

## **BOEMRE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: Ongoing Studies**

**Region:** Pacific OCS Region

**Planning Area:** Northern California, Oregon/Washington

**Title:** Seabird and Marine Mammal Surveys off the Northern California, Oregon and Washington Coasts

**BOEMRE Information Need(s) to be Addressed:** BOEMRE is considering renewable energy proposals offshore northern California, Oregon, and southern Washington. This study will provide up-to-date information on species composition, distribution, abundance, seasonal variation, and habitat utilization of marine mammals and seabirds along this section of coast. Data generated will be used for overall evaluation of proposed renewable energy sites and environmental review of specific project proposals received by BOEMRE.

**Total BOEMRE Cost:** \$1.7 mil                      **Period of Performance:** FY 2010-2013

**Conducting Organization:** USGS/BRD and USFWS

**Principal Investigator:** John Takekawa, Josh Adams and John Mason

**BOEMRE Contact:** [Dave Pereksta](#)

### **Description:**

**Background:** BOEMRE (formerly MMS) funded seabird surveys offshore central and northern California in 1980-1983 (MMS 84-0043) and marine mammal/seabird surveys offshore Oregon and Washington in 1989-1990 (MMS 91-0093). While these surveys provide a good foundation of information for the area, they may be limited by potential shifts of species' distribution and abundance that may have occurred over the past two decades. The proposed study would review and refine the methodology used in earlier studies to provide up-to-date information and establish a more robust longitudinal data set from which to draw on for environmental analyses.

The Pacific Region updated its "Summary of Knowledge" (SOK) for northern California, Oregon, and southern Washington in 2009. The SOK identified data gaps and researchers active in this area. Data collected by other survey efforts will be evaluated to ensure that new surveys complement earlier studies and avoid duplication of effort. In many cases, past studies have focused fine scale data collection on areas not being considered for renewable energy development (e.g. Marine Sanctuaries and other marine protected areas). This survey effort will focus on offshore areas suitable for renewable energy development.

**Objectives:** Objectives of this study would include:

1. Review and refinement of methodologies used for previous marine mammal/seabird surveys;
2. Monthly field surveys (aerial) offshore northern California, Oregon, and southern Washington over an 24-month period;
3. Assessment, analysis, and comparison of data collected with other sources of survey data;
4. Characterization of the current marine mammal/seabird composition, distribution, abundance, seasonal variation and habitat use within the survey area; and,
5. Publication of report(s) on the findings of the surveys and data analysis.

Methods: Survey methodologies used in previous BOEMRE studies and other survey efforts would be reviewed and modified, as necessary, to account for new technologies and equipment availability. Available funding would likely limit the field effort to monthly aerial surveys along prescribed transect lines, supplemented by other sources of aerial/shipboard data as available.

**Current Status:** In planning stage for collecting field data.

**Final Report Due:** 2013

**Publications Completed:** None at this time.

**Affiliated WWW Sites:** None at this time.

**Revised date:** March 4, 2011