

# Hearings on marine mammals

A series of public hearings will be held this summer on requests by the State of Alaska to lift an existing moratorium on the taking of marine mammals and seeking approval of Alaskan laws and regulations for the management of 10 species of marine mammals.

If the requests are approved, the state will take over management of the animals from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hearings will be both in Washington, D.C., and in Alaska, according to the Departments of Commerce and Interior. Dates and locations will be announced.

Approval of the request would permit a limited number of ribbon seals, ringed seals, Pacific bearded seals, spotted seals, harobr seals, northern sea lions, beluga whales, polar bears, sea otters, and walrusés to be taken annually under Alaskan laws and regulations starting in 1977.

The directors of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service, who

administer the act, propose to approve Alaska's request.

At the present time, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 prohibits the taking of any of the species except for native subsistence and by special permit for research, public displays, and incidental to commercial fishing operations.