Primary Infectious Disease Concerns in Pinnipeds of Washington for 2004

*Dyanna M. Lambourn (lambodml@dfw.wa.gov)1, Steven J. Jeffries1, Stephan A. Raverty2, Michael M. Garner1, Stephanie A. Norman3, Joseph K. Gaydos5, John Calambodikidis6, Mike McCardy7, John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program was established due to the enactment of the Marine Mammal Resource Assistance Act of 2000 (MMPA Title IV, section 409), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Mammal Investigations (WDFW/MMI) is one of the primary responders in the Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network and has been responding to stranded marine mammals for over 20 years. The nature of the organization and the goals of the Marine Mammal Stranding Grant are to investigate and monitor causes of marine mammal mortality in Washington waters. The time period studied from December 1, 2000 to November 30, 2004. This study was conducted to expand the knowledge of stranded marine mammals and to understand cause of mortality in Washington waters during this time period.

Results

Call Log and Stranding Response

• A total of 174 stranded marine mammal cases were received.
• 166 animals assigned a WDFW/MMI field number.
• 146 (33%) of all field stranded animals had positive/lesions time (Grav-1)
• Evidence significantly higher among pups, adults (25 vs 43%)
• Current Brucella has been isolated in adults and in harbor seals (44/34)

Primary Infectious Disease Concerns:

Marine Mammal Brucellosis

• Strictly documented in harbor seals and other marine mammals
• by serology in the Pacific Northwest

Objectives

• To investigate whether stranded marine mammals in Washington and Oregon have Brucella ssp. infections and to determine if Brucella ssp. infections may be transmitted to other marine mammals and non-mammal species.

Introduction

The Pacific Marine Mammal Stranding Network (WDFW/MMI) is one of the primary responders in the Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network and has been responding to stranded marine mammals for over 20 years. The nature of the organization and the goals of the Marine Mammal Stranding Grant are to investigate and monitor causes of marine mammal mortality in Washington waters. The time period studied from December 1, 2000 to November 30, 2004. This study was conducted to expand the knowledge of stranded marine mammals and to understand cause of mortality in Washington waters during this time period.

Conclusion

Improved diagnostic evaluation and understanding of disease processes in stranded and live captured pinnipeds in Washington State was affected by the Prescott Grant funds and continued support will enabled efforts to further understand disease processes and potential anthropogenic impacts on marine mammals within the Pacific Northwest. Through the 2004 NOAA Fisheries Prescott Marine Mammal Stranding Grant, WDFW/MMI has increased its ability to respond to stranded marine mammals in western Washington and with continued funding plans to enhance the level of stranding response for 2005 and the future.

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