

Anderson & Kreiger Joins Forces with NRDC, Center for Biological Diversity and Animal Welfare Institute to Protect Marine Mammals from Harmful Fishing Gear

On behalf of several nonprofit conservation groups, A&K's Mina Makariou, Christina Marshall, Marissa Grenon Gutierrez, and Sean Grammel, filed suit against a number of federal officials and agencies in the U.S. Court of International Trade on August 8, 2024. A&K brought this case alongside in-house attorneys at the Center for Biological Diversity, the Animal Welfare Institute, and Natural Resources Defense Council ("NRDC"). The team, including Xavier Lawrence, is also challenging the federal government's failure to comply with FOIA in a related piece of litigation.

The lawsuit was filed to spur implementation of the import provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The aim of these provisions, which have been part of the statute since it was passed in 1972, is to safeguard marine mammals from bycatch in international fishing gear by ensuring that countries exporting seafood to the United States adhere to the same standards as U.S. fisheries. For decades, the defendants in this litigation have delayed enforcement of the statutory mandate to ban seafood imports from nations whose fisheries do not comply with U.S. standards for bycatch protection.

In a [press release from the Center for Biological Diversity](#), Grenon Gutierrez said, "As climate change puts increasing pressure on ocean ecosystems, it is more important than ever to mitigate harms to marine mammals that are within our control. Bycatch is a leading global threat to marine mammals – one that we can work to address using the powerfully protective framework of the Marine Mammal Protection Act."

Marine mammals caught in fishing gear often drown or die on fishing vessels before their remains are discarded. Survivors may experience significant injuries, including severe cuts, broken bones, or loss of limbs. The pain and distress for these animals can be prolonged, with some passing away weeks or even months after entanglement.

Enforcing the Marine Mammal Protection Act's import restrictions and requiring other nations to comply with the same standards as U.S. fishermen will help create fair competition and strongly incentivize countries worldwide to enhance their protection of marine mammals.

To read more about the lawsuit, click the link to the press release from the Center for Biological Diversity: [Lawsuit Press](#)