

**NMFS Office of Protected Resources**

**Review of Humpback Whale Stranding**

**April 20, 2017**

NMFS has completed its review of the humpback whale stranding reported on NMFS's website on May 3, 2017. Based on the information available, NMFS has determined that the event does not warrant modification of the Letters 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 April 20, 2017, a decomposed floating humpback whale was reported off Orange County, California, which NMFS identified as an Uncommon Stranding Event (USE). The discovery was made shortly after, and in the vicinity of, the Navy's permitted use of mid-frequency active sonar and explosives.

The whale was already in a state of decomposition when observed. The whale never reached land and was not otherwise recovered. In addition, there has been no new information obtained since the notification of the stranding that provide insight into the potential causes. Consequently, the available information relating to the stranding is very limited and is insufficient to allow NMFS to determine the likely cause(s) of the stranding. Because the available information does not support a causal connection between the Navy's HSTT training or testing and the stranding, NMFS concludes that the reported event does not warrants any actions pursuant to 50 CFR 216.106(e) or 50 CFR 218.78(c).