

Cora Campbell
Commissioner
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov



Nancy Long
Information Officer
Public Communications Section
907.465.6166
nancy.long@alaska.gov

PRESS RELEASE

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 9, 2011

No. 11-06

Contact: Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish and Game at 907-267-2339

State Disagrees with Finding that Listing of Pacific Walrus is Warranted

(Juneau) – In response to a petition filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced yesterday that the listing of the Pacific walrus under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is warranted, but precluded at this time. A warranted but precluded finding means that the best available information necessitates that the species be listed at this time, but that a listing is not possible due to inadequate agency resources and other priorities. The designation adds the species to a candidate list allowing additional time to assess the species. While on the candidate list, consultations under the ESA are not performed and critical habitat is not designated.

While the State appreciates the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to not list the Pacific walrus under the ESA at this time, we disagree with the finding that the listing of the Pacific walrus under the ESA is warranted at this time.

Doug Vincent-Lang, the State's Endangered Species Coordinator said, "While we concur with the Service that walrus habitat may change over the next 25-50 years, available information about life history characteristics, previous experience with warming climates, and Atlantic walrus ecosystem corollaries suggests that walrus will be able to adapt to these conditions. While the walrus population may decline in response to a smaller carrying capacity, the resultant population will not be threatened with extinction within the next 25-50 years and therefore the decision that listing is warranted is unnecessary at this time. "

The State will carefully review the status review and associated findings. Doug Vincent-Lang added, "Existing regulatory programs provide significant potential protections to walrus. We will work with the Service to examine additional measures that could be implemented to assure for the long-term conservation of Pacific walrus."

###