

Rare Pinniped Conservation Network (RAPCON)

World Marine Mammal Conference

7 December 2019 -- Barcelona

Background: The pinniped clade comprises 33 extant species and numerous subspecies. Historically decimated by unsustainable killing, many pinniped species and populations have rebounded. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, about two-thirds of pinniped species (and sub-species) enjoy LC (least concern) status, while about 10% are listed as VU (vulnerable). *Approximately one-fifth of pinniped species and sub-species are considered EN (endangered)*. Two species, the Caribbean monk seal and the Japanese sea lion, were hunted to extinction. Most pinniped species have population sizes exceeding 100,000 and some number in the millions.

This workshop will focus on the rarest species, sub-species, and demographically isolated populations that are at risk of extinction or reduction to irrevocably low population levels in the relatively near future. The species share one or more of the following characteristics:

- Relatively low abundance (typically < 15,000 individuals)
- Current or recent declining population trends
- Long-term failure to recover
- Small geographic range
- Subject to a suite of anthropogenic threats

Need: Many rare pinniped populations are the subject of recovery and research efforts executed by teams of extremely devoted conservationists. These programs have achieved a great deal for their respective subject species by employing clever and innovative research and conservation approaches. Despite the broad geographic range of these pinniped populations, the scientific and management challenges associated with them are often uncannily similar. These conservation programs largely work in isolation from one another and could potentially achieve more through broader collaboration.

Objectives:

- Launch RAPCON in order to foster and sustain collaboration among individuals working to conserve rare pinniped populations globally
- Provide a forum for pinniped conservationists and other interested people to connect
- Showcase a sampling of pinniped conservation efforts from around the world
- Share expertise and foster networking at topical workstations (interactive demonstrations and discussions), including Photo-ID systems, Rehabilitation and Health Studies, and Telemetry Field and Analysis Methods)

Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
8:30	<i>Welcome and Plan of the Day</i>	Baker
8:40	<i>RAPCON - Background and Aspirations</i>	Baker
9:00	<i>Role of the Marine Mammal Commission</i>	Simmons
9:20	<i>Conservation of the Saimaa ringed seal in a changing climate</i>	Auttila
9:40	<i>Mortality and mitigation in New Zealand sea lions</i>	Roe
10:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
10:20	<i>A comprehensive approach to monk seal conservation in Cabo Blanco, Mauritania</i>	Fernandez de Larrinoa
10:40	<i>Galapagos Pinnipeds - problems of life in a national park</i>	Trillmich
11:00	<i>Linking ecology and social science to help inform conservation planning for Caspian seals</i>	Goodman
11:20	<i>Rescue and rehabilitation of orphan Mediterranean monk seal pups in Greece: Challenges and needs</i>	Kommenou
11:40	<i>Q&A for morning topics and presenters</i>	
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30	<i>Topical Stations – Round 1</i>	
14:15	<i>Topical Stations – Round 2</i>	
15:00	<i>Topical Stations – Round 3</i>	
15:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:15	<i>Open discussion, Q&A</i>	All
16:45	<i>Structured discussion – feedback on RAPCON interest, scope, structure, organization, function</i>	All
17:30	<i>Close</i>	

Speakers and Demonstrators

Presenter	Affiliation
Miina Auttila	<i>Metsähallitus (Parks & Wildlife Finland) and University of Eastern Finland</i>
Jason Baker	<i>Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program, NOAA, USA</i>
Pablo Fernandez de Larrinoa	<i>La Fundación para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad y su Hábitat (CBD-Hábitat), Spain</i>
Simon Goodman	<i>University of Leeds, Leeds, UK</i>
Anastasia Komnenou	<i>School of Veterinary Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece</i>
Wendi Roe	<i>School of Veterinary Science, Massey University, New Zealand</i>
Samantha Simmons	<i>Marine Mammal Commission, USA</i>
Fritz Trillmich	<i>Universität Bielefeld, Germany</i>

Demonstrator	Affiliation
Fernando Aparacio	<i>La Fundación para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad y su Hábitat (CBD-Hábitat), Spain</i>
Michelle Barbieri	<i>Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program, NOAA, USA</i>
Vincent Biard	<i>University of Eastern Finland</i>
Josh M London	<i>NOAA Fisheries, USA</i>
Hope Ronco	<i>Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program, JIMAR, USA</i>