

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: A historical look

An ad hoc PR¹ economics working group, consisting of economists from each region (Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Alaska, Southwest, Pacific Islands) and Science & Technology (NHQ), chaired by Kathryn Bisack and Dale Squires, was initiated at the 2010 NMFS Social Sciences meeting in Orlando, Florida. The purpose of the group was to share PR and PR-related economic work. In 2011, NMFS's Chief Scientist, Richard Merrick, elevated the need for PR economics; he recommended economics be assimilated into the PR strategic planning process and economist Kathryn Bisack, was appointed to the PRSIPP Steering Committee. At the 2012 PRSIPP Workshop (Simpkins and Srinivasan 2013), members of the PR economic ad hoc working group were invited to present their work and discuss their roles by region. Five case studies were presented to demonstrate the contribution economics can have on PR science, which provides data and research to support conservation and management of protected species. The presentations were well received and the PRSIPP committee accepted PR economics as an element of PR Science. However, at the 2013 PRSIPP workshop, securing funds for mandated PR abundance surveys continued to be the primary concern, resulting in unfunded PR economic data and research (Ballance et al. 2014). The PRSIPP steering committee members seemed to recognize the usefulness of PR economic data and research and requested the creation of a "PR Economic Fact Sheet"². However, lack of institutionalized communication channels continues to block integration of economics. In March 2014, NMFS's Chief Scientist, Richard Merrick, provided travel funds for the September 2014 PR economics workshop, which included representatives from NMFS headquarters (2), Regions (10), the Marine Mammal Commission (1) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (1). We anticipate that workshop outcomes will assist in bridging the communications gap between economists and non-economists who collect PR and PR-related data and conduct research, as well as initiate the development of a PR economics roadmap that will demonstrate why PR economics must be an integral part of PR science.

1.2 Workshop Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the workshop was to initiate the process of identifying national PR social science research needs and best practices. With more than 15 years of economist experience providing mandated economic benefit/cost and impact analyses for PR Divisions, there was enough knowledge and skill to begin collectively assessing the legal, scientific, and technical issues specifically pertaining to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

¹ Protected resources include marine mammals, sea turtles, fish, corals and sea birds, among others.

² <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/protected-species/>

There was also an opportunity to inventory past and current PR economics data and research, identify practical and analytical problems, share analytical frameworks and state of the art methods and tools, and list potential roadblocks. By providing the forum for these discussions, the workshop's economists had the opportunity to develop a common understanding of PR economics data and research needs across regions and consider the longer term goal of developing a roadmap that will fully integrate economics into PR science.

1.3 Meeting Organization

To support the immediate and longer term goals of the workshop, the first day of discussions focused on PR economic policy and management needs. NMFS's regulatory responsibilities were reviewed. Economists presented an overview of the economic analyses conducted in support of PR actions in their regions, including externally contracted analyses. Prior to the workshop, PR Division Chiefs residing at NMFS Regional Offices and the Office of PR identified a list of current and future PR economic needs. On the second day, research conducted by NMFS economists focused on protected resources. The case of the Mexican Vaquita porpoise was presented for discussion of potential economic solutions to reverse the fate of this animal that is about to become extinct. On the third day, the group talked about improving internal communication of PR economics and developed a set of recommendations. The full workshop agenda can be found in Appendix A1. Appendices A.2 and A.3 list the goals and top research themes, and questions participants identified in anticipation of the workshop.