**SINGLE SOURCE DETERMINATION USING**
**SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION PROCEDURES (SAP)**
**FOR AN ACTION NOT EXCEEDING THE SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION THRESHOLD**
**(AUTHORITY: FAR 13.106-1(b)(1))**

**Marine mammal/seabird observer for IWC-POWER survey**

1. **Agency and contracting activity.**

   Department of Commerce
   NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO)
   Western Acquisition Division
   Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Marine Mammal Laboratory

2. **Description of supplies or services required to meet agency needs (including the estimated value).**

   NOAA's Marine Mammal Laboratory (MML) requires services to conduct seabird and marine mammal surveys during the IWC-POWER surveys. This year's IWC-POWER survey will occur in the southern Gulf of Alaska and eastern North Pacific Ocean, from 40° N to the US EEZ border, and from 135°W to 155° W. The MML requires one (1) marine mammal/seabird observer with extensive experience in visual observation, photo-ID photograph collection, photo database management, seabird identification, and experience participating in POWER surveys. Given the POWER survey will continue for the next several years, we foresee requiring this service for at least three years.

   The cetacean/seabird observer will be responsible for data collection and data management during the POWER survey from late July through the end of September 2026. Port of embarkation will be Dutch Harbor, AK and disembarkation will be Kodiak, AK. The vessel will be the Japanese vessel R/V Yūshin Maru #2. The role of the contractor will be Primary Photo-ID photographer, collecting photographs from the bow of the vessel. Additionally, the contractor will act as both a visual marine mammal observer as well as a sea bird observer, identifying marine mammals and seabirds to species and counting the number of individuals. This involves documenting all seabird observations in a manner consistent with traditional seabird surveys. The contractor will also be required to manage the photographic database (Adobe LightRoom), which includes importing the large dataset of photographs, sorting photos into appropriate sighting folders, QA/QC'ing image quality, and coding photographs using specific keywords. Finally, the contractor is responsible for authoring portions of the final cruise report that are relevant to his duties, including but not limited to: writing summaries of photo-ID encounters, presenting the seabird observation results in a clear and concise manner, generating all relevant summary tables, and reviewing the final version of the report. As such, the observer must have extensive experience in identifying and photographing both marine mammals and seabirds, a combination which is rare, and must be comfortable spending up to two months at sea without in-ports.

   The IWC-POWER surveys are a uniquely challenging survey for several reasons. First, it is an exceptionally long survey, with 50 continuous days at sea and limited communication abilities. This is an extremely long time for people to be away from home, and many people cannot be gone that long. Second, it is on a Japanese vessel with full Japanese customs, food, and language spoken. Only a few crew speak a little English, so the observer must know at least basic Japanese sayings, as well as specific field work-oriented Japanese sayings (for example, knowing how to say "go to

port 45 degrees") in order to communicate effectively, and must have knowledge of and be respectful of Japanese customs and rules while on board. Third, they must also be ok eating traditional Japanese food, which involves a lot of seafood. Finally, survey operations on board are tiring, much more so than during traditional NOAA surveys. Observers get very few breaks during the day, and then must handle all photo-ID photographs, data input, and data management for both marine mammal and seabird data after the survey day ends, resulting in very long, exhausting days. Because of these reasons, the observer must have prior experience participating in POWER surveys, to ensure they are able to meet all of these challenging requirements.

The expected delivery date for final results and edits to the final cruise report is October 10, 2026.

Proposed performance period:

Base Period: 1 year (July 25, 2026 – July 14, 2027)

Total estimated value of Base Period: [redacted]

3. **Identification of the single source or the brand name to be solicited.**

WildSEA Global, Inc.
PO Box 1667
San Pedro, CA 90733
310-500-8485
Diane Alps, diane@wildseaglobal.org

4. **Supporting rationale.** Only one source or brand name is reasonably available as detailed below:

- ✓ Other - Only one source is capable
  This service requires that the observer have experience in both marine mammal and seabird identification. While there are several skilled observers that can do one or the other, finding someone with the skills for both is exceptionally rare.

  While many observers meet some or most of the skill and experience requirements, only one company meets all requirements. WildSEA, Inc. was contracted in 2023 to perform these same duties during the 2023 POWER survey (contract # 1305M323PNFFS0431), joined the survey again in 2025, and more than exceeds the experience requirements. They have over 30 years of experience as both a marine mammal and seabird observer, using both 7x binoculars and 25x big eye binoculars. Most of this experience is as a visual observer on standard line transect surveys, so they are familiar with traditional survey methods for both taxa. Further, much of their survey experience has been in Alaska waters, so they are extremely familiar with the target species, including the cryptid beaked whale species. They have over 40 years experience managing large photo datasets, importing and keywording photos, and have used Adobe LightRoom (the software used during the POWER surveys) since its inception. While much of their work as an observer is with NOAA surveys, they have also acted as marine mammal and/or seabird observer and photo database manager for the Southall Associates Tagless Behavioral Response Study, Cascadia Research Collective, University of Victoria Society of Ecological and Coastal

Research Study, Point Blue Conservation Science, and numerous others. They have extensive seabird survey experience, both in Alaska and elsewhere, which uniquely qualifies them to identify vagrant or out of place species, and are familiar with standard seabird survey protocols.

Because they have participated in two POWER surveys previously, they are very familiar with the customs and food on board, and know enough basic Japanese sayings as well as vessel-based vocabulary to ensure they are able to work with the crew in a respectful and productive manner. They also have experience with the long survey days and protocols, and efficiently managing their time. Further, they have co-authored portions of the POWER cruise report during their previous POWER surveys, and have knowledge of the format and tasks expected. No other vendor meets all of these requirements.

**5. Market Research.**

All NOAA Science Centers will contract observers for their marine mammal surveys. However, none of those surveys face the challenging conditions of the IWC-POWER surveys. Only five observers have participated in POWER surveys and thus can fulfill that requirement; two have retired from field work, one has passed away, and of the other two, only WildSEA has experience with seabird identification. They are the only vendor able to meet all requirements and ensure a successful survey. Please see included Market Research document for further details.

**6. Technical/Requirements Representative Certification**

I certify that this requirement constitutes the Government's minimum needs and the supporting data provided herein is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

CRANCE.JESSICA.L.1393755241 Digitally signed by CRANCE.JESSICA.L.1393755241 Date: 2026.02.13 11:58:01 -08'00'

Jessica Crance
Research Biologist

2/12/2026
Date

Robert J Foy

Robert Foy
Director, AFSC

2/17/2026
Date

**7. Determination**

I hereby determine that the circumstances of this action deem only one source is reasonably available. This determination is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

LANG.CHRISTIE.ANNE.1156642300

Digitally signed by LANG.CHRISTIE.ANNE.1156642300
Date: 2026.06.16 12:02:30 -07'00'

Contracting Officer

6/16/26

Date