

Determination; Data Collection and Dissemination

16 U.S.C. 1421a

Sec. 402. (a) DETERMINATION FOR RELEASE. — The Secretary shall, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, the Marine Mammal Commission, and individuals with knowledge and experience in marine science, marine mammal science, marine mammal veterinary and husbandry practices, and marine conservation, including stranding network participants, develop objective criteria, after an opportunity for public review and comment, to provide guidance for determining at what point a rehabilitated marine mammal is releasable to the wild.

(b) COLLECTION. — The Secretary shall, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, collect and update, periodically, existing information on—

(1) procedures and practices for—

(A) rescuing and rehabilitating stranded marine mammals, including criteria used by stranding network participants, on a species-by-species basis, for determining at what point a marine mammal undergoing rescue and rehabilitation is returnable to the wild; and

(B) collecting, preserving, labeling, and transporting marine mammal tissues for physical, chemical, and biological analyses;

(2) appropriate scientific literature on marine mammal health, disease, and rehabilitation;

(3) strandings, which the Secretary shall compile and analyze, by region, to monitor species, numbers, conditions, and causes of illnesses and deaths of stranded marine mammals; and

(4) other life history and reference level data, including marine mammal tissue analyses, that would allow comparison of the causes of illness and deaths in stranded marine mammals with physical, chemical, and biological environmental parameters.

(c) AVAILABILITY. — The Secretary shall make information collected under this section available to stranding network participants and other qualified scientists.