

Response to Public Comments (received comments from 3 members of the public):

1. Two comments recommended removing the check box related unusual mortality events on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report Form - Level A. *We agree and have done so. This information will be documented by the NMFS regional stranding coordinator on the Level A data sheet and/or National Marine Mammal Stranding Database in a special designated field labeled Group Events.*
2. Three comments recommended defining the term “limited” and “complete” necropsy that is listed on both of the forms – Marine Mammal Stranding Report Form – Level A and the Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Disposition Form. *We agree and will provide definitions in the accompanying Examiner’s Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network. Briefly, a “complete necropsy” is any necropsy where the majority of organs are collected according to established protocols and a “limited necropsy” is any necropsy where either the condition of the animal or other factors limit a complete necropsy. We also added the terms under this section “carcass fresh” and “carcass frozen/thawed” to better establish the condition of the specimen upon the time of necropsy.*
3. A comment was made inquiring about the interpretation of “whole carcass” vs. “partial carcass” under the section entitled Morphometric Data on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report Form - Level A. *These terms will further be defined in the accompanying Examiner’s Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network. Briefly, these terms do relate to length measurements to document whether there the carcass was complete and intact or only a partial specimen was available for measurement.*
4. A comment was made inquiring about the definition of the term “Stranding Agreement or Authority” that is used on both forms. *This term will further be defined in the accompanying Examiner’s Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network. Briefly, this term refers to the Stranding Agreement holder or agency through which the examiner has been authorized to take marine mammals or marine mammal parts. If the examiner is a member of a Designee Organization, this refers to the name of the Stranding Agreement holder under whom the examiners organization is designated.*
5. A comment was made for clarification of the term “Age Class” that is used on both forms. *Terms for adult, subadult, yearling, and pup/calf will be defined in the accompanying Examiner’s Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network. More detailed information regarding species specific age determination can be found in the literature.*
6. A recommendation was made to include documenting if post release biomonitoring was carried out, disposition of this information, and specific details including type of tag, size, expected duration, etc. *We agree and added this to the Tag Data field in the Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Disposition form. We*

- consider specific details about the tag beyond Level A data but they could be obtained through a point of contact (i.e., data disposition). We will include this instruction in the Examiner's Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network.*
7. A recommendation was made to include documenting where a completed Human Interaction Data Sheet was completed on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report Form - Level A. *At this time, NMFS does not have an OMB approved form for these data so we will include this in the form. We anticipate developing a form for capturing these data in the near future.*
 8. A comment was made to delete detailed information on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report - Level A form regarding date and facility if an animal is transferred to rehabilitation. *At this time, we feel that this information is important to capture on both forms for consistency and will not make the recommended change.*
 9. A comment was made to include a description on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report Form - Level A under Tag Data of marking an animal if it had been examined and left at the site. *We believe that this can be conveyed in the accompanying Examiner's Guide to be distributed to the Stranding Network without making a change on the Marine Mammal Stranding Report – Level A Form.*
 10. A comment was made to expand the information regarding Sample and Specimen Disposition field in the Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Disposition form. *We are in the process of completing a field on our National Marine mammal Stranding Database to capture this information which will be more user friendly than documenting these data by hand.*
 11. A comment was made to include on the Marine Rehabilitation Disposition form if the attending veterinarian had signed off on the release recommendation and the last day of medication (in addition to antibiotics). *We agree and are in the process of developing a health certificate that will capture this information. This will require PRA and OMB clearance. In the meantime, we are currently satisfied with the section capturing information on “health release screen” and last day of antibiotic administration.*
 12. A comment was made regarding the information in the FRN on the total annual cost to the public being under estimated. *We agree that this value is under estimated and have increased it to \$2,448. This value represents not the cost of labor to collect the data but the actual costs associated with capital/start up (e.g. for electronic equipment) and recordkeeping/reporting costs (i.e., photocopying, notarization if applicable, phone calls if not toll-free or local, postage and/or fax costs). Our goal is to completely transition this process over to electronic data collection. We anticipate this occurring in three years and thus will include the costs of computers. However at this time, we have not mandated that these data*

are submitted to NMFS electronically. We receive data in all forms (i.e., hand written and electronic).

13. A comment was made disagreeing with our estimation of time per response of 30 minutes as referenced in the FRN. *We increased this value from the last submission and believe this to be an average time to fill out these forms. We acknowledge that there is a range depending on expertise of an individual. Also, this estimation is not based on the time to collect the actual data.*