



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

July 29, 2004

Patricia O'Connor, District Ranger
Alaska Region, Tongass National Forest
Yakutat Ranger District
P.O. Box 327
Yakutat, AK 99689-0327

Dear Ms. O'Connor:

Thank you for your March 16, 2004, scoping letter regarding the Yakutat II Salvage Timber Sale Environmental Assessment requesting scoping comments and information regarding potentially affected threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.

ESA listed threatened and endangered species that occur in Alaskan marine waters are listed in Table 1. The listed species include seven great whales, one pinniped, twelve stocks of Pacific salmon and steelhead, one sea turtle and three seabirds. The seabirds, including the short-tailed albatross, spectacled eider, and Steller's eider are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All of the other species listed are under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). No stocks of Pacific salmon or steelhead originating from freshwater habitat in Alaska are listed under the ESA. However, some individuals of the listed species originating from freshwaters in the State of Washington do occur in Alaskan outside waters.

Table 1 Species currently listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA in the North Pacific, including Alaska marine waters.

Common Name	Scientific Name	ESA Status
Right Whale	<i>Balaena glacialis</i>	Endangered
Bowhead Whale ¹	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>	Endangered
Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Endangered
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Endangered
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Endangered
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Endangered
Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Endangered
Steller Sea Lion (western population)	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>	Endangered
Steller Sea Lion (eastern population)		Threatened ²
Chinook Salmon (Puget Sound)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened



Chinook Salmon (Lower Columbia River)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened
Chinook Salmon (Upper Columbia River Spring)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Endangered
Chinook Salmon (Upper Willamette River)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened
Chinook Salmon (Snake River spring/summer)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened
Chinook Salmon (Snake River fall)	<i>Onchorynchus tshawytscha</i>	Threatened
Sockeye Salmon (Snake River)	<i>Onchorynchus nerka</i>	Endangered
Steelhead (Upper Columbia River)	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Endangered
Steelhead (Middle Columbia River)	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Threatened
Steelhead (Lower Columbia River)	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Threatened
Steelhead (Upper Willamette River)	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Threatened
Steelhead (Snake River Basin)	<i>Onchorynchus mykiss</i>	Threatened
Leatherback sea turtle	<i>Dermodochelys coriacea</i>	Endangered
Short-tailed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	Endangered
Spectacled Eider	<i>Somateria fishcheri</i>	Threatened
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Threatened

¹ Bowhead whale are present in the Bering Sea area only.

² Steller sea lion are listed as endangered west of Cape Suckling and threatened east of Cape Suckling.

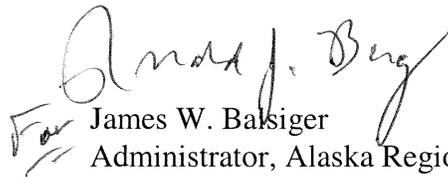
The proposed project on the Yakutat Forelands, several miles inland, is not likely to affect any listed species or designated critical habitat under the jurisdiction of NMFS. However, the project may adversely affect essential fish habitat and may require consultation with NMFS under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA). Section 305(b)(2) of the MSFCMA requires all Federal agencies to consult with the Secretary on all actions, or proposed actions, authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect EFH. NMFS is particularly concerned with nearshore habitat effects from use of the existing the log transfer facility and log transfer, bundling and/or barging techniques which would be used for transferring salvaged timber to salt water in preparation for transporting logs.

For Federal actions that may adversely affect EFH, the responsible Federal agencies must provide NMFS with a written assessment of the effects of that action on EFH. Adverse effect means any impact which reduces the quality and/or quantity of EFH. Adverse effects may include direct (e.g., contamination or physical disruption), indirect (e.g., loss of prey, reduction in species' fecundity), site-specific or habitat-wide impacts, including individual, cumulative, or synergistic consequences of actions. This assessment may be incorporated into NEPA documents such as the project EA for this salvage timber sale. The assessment must contain: A description of the proposed action, an analysis of the effects, including cumulative effects on EFH, the managed species, and associated species, such as major prey species, including affected life history stages, the Forest Service's views regarding the effects of the action on EFH and proposed mitigation, if applicable. EFH information is available on the following websites:
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat> and

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatprotection/essentialfishhabitat.htm>

If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact Sue Walker (907- 586-7585 or susan.walker@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,


James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: USFWS, Juneau
ADF&G, Janet Schempf
DNR - OHMP