

Alaska Regional Response Team's Responses to Public Comments on Wildlife Protection Guidelines for Oil Spill Response in Alaska (version 2020)

Organization	Commenter Name	Telephone #	Email Address	Mailing Address
Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	(907) 777-8451	jdushane@hilcorp.com	3800 Centerpoint Drive, Ste. 1400 Anchorage, AK 99503
Delta Western	Kelly Willett	(907) 265-8313	Kellyw@nsenergy.com	1848 Ship Ave. Anchorage, AK 99501
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Marathon Petroleum	Gerald Warrick	(907) 776-3590	gtwarrick@marathonpetroleum.com	P.O. Box 3369 Kenai, AK 99611
Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	(907) 224-6346	jamiea@alaskasealife.org	P.O. Box 1329 301 Railway Ave. Seward, AK 99664
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United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Staff	(907) 786-3856		1011 East Tudor Road, MS-361 Anchorage, AK 99503
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Staff	(907) 586-7235		Protected Resources Division P.O. Box 21668 Juneau, AK 99802-1668
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)	Staff	(907) 267-2342		Habitat Section 333 Raspberry Road Anchorage, AK 99518-1599

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1	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	3640	3-9	8	I have always been told that all wildlife response activities must go through the wildlife Branch, I understand that the wildlife branch works closely with EU, but it was my understanding that the EU could not make any wildlife calls without the permission of the wildlife branch - is that not correct?	The structure of the Wildlife Branch and Environmental Unit will depend on the scale of the event and response effort; however, the authorities for the wildlife response are not dependent on the structure of the WB and EU. No change was made to the document.
2	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	3640	3-9	8	I would consider rewording this paragraph... Using the word 'usually' makes me nervous - it leaves a lot open to interpretation and may confuse some... When the cook inlet document was being reviewed there was discussion over using the words should vs shall - since the word 'should' was in certain places (like equipment lists), from a legal standpoint it was not seen as requirement but more of a recommendation, therefore the member companies did not have to have all the requirement listed on-hand.	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate.
3	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	4610.4.1	4-5	20	<p>- How many vets in AK have experience with oiled otters? How many vets in the country have experience with oiled otters?</p> <p>- The word 'must' is very limiting - consider changing to vets trained in the treatment of oiled sea otters</p> <p>- Dr. Pam T still volunteers and works as a relief vet for ASLC when needed but she is technically retired.</p>	Because oiled sea otters have specific medical needs, the veterinarian in charge of their care will ideally have experience in caring for them. Barring experience, the veterinarian in charge must have in-depth training in the specific medical needs of oiled sea otters. In reviewing the text, we also noted that there were duplicate bullet points outlining veterinarian qualifications in this section, and we have combined those into one bullet point.
4	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	9740.2.2.3.2	9-20	29	We had an elephant seal this past summer in Seward, she was going through her molt and kept hauling out in the small boat harbor - We had to relocate her a number times before she stopped coming back.	We revised the location "Prince William Sound" to "Kenai Peninsula."

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5	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	9740.2.2.3.2.3	9-25	23	In past conversations regarding ice seals and not being able to release them after rehabilitation due to subsistence concerns - our former husbandry director use to say we could find homes for about 20 ice seals at facilities across the country. Not sure what he based that on but thought it was worth mentioning.	NMFS will keep this information up to date in the NMFS Arctic Marine Mammal Disaster Response Guidelines (referenced in this section of the WPG) or other NMFS policy documents. No change was made to the WPG.
6	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	9740.3.7.1	9-112	N.A.	<p>- This was a little confusing until I looked further ahead and saw the response strategies that start on page 9-114.</p> <p>- The word 'below' makes its confusing</p> <p>- I was almost going to comment - did you mean secondary instead of primary? since right below it is a section on secondary response strategies.</p>	Section IV of the Startup WRP has been revised to more clearly delineate the different subsections: Part A - Species and Habitats, Part B - Proposed Response Strategies, and Part C - Supporting Information for Proposed Response Strategies.
7	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	All	All	All	I am very impressed with the work that went into this document, you can tell a lot of thought and a lot of time went into it.	Thank you for your comment.
8	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	All	All	All	The format is much easier to follow and understand. I think it lays everything out in an easy to understand format.	Thank you for your comment.

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9	Alaska Sealife Center	Jamie Auletta	All	All	All	<p>Most of my comments are on word choice and whether or not it leaves areas too open for interpretation or too limiting. I just want to make sure we are paying attention to the words being used and how they can be interpreted.</p> <p>Rationale: when the kodiak and cook inlet plans were being updated there was wording near equipment list that used the word 'should' - these supplies should be on hand (or something like that) Anyway, when we were reviewing the equipment list for rehab supplies - initially it said that the Alaska SeaLife was the stranding network holder that had all the supplies necessary and that the listed supplies 'should' be on-hand. Jen was misinformed by former employee regarding us having all the supplies and I told that we did not have all the supplies listed (we have most but not in the quantities listed) and then that turned into a conversation of, well, why not? Because of funding and storage and xyz - and she was confused as to why the member companies weren't purchasing all those supplies - and basically the answer is because the wording was 'should' instead of 'shall' - legally 'should' is seen at as a recommendation and not a requirement.</p>	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate.

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10	Delta Western	Kelly Willett	3610	3-1	10, 11, 12	<p>The text added to Section 3610 is unclear as to whether it is applicable to overall day to day operations or a spill response only. Furthermore, “daylight hours” should be defined. If this applies to overall day to day operations, doing work only during daylight hours is problematic in several ways as it does not consider factors such as the long offloading/loading times for barges (can exceed 18 hours); portions of the state experience seasonal periods of limited or no daylight hours; and customer demand for fueling services provided at any time day or night. If this applies to spill response, while it is preferable to conduct response activities during daylight hours, to preclude operations outside such hours may allow for further impacts from a spill than if responders are able to continue to perform required duties outside of daylight hours, especially in the first 24 to 48 hours.</p> <p>Delta Western suggest removing or defining “daylight hours”; clarifying the applicability of this section to spill response and/or day to day operations; and listing exceptions, or “as applicable” language to this best management practice.</p>	Line 4 of this section (in the draft version of the WPG, not the final version) states that the BMPs are for spill response; therefore, they are not intended for day-to-day operations. Additional wording on BMPs has been added to the beginning of this section and this particular BMP (#3) has been reworded for clarity.

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11	Delta Western	Kelly Willett	3610	3-1	26, 27	<p>This section doesn't explicitly outline ADFG's expectations as it pertains to training of personnel at sites and whether operators are expected to maintain permits or obtain them as required to respond to a spill. Additionally, as written, it is unclear as to whether documentation is required if <i>in situ</i> burning is not utilized. Further, this section leaves the following questions unanswered: 1) Do all personnel at facilities need to know how to identify species of bird?, 2) What permits are triggered during a response?, and 3) Is the permit from USFW only triggered during a spill response, or is it something we need to have on hand for an occurrence?</p> <p>Delta Western suggests explicitly defining what ADFG's expectations are with respect to who is responsible for training and at what level and what permits and documentation they are requesting.</p>	<p>This BMP has been reworded for clarity. Please note that the WPG, including the BMPs in this section, are not specific to ADF&G expectations. It is a guidance document developed by the Wildlife Protection Committee and includes all three wildlife agencies in Alaska and many other participants (see 9740.1 for more information). Carcass collection activities following <i>in situ</i> burning should adhere to Carcass Collection and Documentation information provided in Sections 3640.2.1.3 and 9740.3.2, where additional information can be found to answer your first two questions. In brief, answers to your questions are:</p> <p>1) It is understood that oiled (or unoled) carcasses can be difficult to identify, and that may not occur until they are necropsied. The "Species" description on the back of the Carcass Collection Form and the Wildlife Observation Form ask that species be identified as precisely as you can (e.g., "bird" or "unidentified gull" or "mew gull" are all acceptable).</p> <p>2) For carcass collection permitting requirements, see section 3640.2.1.2, Table 3-3, Figure 4-1, and Table 4-1. Additional information on permitting requirements for secondary and tertiary response strategies can be found in Tables 3-4 and 3-5, Figures 4-2 and 4-3, and sections 3640.2.2.1.1, 3640.2.2.3, and 3640.2.3.2.</p> <p>3) In some instances, USFWS may issue a carcass collection permit prior to an incident, but more commonly permits and authorizations for carcass collection are obtained from USFWS during a response through the IMT.</p>

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12	Delta Western	Kelly Willett	3610	3-1	28, 29, 30, 31, 32	<p>This text added to Section 3610 isn't explicit as to what lengths are necessary to ensure compliance with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) requirements . It is unclear whether this needs to take place prior to, during, or after a spill event.</p> <p>Delta Western suggests clearly outlining expectations, defining whether these are suggested or required, and clarifying the anticipated timeline for a spill response.</p>	<p>The reference to ADNR consultation is mentioned as a best management practice in the WPG to minimize impacts to historical properties and cultural resources in addition to minimizing impacts to biological resources. We recommend contacting ADNR's State Historic Preservation Office for more information. This BMP states that consultation should occur "prior to establishment" of these areas, so they should not occur after they are in use for a spill event. However, a fixed facility, such as a tank farm, may be able to identify a preferred staging area or waste collection area prior to an incident and could consult with ADNR and wildlife agencies before an incident. This is not possible for many incidents, especially those due to vessel groundings, which occur in less predictable locations. No change was made to the document.</p>
13	Delta Western	Kelly Willett	3610	3-2	3	<p>This section gives no context as to how or where the trash should be removed. Does this mean interior and exterior areas? What sites fall into this category? Again, it's vague as to whether it applies to spills only.</p> <p>Delta Western suggests removing this section or providing clarification such that it is clear to all parties what is expected.</p>	<p>Line 4 of this section (in the draft version of the WPG, not the final version), states that the BMPs are for spill response. Additional wording on BMPs has been added to the beginning of this section to emphasize this point. This particular BMP has been reworded for clarity; however, it is intentionally not prescriptive because waste management will vary during each response based on the location, response activities, and wildlife present in the vicinity of the response. The intent is to encourage all responders to properly handle and store waste in a manner that will minimize attracting wildlife to areas where responders are present for the safety of both the responders and the wildlife.</p>

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14	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	Initial Emergency Contacts	viii	13	<p>Recommend NMFS get a standard spill specific email (similar to FWS) rather than listing individual person. Recommend this spill-specific email is monitored even when primary contact is out of office.</p> <p>Rationale: Provides continuation of coverage and history even if primary contact person isn't available.</p>	NMFS will consider this further in the future. No change was made to the document.
15	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	9740.3.7.1	9-120	3	<p>First sentence states, "This section to be filled out by RP/PRP." Given that the last sentence of the instructions state that "the permittee or RP/PRP is ultimately responsible for all actions conducted under the authority of each issued permit or authorization," the first sentence should state, "This section to be filled out by permittee or the RP/PRP, whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan."</p> <p>Rationale: There are many instances when the RP is not issued the permit (and may never even see the permit, e.g. Alaska SeaLife Center under NMFS MMHSRP authorized to collected oiled seals), therefore the permittee should be responsible for making sure these details are correct in this worksheet, not an entity (RP) that doesn't authorize or conduct the actions.</p>	In order to keep the forms as concise as possible, instead of adding the suggested language to the top of each applicable section of the WRPs, a footnote has been added to the Acronyms section of the Startup and Comprehensive WRPs stating "RP/PRP includes any entity contracted by the RP/PRP (or their ORSO/PRAC for the response) and is intended to include the RP/PRP, their contractors, the permittee, or whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan." Additional clarifying text has been added to Sections 3650.1 and 3650.2.

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16	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	9740.3.7.2	9-127	3	<p>First sentence states, "This section to be filled out by RP/PRP." Recommend the first sentence state, "This section to be filled out by permittee or the RP/PRP, whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan."</p> <p>Rationale: There are many instances when the RP is not issued the permit (and may never even see the permit, e.g. Alaska SeaLife Center under NMFS MMHSRP authorized to collected oiled seals), therefore the permittee should be responsible for making sure these details are correct in this worksheet, not an entity that doesn't authorize or conduct the actions.</p>	In order to keep the forms as concise as possible, instead of adding the suggested language to the top of each applicable section of the WRPs, a footnote has been added to the Acronyms section of the Startup and Comprehensive WRPs stating "RP/PRP includes any entity contracted by the RP/PRP (or their ORSO/PRAC for the response) and is intended to include the RP/PRP, their contractors, the permittee, or whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan." Additional clarifying text has been added to Sections 3650.1 and 3650.2.
17	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	9740.3.7.2	9-129	3	<p>First sentence states, "This section to be filled out by RP/PRP." Recommend the first sentence state, "This section to be filled out by permittee or the RP/PRP, whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan."</p> <p>Rationale: There are many instances when the RP is not issued the permit (and may never even see the permit, e.g. Alaska SeaLife Center under NMFS MMHSRP authorized to collected oiled seals), therefore the permittee should be responsible for making sure these details are correct in this worksheet, not an entity that doesn't authorize or conduct the actions.</p>	In order to keep the forms as concise as possible, instead of adding the suggested language to the top of each applicable section of the WRPs, a footnote has been added to the Acronyms section of the Startup and Comprehensive WRPs stating "RP/PRP includes any entity contracted by the RP/PRP (or their ORSO/PRAC for the response) and is intended to include the RP/PRP, their contractors, the permittee, or whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan." Additional clarifying text has been added to Sections 3650.1 and 3650.2.

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18	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	9740.3.7.2	9-131	3	<p>First sentence states, "This section to be filled out by RP/PRP." Recommend the first sentence state, "This section to be filled out by permittee or the RP/PRP, whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan."</p> <p>Rationale: There are many instances when the RP is not issued the permit (and may never even see the permit, e.g. Alaska SeaLife Center under NMFS MMHSRP authorized to collected oiled seals), therefore the permittee should be responsible for making sure these details are correct in this worksheet, not an entity that doesn't authorize or conduct the actions.</p>	In order to keep the forms as concise as possible, instead of adding the suggested language to the top of each applicable section of the WRPs, a footnote has been added to the Acronyms section of the Startup and Comprehensive WRPs stating "RP/PRP includes any entity contracted by the RP/PRP (or their ORSO/PRAC for the response) and is intended to include the RP/PRP, their contractors, the permittee, or whomever is directly responsible for carrying out this plan." Additional clarifying text has been added to Sections 3650.1 and 3650.2.
19	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	9740.3.7.2	All	All	<p>Is the Comprehensive Plan meant to be a fill-out once and done document? If it needs to be updated frequently (which it looks like some of these activities are on-going and could change daily especially for a larger spill event), filling out all of this info and getting comments from regulators on all changes may be very cumbersome. Recommend providing guidance on how this Comprehensive WRP would practically be done executed on a large scale spill.</p>	The Comprehensive Wildlife Response Plan is designed to accommodate the need for substantially new activities that require additional wildlife agency and FOSC/SOSC approval, by checking the "Amendment/Update" box in Section I and filling out the relevant information on the amendment. For example, an initial Comprehensive WRP may include bird hazing, but an amendment could cover terrestrial mammal hazing or bird capture and rehab. We have highlighted the purpose of the Comprehensive WRP "Amendment" check box in the text.
20	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	All	All	All	<p>Wildlife Protection Guidelines are much improved over previous Annex G! Much more streamlined, efficient, and great explanations of process. Graphics and job aids are a huge help.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

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21	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	All	All	All	Recommend more guidance on how these forms/protocols intersect with other wildlife guidance documents available to reduce confusion in the field. One example: NMFS has reconn, capture, collection forms and protocols that differ from the WPG. There is clear direction to follow NMFS guidelines on large carcass collection, but none on smaller carcass collection (e.g. small seals). So, would teams be following WPG carcass collection and associated forms or NMFS guidelines? Overlap in birds as well, with observation and collection protocols that differ from the WPG.	The WPG contain new multi-agency forms for Alaska, which we hope will be used. However, we recognize that other forms may also be used. Species-specific protocols and forms for some species under NMFS's jurisdiction are available in the appendices for the two regional guidelines documents (Cook Inlet & Kodiak and Arctic), which are referenced repeatedly in the WPG. The Wildlife Branch and Environmental Unit will determine which forms are most appropriate for incident-specific use. No change was made to the document.
22	Hilcorp Alaska	Jen Dushane	All	All	All	The initial WPG roll-out workshop was really beneficial. Recommend at least a few more workshops to work through changes, updates, and questions related to these guidelines.	We plan to hold additional workshops on a workload-dependent basis after the WPG have been in use for several months. No change was made to the document.
23	Marathon Petroleum	Gerald Warrick	3630.1	3-4	10-	The Operations - Wildlife and Planning - Environmental sections include wildlife prevention information that, while important, would be more beneficial as an appendix or as a general information section at the end of those sections. To make this a useable guide, the order of these sections should be done with more emphasis on the initial wildlife response strategies.	We have added a table of contents at the beginning of each major section, an ICS organizational chart, and a response flowchart to better orient readers within the document. We have left the general wildlife protection information at the beginning of the Operations and Planning sections because, although wildlife BMPs and Considerations are not primary, secondary, or tertiary wildlife response, they are nevertheless important elements of protecting wildlife while conducting other response activities.

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24	Marathon Petroleum	Gerald Warrick	4610	4-1	9	<p>"This form should be reviewed and updated prior to the Tactics Meeting for each Operational Period."</p> <p>Rationale: Form 232 is typically presented at the tactics meeting which is before the planning meeting.</p> <p>Information Source: Operational Period meetings</p>	The proposed change has been made.
25	Marathon Petroleum	Gerald Warrick	4610.3.1	4-2	43850	<p>The Operations - Wildlife and Planning - Environmental sections include wildlife prevention information that, while important, would be more beneficial as an appendix or as a general information section at the end of those sections. To make this a useable guide, the order of these sections should be done with more emphasis on the initial wildlife response strategies.</p>	We have added a table of contents at the beginning of each major section, an ICS organizational chart, and a response flowchart to better orient readers within the document. We have left the general wildlife protection information at the beginning of the Operations and Planning sections because, although wildlife BMPs and Considerations are not primary, secondary, or tertiary wildlife response, they are nevertheless important elements of protecting wildlife while conducting other response activities.
26	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	2470	2-1	All	<p>Recognition of the importance of subsistence information is another upgrade to the WPG. The first line in section 2470 - Subsistence Resources - sets the tone regarding wildlife protection and subsistence concerns where it states, "The importance of subsistence in Alaska cannot be overstated." This section goes on to discuss how resources at risk should be specifically addressed using the Incident Command System (ICS) Form ICS-232, how the Liaison Officer and Unified Command will address subsistence issues and activities with affected stakeholders, and how rehabilitated animals will be banded or marked in such a way so that a subsistence user will know the animal was once oiled.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

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27	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	2470	2-1	All	PWSRCAC has questions regarding the process for responsible wildlife agencies to communicate with subsistence users about the appropriate marking of oiled, rehabilitated, and released marine mammals. The WPG note that these details will be outlined in incident-specific rehabilitated wildlife release plans. PWSRCAC believes this is an important goal, but that more detail should be added to the WPG as to how the communication to all potential subsistence users over a set period of time would occur. PWSRCAC recognizes that section 2470 points out that details of banding and stakeholder interaction will be described and captured in table IX of the Comprehensive Wildlife Response plan templates. Table IX Capture, Transport, Stabilization, Rehabilitation, and Release Plan on p. 9-133, box #12 captures contact information, but does not include a process for interacting with stakeholders. PWSRCAC suggests adding an additional item to table IX to address this communication process. This item would describe stakeholder interaction to ensure that these concerns are managed and addressed. PWSRCAC understands that subsistence activities and animal protection and rehabilitation in general will be critical topics during a large spill event.	We agree with the importance of information sharing between subsistence users and the IMT, especially regarding marking of rehabilitated, then released, wildlife. Although subsistence users and agencies can communicate directly to discuss these issues, marking of subsistence marine mammals may also be addressed through the Liaison Officer and a Regional Stakeholder Committee, if established, which facilitates conversations between stakeholders and the Federal and State OSCs. The OSCs ultimately approve wildlife release plans. Clarifying edits have been made regarding communication and the roles of the Regional Stakeholder Committee and Liaison Officer.
28	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	2500	2-2	All	Similar improvements have been made to Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) information in the WPG. Like ESA consultation, there is more NRDAR information and context which better explains the NRDAR process, how it would function, and who would be responsible for carrying it out.	Thank you for your comment.

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29	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	3640.1	3-10	All	Another positive addition is the emphasis on gathering wildlife observations. As discussed in section 3640.1 – Wildlife Reconnaissance 1 (Recon) – wildlife observations can be made by anyone which is critical during the early hours of a spill. PWSRCAC agrees with this approach, and suggests that even when trained observers arrive on scene, this reporting by anyone continue. Trained observers cannot be everywhere, and as the WPG notes, even some generic information is better than no reporting at all.	Thank you for your comment.
30	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	4810	4-12	All	PWSRCAC supports the expanded explanation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 Consultation process. The previous language in “Annex G” of the WPG described under what circumstances an ESA consultation was required, but did not explain how the process worked or what it entailed. The draft WPG provides a better explanation of the process that is summarized in a flow chart on p. 4-14 and includes related forms in the appendix.	Thank you for your comment.
31	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	9740.3	9-51	All	Development of “grab and go” pages, an easy-to-use format, clear language, and use of standard forms are helpful to responders and wildlife observers. Improvements to various forms throughout the WPG include highlighted information on where forms are sent once completed. The details contained on the forms (such as the Capture Log for LIVE Animals on p. 9-84) contain instructions that make it easy for responders to capture the proper information.	Thank you for your comment.

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32	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	9740.3.1; 9740.3.2	9-49	All	The addition of tactics on wildlife reconnaissance and carcass collection and documentation are other significant enhancements to the WPG.	Thank you for your comment.
33	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	All	All	All	Improvements include the consistency of the format with that of the Regional Contingency Plan and associated Area Contingency Plans approved in 2018. This revised format makes the content responder-and user-friendly across plans. Additionally, based on the revisions, the WPG is easier to navigate and specific issues and topics are easier to find with the extensive table of contents provided.	Thank you for your comment.
34	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	All	All	All	Other improvements include the use of flow charts for decision-making. One example is the Wildlife Hazing/Deterrence Permits Flow Chart on p. 4-9 that addresses hazing decisions. The use of flow charts in the plan allows responders and the incident management team to quickly make informed decisions that leads to the best response.	Thank you for your comment.
35	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	All	All	All	Another area that may require future work is the further development of guidance tools and job aids such as checklists, training benchmarks, and position descriptions associated with the WPG. Improvements have been made in this area, but the WPG Committee identified this issue as a future need.	As the WPC also finds these tools useful, we will continue to incorporate them as much as possible into subsequent versions of the WPG. No change was made to the document.

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36	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	All	All	All	Another area requiring future work is to use and test the new WPG during oil spill drills and exercises. During the Prince William Sound Area Committee meeting on October 22, 2019, it was noted that revised forms and WPG documents were used during the annual Prince William Sound shipper's exercise. Several lessons learned came out of that exercise, and this real-life practice is essential to test and further refine the processes and protocols contained in the proposed WPG.	We will continue to use and evaluate the WPG in drills and exercises, and further refinements will be made based on lessons learned and feedback received. No change was made to the document.
37	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz	All	All	All	PWSRCAC recognizes the tremendous amount of collaboration, incorporation of previous lessons learned, and attention to detail that went into the proposed WPG. PWSRCAC supports the draft WPG and considers these guidelines to be vastly improved from previous versions.	Thank you for your comment.
38	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council	Donna Schantz				It is anticipated that the WPG will be reviewed on an annual basis. One topic that the Wildlife Protection Committee may need to address in future versions deliberately absent from the proposed draft is the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) or drones. The use of UAS technology is a relatively new topic for oil spill response in general, but especially as this technology relates to wildlife. Under the Arctic and Western Alaska (AWA) Area Contingency Plan, protocols for using UAS technology during a spill are currently being developed. PWSRCAC recommends that future guidance documents on the use of UAS be aligned with the WPG.	We plan to include guidance on this topic in the next revision of the WPG. Also, the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee is currently creating a guidance document for the use of UAS during spill response, and this document includes information on avoiding and minimizing wildlife disturbance. No change was made to the WPG.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
39	ADEC	Staff	4610.1	4-1	All	<p>Consider including more guidance to authors of ICS-232 forms with respect to wildlife and their habitats. An example of an adequately completed form may be helpful to include.</p> <p>Rationale: In the three drills I have been involved in, I found the contents of the completed forms significantly lacking in specificity. For example, there seemed to be an over-reliance on referencing GRSs in the vicinity of the spill and not enough emphasis on location of known wildlife concentrations (e.g., sea lion haulouts) and site-/seasonal-specific occupancy potential for sensitive species. The ICS 232 is such a critical form for spill response and it may be the only wildlife-related information that some members of the Unified Command see, so it seems like it warrants more attention in the WPG than it currently receives.</p>	More information on the Resources at Risk Summary (form ICS-232-CG) and recommendations on what should be included in it has been added to this section.
40	ADEC	Staff	9740.3	N.A.	N.A.	<p>Consider including uniquely identifying header info on the second page of two-sided forms.</p> <p>Rationale: This is desirable if/when pages are accidentally separated at some point (e.g., if a 2-sided printer wasn't available, a page is lost, scanned electronic files, etc.). In my many years as a field biologist, project leader, and form developer, I have found this to be a best practice that has come in handy many times.</p>	We have addressed these concerns with edits to the forms.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
41	ADEC	Staff	9740.3.4	9-90	13-14	<p>This sentence seems to imply that only ADEC EH approval is required for disposal in state waters. However, EPA and ADEC/EH approval is required when "baseline" occurs within state waters.</p> <p>Rationale: The MPRSA specifically applies to dumping seaward of “baseline,” which is depicted on many NOAA charts and Division of Water’s webmap. The MPRSA doesn’t distinguish between state and federal waters because of hydrologic connectivity, and prohibits or restricts ocean dumping that would adversely affect human health, welfare, amenities, the marine environment, ecological systems, or economic potentialities, regardless of location. According to EPA, disposal of chemically contaminated food items at sea would violate federal (CWA) and international (London Convention Treaty) laws, so there is no mechanism to approve such dumping.</p> <p>Information Source: Baseline is depicted on ADEC/DOW's webmap at: http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d686c1f3c1e54e7c910a55ca8c9f15b2 - Click on the “content” tab (top, left corner) - Zoom to area of interest - Click the “NOAA Baseline” option (8th option from top in left column) - Expand the NOAA Baseline option. - Baseline is shown in red.</p>	<p>The ADEC bullet has been revised to read: “If disposal is proposed in state waters shoreward of the baseline, verbal or written authorization is required from the ADEC Environmental Health Division. If disposal is proposed in state waters seaward of the baseline, verbal or written authorization is required from the ADEC Environmental Health Division and EPA. Contact ADEC at (907) 269-7681." A footnote was also added to explain baseline, and additional language on this issue was incorporated in Section 3630.3.</p>

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
42	ADEC	Staff	All			<p>Please add a table summarizing recommended safe standoff distances from protected species when agencies have established such expectations. These recommendations should describe safe operating distances for individuals on foot, in manned aircraft (helicopter/airplane), unmanned aerial vehicles, boat, etc. These recommendations should also include both vertical and horizontal separation distances, or indicate "not available" when recommendations have not yet been established.</p> <p>Rationale: Disclosing expectations in an open and transparent manner helps to manage expectations within the response community and avoid unnecessary confusion and when important response decisions must be made in a timely manner. Since initial response actions including preliminary impact reconnaissance are often conducted before the Unified Command is activated (and almost always before the initial incident action plan is developed), it is incumbent upon the wildlife natural resource agencies to communicate such expectations to reduce the likelihood of causing inadvertent impacts to protected species through unintended take.</p>	<p>We agree with the desires expressed in the comment and rationale. However, we find it is more effective to develop incident-specific buffer distances based on species, tactics, location, season, and other variables. Providing prescriptive distances in a table in the WPG could remove the incident-specific flexibility. No change was made to the document.</p>
43	ADF&G	Staff	Initial ER contacts	viii	11	<p>Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals</p> <p>Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).</p>	<p>We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.</p>

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
44	ADF&G	Staff	Initial ER contacts	viii	13	<p>Any possibility NMFS can obtain a general mailbox as did FWS? (fwsakspillresponse@fws.gov)</p> <p>Rationale: A general mailbox is more efficient and ensures communication as it can be monitored by multiple people. The document does not have to be updated when there are staff changes.</p>	NMFS will consider this further in the future. No change was made to the document.
45	ADF&G	Staff	1710.3	1-4	35, 36	<p>This section seems to lack a descriptive like is provided in the other sections.</p> <p>Rationale: It is not apparent how the two provided Alaska Statutes relate to Wildlife Response Permit without provided additional context.</p>	The following introductory text has been added to section 1710: "Under State of Alaska statutes, ADF&G is responsible for managing and protecting fish and wildlife resources in Alaska. The ADF&G also has permitting responsibility for land and water use activities that may affect habitat in fish-bearing streams and in the state's legislatively designated special areas. The ADF&G has joint statutory responsibilities with NMFS and USFWS to manage and protect certain species of wildlife, including with USFWS for wildlife on federal lands." The WPG text describing AS 16.05.920 has also been revised to provide a better description of how this statute pertains to spill response. Lines 37-40 have been replaced with "AS 16.05.920 prohibits the take, possession, and transport of fish, game, or marine aquatic plants unless authorized by permit. The ADF&G Commissioner delegates Habitat Section biologists the authority to issue permits for the salvage (carcass collection), hazing, and rehabilitation of birds and terrestrial mammals during oil spills."

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
46	ADF&G	Staff	3610	3-1	17	<p>Maybe expand to include "Obtain locations of known NMFS and USFWS pinniped haulouts and avoid flying below 1500' altitude in these areas, when possible.</p> <p>Rationale: These areas are not typically marked on a map as "sensitive areas". Just ensuring when approaching the spill area clean-up crews are cognizant of avoiding disturbances to haulouts en route to the impacted location.</p> <p>Information Source: Pinniped haulout sites are now available publicly. Seals: https://services2.arcgis.com/C8EMgrsFcRFL6LrL/arcgis/rest/services/pv_cst_haulout/FeatureServer; Steller sea lions: https://data.nodc.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/iso?id=gov.noaa.nodc:0129877. Walrus: Pacific Walrus Coastal Haulout Database 1852-2016.</p>	<p>We agree with the desires expressed in the comment and rationale. However, we find it is more effective to develop incident-specific buffer distances based on species, tactics, location, season, and other variables. Providing prescriptive distances in a table in the WPG could remove the incident-specific flexibility.</p>
47	ADF&G	Staff	3630.2	3-6	4	<p>Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals</p> <p>Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).</p>	<p>We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.</p>
48	ADF&G	Staff	3630.2	3-6	6	<p>Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals</p> <p>Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).</p>	<p>We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.</p>

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
49	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2	3-11	39	Add walruses Rationale: They should be included in the list with Alaska's other marine mammals.	Walruses have been added to the list of Alaska's marine mammals.
50	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.1.1.2	3-14	Table 3-3	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (top 2 rows) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
51	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.1.1.2	3-15	Table 3-3	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (top row) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
52	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.1.1.2	3-18	Table 3-3	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (top 2 rows) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
53	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.1.1.2	3-19	Table 3-3	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (top 2 rows) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
54	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.3.1	3-20	14	Walrus are briefly mentioned in the link to NMFS guideline. Should they have a separate bullet as do sea otters and polar bear?	A bullet point for walrus has been added: "For walrus, response protocols will be developed in coordination with USFWS on an incident-specific basis, generally following pinniped guidance developed by NMFS in their Arctic Marine Mammal Disaster Response Guidelines."
55	ADF&G	Staff	3640.2.3.2	3-22	Table 3-5	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (top 2 rows) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
56	ADF&G	Staff	4610.5.0	4-7	Figure 4-1	Dolphins are missing from the flow chart Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
57	ADF&G	Staff	4610.5.2	4-9	Figure 4-2	Dolphins are missing from the flow chart Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
58	ADF&G	Staff	4610.5.3	4-11	Figure 4-3	Dolphins are missing from the flow chart Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
59	ADF&G	Staff	4820	4-16	Table 4-1	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (3rd column) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.
60	ADF&G	Staff	4820	4-16	Table 4-1	I find this table difficult to follow. Would it read better if the columns and rows were swapped? Rationale: As written it appears, for example, if ADF&G wants to conduct "Carcass Collection" they do not need a permit (which is inaccurate). It seems more intuitive to add "Carcass Collection/Migratory birds"; Carcass Collection/sea otters, walruses, and polar bears", etc. as rows and boxes can be checked in the columns for agencies responsible for issuing a permit.	While reviewing this table for possible revisions, we realized it was redundant to Table 3-3, and therefore Table 4-1 (Wildlife Authorizations and Permits Required Prior to Implementing Response Tactics) has been removed from the document.
61	ADF&G	Staff	4820	4-17	Table 4-2	Dolphins are missing from the NMFS animals (3rd column) Rationale: If not using "cetaceans" then the following should be included: whales, porpoises, dolphins (all NMFS jurisdiction).	We clarified that dolphins are present in Alaska and under NMFS's jurisdiction throughout the document in response to multiple questions and comments about this. We either added "dolphins" to species categories, or grouped all cetaceans (dolphins, porpoises, whales) in a "cetacean" category.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
62	ADF&G	Staff	4820	4-17	Table 4-2	<p>I find this table difficult to follow. Would it read better if the columns and rows were swapped?</p> <p>Rationale: As written it appears, for example, if ADF&G wants to conduct "Carcass Collection" they do not need a permit (which is inaccurate). It seems more intuitive to add "Carcass Collection/Migratory birds"; Carcass Collection/sea otters, walruses, and polar bears", etc. as rows and boxes can be checked in the columns for agencies responsible for issuing a permit.</p>	This table has been modified to make the permitting agency information more clear.
63	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14	Table 9-4	<p>Include the presence of non-listed Steller sea lions in Southeast Alaska.</p> <p>Rationale: The eastern DPS of the Steller sea lion is not a listed species. The endangered wDPS overlaps only into part of Southeast AK.</p> <p>Information Source: https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/wdps_subset7guidance1213final.pdf </p>	This table defaults to show the "endangered" populations when they are present in a region. It does not easily enable us to show overlap of ESA-listed and non-listed DPSs in the same region. The written description for Steller sea lions provides more detail about the two DPSs, where they occur, and overlap. No change has been made to the document.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
64	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14	Table 9-4	<p>Include the presence of non-listed (Eastern North Pacific) Gray Whales.</p> <p>Rationale: Only the Western North Pacific DPS gray whales are listed under the ESA.</p> <p>Information Source: Eastern NP Gray Whale: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/93649938 Western NP Gray Whale: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/93649940</p>	This table defaults to show the "endangered" populations when they are present in a region. It does not easily enable us to show overlap of ESA-listed and non-listed DPSs in the same region. No change has been made to the document.
65	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14	Table 9-4	<p>Correct the listed of the humpback whale in various regions.</p> <p>Rationale: For example, in Prince William Sound both the endangered and threatened DPS exist.</p> <p>Information Source: Wade, P. R., T. J. Quinn II, J. Barlow, C. S. Baker, A. M. Burdin, J. Calambokidis, P. J. Clapham, E. Falcone, J. K. B. Ford, C. M. Gabriele, R. Leduc, D. K. Mattila, L. Rojas-Bracho, J. Straley, B. L. Taylor, J. Urbán R., D. Weller, B. H. Witteveen, and M. Yamaguchi. 2016. Estimates of abundance and migratory destination for North Pacific humpback whales in both summer feeding areas and winter mating and calving areas. Paper SC/66b/IA21 submitted to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, June 2016, Bled, Slovenia. Available at www.iwcoffice.org.</p>	This table defaults to show the "endangered" populations when they are present in a region. It does not easily enable us to show overlap of ESA-listed and non-listed DPSs in the same region. No change has been made to the document.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
66	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14, 9-15	Table 9-4	<p>Suggest showing a map of the Geographic Zone in Alaska and/or use known coastal areas. What area would Gulf of Alaska species all fall under, "Kodiak"? There is a known small population of beluga whales occurring in Yakutat Bay, is this Southeast Alaska? If so, should the status of belugas be changed to P(Yakutat Bay)/R?</p> <p>Rationale: A map would help identify the areas referenced by geographic location (southeast, Prince William Sound, etc.). For example, for Northern Fur Seals, I would consider the Pribilofs in Western AK vs the Aleutians as per Table 9-4.</p>	A map depicting these Geographic Zones has been added to section 9740.2. This map will be referenced throughout the document whenever Geographic Zones are mentioned. Beluga whales are considered rare in Southeast Alaska primarily due to their presence in Yakutat Bay; therefore, the status of "Rare" (R) for beluga whales in Southeast Alaska in Table 9-4 is more appropriate than "Present" (P).
67	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14, 9-15	Table 9-4	<p>Suggest having NMFS review the location and status of the species under their management.</p> <p>Rationale: The information of location and presence of multiple species appears to have errors.</p> <p>Information Source: See Alaska Protected Resources Division Species Distribution Mapper at https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0c4a81f75310491d9010c17b6c081c81</p>	NMFS has reviewed the tables and updated the tables where appropriate.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
68	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2	9-14, 9-15	Table 9-4	<p>Consider including the following species: narwhal, Lake Iliamna seals, killer whale (Eastern North Pacific Southern Resident stock (threatened))</p> <p>Rationale: The narwhal is included in the list of Alaska marine mammal species. Include Lake Iliamna seals if including inland waters. The Southern resident killer whale has a rare occurrence in southeast Alaska, however other species with rare occurrences are considered.</p> <p>Information Source:</p> <p>Narwhal: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiJIKzMqv_nAhVInJ4KHVPaCRsQFjADegQIAhAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fisheries.noaa.gov%2Fwebdam%2Fdownload%2F70106105&usg=AOvVaw2xV4xvguQ3rLybRjowhieh</p> <p>Killer whale: https://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/news/features/killer_whale_report/pdfs/bigreport62514.pdf</p>	Due to the rare occurrence of narwhal and Southern Resident killer whale in Alaska, these populations have not been included in the WPG at this time. Harbor seals in Iliamna Lake are not currently recognized as a separate distinct population segment and, therefore, are not included in the WPG as a separate population. The status of these populations will be reviewed in future revisions of the WPG. No changes have been made to the document.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
69	ADF&G	Staff	9740.2.2.3.2.2	9-23	1	<p>Suggest replacing August with September</p> <p>Rationale: Molting ends late summer for some age classes (a Southeast Alaska study showed until mid-November, Daniel 2003)</p> <p>Information Source: https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=stellersealion.main</p> <p>Daniel, R. G. 2003. 64p. The timing of moulting in wild and captive Steller sea lions (<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>). M.Sc. thesis, University of British Columbia. Vancouver, British Columbia. See https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=stellersealion.mainDaniel,%20R.%20G.%202003.%2064p.%20The%20timing%20of%20moulting%20in%20wild%20and%20captive%20Steller%20sea%20lions%20(Eumetopias%20jubatus).%20M.Sc.%20thesis,%20University%20of%20British%20Columbia.%20Vancouver,%20British%20Columbia.</p>	We revised this time period to incorporate September.
70	ADF&G	Staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	<p>Should the restrictive use of media (photos, video, etc.) collected under USFWS and NMFS marine mammal permits be included in the plan?</p> <p>Rationale: Current use of social media has presented problems for staff not familiar with the restrictions of media collected under federal marine mammal research permits. Instruction to rescuers should be given elsewhere if not included in this document.</p>	During a spill response, the Unified Command will coordinate release of information to the public, including media such as photos and videos. The Unified Command should provide incident-specific guidance on responders' sharing of photos or other spill-related information on personal or agency social media. Additionally, it is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure their use of media is consistent with their individual permit conditions. No change has been made to the document.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
71	NMFS	Staff		xi	4	Is this section a detailed description of when to call the people listed above? If so, it took awhile for me to make that deduction. You may want to begin this section explaining this better.	We added a new introductory section outlining roles and responsibilities within an ICS structure, and we provided references where readers can learn more about the structure and the authorities involved in oil spill response.
72	NMFS	Staff		xi	7-8	Are these agency contacts the people listed above? Need to clarify.	We added a new introductory section outlining roles and responsibilities within an ICS structure, and we provided references where readers can learn more about the structure and the authorities involved in oil spill response.
73	NMFS	Staff		xii, 1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 3-1, 3-2, 3-9? (1st paragraph under 3640), 3-23, 4-1, 4-4, 9-79		There could be confusion by people not familiar with the roles and acronyms in the oil spill response field about some of the terms and job titles. Suggest an organizational chart or reference early in the WPG to guidance materials to help explain and define: e.g., Unified Command; IMT; structure between ACPs, NRDAR team, response team; Incident Command Post; Incident Command (and how does it differ from Unified Command); Operations Section; NRDAR Liaison; Environmental Unit; Wildlife Branch; WBD; Planning Section; Safety Officer; JIC, Joint Information Center; planning meeting; operational period; OSRO/PRAC. Recommend a flow chart similar to Figure 3-1 to show the organizational structure between the ACPs, NRDAR team, response team, etc.	We have added information, including an ICS organization chart and wildlife response flow chart, to the beginning of the document to briefly reference overarching guidance for oil spill planning and response. The WPG provide tools and background to address wildlife concerns during a spill response in Alaska; they are directed primarily at responders who are already familiar with the Incident Command System and spill response roles.

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#	Organization	Commenter Name	Section #	Page #	Line #	Comment	Response to Comment
74	NMFS	Staff		2-1	1-3	Multiple questions. What does "Command" mean--no explanation? Why does the numbering jump to 2400? Why is "Subsistence Resources" under Command and Liaison Officer sections? Very confusing/random heading organization. Explanation needed.	A "How To Use the Wildlife Protection Guidelines" section has been added to the beginning of the document which includes a general ICS organization chart. Additional clarifications have also been added to Sections 2000 and 2400 to address your concerns. The WPG table of contents is organized to match the structure of the four Area Contingency Plans (page 1-1, line 19). Because the Wildlife Protection Committee did not have the discretion to change 1000- and 100-level headers, only the sections relevant to the WPG are included in the document.
75	NMFS	Staff		2-2	1-4	If wildlife banding or subsistence is addressed or mentioned anywhere else in WPG, that connection should be described here (e.g., refer people to other sections with additional info).	This is the only instance where wildlife marking or banding is referred to in the WPG, although subsistence use is also mentioned in sections 4610.1 - Resources at Risk Summary and 9740.2 - Species Information. We have edited the section to further clarify where release plans can be found. Please also see our response to Comment #27 for additional information on subsistence.
76	NMFS	Staff		3-7	2	Should be or must be?	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate. In this specific case, we retained the existing language.
77	NMFS	Staff		3-10	32	This makes it sound like Wildlife Observers are only agency personnel.	We revised this language to clarify that the position is not just agency personnel; it is specific to the ICS and described in more detail later in the document.
78	NMFS	Staff		3-11	8	This makes it sound like Wildlife Observers are responsible for contacting agencies to get needed permits.	We revised this language to clarify that the activities conducted by Wildlife Observers, not the observers themselves, may need permits.

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79	NMFS	Staff		3-11	27-41	Suggest moving the last paragraph on this page (starts with "The WPG focuses,,," to the beginning of this section, as it seems introductory. Suggest clarifying that all 3 response strategy categories require permits, either in a blanket statement or in each description.	We moved this paragraph so that it appears earlier in the WPG, and we added a sentence clarifying that all three categories of wildlife response will require permits.
80	NMFS	Staff		3-13	36	Change "may" to "can". How are Startup and Comprehensive WRPs different?	Readers can follow the hyperlinks in this sentence to learn more about Startup and Comprehensive Wildlife Response Plans, including the circumstances in which each is appropriate. No change was made to the document.
81	NMFS	Staff		4-2	1	This section appears very repetitive to previous rat-free section. Is it different?	The "rat-free" information is redundant because both Operations and Planning Section personnel may need to be aware of it. However, the information is consistent between these two sections. No change was made to the document.
82	NMFS	Staff		4-5	11	"Must": is this mandated by law/regs? Or are these guidelines (i.e., should)?	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate. In this specific case, we retained the existing language (i.e. "must").
83	NMFS	Staff		4-5	35	"Must": is this mandated by law/regs? Or are these guidelines (i.e., should)?	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate. In this specific case, we retained the existing language.

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84	NMFS	Staff		4-6	25	"Must": is this mandated by law/regs? Or are these guidelines (i.e., should)? Some of the items in the list appear to be required but others are not required? If a permit or plan or other thing says "must follow guidelines" and these are the guidelines, then saying "must" here is okay. If these are truly only strong preferences by wildlife agencies, then you should divide up the "musts" and the "shoulds".	We agree that proper word choice, especially for terms that may imply legal responsibility, is important. We have evaluated the use of these terms in the document and have made changes where appropriate. In this specific case, we retained the existing language (i.e. "must").
85	NMFS	Staff		9-2	36-39	The last two sentences would be useful at the very beginning of this document	We have added information, including an ICS organization chart, to the beginning of the document to briefly reference overarching guidance for oil spill planning and response. Please see also the response to comment #73.
86	NMFS	Staff	9	9-20 – 9-24		NMFS updated the Northern fur seal description. Rationale: Include best available information	Section 9740.2.2.3.2.1 - Northern Fur Seals has been updated to include the best available information.
87	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.1	9-13	16	Consider adding another option for how species may be prioritized: whether the area is an important breeding/breeding area for a particular species or species group.	We added a 5th bullet point on page 9-13 which states "The species, or species group, is known to have an important breeding site in the planning area."
88	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.1	9-14		It would be helpful to have a map showing how the geographic zones in Table 9-4 are defined.	We added a map to provide a visual reference of the geographic zones mentioned several times in the WPG.
89	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.2.2	9-16	35	You could delete "and they will often investigate new additions to their environment" because it says the same thing in the next sentence.	We revised this section to more clearly describe potential responses of marine mammals to deterrence tactics.
90	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.2.2	9-17	3	In addition, I would presume there are very few facilities that could house such wildlife.	We revised the language on this page to reflect the small number of marine mammals that could be held in existing facilities.

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91	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.2.5	9-30	8	So oil on the skin would not cause issues with heat loss/gain through the skin? I would have thought that a layer of oil on the skin would cause differences in thermoregulation through the skin.	We have amended the lines to address the uncertainty surrounding whether a layer of oil affects walrus thermoregulation.
92	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.3	9-31	1	There seems to be very little info here compared to seals/sea lions which have a section per species. Seems like the response might be different for different species based on behavior (e.g., species that are in groups like dolphins vs. more solitary cetaceans like fin whales, or species that migrate vs. those that don't)	We plan to include more information about cetaceans in future versions of the WPG. No change was made to the document.
93	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.3	9-31	10	Is there any information on long term exposure of cetaceans to oil spill? There seems to be quite a lot of information here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275959547_Overview_of_Effects_of_Oil_Spills_on_Marine_Mammals	Yes, there is a considerable amount of information about oil exposure impacts to cetaceans resulting from the Deepwater Horizon Spill. We plan to include more information in future versions of the WPG. No change was made to the document.
94	NMFS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.4	9-32	39	I assume there would also be complications as oil on the fur would have implications for camouflage with their environment.	Yes, this could be a potential issue, particularly if white ice seal pups are oiled with black oil. We plan to address this in the next WPG. No change was made to the document.
95	NMFS	Staff		9-107	3	Is it worth mentioning here that you cannot use a startup if you are planning to do pre-emptive capture?	We reworded the sentence to clarify that "Pre-emptive capture may only be requested using a Comprehensive WRP (i.e., a Startup WRP may not be used to request pre-emptive capture)."

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96	USFWS	Staff	3640.2.3.2			Seems like for tertiary response the start-up WRP should be required/approved before field deployment especially if responder can cite existing references/protocols and already has a permit (makes it pretty easy to put together a start-up plan before actually doing any capture).	We have changed the language commented upon to read: "Responders who already have valid permits to conduct oiled wildlife capture, transport, stabilization, or rehabilitation activities will need to: 1. Follow the terms of their permits. 2. Immediately notify the appropriate wildlife agency to advise them of planned actions and to receive initial authorization."
97	USFWS	Staff	3650 & 3650.1			Maybe need to clarify if startup actually allows implementation/deployment into field, or is just a planning process for hazing, capture, etc.	We addressed this in Section 3650, which states: "A two-phase process allows initial wildlife response strategy implementation as soon as possible using the Startup WRP (Section 9740.3.7.1) and allows additional details to be added to the Comprehensive WRP as the spill response continues. This two-phase process allows time to: Scale the IMT wildlife sections (EU, WB) to the size appropriate for the incident, mobilize wildlife responders, conduct immediate authorized response activities for impacted wildlife, and develop details necessary to complete the Comprehensive WRP." To clarify that the strategies may be implemented using the Startup WRP, we have made the edit suggested in comment #98.
98	USFWS	Staff	3650.1	3-23	21	"The startup WRP is a request to begin the process of authorizing [and implementing?] all or some portion of wildlife response..."	This edit has been incorporated into the final WPG.
99	USFWS	Staff	3650.1	3-24	6	All authorizations should be written to show proof of authorization.	Although all verbal or email authorizations are noted as "Emergency" authorizations in Section V of the Startup WRP and Section X of the Comprehensive WRP, either WRP serves as the written record of these authorizations. No change was made to the document.

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100	USFWS	Staff	3650.2	3-24	27-28	"A Comprehensive WRP must always be submitted to request pre-emptive capture [and all tertiary response (capture of oiled wildlife?)] ."	We reworded the sentence to clarify that "Pre-emptive capture may only be requested using a Comprehensive WRP (i.e., a Startup WRP may not be used to request pre-emptive capture)." Oiled wildlife capture can be included in a Startup WRP if permitted and authorized.
101	USFWS	Staff	Figure 4-4	4-14		Where do federally recognized tribes fall out - federal or non-federal RP? E.g., a spill occurs on tribal lands and EPA is NOT called in to respond.	Figure 4-4 describes responsibilities to minimize impacts to ESA-listed species during spill responses. Most tribal lands in Alaska are owned and managed by Alaska Native corporations, which like other corporations and responsible parties, would need to report and respond to spills. Spills that threaten waters of the U.S. will trigger USCG or EPA involvement and may warrant an ESA section 7 consultation. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation responds to all spills and would provide oversight for those to land that do not threaten waters of the U.S. During spill responses that lack a federal nexus (i.e., a federal agency does not fund, authorize, or conduct any part of the action), there is no ESA section 7 consultation; however, the responsible party is still required to avoid harm and harassment of ESA-listed species. Similarly, federally-recognized tribes do not have an ESA section 7 consultation nexus. No change was made to the document.

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102	USFWS	Staff	9740.2.2.2.3	9-17	17	A short sentence on release and availability of suitable release sites should probably be added. Lots of concern for disease transmission from animals that have been held/treated in facilities. Maybe in general marine mammals section 9740.2.2.2 since it applies to all marine mammals.	We have amended Section 9740.2.2.2.3 to read: "Due to the size and the remoteness of many areas in Alaska, in some instances capture and cleaning of marine mammals may not be practical or beneficial due to a lack of equipment, trained personnel, facilities, and availability of suitable release sites. Additionally, the potential for disease transmission from animals that have been held captive to populations of wild animals may be a concern. While some guidance exists (e.g., in Best Practices for Migratory Bird Care During Oil Spill Response), decisions regarding release of rehabilitated wildlife will be species- and incident-specific. These release decisions will be made by the wildlife agencies with trust responsibility for that species, in consultation with rehabilitation experts and veterinarians."
103	USFWS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.1.1	9-19	32	And re-location? If you had a suitable relocation site within sea otter population range, it seems that might be an option for long-term holding, especially if a long cleanup was expected.	We changed the wording to: "Request authorization to conduct oiled sea otter capture, transport, stabilization, rehabilitation, release, and relocation in Startup or Comprehensive WRPs (Section 9740.3.8)."
104	USFWS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.2.5	9-30		For tertiary response strategies, address potential to survive if released back into the wild. If they are small dependent calves, would probably go to zoo; not likely to survive if released back into wild.	We agree; however, because this applies to most (if not all) marine mammals we amended Section 9740.2.2.2.3 to read: "Tertiary response strategies should only be considered if it is determined that the probable survival of the oiled marine mammals is very low and the likelihood of successful rehabilitation is high. For marine mammals that have undergone successful rehabilitation, release to the wild may be possible. In some cases, rehabilitated marine mammals will be placed in authorized zoos or aquaria."
105	USFWS	Staff	9740.2.2.3.4			Polar bear section updated to reflect best available information.	Section 9740.2.2.3.4 - Polar Bears has been updated to include the best available information.