

**NMFS Office of Protected Resources**

**Review of Three California Sea Lion Strandings**

**May 11, 15, and 18, 2017**

NMFS has completed its review of three California sea lion strandings reported on NMFS's website on June 1, 2017. Based on the information available, NMFS has determined that none of the events 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 May 11, 2017, a California sea lion carcass was discovered at the Navy's Silver Strand Training Complex; on May 15, 2017, a California sea lion carcass was discovered at Naval Base Coronado; and on May 18, 2017, another California sea lion carcass was discovered at the Navy's Silver Strand Training Complex. The May 11 and May 15 discoveries were made shortly after, and in the vicinity of, the Navy's permitted use of high-frequency active sonar. The May 18 discovery was made shortly after, and in the vicinity of, the Navy's permitted use of explosives.

California sea lions are the subject of an ongoing Unusual Mortality Event that began in January 2013. For more information, see: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/mmume/californiasealions2013.htm>. There is no stranding network responder dedicated to investigating reports of dead pinnipeds in San Diego County, so none of the strandings received a response from, or investigation by, the stranding network. In addition, there has been no new information obtained since the notification of these strandings that provide insight into their potential causes. Consequently, the available information relating to the three strandings is very limited and is insufficient to allow NMFS to determine the likely cause(s) of the strandings. Because the available information does not support a causal connection between the Navy's HSTT training or testing and these pinniped strandings, NMFS concludes that none of the reported events warrants any actions pursuant to 50 CFR 216.106(e) or 50 CFR 218.78(c).