cook Inlet beluga whale. The results from this survey should be useful to NMFS and the public in the future as NMFS and its partners consider various actions under the recovery planning process for Cook Inlet beluga whales. Any future regulatory actions would include analyses of costs and benefits of the proposed measures as well as opportunities for public input.

11. Affected public (*Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "x"*)
a. P Individuals or households d. ___ Farms
b. ___ Business or other for-profit e. ___ Federal Government
c. ___ Not-for-profit institutions f. ___ State, Local or Tribal Government

12. Obligation to respond (*check one*)
a. [✔] Voluntary
b. [ ] Required to obtain or retain benefits
c. [ ] Mandatory

13. Annual recordkeeping and reporting burden
a. Number of respondents 2,428
b. Total annual responses 2,621
1. Percentage of these responses collected electronically 10 %
c. Total annual hours requested 793
d. Current OMB inventory 0
e. Difference 793
f. Explanation of difference
1. Program change
2. Adjustment

14. Annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden (*in thousands of dollars*)
a. Total annualized capital/startup costs 0
b. Total annual costs (O&M) 0
c. Total annualized cost requested 0
d. Current OMB inventory 0
e. Difference 0
f. Explanation of difference
1. Program change
2. Adjustment

15. Purpose of information collection (*Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "X"*)
a. ___ Application for benefits e. X Program planning or management
b. ___ Program evaluation f. P Research
c. ___ General purpose statistics g. ___ Regulatory or compliance
d. ___ Audit

16. Frequency of recordkeeping or reporting (*check all that apply*)
a. [ ] Recordkeeping b. [ ] Third party disclosure
c. [ ] Reporting
1. [ ] On occasion 2. [ ] Weekly 3. [ ] Monthly
4. [ ] Quarterly 5. [ ] Semi-annually 6. [ ] Annually
7. [ ] Biennially 8. [✔] Other (describe) One time

17. Statistical methods
Does this information collection employ statistical methods
[✔] Yes [ ] No

18. Agency Contact (person who can best answer questions regarding the content of this submission)
Name: Dr. Dan Lew
Phone: (530) 752-1746

19. Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

On behalf of this Federal Agency, I certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9

NOTE: The text of 5 CFR 1320.9, and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3), appear at the end of the instructions. *The certification is to be made with reference to those regulatory provisions as set forth in the instructions.*

The following is a summary of the topics, regarding the proposed collection of information, that the certification covers:

(a) It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions;

(b) It avoids unnecessary duplication;

(c) It reduces burden on small entities;

(d) It used plain, coherent, and unambiguous terminology that is understandable to respondents;

(e) Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices;

(f) It indicates the retention period for recordkeeping requirements;

(g) It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3):

- (i) Why the information is being collected;
- (ii) Use of information;
- (iii) Burden estimate;
- (iv) Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, mandatory);
- (v) Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
- (vi) Need to display currently valid OMB control number;

(h) It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected (see note in Item 19 of instructions);

(i) It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology; and

(j) It makes appropriate use of information technology.

If you are unable to certify compliance with any of the provisions, identify the item below and explain the reason in Item 18 of the Supporting Statement.

Signature of Senior Official or designee	Date

Agency Certification (signature of Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Line Office Chief Information Officer, head of MB staff for L.O.s, or of the Director of a Program or StaffOffice)	
Signature signed by Dr. Ned Cyr	Date 05/14/2012
Signature of NOAA Clearance Officer	
Signature BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 Digitally signed by BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=DoD, ou=PKI, ou=OTHER, cn=BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 Date: 2013.06.10 13:28:11 -04'00'	Date 05/15/2012

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
COOK INLET BELUGA WHALE ECONOMIC SURVEY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a request for a new information collection.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The population of Cook Inlet beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*), found in the Cook Inlet of Alaska, is one of five distinct population segments (DPSs) in United States (U.S.) waters. It was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on October 22, 2008 (73 FR 62919). The population was previously designated as a depleted species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362) on May 31, 2000 (65 FR 34590).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the primary agency responsible for the protection of marine mammals in the U.S., including the Cook Inlet beluga whale (CIBW). Under the terms of the ESA, NMFS initiated the process of developing a recovery plan for the CIBW in March 2010 and published the final rule designating critical habitat for CIBW on April 11, 2011 (76 FR 20180). To aid in the process of plan development, NMFS appointed a Recovery Team composed of two voluntary advisory groups: a Scientific Panel and a Stakeholder Panel. Additionally, under terms of Section 6 of the ESA and the limited cooperative agreement with the State of Alaska signed on December 3, 2009, NMFS coordinates management activities for protected species with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

While a number of actions to halt the decline of the CIBW have been implemented since 2000 by NMFS, in cooperation with ADF&G, Alaska Native tribal governments, and other state and local agencies, recovery planning and management is expected to be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Over the course of this process, multiple management actions may be considered by NMFS, the Recovery Team, and cooperating agencies in their efforts to protect and aid in the recovery of the CIBW population. In deciding between management actions, planners and policy makers must balance the ESA and MMPA goals of protecting CIBWs from further declines with economic activities and development in the Cook Inlet region. Cook Inlet beluga whale protection actions may be subject to Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735), which requires regulatory agencies to consider costs and benefits in deciding among alternative management actions.

The public benefits associated with actions to protect the CIBW population that may help the species recover are primarily the result of the non-consumptive value people attribute to such protection (e.g., active use values associated with being able to view beluga whales and passive use values unrelated to direct human use). Little is known about these values, yet such information is needed for decision makers to more fully understand the trade-offs involved in

choosing among potential protection alternatives and to complement other information available about the costs, benefits, and impacts of protection alternatives. A survey is needed that will collect information that provides the information necessary to estimate public values for protection of CIBWs and the impacts of that protection.

This data collection and the subsequent research and analysis will provide the information needed to allow for a fuller range of benefits to be considered along with cost estimates, as well as other non-economic information, in the analysis of management actions that affect the CIBW. Previously, a pilot version of the survey was administered (OMB Control No. 0648-0621) to a small sample of households to evaluate the survey instrument and administration protocols. In particular, the pretest gathered a sufficient number of responses to evaluate the information presentation, reliability, internal consistency, response variability, and other properties of a newly developed survey, but too few to estimate economic values of interest in the full data collection.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The information will be collected through a mail survey on a sample of Alaska households. Sampled households will be contacted by NMFS through a mixture of mailings and telephone calls designed to maximize survey response. The mailings include an advance letter describing the study and requesting the individual's participation and are followed by the survey questionnaire, a reminder postcard, and a second full mailing. In addition to the mail contacts, a telephone contact with non-responding households for whom we have telephone numbers will be attempted. The primary purpose of the telephone contact is to encourage response to the mail survey. For non-responding households to the first five contacts (advance letter, initial mailing, postcard reminder, telephone reminder, and second full mailing), a short non-response survey will be sent by certified mail that collects information necessary to evaluate non-response behavior.

Mail Questionnaire

Survey responses gathered from the questionnaire include information about the following:

a. Public preferences regarding the protection of CIBWs.
b. Factors such as the risk of extinction to the DPS, listing status, and protection costs that affect the public's preferences for protecting CIBWs.
c. Information on general familiarity, attitudes, and preferences regarding protection of threatened and endangered species, and other priorities for government action.

The data will be used by NMFS to estimate a preference function for explaining choices between protection programs that differ in the extinction risk levels, ESA listing status, and costs. This estimated function will provide NMFS with information on public preferences and values for alternative CIBW protection programs, and what factors affect these values. This information

can then be compared with program costs and other impacts when evaluating protection alternatives.

The following is a discussion of how particular questions in the mail questionnaire will be ultimately used. Generally, the survey asks respondents for information regarding their knowledge and opinions of CIBWs, other endangered species, other whale species, and potential goals and impacts of management options available to protect the endangered population of CIBWs, in addition to standard socio-demographic information needed to classify respondents. It is divided into several sections.

Section 1: The Issue: Endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

Prior to the first section, respondents are asked a general social issues question. To put the issue of protecting threatened and endangered species in the context of the broad variety of priorities for government action (each with costs), and thus to reduce survey "importance bias", Q1 asks the respondent whether less, about the same, or more should be done with respect to several other issues facing the U.S. In addition to protection of threatened and endangered species, the set of issues listed includes government efficiency, education, road and highway improvements, economic growth and jobs, and air and water pollution.

The first section identifies the CIBW as a species protected under the Endangered Species Act and presents information about the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including definitions for "endangered" and "threatened" species, which are important to the policy questions in the survey. Since the CIBW is protected under the ESA as a distinct population segment (DPS), not as a distinct species, respondents are informed that the ESA also may protect a DPS. The introductory material also presents a breakdown of how many species are protected under the ESA to help place CIBWs in context as one of many ESA-protected species. Finally, the introduction identifies that the ESA requires reasonable actions be taken, which begins to motivate the questions about alternative actions to consider. The section also lists reasons people may care about threatened and endangered species and the types of costs that result from protecting them.

- Q2 asks how positive or negative the respondent's reaction is when they think about the Endangered Species Act. This simple question identifies people's general feelings toward endangered species protection. The question provides an easy start to the process of thinking about preferences regarding threatened and endangered species, and, in combination with Question 1, sets a tone of neutrality by accommodating positive and negative reactions at the start of the survey. In initial testing (and a past study), responses to this question were good predictors of how respondents would answer the stated preference questions.

- Q3 asks respondents whether they are aware that the ESA protects distinct population segments in addition to entire species. This question is used as a way to encourage respondents to read and understand the information regarding the ESA and its protection of DPSs in addition to entire species.

- After providing some general reasons for and against protecting threatened and endangered species (again providing a neutral perspective), Q4 addresses the importance to the respondent of general protection of threatened and endangered species, and whether protecting jobs is more or less important than threatened and endangered species protection to the respondent. Responses to this question were also found to be correlated with response patterns to stated choice questions in initial qualitative testing (i.e., focus group).

To properly elicit preferences regarding added protection of CIBWs, it is necessary to accurately define the good to be valued, and to provide the context within which it is produced, to ensure that respondents fully understand what they are being asked to value. Part of the process of providing context for the valuation involves discussing the species that may serve as substitutes in individual's minds for CIBWs. In focus groups, a natural set of substitutes that people identified for CIBWs is other whale species. This section provides a graphic of endangered whales residing in U.S. waters, with some information about whether the entire species or only one or more DPSs are protected. This graphic is useful for illustrating that the CIBW is one of several whale species in the U.S. that are protected by the ESA.

- Q5 is used to determine whether respondents have had prior experience observing whales, and aids in encouraging respondents to review the information provided.

Section 2: Some Beluga Whale Facts

This brief section introduces several facts about beluga whales generally.

- Like Q5, Q6 is intended to get respondents to begin thinking about beluga whales and assess their familiarity with beluga whales prior to reading the survey.

Section 3: Beluga Whales in the U.S.

This brief section provides a map of Alaska and table describing where the five beluga whale DPSs are, what their population sizes are, and what the population trend is for each.

- Q7 is another question intended to put the issue of CIBWs in a larger context (all beluga whales) and asks respondents whether they are concerned about the DPSs that are declining given that other DPSs are stable or increasing.

Section 4: Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

This section describes how the CIBW DPS is different from the other DPSs, where it is located, its ESA listing, natural and human-related factors associated with the past population decline, its current population trend, past and present efforts to protect it, and economic activities in the Cook Inlet that may be affected by protection measures, as well as the current estimated risk of extinction for the DPS under current conditions. This and the next section define the baseline of current and expected future conditions with current management programs, which is required for proper valuation of alternative levels of protection.

- Q8 asks whether the respondent has ever seen, heard, or read about the CIBW before reading the survey and is intended to get the individual thinking about the species and what they know about it.

- Respondents are asked how concerned they are about the CIBW in Q9. This information serves dual purposes. First, this question encourages the respondent to read and understand what is occurring with the DPS, and second, provides information that can be used to check for consistency of preferences with responses to stated preference questions.

- Q10 asks specifically about the risk of extinction information discussed above the question. It is intended to encourage the respondent to read the information on extinction risk carefully and consider whether the estimate is concerning from the respondent's perspective.

Section 5: New Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Protection Actions

This section introduces the concept of additional protection actions for CIBWs being undertaken and sets the stage for asking about protection alternatives and specific outcomes in the stated preference questions. In this section, different types of protection actions that would help CIBWs to recover are described in general terms, the term "recover" is defined, and the costs of additional protection actions (payment vehicle) are discussed in terms of the effects they would have on individual households.

- Q11 asks respondents to what extent they agree with two statements, one indicating a desire to help the CIBW recover, even if it costs more money; and the other stating that the most effective protection actions should be used even if businesses and individuals are negatively affected. The question serves the purpose of acknowledging that there are costs to protecting CIBWs and informing the respondent about these costs. This is important for maintaining a neutral stance regarding protection and minimizing information bias. Additionally, agreeing with the first statement indicates a willingness to spend money to protect the DPS, while disagreement suggests individuals may not choose costly programs to help the DPS. Disagreement with the second statement provides a reason why individuals may not be willing to spend additional money to protect CIBWs.

Section 6: What Alternatives Do You Prefer?

This section contains the stated preference questions, which are in a choice experiment, or stated choice, framework. The section begins with instructions for answering the questions and a budget reminder. In addition, a "cheap talk" script (e.g., Cummings and Taylor [1999]) is included to minimize potential hypothetical bias. Cheap talk refers to introductory text provided to the respondent before the stated preference questions are asked that explains what hypothetical bias (i.e., the potential bias associated with the respondent not being compelled to pay the amount they state they would pay) is, why it is problematic, and an appeal to not introduce this

potential bias by answering the questions as truthfully as possible. The instructions and cheap talk script are followed by four stated choice questions (Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15) and follow-up questions (Q16, Q17). The information from these questions will be used to estimate a CIBW protection preference function.

- In each of the four choice questions (Q12 through Q15), respondents are confronted with three alternatives that differ in what they do and how much they cost: the current CIBW protection program (Alternative A), which is the status quo alternative, and two others that do more and cost more (Alternatives B and C), in the survey to encourage respondents to view the non-status quo alternatives as distinct across choice questions. These alternatives are described by their expected results with respect to the following attributes:

  1. Population status in 50 years
  2. Risk of extinction by the year 2110
  3. Added household cost[1]

  Respondents are then asked to choose the alternative they most prefer, and which they least prefer. The status quo is always the first option to make it easy for respondents to select it (and reduce any unintended bias in selecting alternatives to do more and spend more), and to allow rank ordering of non-status quo alternatives relative to the baseline (Alternative A), which provides statistical efficiency gains over paired choices.

- In Q16, respondents are asked to agree or disagree with several statements that are used to help address several concerns about people's responses, including whether respondents feel it is their responsibility to pay for CIBW protection at all (potential protest), whether respondents had enough information to make an informed choice (the effect of uncertainty on values), whether respondents were paying just for CIBWs or if they believed other species were being protected by the alternatives considered (potential embedding), whether respondents believed the federal government could effectively manage the CIBW protection programs to bring about the results being valued (potential protest), whether respondents feel they should not have to pay more federal taxes for any reason (potential protest),whether the scientific estimates of future extinction risk were believable to the respondent (potential protest), a statement about whether the respondent felt qualified to choose between different extinction risks (potential protest), and a statement indicating an unwillingness to pay if there is any risk of extinction.

- Q17 identifies how confident individuals are about their answers to the stated preference questions. Respondents stating they are "not at all confident" in their answers may be excluded from the estimation since these individuals, for whatever reason, are uncertain that their answers reflect how they feel.

[1] In cognitive interviews, individuals were specifically asked in what form they believed they would be paying for Cook Inlet beluga whale protection programs. The vast majority responded that the added cost in the choice questions simply represents money out of their pocket, mostly in the form of federal taxes, but also from some additional expenditures on seafood products.

- The final question (Q18) in the section is intended to gauge respondents' general environmental attitudes using questions from the New Ecological Paradigm, a series of Likert scale questions that measure pro-environmental sentiments on several dimensions (Dunlap, van Liere, Mertig, and Jones, 2001). These questions have been used frequently in numerous environmental surveys. An understanding of general environmental attitudes may be helpful to explain responses to stated preference questions and enable classification of respondents.

Section 7: About You and Your Household

This final section consists of eleven questions, Q19 through Q29, that collect information about the respondent and the respondent's household to be used as explanatory variables in the stated preference model, for comparing the sample to the population (coverage or sampling bias), and for comparing respondents to non-respondents (non-response bias). To the extent possible, the questions and response categories parallel those used by the Census Bureau to allow the most direct comparisons.

- Socioeconomic, demographic, and classification information collected includes gender (Q19), age (Q20), household size (Q21), employment status (Q22), membership in an environmental or conservation program (Q23), recent fishing and hunting behavior (Q24), educational attainment (Q25), household ownership status (Q26), ethnicity (Q27), race (Q28), and income (Q29).

Telephone Follow-Up

Following the initial mailing and postcard reminder, we will contact non-respondents by telephone to encourage them to complete the mail survey.[2] No additional information will be collected from these individuals, as this telephone call will be used solely to encourage individuals to respond to the mail survey.

Non-Respondent Survey

After the telephone contact and second full mailing, individuals who have still not responded will receive a non-respondent survey. This short, 2-page survey will be mailed to respondents by certified mail. The non-respondent survey includes selected socioeconomic and demographic questions, along with two key attitudinal questions and a question that directly asks them for the reasons they may not have participated in the main mail questionnaire. Information about these variables will enable conducting statistical tests to determine whether non-respondents differ from respondents with respect to these characteristics. The attitudinal questions include versions of Q2 and Q4 from the mail questionnaire. Responses to questions like these have been shown to be correlated to responses to stated preference questions in earlier rounds of focus groups and cognitive interviews and in the formal pretest. This information can be used to evaluate and adjust the results for potential non-response bias among sample members.

[2] Those needing a replacement survey will be mailed one following the telephone interview.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

The survey will be administered as a mail survey and therefore does not involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The economics literature was consulted extensively to identify studies that valued Cook Inlet beluga whales. To date, there has not been any study that provides economic value information for CIBWs.[3] However, a recent unpublished government study by Olar, et al. (2007) valued the protection of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence Estuary in Canada, which is classified as threatened under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in Canada. The study uses stated preference choice experiment data collected from a survey of Canadian households using an Internet-enabled Web panel that achieved a cooperation rate of 52%. Mean household willingness to pay for improving the St. Lawrence Estuary beluga whale from its currently threatened status to a special concern status was estimated to be $107 (Canadian dollars), with a standard deviation of about $12. For a larger improvement, from threatened to not at risk, the mean household willingness to pay (WTP) was estimated to be $122 (Canadian dollars) with a standard deviation of about $17. While these results suggest a positive WTP for improving the status of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence Estuary, the WTP is for Canadian households and does not speak to Alaska households' preferences and values.

Although there are no existing survey efforts to understand the public's preferences and values for protecting CIBWs, there are numerous examples of studies conducted to estimate the non-consumptive value of other endangered species and marine mammals. Examples include Bosetti and Pearce (2003), Langford, et al. (2001), Jakobsson and Dragun (2001), Fredman (1995), Hagen, et al. (1992), among others. All these studies utilized contingent valuation methods, as do the vast majority of species valuation studies.[4] As a result, they are unable to fully analyze marginal values of attributes of the species protection. The proposed study departs from most of

[3] As noted above, the CIBW pilot pretest survey did not collect sufficient data for estimating value information.
[4] See Loomis and White (1996) and Richardson and Loomis (2009) for summaries of the literature related to the valuation of threatened and endangered species.

the existing literature in its use of a stated choice framework that allows marginal values of attributes of protection programs to be estimated. The added information provided by this approach arms decision makers with better information about how much the public would benefit from programs that lead to differing results, and thus represents a flexible tool for management. A recent study by Lew, Layton, and Rowe (2010) illustrates an application of this approach with respect to the valuation of protection for a U.S. threatened and endangered species (the Steller sea lion).

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small identities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The collection does not involve small businesses or other small identities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The survey is necessary to gather data for estimating public values for additional protection for CIBWs, beyond what is currently being done. If the data collection is not conducted, NMFS will have to rely on information about public values for other species to infer the value of protecting CIBWs using benefits transfer methods to consider along with other important information in decisions about CIBW management alternatives.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The collection is consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published February 7, 2012, (77 FR 6065) solicited comments on the information collection. The information collection described therein was for a survey with a larger scope; the target population has since been refined to Alaska households.

There were three requests for copies of the survey and five letters submitted providing substantive comments. One additional comment was a general statement about there not being a need to spend government money on surveys of this type. No response was prepared for this comment. Copies of the survey instrument were provided to the requesting individuals.

All five letters with substantive comments focused on the first of four topics on which the FR Notice invited comments: “whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the

proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility." Although the comments did not address the other three topics, they did provide multiple substantive points of criticism. On review of the submitted letters, NMFS staff identified eight unique comments and drafted detailed responses to each. Comments and responses are presented in an Appendix, submitted as a supplementary document.

All of these commenters recommend cancellation of the proposed data collection, and two suggest that proceeding with the information collection prior to completion of the CIBW Recovery Plan is inappropriate. For reasons described in the responses to comments, NMFS disagrees with the claims that the information collection is unnecessary for the proper performance of the agency's function, and that it is appropriate to delay the research pending completion of Recovery Plan development. NMFS intends to proceed with the data collection, pending clearance under PRA.

Four of the comment letters were submitted by members of the CIBW Recovery Team Stakeholder Panel. All expressed concerns about the lack of coordination with the Recovery Team and other government entities on development of the proposed data collection, and interpreted the Federal Register (FR) notice as a statement of NMFS' intent to pursue CIBW protection actions outside of the framework of the established recovery plan process and cooperative agreement with the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. In response, senior Protected Resources staff at NMFS Alaska Region communicated in writing to Recovery Team members to clarify the objectives and intended use of survey results in the recovery plan process and subsequent economic analysis of options developed by the Recovery Plan team. The letter also states NMFS' intent to better inform team members in the future about progress and findings related to this project. In addition, a response was sent by the principal investigators to the commenter referencing the letter to the Recovery Team and further emphasizing the survey objectives and intent to improve consultation with the Recovery Team members. The FR notice text for publication upon submission of this PRA clearance request to OMB was revised to clarify the objectives of the research.

The survey instrument presents the latest information on CIBWs, current population trends, alternative management options, and likely impacts of management options. To ensure that the information is as accurate as possible, numerous CIBW researchers and biologists have reviewed the survey instrument, including Mr. Jon Kurland (Director of NMFS Alaska Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division), Dr. Brad Smith, Dr. Barbara Mahoney, Dr. Kaja Brix, and Dr. Lew Queirolo of the NMFS Alaska Regional Office, and Dr. Kim Shelden and Dr. Rod Hobbs of NMFS' National Marine Mammal Laboratory.

9. <u>Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees</u>.

Inclusion of an incentive acts as a sign of good will on the part of the study sponsors and encourages reciprocity of that goodwill by the respondent. Singer (2002) provides a comprehensive review of the use of incentives in surveys. She notes that giving respondents a small financial incentive (even a token amount) in the first mailing increases response rates in mail-based surveys and are cost-effective. Such prepaid incentives are more effective than larger

promised incentives that are contingent on completion of the questionnaire. In tests conducted by Lesser, et al (1999), including a $2 incentive in a mailing with four contact points was shown to increase response rates by an additional 19 to 31 percentage points. Thus, even a small upfront incentive typically is more cost effective than additional follow-up steps that are often considered.

To encourage participation in the mail survey, a $5 honorarium will be provided to the participants in the initial mailing. During the pilot pretest implementation of this survey (OMB Control No. 0648-0621), we conducted a split-sample test of different amounts of honorarium--$1, $5, and $10. A memorandum to OMB following completion of the pilot pretest implementation (sent to OMB on September 20, 2011) reported that the $5 and $10 incentives resulted in a statistically higher response rate than the $1 incentive. The response rates associated with the $5 and $10 incentive amounts were not statistically different. As a result, the $5 honorarium appears to be the least costly incentive to increase response rates significantly.

There are several reasons why we believe inclusion of both a financial incentive and follow-up contacts will be needed to reach desired response rates. First, the survey is about an unfamiliar issue to many Alaskans. As such, the chance that respondents will not be motivated to complete the survey is higher than for a survey on a more familiar subject. Second, although every attempt is being made to ensure the survey is easy to read, understand, and complete, the amount of information it needs to present and the number of questions it needs to ask contribute to a 16-page survey requiring more respondent attention than some surveys. For these reasons, we expect both incentives and follow-up contacts will be required to obtain a suitable response rate.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

In the cover letter accompanying each mailing, respondents will be told that their name and address information will be kept separate from their responses and that only their responses will be given to researchers. The cover page of the survey also includes the following statement:

> 'Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to researchers for analysis.'

Following completion of the data collection, the survey firm will delete any information identifying individuals (i.e., name and addresses) before any data file is delivered to NMFS or any other participating researchers and agencies.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature asked in the survey.

12. <u>Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information</u>.

The mail survey will be sent to a random sample of approximately 4,200 addresses. The random sample will be purchased from a professional sampling vendor. Based on previous experience, up to 15% of these types of samples can be expected to be bad or unusable addresses, which means the number of households receiving the survey will be approximately 3,570. We expect a final response rate of at least 50 percent (of the valid sample), leading to at least 1,785 (= 3,570 × 0.50) responding households returning completed surveys. The cover letter will solicit the participation of an adult head of the household to complete the survey. Our experience suggests respondents typically complete the survey in 20 to 25 minutes, so we assume 25 minutes in our computation of the potential burden hours. As a result, those ultimately completing the survey are expected to contribute up to 744 hours to the overall hour burden.

Following the initial mailing and postcard, we expect approximately 70% of expected completes or 1,250 households to have returned completed surveys (based on results from the pilot pretest survey implementation). Households that have not responded after the initial mailing and postcard reminder will be contacted by telephone and encouraged to complete and return the survey. Households that need a replacement questionnaire will be identified and sent a new one. The phone interview is expected to take 2 minutes on average to complete, and we expect to attempt to reach up to 36% of the 535 potential respondents who will eventually return the survey, or up to 193 individuals, and 36% of the 1,785 of those who will not return the survey, or up to 643 individuals, for a total of 836 individuals representing approximately 28 burden hours (193 × 2 min + 643 × 2 min).[5]

Following the telephone prompts, a second full mailing will be attempted. This will not result in any additional burden hours.

After all contacts, we expect 1,785 responding households to have returned completed surveys, which leaves 1,785 non-responding households. A brief (2-page) non-respondent survey will be conducted with a sample of 750 non-responding individuals. Each non-responding household will be sent the short survey by certified mail. Of these 750 non-responding individuals sent a non-response survey, we anticipate 33%, or 250, will return completed surveys. The non-respondent survey is expected to take at most 5 minutes to complete, which results in an additional 21 hours.[6]

The total number of unique respondents to all survey contacts will be 2,678. This number consists of respondents who return the questionnaire (1,785), respondents who do not return the questionnaire but are reached during the telephone prompt contact (643), and the non-respondents to the main mail questionnaire who complete the non-response survey only (250).

[5] Although we will attempt to reach all households in the sample that have not returned a completed survey to this point, we do not expect to be able to reach more than 193 in a timely and affordable manner.

[6] Based on informal testing, we expect the two-page non-response survey will take respondents 3-5 minutes to complete on average, but for the purposes of calculating burden hours, we assume 5 minutes.

Survey instrument	Estimated number of respondents	Estimated number of responses	Estimated time per respondent (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden hours (hours)
Mail survey (from initial mailing and postcard reminder)	1,250	1,250	25	521
Mail survey (returned after phone contact and follow-up full mailing)	535	535	25	223
Follow-up phone call	643[a]	836 [c]	2	28
Non-response survey	250	250	5	21
Total respondents	2,478[b]	2,661		793

[a] Number of successful phone contacts of households that have not returned completed surveys following initial mailing and postcard reminder.
[b] Total respondents reflect the total sample size minus the households that do not complete either the mail survey or phone interview.
[c] Includes 643 households that complete only the phone call, plus 193 households contacted by phone that also complete the mail survey.

13. <u>Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above)</u>.

No additional cost burden will be imposed on respondents aside from the burden hours indicated above.

14. <u>Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government</u>.

Annualized cost to the Federal government of the survey is approximately $50,000 per year, divided as follows: $40,000 in contract award money and $10,000 in staff time and resources. Contractor services include administering of the mail survey, follow-up telephone calls, non-response survey, and data validation.

15. <u>Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments</u>.

This is a new collection.

16. <u>For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication</u>.

A report will summarize the survey development, testing, and implementation. It will present statistical summaries (i.e., means, variances, and frequency distributions) of data collected in the survey, and some basic analyses of the data. In addition, the econometric analysis of the stated preference choice experiment data will be reported in one or more papers that will be submitted

for publication at an environmental economics peer-reviewed journal, such as *Marine Resource Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management,* or *Land Economics*. It is also expected that the information produced from the econometric analysis of survey data may be used in regulatory analyses of Recovery Plan alternatives.

17. <u>If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate</u>.

Not Applicable.

18. <u>Explain each exception to the certification statement</u>.

Not Applicable.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
COOK INLET BELUGA WHALE ECONOMIC SURVEY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a request for a new information collection.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The population of Cook Inlet beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*), found in the Cook Inlet of Alaska, is one of five distinct population segments (DPSs) in United States (U.S.) waters. It was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on October 22, 2008 (73 FR 62919). The population was previously designated as a depleted species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362) on May 31, 2000 (65 FR 34590).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the primary agency responsible for the protection of marine mammals in the U.S., including the Cook Inlet beluga whale (CIBW). Under the terms of the ESA, NMFS initiated the process of developing a recovery plan for the CIBW in March 2010 and published the final rule designating critical habitat for CIBW on April 11, 2011 (76 FR 20180). To aid in the process of plan development, NMFS appointed a Recovery Team composed of two voluntary advisory groups: a Scientific Panel and a Stakeholder Panel. Additionally, under terms of Section 6 of the ESA and the limited cooperative agreement with the State of Alaska signed on December 3, 2009, NMFS coordinates management activities for protected species with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

While a number of actions to halt the decline of the CIBW have been implemented since 2000 by NMFS, in cooperation with ADF&G, Alaska Native tribal governments, and other state and local agencies, recovery planning and management is expected to be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Over the course of this process, multiple management actions may be considered by NMFS, the Recovery Team, and cooperating agencies in their efforts to protect and aid in the recovery of the CIBW population. In deciding between management actions, planners and policy makers must balance the ESA and MMPA goals of protecting CIBWs from further declines with economic activities and development in the Cook Inlet region. Cook Inlet beluga whale protection actions may be subject to Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735), which requires regulatory agencies to consider costs and benefits in deciding among alternative management actions.

The public benefits associated with actions to protect the CIBW population that may help the species recover are primarily the result of the non-consumptive value people attribute to such protection (e.g., active use values associated with being able to view beluga whales and passive use values unrelated to direct human use). Little is known about these values, yet such information is needed for decision makers to more fully understand the trade-offs involved in

choosing among potential protection alternatives and to complement other information available about the costs, benefits, and impacts of protection alternatives. A survey is needed that will collect information that provides the information necessary to estimate public values for protection of CIBWs and the impacts of that protection.

This data collection and the subsequent research and analysis will provide the information needed to allow for a fuller range of benefits to be considered along with cost estimates, as well as other non-economic information, in the analysis of management actions that affect the CIBW. Previously, a pilot version of the survey was administered (OMB Control No. 0648-0621) to a small sample of households to evaluate the survey instrument and administration protocols. In particular, the pretest gathered a sufficient number of responses to evaluate the information presentation, reliability, internal consistency, response variability, and other properties of a newly developed survey, but too few to estimate economic values of interest in the full data collection.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The information will be collected through a mail survey on a sample of Alaska households. Sampled households will be contacted by NMFS through a mixture of mailings and telephone calls designed to maximize survey response. The mailings include an advance letter describing the study and requesting the individual's participation and are followed by the survey questionnaire, a reminder postcard, and a second full mailing. In addition to the mail contacts, a telephone contact with non-responding households for whom we have telephone numbers will be attempted. The primary purpose of the telephone contact is to encourage response to the mail survey. For non-responding households to the first five contacts (advance letter, initial mailing, postcard reminder, telephone reminder, and second full mailing), a short non-response survey will be sent by certified mail that collects information necessary to evaluate non-response behavior.

Mail Questionnaire

Survey responses gathered from the questionnaire include information about the following:

a. Public preferences regarding the protection of CIBWs.
b. Factors such as the risk of extinction to the DPS, listing status, and protection costs that affect the public's preferences for protecting CIBWs.
c. Information on general familiarity, attitudes, and preferences regarding protection of threatened and endangered species, and other priorities for government action.

The data will be used by NMFS to estimate a preference function for explaining choices between protection programs that differ in the extinction risk levels, ESA listing status, and costs. This estimated function will provide NMFS with information on public preferences and values for alternative CIBW protection programs, and what factors affect these values. This information

can then be compared with program costs and other impacts when evaluating protection alternatives.

The following is a discussion of how particular questions in the mail questionnaire will be ultimately used. Generally, the survey asks respondents for information regarding their knowledge and opinions of CIBWs, other endangered species, other whale species, and potential goals and impacts of management options available to protect the endangered population of CIBWs, in addition to standard socio-demographic information needed to classify respondents. It is divided into several sections.

Section 1: The Issue: Endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

Prior to the first section, respondents are asked a general social issues question. To put the issue of protecting threatened and endangered species in the context of the broad variety of priorities for government action (each with costs), and thus to reduce survey "importance bias", Q1 asks the respondent whether less, about the same, or more should be done with respect to several other issues facing the U.S. In addition to protection of threatened and endangered species, the set of issues listed includes government efficiency, education, road and highway improvements, economic growth and jobs, and air and water pollution.

The first section identifies the CIBW as a species protected under the Endangered Species Act and presents information about the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including definitions for "endangered" and "threatened" species, which are important to the policy questions in the survey. Since the CIBW is protected under the ESA as a distinct population segment (DPS), not as a distinct species, respondents are informed that the ESA also may protect a DPS. The introductory material also presents a breakdown of how many species are protected under the ESA to help place CIBWs in context as one of many ESA-protected species. Finally, the introduction identifies that the ESA requires reasonable actions be taken, which begins to motivate the questions about alternative actions to consider. The section also lists reasons people may care about threatened and endangered species and the types of costs that result from protecting them.

- Q2 asks how positive or negative the respondent's reaction is when they think about the Endangered Species Act. This simple question identifies people's general feelings toward endangered species protection. The question provides an easy start to the process of thinking about preferences regarding threatened and endangered species, and, in combination with Question 1, sets a tone of neutrality by accommodating positive and negative reactions at the start of the survey. In initial testing (and a past study), responses to this question were good predictors of how respondents would answer the stated preference questions.

- Q3 asks respondents whether they are aware that the ESA protects distinct population segments in addition to entire species. This question is used as a way to encourage respondents to read and understand the information regarding the ESA and its protection of DPSs in addition to entire species.

- After providing some general reasons for and against protecting threatened and endangered species (again providing a neutral perspective), Q4 addresses the importance to the respondent of general protection of threatened and endangered species, and whether protecting jobs is more or less important than threatened and endangered species protection to the respondent. Responses to this question were also found to be correlated with response patterns to stated choice questions in initial qualitative testing (i.e., focus group).

To properly elicit preferences regarding added protection of CIBWs, it is necessary to accurately define the good to be valued, and to provide the context within which it is produced, to ensure that respondents fully understand what they are being asked to value. Part of the process of providing context for the valuation involves discussing the species that may serve as substitutes in individual's minds for CIBWs. In focus groups, a natural set of substitutes that people identified for CIBWs is other whale species. This section provides a graphic of endangered whales residing in U.S. waters, with some information about whether the entire species or only one or more DPSs are protected. This graphic is useful for illustrating that the CIBW is one of several whale species in the U.S. that are protected by the ESA.

- Q5 is used to determine whether respondents have had prior experience observing whales, and aids in encouraging respondents to review the information provided.

Section 2: Some Beluga Whale Facts

This brief section introduces several facts about beluga whales generally.

- Like Q5, Q6 is intended to get respondents to begin thinking about beluga whales and assess their familiarity with beluga whales prior to reading the survey.

Section 3: Beluga Whales in the U.S.

This brief section provides a map of Alaska and table describing where the five beluga whale DPSs are, what their population sizes are, and what the population trend is for each.

- Q7 is another question intended to put the issue of CIBWs in a larger context (all beluga whales) and asks respondents whether they are concerned about the DPSs that are declining given that other DPSs are stable or increasing.

Section 4: Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

This section describes how the CIBW DPS is different from the other DPSs, where it is located, its ESA listing, natural and human-related factors associated with the past population decline, its current population trend, past and present efforts to protect it, and economic activities in the Cook Inlet that may be affected by protection measures, as well as the current estimated risk of extinction for the DPS under current conditions. This and the next section define the baseline of current and expected future conditions with current management programs, which is required for proper valuation of alternative levels of protection.

- Q8 asks whether the respondent has ever seen, heard, or read about the CIBW before reading the survey and is intended to get the individual thinking about the species and what they know about it.

- Respondents are asked how concerned they are about the CIBW in Q9. This information serves dual purposes. First, this question encourages the respondent to read and understand what is occurring with the DPS, and second, provides information that can be used to check for consistency of preferences with responses to stated preference questions.

- Q10 asks specifically about the risk of extinction information discussed above the question. It is intended to encourage the respondent to read the information on extinction risk carefully and consider whether the estimate is concerning from the respondent's perspective.

Section 5: New Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Protection Actions

This section introduces the concept of additional protection actions for CIBWs being undertaken and sets the stage for asking about protection alternatives and specific outcomes in the stated preference questions. In this section, different types of protection actions that would help CIBWs to recover are described in general terms, the term "recover" is defined, and the costs of additional protection actions (payment vehicle) are discussed in terms of the effects they would have on individual households.

- Q11 asks respondents to what extent they agree with two statements, one indicating a desire to help the CIBW recover, even if it costs more money; and the other stating that the most effective protection actions should be used even if businesses and individuals are negatively affected. The question serves the purpose of acknowledging that there are costs to protecting CIBWs and informing the respondent about these costs. This is important for maintaining a neutral stance regarding protection and minimizing information bias. Additionally, agreeing with the first statement indicates a willingness to spend money to protect the DPS, while disagreement suggests individuals may not choose costly programs to help the DPS. Disagreement with the second statement provides a reason why individuals may not be willing to spend additional money to protect CIBWs.

Section 6: What Alternatives Do You Prefer?

This section contains the stated preference questions, which are in a choice experiment, or stated choice, framework. The section begins with instructions for answering the questions and a budget reminder. In addition, a "cheap talk" script (e.g., Cummings and Taylor [1999]) is included to minimize potential hypothetical bias. Cheap talk refers to introductory text provided to the respondent before the stated preference questions are asked that explains what hypothetical bias (i.e., the potential bias associated with the respondent not being compelled to pay the amount they state they would pay) is, why it is problematic, and an appeal to not introduce this

potential bias by answering the questions as truthfully as possible. The instructions and cheap talk script are followed by four stated choice questions (Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15) and follow-up questions (Q16, Q17). The information from these questions will be used to estimate a CIBW protection preference function.

- In each of the four choice questions (Q12 through Q15), respondents are confronted with three alternatives that differ in what they do and how much they cost: the current CIBW protection program (Alternative A), which is the status quo alternative, and two others that do more and cost more (Alternatives B and C), in the survey to encourage respondents to view the non-status quo alternatives as distinct across choice questions. These alternatives are described by their expected results with respect to the following attributes:

  1. Population status in 50 years
  2. Risk of extinction by the year 2110
  3. Added household cost[1]

  Respondents are then asked to choose the alternative they most prefer, and which they least prefer. The status quo is always the first option to make it easy for respondents to select it (and reduce any unintended bias in selecting alternatives to do more and spend more), and to allow rank ordering of non-status quo alternatives relative to the baseline (Alternative A), which provides statistical efficiency gains over paired choices.

- In Q16, respondents are asked to agree or disagree with several statements that are used to help address several concerns about people's responses, including whether respondents feel it is their responsibility to pay for CIBW protection at all (potential protest), whether respondents had enough information to make an informed choice (the effect of uncertainty on values), whether respondents were paying just for CIBWs or if they believed other species were being protected by the alternatives considered (potential embedding), whether respondents believed the federal government could effectively manage the CIBW protection programs to bring about the results being valued (potential protest), whether respondents feel they should not have to pay more federal taxes for any reason (potential protest),whether the scientific estimates of future extinction risk were believable to the respondent (potential protest), a statement about whether the respondent felt qualified to choose between different extinction risks (potential protest), and a statement indicating an unwillingness to pay if there is any risk of extinction.

- Q17 identifies how confident individuals are about their answers to the stated preference questions. Respondents stating they are "not at all confident" in their answers may be excluded from the estimation since these individuals, for whatever reason, are uncertain that their answers reflect how they feel.

[1] In cognitive interviews, individuals were specifically asked in what form they believed they would be paying for Cook Inlet beluga whale protection programs. The vast majority responded that the added cost in the choice questions simply represents money out of their pocket, mostly in the form of federal taxes, but also from some additional expenditures on seafood products.

- The final question (Q18) in the section is intended to gauge respondents' general environmental attitudes using questions from the New Ecological Paradigm, a series of Likert scale questions that measure pro-environmental sentiments on several dimensions (Dunlap, van Liere, Mertig, and Jones, 2001). These questions have been used frequently in numerous environmental surveys. An understanding of general environmental attitudes may be helpful to explain responses to stated preference questions and enable classification of respondents.

Section 7: About You and Your Household

This final section consists of eleven questions, Q19 through Q29, that collect information about the respondent and the respondent's household to be used as explanatory variables in the stated preference model, for comparing the sample to the population (coverage or sampling bias), and for comparing respondents to non-respondents (non-response bias). To the extent possible, the questions and response categories parallel those used by the Census Bureau to allow the most direct comparisons.

- Socioeconomic, demographic, and classification information collected includes gender (Q19), age (Q20), household size (Q21), employment status (Q22), membership in an environmental or conservation program (Q23), recent fishing and hunting behavior (Q24), educational attainment (Q25), household ownership status (Q26), ethnicity (Q27), race (Q28), and income (Q29).

Telephone Follow-Up

Following the initial mailing and postcard reminder, we will contact non-respondents by telephone to encourage them to complete the mail survey.[2] No additional information will be collected from these individuals, as this telephone call will be used solely to encourage individuals to respond to the mail survey.

Non-Respondent Survey

After the telephone contact and second full mailing, individuals who have still not responded will receive a non-respondent survey. This short, 2-page survey will be mailed to respondents by certified mail. The non-respondent survey includes selected socioeconomic and demographic questions, along with two key attitudinal questions and a question that directly asks them for the reasons they may not have participated in the main mail questionnaire. Information about these variables will enable conducting statistical tests to determine whether non-respondents differ from respondents with respect to these characteristics. The attitudinal questions include versions of Q2 and Q4 from the mail questionnaire. Responses to questions like these have been shown to be correlated to responses to stated preference questions in earlier rounds of focus groups and cognitive interviews and in the formal pretest. This information can be used to evaluate and adjust the results for potential non-response bias among sample members.

[2] Those needing a replacement survey will be mailed one following the telephone interview.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

The survey will be administered as a mail survey and therefore does not involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The economics literature was consulted extensively to identify studies that valued Cook Inlet beluga whales. To date, there has not been any study that provides economic value information for CIBWs.[3] However, a recent unpublished government study by Olar, et al. (2007) valued the protection of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence Estuary in Canada, which is classified as threatened under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in Canada. The study uses stated preference choice experiment data collected from a survey of Canadian households using an Internet-enabled Web panel that achieved a cooperation rate of 52%. Mean household willingness to pay for improving the St. Lawrence Estuary beluga whale from its currently threatened status to a special concern status was estimated to be $107 (Canadian dollars), with a standard deviation of about $12. For a larger improvement, from threatened to not at risk, the mean household willingness to pay (WTP) was estimated to be $122 (Canadian dollars) with a standard deviation of about $17. While these results suggest a positive WTP for improving the status of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence Estuary, the WTP is for Canadian households and does not speak to Alaska households' preferences and values.

Although there are no existing survey efforts to understand the public's preferences and values for protecting CIBWs, there are numerous examples of studies conducted to estimate the non-consumptive value of other endangered species and marine mammals. Examples include Bosetti and Pearce (2003), Langford, et al. (2001), Jakobsson and Dragun (2001), Fredman (1995), Hagen, et al. (1992), among others. All these studies utilized contingent valuation methods, as do the vast majority of species valuation studies.[4] As a result, they are unable to fully analyze marginal values of attributes of the species protection. The proposed study departs from most of

[3] As noted above, the CIBW pilot pretest survey did not collect sufficient data for estimating value information.
[4] See Loomis and White (1996) and Richardson and Loomis (2009) for summaries of the literature related to the valuation of threatened and endangered species.

the existing literature in its use of a stated choice framework that allows marginal values of attributes of protection programs to be estimated. The added information provided by this approach arms decision makers with better information about how much the public would benefit from programs that lead to differing results, and thus represents a flexible tool for management. A recent study by Lew, Layton, and Rowe (2010) illustrates an application of this approach with respect to the valuation of protection for a U.S. threatened and endangered species (the Steller sea lion).

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small identities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The collection does not involve small businesses or other small identities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The survey is necessary to gather data for estimating public values for additional protection for CIBWs, beyond what is currently being done. If the data collection is not conducted, NMFS will have to rely on information about public values for other species to infer the value of protecting CIBWs using benefits transfer methods to consider along with other important information in decisions about CIBW management alternatives.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The collection is consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published February 7, 2012, (77 FR 6065) solicited comments on the information collection. The information collection described therein was for a survey with a larger scope; the target population has since been refined to Alaska households.

There were three requests for copies of the survey and five letters submitted providing substantive comments. One additional comment was a general statement about there not being a need to spend government money on surveys of this type. No response was prepared for this comment. Copies of the survey instrument were provided to the requesting individuals.

All five letters with substantive comments focused on the first of four topics on which the FR Notice invited comments: “whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the

proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility." Although the comments did not address the other three topics, they did provide multiple substantive points of criticism. On review of the submitted letters, NMFS staff identified eight unique comments and drafted detailed responses to each. Comments and responses are presented in an Appendix, submitted as a supplementary document.

All of these commenters recommend cancellation of the proposed data collection, and two suggest that proceeding with the information collection prior to completion of the CIBW Recovery Plan is inappropriate. For reasons described in the responses to comments, NMFS disagrees with the claims that the information collection is unnecessary for the proper performance of the agency's function, and that it is appropriate to delay the research pending completion of Recovery Plan development. NMFS intends to proceed with the data collection, pending clearance under PRA.

Four of the comment letters were submitted by members of the CIBW Recovery Team Stakeholder Panel. All expressed concerns about the lack of coordination with the Recovery Team and other government entities on development of the proposed data collection, and interpreted the Federal Register (FR) notice as a statement of NMFS' intent to pursue CIBW protection actions outside of the framework of the established recovery plan process and cooperative agreement with the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. In response, senior Protected Resources staff at NMFS Alaska Region communicated in writing to Recovery Team members to clarify the objectives and intended use of survey results in the recovery plan process and subsequent economic analysis of options developed by the Recovery Plan team. The letter also states NMFS' intent to better inform team members in the future about progress and findings related to this project. In addition, a response was sent by the principal investigators to the commenter referencing the letter to the Recovery Team and further emphasizing the survey objectives and intent to improve consultation with the Recovery Team members. The FR notice text for publication upon submission of this PRA clearance request to OMB was revised to clarify the objectives of the research.

The survey instrument presents the latest information on CIBWs, current population trends, alternative management options, and likely impacts of management options. To ensure that the information is as accurate as possible, numerous CIBW researchers and biologists have reviewed the survey instrument, including Mr. Jon Kurland (Director of NMFS Alaska Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division), Dr. Brad Smith, Dr. Barbara Mahoney, Dr. Kaja Brix, and Dr. Lew Queirolo of the NMFS Alaska Regional Office, and Dr. Kim Shelden and Dr. Rod Hobbs of NMFS' National Marine Mammal Laboratory.

9. <u>Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees</u>.

Inclusion of an incentive acts as a sign of good will on the part of the study sponsors and encourages reciprocity of that goodwill by the respondent. Singer (2002) provides a comprehensive review of the use of incentives in surveys. She notes that giving respondents a small financial incentive (even a token amount) in the first mailing increases response rates in mail-based surveys and are cost-effective. Such prepaid incentives are more effective than larger

promised incentives that are contingent on completion of the questionnaire. In tests conducted by Lesser, et al (1999), including a $2 incentive in a mailing with four contact points was shown to increase response rates by an additional 19 to 31 percentage points. Thus, even a small upfront incentive typically is more cost effective than additional follow-up steps that are often considered.

To encourage participation in the mail survey, a $5 honorarium will be provided to the participants in the initial mailing. During the pilot pretest implementation of this survey (OMB Control No. 0648-0621), we conducted a split-sample test of different amounts of honorarium--$1, $5, and $10. A memorandum to OMB following completion of the pilot pretest implementation (sent to OMB on September 20, 2011) reported that the $5 and $10 incentives resulted in a statistically higher response rate than the $1 incentive. The response rates associated with the $5 and $10 incentive amounts were not statistically different. As a result, the $5 honorarium appears to be the least costly incentive to increase response rates significantly.

There are several reasons why we believe inclusion of both a financial incentive and follow-up contacts will be needed to reach desired response rates. First, the survey is about an unfamiliar issue to many Alaskans. As such, the chance that respondents will not be motivated to complete the survey is higher than for a survey on a more familiar subject. Second, although every attempt is being made to ensure the survey is easy to read, understand, and complete, the amount of information it needs to present and the number of questions it needs to ask contribute to a 16-page survey requiring more respondent attention than some surveys. For these reasons, we expect both incentives and follow-up contacts will be required to obtain a suitable response rate.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

In the cover letter accompanying each mailing, respondents will be told that their name and address information will be kept separate from their responses and that only their responses will be given to researchers. The cover page of the survey also includes the following statement:

> 'Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to researchers for analysis.'

Following completion of the data collection, the survey firm will delete any information identifying individuals (i.e., name and addresses) before any data file is delivered to NMFS or any other participating researchers and agencies.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature asked in the survey.

12. <u>Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information</u>.

The mail survey will be sent to a random sample of approximately 4,200 addresses. The random sample will be purchased from a professional sampling vendor. Based on previous experience, up to 15% of these types of samples can be expected to be bad or unusable addresses, which means the number of households receiving the survey will be approximately 3,570. We expect a final response rate of at least 50 percent (of the valid sample), leading to at least 1,785 (= 3,570 × 0.50) responding households returning completed surveys. The cover letter will solicit the participation of an adult head of the household to complete the survey. Our experience suggests respondents typically complete the survey in 20 to 25 minutes, so we assume 25 minutes in our computation of the potential burden hours. As a result, those ultimately completing the survey are expected to contribute up to 744 hours to the overall hour burden.

Following the initial mailing and postcard, we expect approximately 70% of expected completes or 1,250 households to have returned completed surveys (based on results from the pilot pretest survey implementation). Households that have not responded after the initial mailing and postcard reminder will be contacted by telephone and encouraged to complete and return the survey. Households that need a replacement questionnaire will be identified and sent a new one. The phone interview is expected to take 2 minutes on average to complete, and we expect to attempt to reach up to 36% of the 535 potential respondents who will eventually return the survey, or up to 193 individuals, and 36% of the 1,785 of those who will not return the survey, or up to 643 individuals, for a total of 836 individuals representing approximately 28 burden hours (193 × 2 min + 643 × 2 min).[5]

Following the telephone prompts, a second full mailing will be attempted. This will not result in any additional burden hours.

After all contacts, we expect 1,785 responding households to have returned completed surveys, which leaves 1,785 non-responding households. A brief (2-page) non-respondent survey will be conducted with a sample of 750 non-responding individuals. Each non-responding household will be sent the short survey by certified mail. Of these 750 non-responding individuals sent a non-response survey, we anticipate 33%, or 250, will return completed surveys. The non-respondent survey is expected to take at most 5 minutes to complete, which results in an additional 21 hours.[6]

The total number of unique respondents to all survey contacts will be 2,678. This number consists of respondents who return the questionnaire (1,785), respondents who do not return the questionnaire but are reached during the telephone prompt contact (643), and the non-respondents to the main mail questionnaire who complete the non-response survey only (250).

[5] Although we will attempt to reach all households in the sample that have not returned a completed survey to this point, we do not expect to be able to reach more than 193 in a timely and affordable manner.

[6] Based on informal testing, we expect the two-page non-response survey will take respondents 3-5 minutes to complete on average, but for the purposes of calculating burden hours, we assume 5 minutes.

Survey instrument	Estimated number of respondents	Estimated number of responses	Estimated time per respondent (minutes)	Estimated total annual burden hours (hours)
Mail survey (from initial mailing and postcard reminder)	1,250	1,250	25	521
Mail survey (returned after phone contact and follow-up full mailing)	535	535	25	223
Follow-up phone call	643[a]	836 [c]	2	28
Non-response survey	250	250	5	21
Total respondents	2,478[b]	2,661		793

[a] Number of successful phone contacts of households that have not returned completed surveys following initial mailing and postcard reminder.
[b] Total respondents reflect the total sample size minus the households that do not complete either the mail survey or phone interview.
[c] Includes 643 households that complete only the phone call, plus 193 households contacted by phone that also complete the mail survey.

13. <u>Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above)</u>.

No additional cost burden will be imposed on respondents aside from the burden hours indicated above.

14. <u>Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government</u>.

Annualized cost to the Federal government of the survey is approximately $50,000 per year, divided as follows: $40,000 in contract award money and $10,000 in staff time and resources. Contractor services include administering of the mail survey, follow-up telephone calls, non-response survey, and data validation.

15. <u>Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments</u>.

This is a new collection.

16. <u>For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication</u>.

A report will summarize the survey development, testing, and implementation. It will present statistical summaries (i.e., means, variances, and frequency distributions) of data collected in the survey, and some basic analyses of the data. In addition, the econometric analysis of the stated preference choice experiment data will be reported in one or more papers that will be submitted

for publication at an environmental economics peer-reviewed journal, such as *Marine Resource Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management,* or *Land Economics*. It is also expected that the information produced from the econometric analysis of survey data may be used in regulatory analyses of Recovery Plan alternatives.

17. <u>If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate</u>.

Not Applicable.

18. <u>Explain each exception to the certification statement</u>.

Not Applicable.

Advance Letter

<DATE>
John Smith
123 Main Street
City, STATE ZIP USA

Dear <Name>,

We need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales. The population of beluga whales in the Cook Inlet of Alaska declined rapidly during the 1990s and since then has not been recovering as scientists expected. Some actions have been taken to halt the decline, and the government is considering additional actions to protect the population and help it recover. Even though you may not be familiar with this issue, your opinion matters. Government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales affect all U.S. households through federal government spending.

In the next few days, you will receive a survey in the mail with pictures and questions about the Cook Inlet beluga whale and other whales. The survey does not require any special knowledge.

We know your time is valuable. You will find $5 included with your survey as a small token of our appreciation for your participation. Your household is part of a small number of households across the country scientifically selected to help us understand public views on this issue. To make sure we hear from a true cross-section of households, we need to hear from you.

This survey is being conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a U.S. government agency charged with managing the conservation of the Cook Inlet beluga whale and other marine life.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts
Project Directors
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Letter with First Mailing of Survey

<DATE>

John Smith
123 Main Street
City, STATE ZIP USA

Dear <Name>,

Enclosed is the questionnaire I wrote to you about last week.

We need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting beluga whales in Alaska's Cook Inlet. Cook Inlet beluga whales declined rapidly during the 1990s. Actions have been taken to halt the decline, but the population has not been recovering as expected. The federal government is considering additional actions to protect the population and help it recover.

Even though you may not be familiar with this issue, your opinion matters. Any government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales will affect all U.S. households through federal government spending. Your household is one of only a select few from across the country scientifically selected to provide opinions to be considered along with information from scientists and planners. To keep costs low and to make sure we hear from a true cross-section of the public, we need to hear from you.

Your questionnaire should be completed by either the male or female head of your household. The survey takes most people about 20 minutes to complete, sometimes more, sometimes less. The survey does not require any special knowledge – we just ask that you consider each question and respond with your own opinion. If you would prefer to complete the survey on-line, you may go to **https://www.synovate.com/surveylocation** and use the following information to access the survey on the secure website:

Username: dklslkd
Password: dasklfdjskj

Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to the researchers for analysis. The identification number on the back of the survey is there so that XXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, can check your name off when the questionnaire is returned. If you have any questions, please call XXXXXXXX toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your help, and please remember to complete all the questions.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts
Project Directors
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Reminder Postcard

<DATE>

Last week a questionnaire was mailed to you seeking your opinions about the Cook Inlet beluga whale, a species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, or filled out the survey on-line, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not, we ask that you do so today.

It is very important that we hear from you. You are one of a small number of households across the country selected to give your opinions on this matter. Your response will help shape decisions about federal government actions and spending on this topic. Even if you don't have strong views on this matter, we need your participation in the questionnaire to ensure public opinion is considered in these decisions.

If you need another copy of the questionnaire, please call XXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, at 1-800-XXX-XXXX, and a questionnaire will be mailed to you today.

Thank you for your help.

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts
Project Directors
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Letter with Second Mailing of Survey

<DATE>

John Smith
123 Main Street
City, STATE ZIP USA

Dear NAME

We realize you are busy but we need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales in Alaska. Cook Inlet beluga whales declined rapidly during the 1990s and since then the population has not been recovering as expected. The federal government is considering additional actions to protect the population and help it recover.

It is important that we hear from you:

- Even though you may not be familiar with Cook Inlet beluga whales, any additional government actions to protect them will affect all U.S. households through federal government spending.

- Your household is one of only a select few from across the country scientifically selected to represent the views of all [U.S. residents] [Alaska residents].

Your questionnaire can be completed by either the male or female head of your household. The survey takes most people about 20 minutes to complete and does not require any special knowledge – we just ask that you consider each question and respond with your own opinion. If you would prefer to complete the survey on-line, you may go to **https://www.synovate.com/surveylocation** and use the following information to access the survey on the secure website:

Username: dklslkd
Password: dasklfdjskj

Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to the researchers for analysis. The identification number on the back of the survey is there so that XXXXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, can check your name off when the questionnaire is returned. If you have any questions, please call XXXXXXXXXXX at XXXXXXXXXXXX toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your help, and please remember to complete all the questions. When the results are analyzed, we will send you a postcard listing a web site where you can see a summary of the results.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts
Project Directors
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The Future of Cook Inlet Beluga Whales
What is Your Opinion?

The population of beluga whales in the Cook Inlet of Alaska declined rapidly during the 1990s and consequently was listed as an Endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in 2008. Some actions have been taken to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales and more actions are now being considered. This survey collects public opinions about these possible new actions. Government officials will consider your opinions, along with information from scientists and planners, when selecting what and how much to do.

Even though you may not be familiar with this issue, your opinions matter. Government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales will affect all U.S. households through federal government spending.

The material in this survey is based on the best available information from government, university, and industry scientists.

This survey is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a U.S. government agency charged with making decisions about Cook Inlet beluga whale management activities.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 25 minutes, including time for reviewing instructions, reviewing existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to the researchers for analysis.

OMB Control #: XXXX-XXXX
Expiration Date: XXXX

Q1 **Protecting threatened and endangered species is one of many issues facing the U.S. To help us place this issue in perspective, answer this question based on what you know now. For each issue, compared to what is being done now in the U.S., do you think we should be doing less, doing about the same, or doing more?** *For each item, check one box.*

	Do less	Do about the same	Do more
Make government more efficient…….....	❑	❑	❑
Improve education..…….....	❑	❑	❑
Protect threatened and endangered species.....	❑	❑	❑
Improve roads and highways.....	❑	❑	❑
Encourage economic growth and jobs.....	❑	❑	❑
Clean up air and water pollution.....	❑	❑	❑

The Issue: Endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

The Cook Inlet beluga whale is protected as an endangered species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. According to the act:

> An endangered species is a plant or animal species that is in danger of going extinct in areas where it normally lives.
>
> A threatened species is a plant or animal species that is likely to become endangered in areas where it normally lives.

The Endangered Species Act requires the federal government to take reasonable actions to protect threatened and endangered species, such as limiting human activities that may harm them and protecting the places where they live.

Q2 **The Endangered Species Act currently protects 86 mammals, 90 birds, 138 fish, 294 other species such as reptiles and insects, and 718 plants. When you think of the Endangered Species Act, how positive or negative is your general reaction?** *Check one box.*

- ❑ Mostly positive
- ❑ Somewhat positive
- ❑ Neither positive nor negative
- ❑ Somewhat negative
- ❑ Mostly negative
- ❑ Don’t know

The Endangered Species Act protects either the entire species, or one or more <u>distinct populations</u> within a species. Distinct populations are different from the rest of the species because of physical, genetic, ecological, or behavioral characteristics.

Cook Inlet beluga whales are a distinct population of beluga whales that are geographically isolated and do not interact with other beluga whale populations in Alaska.

Q3 **Before today, were you aware that the Endangered Species Act protects distinct populations for some species in addition to entire species?** *Check one box.*

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Some people are interested in protecting threatened and endangered species because they:

- Are a source of enjoyment and learning for people now and in the future.
- May help to show whether the environment and ecosystem are healthy.
- May provide medicines and other helpful substances for humans someday, even if we don't yet know what these uses are.
- Have a right to exist and should not be endangered by man's actions.

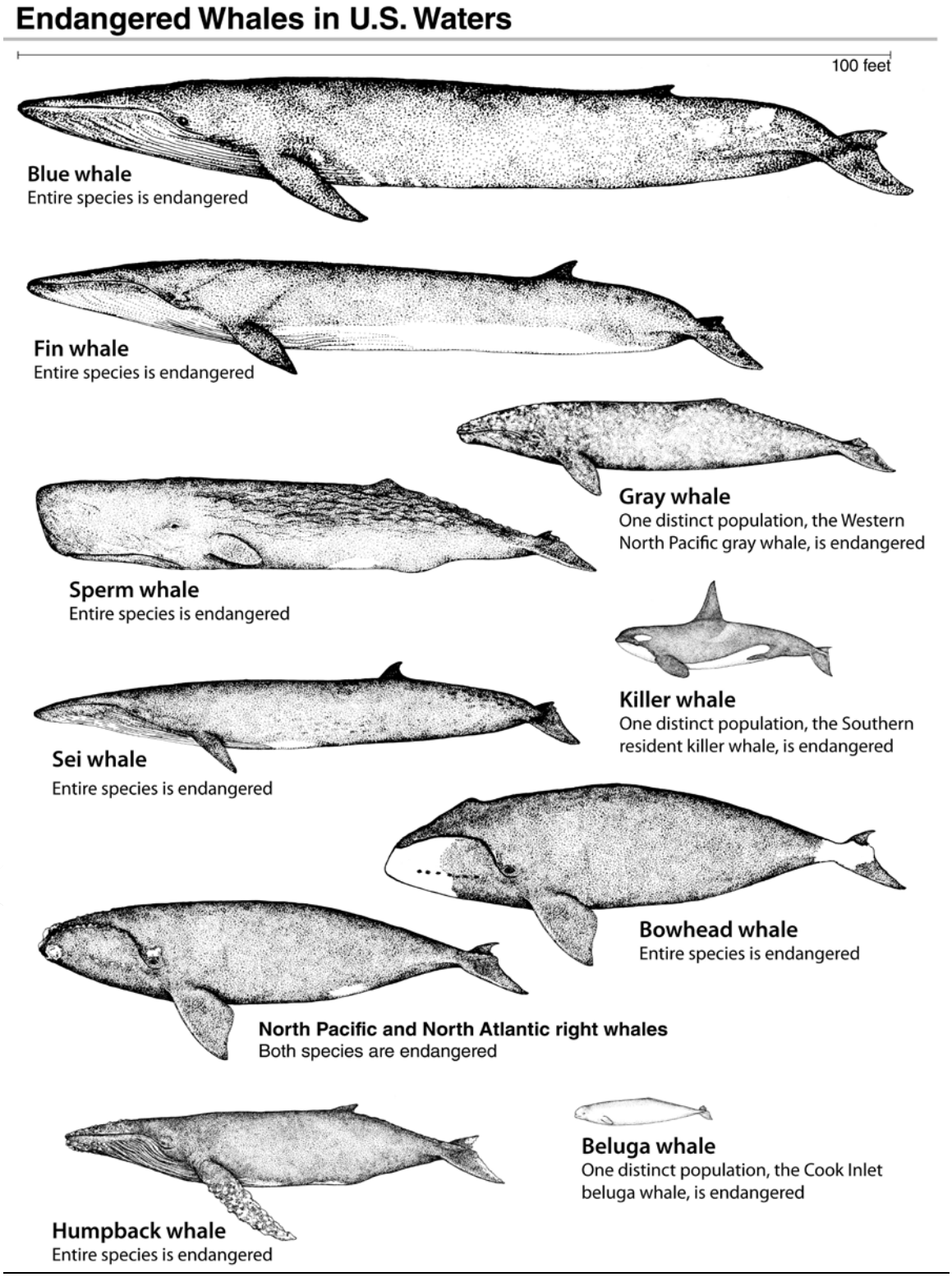
Some people are concerned about actions to protect threatened and endangered species because they:

- May restrict what people can do, such as limit recreation, forestry, land development and use, and hunting and fishing activities.
- May increase the cost to produce and provide goods such as food, housing, drinking water, and lumber, which could increase some prices consumers pay.
- May not be effective if the decline of the species is due to causes beyond human control.
- Use government funds and resources that could be used for other important issues.

Q4 **From strongly disagree to strongly agree, how do you feel about these statements?** *Check one box for each statement.*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Protecting threatened and endangered species is important to me.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Protecting jobs is more important than protecting threatened and endangered species.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

The beluga whale is one of 11 whale species found in U.S. waters that are listed as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The figure below shows these endangered whale species (pictures are to scale).



Q5 **Have you personally observed whales in nature (outside of aquariums)?** *Check one box.*

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

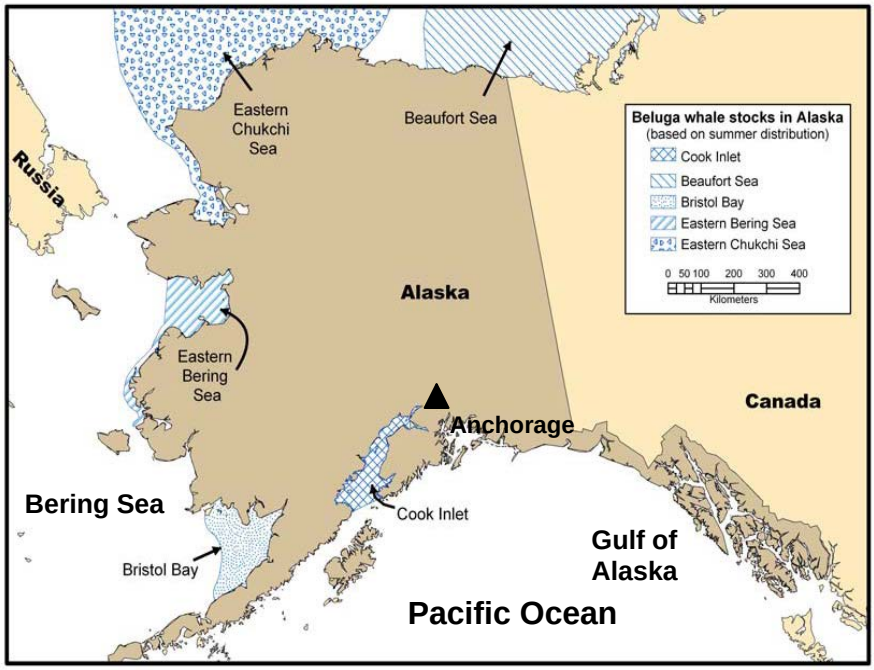
Some Beluga Whale Facts

- **Adult beluga whales are white in appearance, can grow to an average of 15 feet long, weigh more than 3,000 pounds, and live more than 30 years. Males are larger than females.**
- **They are social animals that typically hunt, travel, and interact in groups.**
- **Beluga whales are found in Arctic and subarctic regions of Russia, Greenland, and North America, usually in areas of the ocean that are covered by ice during part of the year.**
- **There are 29 distinct beluga whale populations in the world, including five populations in Alaska.**
- **In Alaska, beluga whales mostly eat fish, such as cod and salmon. An adult beluga whale may eat 50 pounds of food in one day.**
- **Some distinct beluga whale populations migrate, but other distinct populations live in one area year round.**

Q6 **Before today, had you ever seen, heard about, or read about beluga whales?** *Check one box.*

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

Beluga Whales in the U.S.



Summer distribution of beluga whale stocks in Alaska
From: *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries Service. 2008.*

Five beluga whale populations (or "stocks") live in U.S. waters off the coast of Alaska in the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, Bering Sea, Bristol Bay, and Cook Inlet (see map).

Population estimates for the 5 distinct populations of beluga whales in the U.S.:

U.S. beluga whale distinct population	Approximate size of distinct population (current population trend)
Beaufort Sea	40,000 (not known if increasing or decreasing)
Eastern Chukchi Sea	3,700 (appears to be stable)
Eastern Bering Sea	18,000 (not known if increasing or decreasing)
Bristol Bay	3,300 (appears to be increasing)
Cook Inlet	*284* (*decreasing*)

Q7 **From strongly disagree to strongly agree, how do you feel about the following statement?**
Check one box.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Since some distinct populations of U.S. beluga whales are increasing or stable, I am not concerned about the ones that are decreasing.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Cook Inlet Beluga Whales

Of the five distinct beluga whale populations found in the U.S., the <u>Cook Inlet beluga whale</u> is considered by scientists to be the most isolated, both geographically and genetically, from the other populations. It is also the smallest of the five beluga whale populations in the U.S. The Cook Inlet beluga whale lives in Cook Inlet year round.

Currently, the Cook Inlet beluga whale is listed as <u>endangered</u> under the Endangered Species Act.

Q8 **Before today, had you ever seen, heard about, or read about Cook Inlet beluga whales?**
Check one box.

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

Cook Inlet beluga whales live mostly in the northern part of Cook Inlet near Anchorage, Alaska's largest city. Because of where they live, the Cook Inlet beluga whale population is vulnerable to human activities.

- In Alaska, Alaska Native tribes have hunted beluga whales for food, oil, and traditional uses for centuries. Beluga whale hunting in U.S. waters is only permitted for Alaska Native tribes and is illegal for all others.
- Between 1994 and 1998, more than 300 beluga whales were killed in the Cook Inlet by Alaska Natives in legal hunts. This was a dramatic increase from the hunts reported in the past.
- The population declined by almost a half during this same period.

Scientists believe Alaska Native hunting was the primary cause for this decline. In 1999, the federal government began restricting Cook Inlet beluga whale hunting by Alaska Natives.

- Between 1999 and 2006, Alaska Natives killed a total of five Cook Inlet beluga whales in legal hunts.
- Beginning in 2007, all hunting of Cook Inlet beluga whales was suspended until the population has increased enough for hunting to resume.

As a result of these protection actions, federal government scientists predicted the Cook Inlet beluga whale population would begin increasing by 2% to 6% per year.

Despite these measures, the Cook Inlet beluga whale population is not growing as predicted, and has declined to 284 whales. It is not known whether this is a result of natural factors, human-related factors, or a combination of both.

Numerous factors could be contributing to the continued decline of Cook Inlet beluga whales, and the extent to which each factor affects the population is being investigated by scientists. They include the following:

Natural factors

- Beluga whales being stranded in the mud during low tide
- Killer whales preying on beluga whales
- Illness caused by parasites and disease

Human-related factors

- Illegal hunting
- Commercial and recreational fishing, which decreases available food for beluga whales
- Illness or injury caused by pollution from sewage, airports, cities, and other sources
- Oil spills from tankers and drilling platforms
- Dredging and building activities where beluga whales live
- Ships and boats hitting or disturbing beluga whales
- Underwater noise that may damage or interfere with beluga whales' hearing

Q9 After looking at the information in this handout, how concerned are you, if at all, about the Cook Inlet beluga whale? *Please check one box.*

Not at all concerned	A little concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned	Extremely concerned
❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Federal government scientists have predicted that without changes to reverse the continued decline of the Cook Inlet beluga population, the population is likely to permanently disappear. With a small population, Cook Inlet beluga whales are more vulnerable to rare events, such as oil spills or a low number of successful births.

Using the best information and prediction methods available, government scientists have estimated that under current conditions, there is a 25 percent risk (1 in 4 chance) that the population will be extinct in 100 years (by the year 2110).

Q10 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *Check one box.*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
A 25% risk of extinction in 100 years for Cook Inlet beluga whales makes me concerned that they will actually go extinct.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

New Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Protection Actions

To help the population recover, federal and state governments may consider additional actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales and their habitat from human activities that may increase their risk of extinction.

- **Recover** means the species' population has improved to the point where the risk of extinction in the foreseeable future is very small and the species can be removed from the endangered and threatened species list.
- Possible protection actions that could occur include: further regulate commercial fishing, reduce pollution (chemical and noise) sources, minimize impacts from coastal development on beluga whales, increase monitoring activities to identify and rescue stranded whales, and prevent illegal hunting.
- The costs associated with additional protection actions vary a great deal, and depend upon the specific actions taken. Regardless of the action taken, more enforcement of existing restrictions will be required and more monitoring and research done to improve our understanding of the distinct population and the threats to it, particularly in areas of Cook Inlet used most by beluga whales.

Additional protection actions beyond those currently in place for the Cook Inlet beluga whales will cost more money. These costs may take various forms.

- Your household's costs may increase through higher prices for products you buy and through increases in your federal taxes.
- Most of the increased cost would occur in the first 10 years while industries adjust to new requirements, and to fund more government enforcement and monitoring.

Q11 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *Please check one box.*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Even if it costs us more money, we should do more so that the Cook Inlet beluga whale recovers.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Even if businesses and individuals are negatively affected by them, the most effective protection actions should be used to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales…….	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

What Alternatives Do You Prefer?

As we have discussed, new alternatives may be considered to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales. Your opinions are important to help understand what alternatives the public prefers, and will be used to help decision makers set policy.

The next questions compare the expected results for the Cook Inlet beluga population after 50 years under hypothetical alternative programs of regulations, and government enforcement and monitoring. In each question, you are asked to compare Alternative A with two other alternatives:

- **Alternative A** presents the expected Endangered Species Act status and risk of extinction of the Cook Inlet beluga population after 50 years without additional protection actions beyond those currently in place. Continuing the current actions would not increase the costs to your household.

- **Alternative B** and **Alternative C** present the expected Endangered Species Act status and risk of extinction of the Cook Inlet beluga whale population after 50 years under a range of the many possible alternatives that do more and cost more to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales.
  - The added cost to your household each year for 10 years above the cost of the current program is also listed.
  - Remember, if you spend money for this, it won't be available to buy other things.

Questions 12, 13, 14, and 15 cover a range of alternatives and costs. Since scientists are still working on the alternatives and estimating the possible costs, the results and costs for the hypothetical alternatives may vary across questions. Please answer each question considering only the results and costs presented in that question.

For hypothetical questions like these, studies have shown that many people say they are willing to pay more for protecting threatened and endangered species than they actually would pay out of their pockets. We believe this happens because people do not really consider how big an impact an extra cost actually has to their family's budget when answering these types of questions.

To avoid this, as you consider each question, please imagine your household actually paying the cost for the alternative you select from your household's budget.

Q12 **Here is the current program with two alternatives. Which alternative do you most prefer and which alternative do you least prefer?** *Please indicate your responses below the table.*

	Alternative A Current program	Alternative B	Alternative C
Population status……... (endangered now)	**Endangered**	**Threatened**	**Threatened**
Risk of extinction by the year 2110…….. (25% now)	**25%**	**15%**	**10%**
Added cost to your household each year for 10 years…….	**$0**	**$40**	**$50**

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Which alternative do you prefer the most? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑
Which alternative do you prefer the least? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑

Q13 **Here is the current program with two different alternatives. Which alternative do you most prefer and which alternative do you least prefer?** *Please indicate your responses below the table.*

	Alternative A Current program	Alternative B	Alternative C
Population status……... (endangered now)	**Endangered**	**Recovered**	**Threatened**
Risk of extinction by the year 2110…….. (25% now)	**25%**	**Less than 1%**	**5%**
Added cost to your household each year for 10 years…….	**$0**	**$100**	**$60**

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Which alternative do you prefer the most? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑
Which alternative do you prefer the least? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑

Q14 **Here is the current program and two more alternatives. Which alternative do you most prefer and which alternative do you least prefer?** *Please indicate your responses below the table.*

	Alternative A Current program	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**
Population status……... (endangered now)	**Endangered**	**Endangered**	**Threatened**
Risk of extinction by the year 2110…….. (25% now)	**25%**	**20%**	**2%**
Added cost to your household each year for 10 years…….	**$0**	**$30**	**$80**

	Alternative A	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**
Which alternative do you prefer the most? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑
Which alternative do you prefer the least? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑

Q15 **Here, again, is the current program and two other alternatives. Which alternative do you most prefer and which alternative do you least prefer?** *Please indicate your responses below the table.*

	Alternative A Current program	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**
Population status……... (endangered now)	**Endangered**	**Threatened**	**Recovered**
Risk of extinction by the year 2110…….. (25% now)	**25%**	**15%**	**Less than 1%**
Added cost to your household each year for 10 years…….	**$0**	**$40**	**$100**

	Alternative A	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**
Which alternative do you prefer the most? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑
Which alternative do you prefer the least? *Check one box------>*	❑	❑	❑

Q16 **The following are statements some people tell us about their answers to Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?** *Mark the box of your response for each statement.*

When answering Q12, Q13, Q14, and Q15…	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I do not feel it is my responsibility to pay for the protection of Cook Inlet beluga whales…….....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
There is not enough information for me to make an informed choice between the alternatives……...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The added costs I am willing to pay are just to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales, and not to protect other species……...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am concerned that the federal government will not effectively protect Cook Inlet beluga whales……...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I feel I should not have to pay more federal taxes for any reason…….....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I don't think that scientists can make good predictions about what will happen in 50 or 100 years……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I don’t feel qualified to choose between different levels of risks of extinction……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I don’t want to pay for Cook Inlet beluga whale protections if there is still a risk it may become extinct in the future……	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q17 **These questions were asked to obtain public input for decision makers to consider along with information from scientists and planners. People feel differently about how confident they are with their selection of alternatives and the costs they would have to pay.**

How confident are you that your answers in Q12 through Q15 accurately reflect how you feel about the alternatives for protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales? *Check the best answer.*

Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident	Extremely confident
❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q18 **Listed below are statements about the relationship between humans and the environment.** *For each statement please indicate how much you agree or disagree by checking the appropriate box.*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support……	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs……	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences……...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Humans are severely abusing the environment…….	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist……	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Despite our special abilities, humans are still subject to the laws of nature……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The so-called “ecological crisis” facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated…	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature……	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset……..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it…	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe……...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

About You and Your Household

This information is used to compare our survey respondents with the U.S. population. Your responses will be kept confidential and separate from your name and address. Material identifying you will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Q19 **Are you male or female?** *Check the box of your answer.*

- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

Q20 **In what year were you born?** 19_____

Q21 **How many people do you live with in each of the following age groups?**
If none for a category please write "0".

_____ Under 18 _____ 18 to 35 _____ 36 to 60 _____ Over 60

Q22 **Which of the following best describes your employment status?** *Check the box of your answer.*

- ❑ Employed full-time
- ❑ Employed part-time
- ❑ Homemaker
- ❑ Student
- ❑ Retired
- ❑ Currently unemployed
- ❑ Other (*please specify)*_____

Q23 **Have you ever been a member of, or contributed time or money to, an environmental or conservation organization?** *Check the box of the best answer.*

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

Q24 **How many hunting trips and sport or non-commercial fishing trips, if any, have you taken in the last 3 years?** *For each type of trip, check the best answer.*

Hunting trips:
- ❑ None
- ❑ 1 to 3
- ❑ 4 or more

Fishing trips:
- ❑ None
- ❑ 1 to 3
- ❑ 4 or more

Q25 **What is the highest grade or level of school you have completed?** *Check the best answer.*

- ❑ Some high school or less
- ❑ High school diploma or equivalent
- ❑ Some college
- ❑ Two year college degree (AA, AS) or technical school
- ❑ Four year college graduate (BA, BS)
- ❑ Some graduate work but did not receive a graduate degree
- ❑ Graduate degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.)

Q26 **Do you own or rent your residence?** *Check your answer.*

- ❑ Own
- ❑ Rent

Q27 **Are you Hispanic or Latino?** *Check the box of the best answer.*

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Q28 **Which of the following best describes you?** *Check one or more.*

- ❑ Asian
- ❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ❑ Black or African American
- ❑ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ❑ White

Q29 **What was your household income (before taxes) in 2011?** *Check the box of the best answer.*

- ❑ Less than $10,000
- ❑ $10,000 to $19,999
- ❑ $20,000 to $29,999
- ❑ $30,000 to $39,999
- ❑ $40,000 to $49,999
- ❑ $50,000 to $59,999
- ❑ $60,000 to $79,999
- ❑ $80,000 to $99,999
- ❑ $100,000 to $124,999
- ❑ $125,000 to $149,999
- ❑ $150,000 to $200,000
- ❑ $200,000 or more

Is there anything we overlooked?
Please use the space below to provide us with any other comments you would like to make.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Telephone Follow-Up

[IF OBVIOUS YOUTH – Ask to speak with an adult]

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from [survey firm] in [City, State] on behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. I am trying to reach [name on address]**.**

[IF RESPONDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE] → Is there another adult of the household that I could speak to?

> [IF NOT AVAILABLE] → Thank you, I will call back later. When would be a good time to reach [name, or another adult head of household]?

[IF QUALIFIED RESPONDENT IS ON THE PHONE]

QA Recently, we mailed your household a questionnaire asking your opinions about the future of Cook Inlet beluga whales in Alaska. It included $5 as a token of our appreciation for completing it. The questionnaire had a picture of a Cook Inlet beluga whale on the cover. Do you remember receiving that questionnaire?

1 YES
2 NO *[SKIP TO QA2]*

QA1 As of today, we have not received a completed questionnaire from your household. Your household is part of a small group of people we are asking for opinions, so your response is very important. If we send you another questionnaire, could you find the time to complete it and return it to us within a week of receiving it?

1 YES – SEND NEW SURVEY *[SKIP TO VERIFY]*
2 YES – DO NOT NEED ANOTHER SURVEY *[THANK YOU. SKIP TO CONTINUE]*
3 SURVEY HAS ALREADY BEEN RETURNED *[THANK YOU, SKIP TO CONTINUE]*
4 NO *[SKIP TO QB]*

QA2 We are collecting public opinions for the federal government to consider when developing action plans for threatened and endangered species in Alaska. Your household is part of a small group of people we are asking for opinions, so your response is very important. If we send you another questionnaire, could you return it to us within a week after you receive it?

1 YES – SEND NEW SURVEY *[SKIP TO VERIFY]*
2 YES – DO NOT NEED ANOTHER SURVEY *[SKIP TO CONTINUE]*
3 NO *[SKIP TO QA3]*

QA3 Since we are only contacting a small number of households, it is very important that we hear from your household. Your opinions will represent those of other households similar to you. The survey does not require any special knowledge. Is there another adult head of household who would be interested in completing the survey?

1 YES, GETTING THEM TO THE PHONE *[REPEAT QA2]*
2 YES, BUT NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME *[SET CALLBACK]*
3 NO *[SKIP TO QB]*

QB It is very important for our analysis that we understand how those who haven't returned the questionnaire compare to those who did. This way we will not misinterpret the results. Could I take about 4 minutes to ask you a few questions that will help us with our work? I'd like to remind you that all of your answers are confidential and your name will not be revealed to anyone.

1 YES *[SKIP TO Q1]*
2 NO *[ASK FOR A MORE CONVENIENT TIME, OTHERWISE, THANK AND TERMINATE]*

VERIFY (If new survey needs to be sent)

I would like to verify the mailing information that I have. I have your name as… (Read and verify all items)

NAME_____
STREET ADDRESS_____
CITY_____STATE _____ ZIP_____
PHONE_____

Thank you, I will send another questionnaire out today.

CONTINUE (If they indicate survey has been or will be returned)

Receiving your completed questionnaire will be very helpful. Could I take a couple minutes to ask you 4 questions to help us with our preliminary results until we receive your completed questionnaire?

1 NO, or NOT NOW → Say: OK. We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire. [*Thank and TERMINATE]*.
2 YES → *[CONTINUE WITH EVALUATE]*

EVALUATE

Q1 **This question is about your overall opinion of the Endangered Species Act. Currently there are 86 mammals, 90 birds, 138 fish, 294 other species such as reptiles and insects, and 718 plants protected under the Endangered Species Act. When you think of the Endangered Species Act, how positive or negative is your general reaction? Is it...** (*Read answer options*)

1 Mostly positive
2 Somewhat positive
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat negative
5 Mostly negative
9 *[DON'T READ – BUT CODE IF STATED]* Don't know

Q2 **I will now read two statements. For each, tell me if you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree.**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Protecting threatened and endangered species is important to me.....	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
Protecting jobs is more important than protecting threatened and endangered species.....	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

[RETURNING SURVEY] → I have just 2 quick questions about you and your household to help us group your responses with others.

[NOT RETURNING SURVEY] → I have just 3 quick questions about you and your household to help us group your responses with others.

Q3 **In what year were you born?** 19_____
Refused

Q4 **[SKIP Q4 IF THEY INDICATE THEY ARE RETURNING THE SURVEY] Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have completed?**

1 Some high school or less
2 High school diploma or equivalent
3 Some college
4 Two year college degree (AA, AS) or technical school
5 Four year college graduate (BA, BS)
6 Some graduate work but did not receive a graduate degree
7 Graduate degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.)
9 REFUSED

Q5 **Into which of the following groups does your total annual household income fall before taxes?**

1 Under $30,000
2 $30,000 - $59,999
3 $60,000 - $99,999
4 $100,000 and over

[IF RETURNING SURVEY] → Thank you, this will help with our preliminary analysis. Receiving your completed questionnaire will greatly help to have an accurate understanding of public opinion about government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales.

[IF NOT RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRE] → That's all the questions I have for you. Do you have any comments that you would like to add? Thank you for your time. We really appreciate your participation. Thanks again, and have a good evening.

TERMINATE

[TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER]
Respondent gender: MALE
FEMALE

LANG Language or other barrier:
1 YES, POSSIBLE LANGUAGE BARRIER
2 YES, DEFINITE LANGUAGE BARRIER
3 NO LANGUAGE, BUT OTHER TYPE OF BARRIER *[SPECIFY]*
4 NO BARRIERS

DID THE RESPONDENT INDICATE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?
A I don't care about Cook Inlet beluga whales or T&E species NO YES
B I don't know about Cook Inlet beluga whales, T&E species, etc. NO YES

OTHER RESPONDENT COMMENTS

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS AND ANSWERS

[*If concerned about purpose of the call*] This is not a marketing or sales call. We are collecting public input for government, industry, and citizen groups to consider when developing action plans for threatened and endangered species in Alaska. I want to assure you that your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not be revealed to anyone.

[*If asking about the study sponsor*] This survey is sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a U.S. government agency charged with making decisions about threatened and endangered marine mammals.

[Response to: "Why did you send money with the survey?"] The survey is very important and we find we can get more citizen input for less money by including a small token of our appreciation with the survey. More people return the survey faster, so we don't have to contact as many households, or contact you as often, to get an accurate sample of the public's input.

[I don't know anything about Cook Inlet beluga whales or beluga whales]. The survey does not require to you have any special knowledge, we just ask that you consider each question and respond with your own opinion.

[I don't care about Cook Inlet beluga whales]. It is important that we hear that on the survey. If we only receive surveys from people who care a lot, that would result in biased results about what public opinion really is.

Notices

Federal Register
Vol. 78, No. 76
Friday, April 19, 2013

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Economic Survey.

OMB Control Number: None.

Form Number(s): NA.

Type of Request: Regular submission (request for a new information collection).

Number of Respondents: 4,200.

Average Hours per Response: 25 minutes.

Burden Hours: 1,750.

Needs and Uses: This request is for a new information collection.

The population of Cook Inlet beluga whales in the Cook Inlet of Alaska is one of five distinct population segments in United States (U.S.) waters. It was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act on October 22, 2008 (73 FR 62919), and Critical Habitat was designated in a final rule published on April 11, 2011 (76 FR 20180). The public benefits associated with protection actions for the Cook Inlet beluga whale are substantially the result of the non-consumptive value people attribute to such protection. This includes active use values associated with being able to view beluga whales and passive use, or ''existence,'' values unrelated to direct human use. No empirical estimates of these values for Cook Inlet beluga whales are currently available, but this information is needed for decision makers to more fully understand the trade-offs involved in evaluating population recovery planning alternatives and to complement other information available about the costs, benefits, and impacts of alternative plans.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) plans to conduct a survey of Alaska households to collect data for estimating non-consumptive economic benefits associated with changes in extinction risk resulting from protection actions for the Cook Inlet beluga whale. The analysis NMFS completed prior to designating Critical Habitat for Cook Inlet beluga whales described non-consumptive benefits in limited qualitative terms only. Adding empirical data about non-consumptive benefits remains the most significant gap to enabling a complete and balanced economic analysis. The results from this survey should be useful to NMFS and the public in the future as NMFS considers various actions under the recovery planning process for Cook Inlet beluga whales. Any future regulatory actions would include analyses of costs and benefits of the proposed measures as well as opportunities for public input.

During 2011, NMFS fielded a pilot version of the survey to a small number of households, primarily to evaluate the survey administration procedures prior to sending the survey out to a larger and more representative sample. The results of this pretest indicated the need to make minor adjustments to the survey administration (e.g., timing of mailings and telephone calls), which will be incorporated in the data collection to which this notice pertains.

This notice revises a previously published notice that had indicated a survey of larger scope (77 FR 32928).

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Frequency: One time.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

OMB Desk Officer: *OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov*.

Copies of the above information collection proposal can be obtained by calling or writing Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, (202) 482–0336, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at *JJessup@doc.gov*).

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to *OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov*.

Dated: April 15, 2013.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2013–09168 Filed 4–18–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Economic Development Administration

Notice of Petitions by Firms for Determination of Eligibility To Apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance

AGENCY: Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and Opportunity for Public Comment.

Pursuant to Section 251 of the Trade Act 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2341 *et seq.*), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has received petitions for certification of eligibility to apply for Trade Adjustment Assistance from the firms listed below. Accordingly, EDA has initiated investigations to determine whether increased imports into the United States of articles like or directly competitive with those produced by each of these firms contributed importantly to the total or partial separation of the firm's workers, or threat thereof, and to a decrease in sales or production of each petitioning firm.