

736 F Street
Arcata, CA 95521

<i>City Manager</i> (707) 822-5953	<i>Environmental Services</i> 822-8184	<i>Police</i> 822-2428	<i>Recreation</i> 822-7091
<i>Community Development</i> 822-5955	<i>Finance</i> 822-5951	<i>Public Works</i> 822-5957	<i>Transportation</i> 822-3775

November 4, 2009

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

United States Congress
111th Congress, 1st Session
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Obama and United States Congress:

The City Council of the City of Arcata is writing to urge the United States Congress and the President of the United States to call upon the National Marine Fisheries Service to undertake an immediate and comprehensive assessment of the California Grey Whale and if warranted to relist the California Gray Whale under the Endangered Species Act.

The California Gray Whale has been for a long time an important species for Northern California both for its natural, educational and scientific value, as well as for its aesthetic appeal and the economic significance the species has played in local communities. Whale watching contributes to local economies in direct revenues and in the overall economic well-being of coastal communities.

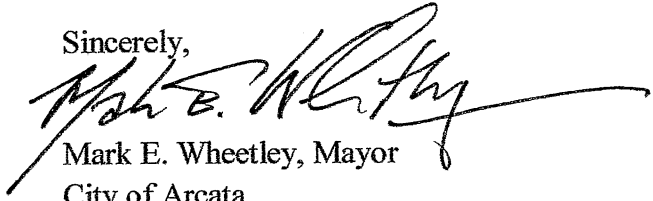
The Gray Whale was placed on the endangered and threatened species list in 1970 when its population was estimated at 12,000 and removed in 1994 when its population was estimated at 23,000. Scientists know that there was a major collapse in the population in 1999-2000, wiping out an estimated one-third of the total population. Since that time the National Marine Fisheries Service has not published an estimate of the population. While official estimates are not available some scientists estimate the current population at 14,000 and calf counts continue to be low.

What we do know is that the California Gray Whale migrates past one of the most heavily industrialized coastlines in the world and is exposed to marine pollution, industrial noise, bottom trawling, industrial development and military and non-military sonar activity. The sonar systems blast across large areas with levels of underwater noise loud enough to have resulted in deaths of marine mammals.

Additionally there are significant threats on the Gray Whales posed by global warming, melting sea ice, and the impact of increased sea water temperature in the Arctic feeding grounds that have very serious implications for this species.

In order to provide the consistent protection that this species needs, the City requests that the comprehensive assessment should include all current research covering the migration routes, population dynamics, and mortality rates of the California Gray Whale. Further if the body of scientific evidence warrants it, we request that the National Marine Fisheries Service is requested to change the status of the Gray Whale to endangered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Wheatley", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark E. Wheatley, Mayor
City of Arcata