



SPLASH

A Comprehensive Study of North Pacific Humpback Whales
Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpback Whales

Information Sheet

What is SPLASH? SPLASH is an international cooperative effort to understand the population structure of humpback whales across the North Pacific, and to assess the status, trends and potential human impacts to this population. The project has broad international and national participation.

How will SPLASH be accomplished? SPLASH will use consistent sampling efforts in feeding and wintering areas of humpbacks within the North Pacific. Field techniques such as photo-identification and biopsy tissue sampling will be the primary field methods employed.

What are the objectives of SPLASH?

- Obtain a current estimate of overall abundance of humpback whales within the North Pacific;
- Provide an understanding of population structure and migratory interchange using genetic markers and photo-identification;
- Estimate the abundance of humpback whales in specific wintering and feeding areas to better serve management needs;
- Provide information on trends in abundance;
- Improve understanding of population parameters including reproductive, mortality, and pregnancy rates as well as age/sex structure;
- Describe the influence of population processes on genetic diversity and exchange;
- Identify habitat and characterize use; and
- Identify human impacts (entanglement, toxicology, etc.).

What are the regions to be studied?

- Western North Pacific wintering areas
- Hawaiian Islands
- Mexico
- Central America
- California, Oregon, and Washington
- British Columbia
- Western Gulf of Alaska
- Southeast Alaska including the East Gulf
- Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea
- Western North Pacific waters off Russia



When will SPLASH take place?

SPLASH is a three winter, two summer program effort with a proposed start time of January 2004. The SPLASH program will run through the summer of 2006.

SPLASH Steering Committee

The steering committee for SPLASH includes the following government organizations: Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA; National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NOAA; National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA; National Park Service, Department of Interior; Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and Instituto Nacional de Ecología, Mexico; and several academic and private institutions.

For More Information go to: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>
or email: humpbackwhale@noaa.gov

