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## Press Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Press contact:** Elizabeth Heyd at NRDC in Washington 202/289-2424; Daniel Hinerfeld at NRDC in Santa Monica 310/434-2303

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### U.S. Supreme Court to Hear Navy Sonar Case

#### Ruling Could Be Made By This Fall

WASHINGTON (June 23, 2008) – Today, the United States Supreme Court announced its decision to hear arguments regarding the U.S. Navy's use of sonar in ongoing training exercises through 2009. The Court's order granting certiorari can be found here: <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/orders/courtorders/062308pzor.pdf>

The underlying lawsuit was brought by a coalition of conservation organizations led by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). The other groups are the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the League for Coastal Protection, Cetacean Society International, and Ocean Futures Society and its president and founder Jean-Michel Cousteau.

In April, the Navy petitioned the Court for review of the February 29, 2008, decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, allowing naval training exercises to continue in the Southern California region but with greater environmental safeguards in the use of harmful mid-frequency active sonar (MFA). The Navy, in its official "Environmental Assessment" of the exercises, acknowledges sonar use now underway in Southern California waters will significantly disturb or injure an estimated 170,000 marine mammals, including causing permanent injury to more than 450 whales and temporary hearing impairment in at least 8,000 whales. The petition for review by the Supreme Court was filed by the U.S. Solicitor General on behalf of the Navy.

**Following is a statement by Joel Reynolds, senior attorney and director of NRDC's Marine Mammal program:**

"Today's decision was anticipated, and we have already begun to prepare for Supreme Court review.

"It's clear both that high intensity military sonar can injure and kill whales, dolphins, and other marine life and that the Navy can reduce the risk of this harm by commonsense safeguards without compromising our military readiness. These have been the unanimous conclusions of every court that has considered this issue, even after President Bush in January sought unsuccessfully to intervene on the Navy's behalf.

"Today's order means that the Supreme Court will now itself consider the matter, and, as we have done repeatedly in this and other sonar cases, we will respond vigorously to the Navy's appeal."

**Following is a statement by Jeffrey Flocken, Washington, DC director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare:**

"High intensity sonar and other manmade noise pose a serious threat not just to whales and other marine mammals but to the entire web of life in the ocean."

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 1.3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Livingston, Montana, and Beijing. Visit us at [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

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