

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### MARINE MAMMAL HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR WASHINGTON AND ALASKA

Five hearings begin June 29 on whether management of marine mammals in Alaska may be returned to State control, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The public is invited to attend all the hearings. But testimony will be accepted only from 10 proponents and 11 opponents, as determined at a prehearing conference in May. The 21 represent a wide range of organizations.

Also at issue is whether to waive the existing moratorium on the killing or capture of polar bears, walrus, sea otters, ringed seals, bearded seals, harbor seals, beluga whales, northern sea lions, ribbon seals, and larcha seals.

The following dates and locations were announced:

1. Anchorage - June 29, Alaska District Court, Courtroom C, 360 K Street, 10 a.m.
2. Nome - July 6, Federal Building Courtroom, Front Street, 10 a.m.
3. Bethel - July 12, Kuskokwim Native Village Association Building, 10 a.m.
4. Anchorage - July 14, Alaska State Court Building, Alaska District Court, Courtroom E, 360 K Street, 10 a.m. (reconvening July 15 if necessary).
5. Washington, D.C. - September 21, Interior Department Auditorium, 18th & C Streets, N.W., 10 a.m.

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An Administrative Law Judge will preside at the hearings. He will present his recommendations to the two directors of the agencies with marine mammal jurisdiction: Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service. Each of the two agency heads will then announce his own decision. The two agencies have jurisdiction over different mammals.

The hearings will also involve proposed Federal regulations concerning the taking of the nine species and the adequacy of the State of Alaska's laws and regulations which regulate the mammals.

Any person desiring further information concerning these proceedings may contact the Presiding Officer, Administrative Law Judge Malcolm P. Littlefield, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22203 (telephone: 703/557-9200).

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