

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the 1994 amendments of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) were required to generate stock assessment reports (SARs) for all marine mammal stocks in waters within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The first reports for the Atlantic (includes the Gulf of Mexico) were published in July 1995 (Blaylock *et al.* 1995). The MMPA requires NMFS and USFWS to review these reports annually for strategic stocks of marine mammals and at least every 3 years for stocks determined to be non-strategic. The second edition of the SARs (1996 assessments) was published in October 1997 and contained all the previous reports, but major revisions and updating were only completed for strategic stocks (Waring *et al.* 1997). In subsequent annual reports, including this current 2010 edition, updated reports are indicated by the corresponding year date-stamp at the top right corner of the report and are included in the main body of the document. Stock assessments not updated in the current year are included, in full, in an appendix. Also included in this report as appendices are: 1) a summary of serious injury/mortality estimates of marine mammals in observed U.S. fisheries (Appendix I), 2) a summary of NMFS records of large whale/human interactions examined for this assessment (Appendix II), 3) detailed fisheries information (Appendix III), 4) summary tables of abundance estimates generated over recent years and the surveys from which they are derived (Appendix IV), and 5) the the USFWS West Indian manatee assessments (Appendix VI).

Table 1 contains a summary, by species, of the information included in the stock assessments, and also indicates those that have been revised since the 2009 publication. Most of the changes incorporate new information into sections on population size and/or mortality estimates. A total of 21 of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico stock assessment reports were revised for 2010. In addition to this, the Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphin stock complex was broken up into 5 new reports – northern migratory, southern migratory, coastal South Carolina/Georgia, coastal Northern Florida and coastal southern Florida stocks (all of strategic status). The Gulf of Mexico coastal bottlenose dolphin stocks were also split up, resulting in new eastern (non-strategic) coastal, western coastal (strategic) and northern (non-strategic) coastal bottlenose dolphin reports. A report on the Caribbean stock of sperm whales has also been added this year. Analysis of the geographical separation of long and short-finned pilot whale stocks in the Atlantic has been performed, and preliminary abundance estimates for the two stocks are included in the revised pilot whale reports. Abundance estimates for harbor seals and one of the Gulf of Mexico estuarine stocks of bottlenose dolphins have become outdated. The revised and new SARs include 18 strategic and 12 non-strategic stocks.

This report was prepared by staff of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) and Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). NMFS staff presented the reports at the February 2010 meeting of the Atlantic Scientific Review Group (ASRG), and subsequent revisions were based on their contributions and constructive criticism. This is a working document and individual stock assessment reports will be updated as new information becomes available and as changes to marine mammal stocks and fisheries occur. The authors solicit any new information or comments which would improve future stock assessment reports.