

**NMFS Office of Protected Resources**

**Review of California Sea Lion Stranding**

**October 5, 2018**

NMFS has completed its review of the California sea lion stranding reported on NMFS's website on June 6, 2018. Based on the information available, NMFS has determined that the event does not warrant modification of the Letter of Authorization for the U.S. Navy's Hawaii Southern California Training and Testing (HSTT) under 50 CFR 218.78(c)(1) or notice and comment procedures under 50 CFR 216.106(e) or 50 CFR 218.78(c)(1)(ii).

On May 24, 2018, a California sea lion carcass was discovered at the Navy's Silver Strand Training Complex. The discovery was made shortly after, and in the vicinity of, the Navy's permitted use of high-frequency active sonar. There is no stranding network responder dedicated to investigating reports of dead pinnipeds in San Diego County, so this event did not receive a response from, or investigation by, the stranding network. In addition, there has been no new information obtained since the notification of the stranding that provides insight into the potential cause(s). Consequently, the available information relating to the stranding is insufficient to allow NMFS to determine the likely cause(s).

Because the available information does not support a causal connection between the Navy's HSTT training or testing and the pinniped stranding, NMFS concludes that the reported event does not warrant any actions pursuant to 50 CFR 216.106(e) or 50 CFR 218.78(c). Additionally, NMFS notes that California sea lions are the subject of an ongoing Unusual Mortality Event (UME) that began in January 2013. For more information, see: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/2013-2017-california-sea-lion-unusual-mortality-event-california>.