



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
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Charge to Peer Reviewers

Thank you for agreeing to provide peer review of the Draft Species Status Assessment and Draft Recovery Plan for the Main Hawaiian Islands Insular False Killer Whale (MHI IFKW) Distinct Population Segment (DPS). We appreciate your willingness to help with this important effort to ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the scientific information upon which the Species Status Assessment and Recovery Plan are based.

The enclosed Draft Species Status Assessment for the MHI IFKW DPS is a comprehensive update to the peer reviewed 2010 Status Review Report for the MHI IFKW DPS ([Oleson et al. 2010](#)). Newer information and citations are in a blue text color to more easily allow readers to identify information since the MHI IFKW was listed as an endangered DPS under the Endangered Species Act in 2012. The Draft Species Status Assessment discusses the natural history, status, potential threats, and conservation measures for the MHI IFKW DPS.

The enclosed Draft Recovery Plan for the MHI IFKW DPS provides the recovery strategy, goals, objectives, criteria, actions, time, costs, and partnerships to recover the MHI IFKW DPS. This document represents a departure from past NOAA Fisheries recovery plans in that it does not include detailed information on the DPS' biology, ecology, status and threats, and conservation efforts to date, which has typically been included in the Background section of a species recovery plan. Rather, this information is found in the Species Status Assessment. Because the Species Status Assessment is a separate document, it can be readily updated, without having to update the entire recovery plan (which can be a lengthy process).

After seeking independent peer review on both documents, we will consider all substantive comments received and address them as appropriate. We will then finalize the Species Status Assessment and post it to our NOAA Fisheries [false killer whale species profile page](#). We will then make the Draft Recovery Plan available for public comment. Before the Draft Recovery Plan is finalized, we will consider all substantive comments received during the public comment period and address them as appropriate. Once finalized, the Recovery Plan will be used to direct conservation and recovery actions for the MHI IFKW DPS.

Questions to Consider During the Peer Review

We welcome comments on any aspect of the Draft Species Status Assessment and Draft Recovery Plan, but request that you focus your review on the following topics:

1. In general, does the Draft Species Status Assessment include and cite the best scientific and commercial information available on the species, its biology, population structure, habitat, and threats? If you are aware of additional or more current relevant information,



please provide the suggested reference(s) and, if possible, a copy of the paper(s).

2. Does the discussion of potential threats and other stressors in the Draft Species Status Assessment accurately consider and reflect the risk to the species?
3. Regarding the Draft Recovery Plan, do you have any comments or concerns regarding the proposed recovery criteria?
4. Do recovery action priorities presented in the Implementation Table (Table 5–1) of the Draft Recovery Plan reflect a biologically sound conservation approach for the MHI IFKW DPS?
5. Are the proposed research, monitoring, management, and outreach recovery actions appropriate and sufficient?
6. Are there other recovery actions that should be considered for inclusion in the plan?

Requirements of the Peer Review

In accordance with the White House Office of Management and Budget’s Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (OMB Bulletin), we must post online the name and affiliation of each peer reviewer, along with peer reviewer comments, as part of the agency’s public record. Your comments will be posted without attribution. Previously submitted peer reviews for other documents are available at

http://www.cio.noaa.gov/services_programs/prplans/PRsummaries.html.

The OMB Bulletin further requires that non-Federal peer reviewers complete a “Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form.

Finally, the OMB Bulletin requires that peer reviewers be informed of applicable access, objectivity, reproducibility, and other quality standards under federal laws governing access and quality. NOAA’s Information Quality Guidelines are available at:

http://www.cio.noaa.gov/services_programs/IQ_Guidelines_103014.html.

Review Logistics

Enclosed please find the Draft Species Status Assessment and the Draft Recovery Plan for the MHI IFKW DPS, as well as the conflict of interest disclosure form.

1. Please summarize your comments in a letter that provides a brief overview, followed by more detailed responses to the specific review questions identified above. You may also provide edits and comments to both documents via the track changes feature of Microsoft Word.

2. If you are not a federal employee, please complete the enclosed confidential “NOAA Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form, and return it with your review – please note that this form requires inclusion of a curriculum vitae.

Your participation in this peer review is important to the recovery planning process and we appreciate your voluntary time and effort in this review. If you have any questions regarding this review, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Krista Graham at (808) 725-5152.

Prepared by:
Protected Resources Division
NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office
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