Humpback and Gray Whale Status Decisions

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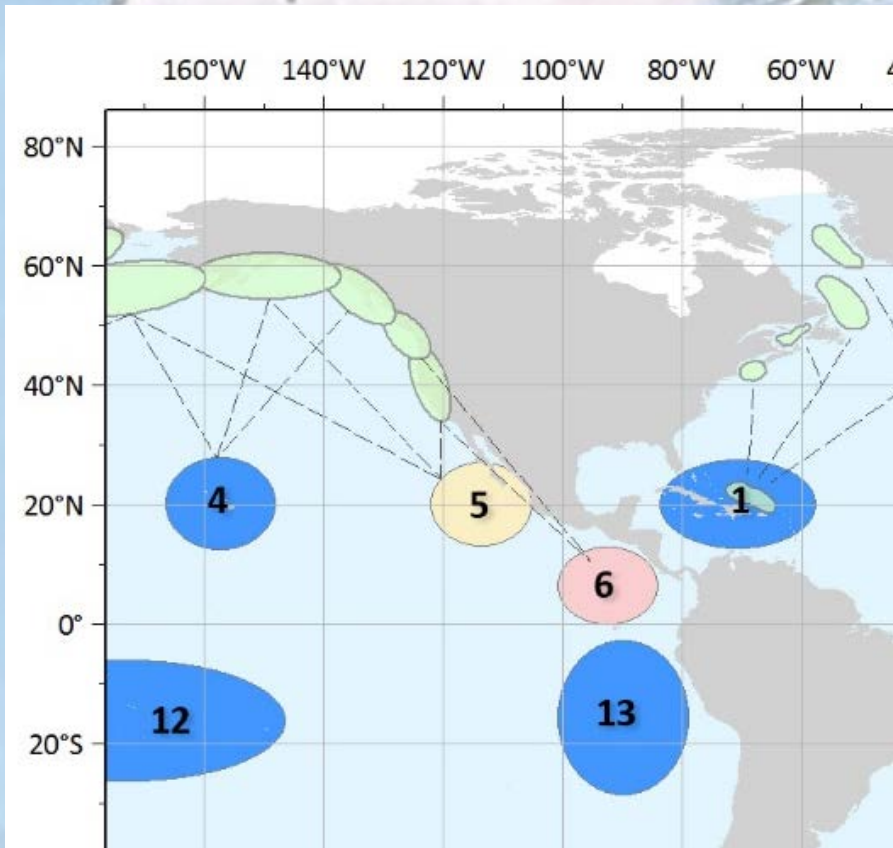Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

Listing Process Guided by WAC 220-610-110

- Periodic review of status every 5 years –First Periodic Status Review for Gray and Humpback Whale

- Listing recommendations and decisions "...solely on the basis of the biological status of the species being considered, based on the preponderance of scientific data available."

- Diversity Division drafted and solicited 90 public

- Seeking decisions on status recommendations for both Humpback and Gray Whale

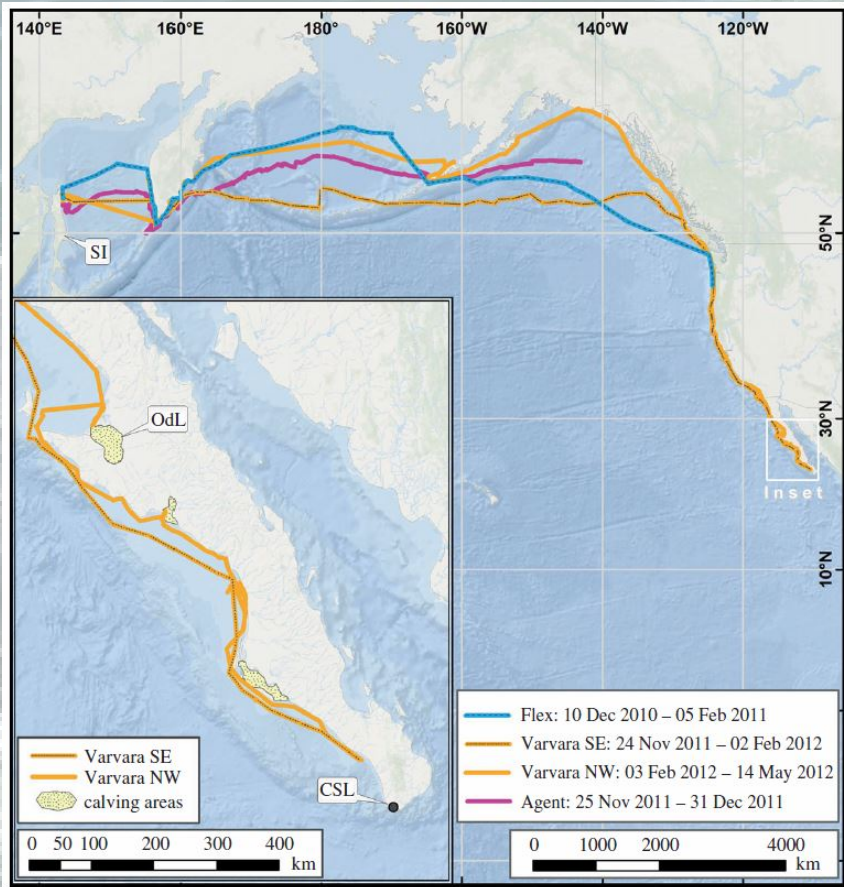# Humpback Whale in Washington: Recommend maintain as Endangered

Three Distinct Population Segments use WA waters:

- **Anywhere from ~36 to ~79% of Humpbacks in WA waters are from federally listed stocks (Central America DPS, and Mexico DPS)**
- **Others part of Hawaiian DPS (not federally listed) make up between 21% and 64% depending on the source**

Threats include entanglement, ship strike, and human generated noise.

Migrate to WA to feed, though more info needed on numbers coming to WA

Gray Whale in Washington: Recommend maintain as Sensitive

- **Gray Whale stock structure is poorly understood**
  - **Eastern North Pacific (not federally listed)**
  - **Western North Pacific (federally endangered)**
- **Recent data indicates a relatively large percentage of WNP whales travel through WA waters (provisional data)**
  - **However a tiny fraction of the total whales in WA waters**
- **Continuing unusual mortality event which began in 2019, low calving numbers**

Public Comment and Recommendations

- Humpback
  - Periodic Status Review: 2 letters supporting
  - Commission meeting: 1 supporting, 1 neutral
  - Updated the PSR to include the most up to date population, stranding, and threats information
  - Recommend maintain current classification as state Endangered

- Gray
  - Periodic Status Review: 2 letters supporting
  - Commission meeting: 2 supporting recommendation to maintain at a minimum, 1 neutral
  - Updated the PSR to include up to date population and movement data, UME and threats information as well as additional information on the "sounders" and other regional priorities.
  - Recommend maintain current classification as state Sensitive