



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

October 7, 2002

JT Stangl
North Zone Planning Team
USDA Forest Service
204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835

RE: Salvage Timber Harvest on Yakutat Forelands

Dear Mr. Stangl:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your request for written notification of the threatened or endangered species and critical habitat that may be present in the Yakutat Forelands, in compliance with 50 CFR 402.12(c). NMFS has reviewed your preliminary information and offers the following comments specific to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA)

Endangered Marine Species

ESA listed 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. Seabirds are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All of the other species listed are under the jurisdiction of the 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.

The proposed project on the Yakutat Forelands 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 (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.

Adverse effects are any impact which reduce the quality and/or quantity of EFH. These 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.

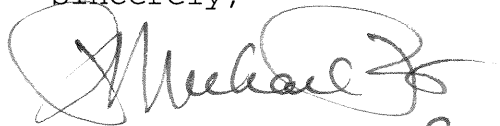
We do not have enough information on the planned timber harvest to determine whether adverse effects to EFH may occur. For any Federal action that may adversely affect EFH, Federal agencies must provide NMFS with a written assessment of the effects of that action on EFH. This assessment may be incorporated into NEPA documents and must contain:

- 1) A description of the proposed action.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The Federal agency's views regarding the effects of the action on EFH.
- 4) 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>

Ms. Susan Walker is the NMFS contact for this project and can be reached at (907-586-7646, susan.walker@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger *JW*
Administrator, Alaska Region

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>Dermochelys 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 The bowhead whale is 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.