

## White Card

### Definitions

- **Endangered.** Species that are classified as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act have suffered losses to their population that put them at high risk for extinction. When species are designated as endangered under the Act, it turns on costly actions by both public and private entities to protect the species.
- **Threatened.** Species that are classified as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act have suffered losses to their populations that have not reached the level of risk to extinction but are headed in that direction. Protection is warranted to avoid more costly required actions if species becomes endangered.

### Health & Condition of Ocean Animal Species in the Channel Islands Region

- **Large Baleen Whales.** The main baleen whale species seen in the Channel Islands region are Blue, Fin, Gray and Humpback. All but the Gray are endangered.
  - In addition to natural mortality, the main pressures on these whales include exposure to pollutants, eating marine trash, human noise from ships, military operations, and other industry, being hit by ships, entanglements in fishing gear or trash, oil spills, and climate change.
  - Based on historical records, on average, about four to five of these whales die each year off of the California coast due to the various human threats. However, the actual number is likely higher because not all whale deaths are noticed or reported.
  - There are over 20,000 gray whales along the U.S. West Coast and they are at or near their optimal population. The impact of one grey whale death on the overall population is small. Whereas, there are roughly 1,500 endangered blue whales and one death has a much greater impact on the population.
- **Other Baleen Whales.** There are three other baleen whale species (Minke, Sei and North Pacific Right) seen in the region. The Sei and North Pacific Right whales are endangered and rarely seen. The Minke is also rarely seen.
  - Most of the same factors that affect the large baleen whales also affect the other baleen whales.
  - Because they are rare in the region, less is known about how many die each year due to human pressures.
- **Toothed Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises.** There are 10 main species of toothed whales and eight types of dolphins and porpoises that have been seen in the region.
  - Pressures affecting these species are the same as for the other whale species.
  - Two of the toothed whale species (Sperm whale and Killer whale or Orca) are currently endangered. None of the dolphins or porpoises is endangered or threatened.
- **Seals and Sea Lions.** There are four species of seals and two species of sea lions in the region.
  - Pressures affecting these species include food availability, getting caught in fishing gear and other marine trash, predation, infectious diseases, disturbances from boats and vessels, climate change, toxins from harmful algae, pollutants, oil spill exposure and boat collisions.
  - One of the sea lion species (Stellar Sea Lion) is endangered and one of the seal species (Guadalupe fur seal) is threatened.
- **Seabirds and Shorebirds.** There are 195 species of which 60 are seabirds that have been seen in the region.
  - The region is located along the Pacific Flyway, a major migratory route for birds, and acts as a stopover during both the north (April through May) and south (September through December) migrations.
  - Pressures affecting these species include pollution, egg predation by both native and invasive species, adult predation by other birds, human disturbance, light pollution and climate change.
  - The Channel Islands region provides breeding and nesting for 19 species. Of these 19 species, one (California Least Tern) is endangered and three (Western snowy plover, Scripps’s murrelet and Guadalupe murrelet) are threatened.

## Problems and Management Solutions

- If **current management practices** continue in the future (Status Quo), scientists expect that the health and conditions of all the species referenced above will remain in their current condition or get worse and will be in a poor or **low condition** without **additional** management action.
- If **management is changed** to improve the health and conditions of these species, it will require both public and private investments to protect and restore them, which could include enforcement of rules and regulations.
- In the next section of the survey, you will be presented with several sets of species health and conditions. There is an estimated cost to your household per year that would be required to achieve each condition.
- The **cost per year** is based on the costs that would be paid by businesses and households to pay for investments that protect and restore them like improved sewage treatment, filtering and cleaning urban run-off, erosion control from agricultural areas and development projects, slowing down commercial vessels that strike whales, moving shipping lanes, reducing noise from military testing and other human uses, and enforcement of rules and regulations.
- The **cost per year** would be paid by all residents and visitors to Southern California through increased prices of goods and services. This might also include increases in local sales taxes to cover government costs to pay for protection and restoration.
- **Option A: Status Quo** (No change in management), will cost your household nothing (\$0 per year), but is expected to result in **low conditions** on all of the species.
- You will always have the opportunity to choose the Status Quo (Option A).
- *Remember when making your choices on how much you are willing to pay that you only have so much income and if you pay to improve conditions you will have less to spend on other goods, services, and social issues that are important to you.*