



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

May 13, 2004

Henri R. Bisson  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Alaska State Office  
222 W. Seventh Ave., #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

Re: BLM Resource Management Plan for the  
East Alaska Planning Area

Dear Mr. Bisson:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your request for information regarding resources of NMFS concern for consideration in the Resource Management Plan for the East Alaska Planning Area. The planning area encompasses approximately 7.6 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands within the responsibility of the Glennallen Field Office.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA directs federal interagency cooperation “to insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species” or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. NMFS is responsible for the administration of the ESA as it applies to listed cetaceans and pinnipeds in Alaska. These include seven species of endangered whales (fin, right, humpback, blue, sperm, sei and bowhead whales), the threatened eastern population of Steller sea lions, and the endangered western population of Steller sea lions.

Due to the inland location of most of the planning area, threatened or endangered marine mammals do not occur in the vicinity, and critical habitat for the above listed species would not be affected. Additional information regarding the ESA is available on our website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/default.htm>.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

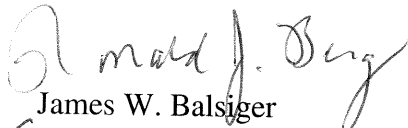
Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires federal agencies to consult with NMFS regarding any action that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for species covered under a federal Fisheries Management Plan. EFH has been broadly defined as “those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.”



The East Alaska Planning Area contains EFH for all 5 species of salmon. The proposed resource management plan should discuss potential effects of BLM activities on EFH. Additional information regarding EFH is available on our website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat/efh.htm>.

If you have questions concerning endangered species issues please contact Mr. Brad Smith at (907) 271-3023. Questions regarding EFH should be addressed to Mr. Larry Peltz at (907) 271-1332.

Sincerely,

  
James W. Balsiger  
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Misha Vakoc, EPA Region 10 - Seattle