



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

December 18, 2002

Ted Rockwell  
Environmental Scientist  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 10  
222 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #22  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

Re: EFH in the Point Thomson  
Area

Dear Mr. Rockwell:

I am writing in response to your letter of December 2, 2002, concerning the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed oil and gas development at Point Thompson. You specifically requested "information regarding descriptions and maps of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) that may be present in the Point Thomson project area."

Section 303(a)(7) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires Regional Fishery Management Councils to describe and identify EFH for each federally managed species. Many parties participate in the public process of designating EFH. The eight Councils, which have the responsibility for drafting fishery management plans (FMP's), are charged with proposing EFH designations for each life stage of the managed species in their jurisdiction. These designations must be based on the best available science regarding the habitat requirements of each managed species and are developed through a public process with many opportunities for input. Once proposed designations have been made by a Council, a notice is published in the Federal Register to inform the general public that the proposed EFH designations have been submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for approval. NMFS reviews public comments before making a final decision on whether to approve a Council's proposed EFH designations.

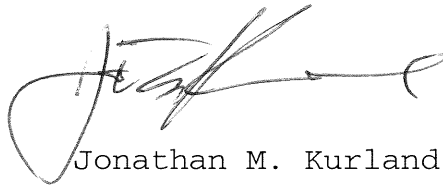
The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) manages federally controlled fisheries in Alaska. There are no federally managed fisheries in the Beaufort Sea. However, the NPFMC has identified EFH for salmon and within that designation has included salmon populations in the Beaufort Sea.



I have enclosed a copy of the report "Essential Fish Habitat Assessment Report for the Salmon Fisheries in the EEZ off the Coast of Alaska". Small populations of chinook, chum and pink salmon are found along the North Slope. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Atlas of Anadromous Fish does not identify any salmon populations in the Point Thomson Unit, but salmon are found on both sides of the unit. On the east side of the Point Thomson unit, pink salmon are found in the Staines River and chum and pink salmon are found in the Canning River. On the west side of the Point Thomson Unit, chum and pink salmon are found in the Sagavanirktok River. There is no freshwater salmon EFH in the Point Thomson Unit, but there is salmon EFH in marine waters off the Point Thomson Unit. A copy of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Atlas of Anadromous Fish is available for your review in the NMFS Habitat Conservation Division office in Anchorage.

Please contact Larry Peltz in the Anchorage office at 271-1332 for further assistance as you develop the EIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan M. Kurland". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jonathan M. Kurland

Assistant Regional Administrator  
for Habitat Conservation