



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex
1 Marshlands Road
Fremont, California 94555



April 11, 2012

Rob McInnis
NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service/Southwest Region
Protected Resources Division
501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802
ATTN: Monica DeAngelis

Subject: Request for ESA Section 7 Consultation with NOAA regarding bird mitigation research trial on the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge

Dear Mr. McInnis,

The purpose of this correspondence is to request formal consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and provide information to support our determination of the potential impacts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) planned bird mitigation research trial on Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*). The proposed research trial will be located on the South Farallon Islands (Farallon National Wildlife Refuge), which is managed by the FWS. The islands are located 27 miles west of the Golden Gate in central California. The purpose of the trial is to test methods that may be used to minimize non-target impacts to birds, especially gulls, during a future proposed house mouse eradication project. Hazing will be the primary methods tested in the trials. One goal of the trials is to examine marine mammal reactions to bird hazing so that impacts to marine mammals can be minimized during the actual proposed mouse eradication project. The trials will be conducted between November 2012 and January 2013, with most likely dates between early November and mid-December.

This letter addresses potential effects on threatened Steller sea lions from the proposed bird mitigation research trial. The information provided in this correspondence consists of the following:

1. Proposed project description;
2. Description of the potential effects to Steller sea lions;
3. Minimization and avoidance measures to reduce potential effects to Steller sea lions.

Based on the findings presented in the attached document, we believe the proposed research trial is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the threatened Steller sea lion. We hope to receive concurrence from you that the proposed project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Steller sea lion population on the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge.

We look forward to working with you on this project. If you have any questions or requests for further information, please contact Gerry McChesney, Farallon National Wildlife Refuge



Manager, at 510-792-0222, ext. 222 or gerry_mcchesney@fws.gov.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal.

Sincerely,

G. Mendel Stewart
Refuge Complex Manager

