

BUILDING A CONSERVATION PLAN FOR PUGET SOUND KILLER WHALES



Requirements for a
Conservation Plan
under the Marine
Mammal Protection
Act (MMPA)

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A Conservation Plan shall be:

- prepared as soon as possible for stocks designated as depleted; (MMPA Sec. 115(b)(1)(C))
- modeled on Recovery Plans required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). (MMPA Sec 115(b)(2))



Similar Content – Similar Goal

The goal of a Recovery Plan under the ESA is the conservation and survival of the species.

The goal of a Conservation Plan under the MMPA is the conservation and restoration of the stock to its Optimum Sustainable Population level.



The ESA Model – MMPA

Conservation Plans must include:

- Objective measurable criteria, which when met, would result in the conservation and restoration of the stock to its OSP;
- A description of site specific management actions necessary for recovery; and
- Estimates of time and cost to carry out the recommended recovery measures.



Congress Provided More Guidance that Conservation Plans include:

- An assessment of the status of the stock & its essential habitat;
- A description of the nature, magnitude, & causes of population decline or loss of essential habitat;
- An assessment of possible threats to the stock & its habitat;
- A discussion of critical information gaps;
- A discussion of research & management that could be undertaken to meet the objective of the plan; and
- A schedule for implementing those actions.



Restoration – Not Just A Number

- OSP is a range.
- NMFS has used estimated values for the lower and upper bounds of OSP in its depleted designation.
- The Conservation Plan will define a restoration goal that is achievable and sustainable.



Site Specific Management Actions

- A Conservation Plan is not a regulation on its own.
- The plan may recommend regulatory actions and/or provide guidance for voluntary initiatives.
- The Plan is a living document that can change in response to circumstances and new information.



Estimate Time and Cost of Implementation

- Time estimates must take into account the life history of the species.
- Killer whales are long lived and determining recovery with confidence will take years.
- Direct cost estimates for implementation do not include indirect costs the conservation measures may have on people or businesses.

