

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:		Calendar Year:	2017
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A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	1/18/17	Fairbanks, AK	10	http://alaskarrt.org
2.	5/24/17	Sitka, AK	7	http://alaskarrt.org
3.	9/21/17	Cordova, AK	9	http://alaskarrt.org

B. Activations / Notifications

1.	Dates:	April 2017	Event:	BP Well number 3 Activation	ACT	X	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	BP Flow Station 1, Drill Site 2, Well Site #3 release and response at Prudhoe Bay in April 2017						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, ADEC						
	Decisions Made:	<p>BPXA Well 3 on Alaska's North Slope vented gas, which caused an initial spray of crude oil that impacted the gravel well pad. The well was killed by pumping in salt water, offsetting upward pressure. The well is not officially secured until a mechanical plug is installed. The dynamic kill means that hydraulic pressure is still being applied to the well.</p> <p>The Unified Command reviewed BPXA plans for placing a mechanical plug at the damaged section of the downhole pipe. Once the well was secured downhole, BPXA worked with their Oil Spill Response Organization, Alaska Clean Seas, to delineate the impacted area.</p>						
2.	Dates:		Event:		ACT		NOT	
	Issue / Concern:							
	Agencies Involved:							
	Decisions Made:							
3.	Dates:		Event:		ACT		NOT	
	Issue / Concern:							
	Agencies Involved:							
	Decisions Made:							

4.	Dates:		Event:		ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:					
	Agencies Involved:					
	Decisions Made:					

C. RRT Exercises

1.	Dates: 10/5/17		Event:	Valdez TAPS Notification	
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, ADEC, DOI, NOAA			
	Summary of exercise:	The notification exercise tested the utilization of the CG Alert Warning System to contact, provide status update, and setup ARRT CC to discuss range of response options.			
2.	Dates:		Event:		
	Agencies Involved:				
	Summary of exercise:				
3.	Dates:		Event:		
	Agencies Involved:				
	Summary of exercise:				

D. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
1) U.S. EPA Region 10	Chris Field, EPA Co-Chair, ARRT	Calvin Terada, EPA Co-Chair, ARRT
2)		
3)		

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

How can I remotely participate in Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) Meetings? ARRT established comprehensive processes and procedures for maximizing capabilities for off-the-shelf communication software and equipment. The procedures are scaled into four options based on the local conditions of the participant. This has allowed guest speakers, RRT members, and the public to participate in meetings held literally hundreds of miles away.

F. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts

Before 1993, the State of Alaska managed Emergency Response for oil spills and hazardous materials releases by use of the Alaska *State Master Plan*. The *State Master Plan* was a standalone plan solely managed by the state of Alaska. In an effort to be better prepared for emergencies, the state, United States Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency, decided to develop a jointly managed *Unified Plan* (UP). The Unified Plan encompasses not only state requirements for preparing for and responding to oil spills and hazardous materials releases, but also encompassed federal requirements as well. The Unified Plan differs from the *National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan* (NCP) in that the NCP model is based on *Area Contingency Plans* (ACPs) managed by *On Scene Coordinators* (OSCs). In most areas of the country, ACPs are based on U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port areas of responsibility (COTP AOR). In Alaska, the COTP AOR for Western Alaska is divided into eight *Sub Areas Contingency Plans* (SCP). This division created confusion in many responders who respond to events in Alaska but are from other areas of the country.

In an effort to be better prepared in the event of an oil spill or hazardous materials release in the State of Alaska; the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10, and the United States Coast Guard District 17 and Sectors Anchorage, Juneau, and Marine Safety Unit Valdez initiated a project to transition from the existing UP towards a planning framework consistent with the NCP and the National Response Framework. The primary objective of initiative was to decommission the Alaska Unified Plan and SCPs by reorganizing into a Regional Contingency Plan combined with 4-ACPs.

This initiative completed the following steps and milestones during 2017:

- Established AK Area Planning Transition Team
- Agency Reps from USCG D17 & Sector Anchorage, Alaska DEC, and EPA recently met and devised plan to meet stated Area Planning objectives within a rapid 1 year timeline
- Conducted initial Area Committee formation planning
- Briefed overview of the Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) for transition to NCP compliant Area Planning to leadership and stakeholders
- Attained approval to proceed with project

G. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)



Alaska Regional Response Team
CY 2017
ESA Compliance Report

APRIL 30, 2018

Background

On January 23, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)¹ – pursuant to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act – jointly issued the *Biological Assessment of the Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases (Unified Plan)*. In response, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued Biological Opinions (BiOp) on the Alaska Unified Plan on February 27, 2015, and May 15, 2015, respectively. These BiOps contain certain mandates and recommendations for the EPA and USCG regarding oil pollution preparedness, planning, and response actions. Among those requirements is annual² reporting back to the Services on steps taken as the responsible federal action agencies toward achieving those mandates and recommendations.

The first annual reporting to the Services was summarized in Section III of the *ARRT Annual Report 2015*³ (issued January 20, 2016). Last year's CY 2016 report was a more detailed accounting of compliance measures and means taken by the ARRT and the federal on-scene coordinators (FOSC) with direct reference to the FWS BiOp Conservation Recommendations and the NMFS BiOp Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPMs), including Terms and Conditions, and Conservation Recommendations. This year's CY 2017 report follows that same format. All past reports may be found at www.alaskarrt.org

Organization

To describe action agency compliance progress made at both the local FOSC level and the regional ARRT level, the below Compliance Update section is separated by Service, then by each Services' respective Conservation Recommendations and RPMs along with any Terms and Conditions (attached for reference). These have been restated as prompts to facilitate gathering of content. Where applicable, each FOSC's compliance efforts (within their respective areas of responsibility) are detailed therein in response to those questions. Relevant ARRT inputs addressing regional matters are included at the end of each section.

¹ The Endangered Species Act places the burden of compliance on the federal agencies taking the action which may affect protected species or their critical habitat, etc. Under the National Contingency Plan (40 CFR 300), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard are the lead federal (action) agencies for pollution preparedness and response. However, this work is planned and performed in conjunction with other federal agencies, the States, and tribes, including agencies representing the Services in the on the Alaska RRT. Therefore, this report is designated as from the Alaska RRT.

² Calendar year based to coincide with the ARRT Annual Report.

³ The ARRT Annual Report to the NRT is based on calendar year.

Point of Contact

Please contact Mark Everett, USCG Co-Chair of the Alaska RRT, Mark.Everett@uscg.mil, (907) 463-2804, with any questions.

Compliance Update

USFWS BiOp (pages 121-123), see attached

8.o Conservation Recommendations

1. What has been done to increase FWS awareness of and meaningful involvement in responses to oil spills?

<p>USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p> <p>(Sector Anchorage)</p>	<p>For every case, the duty federal on-scene coordinator representative (FOSCR) and pollution responder (PR) contact DOI and provide initial and subsequent updates. DOI works to liaise between the FWS and the FOSCR to pass along case details and any of FWS concerns. Throughout 2017, the USFWS was routinely on update emails sent out to state and federal partners for awareness, and their responses to case updates were carefully reviewed by duty personnel and addressed as appropriate.</p> <p>Additionally, Sector Incident Management Division (IMD) coordinated and attended training with the Scientific Support Coordinator on the ESA section 7 emergency consultation procedures, including an overview of the NMFS and FWS biological opinions. Sector worked closely with NMFS and USFWS to revise and finalize the ESA Initiation forms and develop a template for closing out Emergency ESA Section 7 Consultations, now used throughout District 17.</p>
<p>USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p> <p>(Marine Safety Unit Valdez)</p>	<p>The FOSC for Prince William Sound has tasked unit responders with always notifying FWS during oil spills in Prince William Sound. The FOSC also advocates for FWS involvement in any major exercise in the Prince William Sound Area.</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p> <p>(Sector Juneau)</p>	<p>Whenever Sector Juneau responders receive notification of a discharge in an area where sensitive resources may be affected, responders typically contact Department of the Interior (DOI) personnel first, to inform them of the situation. The DOI contact can help to determine whether the incident or corresponding response operations are likely to impact listed species and/or designated habitats under either USFWS or NPS purview. If impacts are likely to occur,</p>

	<p>then responders initiate the consultation process using the “Alaska Region Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation Initiation” form in concert with the appropriate agency representative(s).</p> <p>During the fall of 2017, the Anchorage-based USFWS point of contact for ESA consultations left her position. DOI informed USCG of interim consultation procedures that remain in effect (as of 18DEC17), until the position is filled. Sector Juneau personnel treated that transition as a good opportunity to reach out to USCG responders, provide the interim consultation instructions, and remind responders of their obligations related to ESA considerations.</p>
USEPA Region 10	When participating in spill preparedness activities, Alaska-based On-Scene Coordinators and the Alaska Spill Response Planner invited the USFWS Environmental Contaminants/Spill Response Coordinator to participate in those drills and exercises.
Alaska RRT	The relatively small yet tight knit cadre of representatives from action agencies, the Services, and other allied and industry professionals involved in the pollution preparedness and response enterprise in Alaska work well together through existing relationships and established processes. Much of this occurs through regular meetings, exercises and responses. Occasionally new opportunities arise, especially in such a dynamic policy and operations theater, for greater ongoing cross-agency training and orientation. The ARRT routinely encourages its member agencies and subarea committees to identify and pursue, as resources allow, greater collaboration to gain a deeper understanding and insight into their partners’ policies, procedures, and capabilities. USFWS are always welcome to participate.

2. Summarize your FY2017 spill response activities to include:
 - a. Name/Type of cases involving emergency consultation with FWS

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>Sector Anchorage conducted the following emergency consultations:</p> <p>28 February, F/V ELIZABETH TAYLOR ran aground in women's bay AK. ESA consultation was initiated on 01 March. All mitigation measures were implemented, no wildlife was spotted or impacted during the response.</p>
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	<p>07 March, F/V ST DOMINICK ran aground in Pumicestone Bay on Unalaska island. ESA consultation initiated on 07 March. All mitigation measures were implemented, no wildlife was spotted or impacted during the response.</p> <p>01 April, 'Anna' platform sheen in Cook inlet AK. ESA consultation initiated on 02 April. All mitigation measures were implemented, no marine mammals were spotted or impacted during the response.</p> <p>29 June, F/V MISS DESTINEE capsized near Kodiak Island. ESA consultation initiated on 30 June. All mitigation measures were implemented, no wildlife spotted, no impacts to wildlife during the response.</p> <p>30 July, YNG15 Barge abandoned and reported discharging oil in Prudhoe Bay, AK. ESA consultation initiated on 30 July. All mitigation measures were implemented, no wildlife spotted, no impacts to wildlife during the response.</p> <p>02 September, F/V PROVIDER grounded near Elma Island AK. ESA consultation initiated on 03 September but cancelled the next day. No mitigation measures were provided for this incident.</p> <p>16 August, M/V AKUTAN arrived in Dutch Harbor in poor condition and posed an imminent and substantial pollution threat to the environment. ESA consultation initiated on 17 August. All mitigation measures were implemented, no wildlife spotted, no impacts to wildlife during the response.</p>
<p>USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>F/V ALL IN – 04Aug2017 – Vessel Capsized in Knight Island Passage (PWS)</p> <p>F/V STOIC – 11Aug 2017 – Vessel Capsized Unakwik Inlet (PWS)</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>Sector Juneau did not complete any emergency consultations with USFWS during CY17. However, Sector Juneau did notify USFWS – via DOI points of contact – of various aspects of five different oil discharge responses, including three vessel groundings and two vessel sinkings. Each of those cases involved the presence of response contractor vessels, the deployment of containment boom and sorbent materials, and on-scene vessel dewatering and repair. Neither DOI nor USFWS reported back on any of those notifications. The vessels involved in those cases were Towing Vessel (T/V)</p>

	<p>SAMSON MARINER; T/V OCEAN EAGLE; T/V POWHATAN; M/V WHIMSEA; and F/V CONFIDENCE.</p> <p>With regards to the grounding of T/V OCEAN EAGLE, crewmembers on board USCGC LIBERTY (the On-Scene Command vessel) observed 10-15 sea otters approximately 100-400 yards from the area where emergency repairs were being completed on the towing vessel. Sector Juneau advised USFWS of those sightings via email. However, USFWS did not appear to have any follow-up questions or guidance on that or any other case.</p> <p>Regarding the T/V POWHATAN incident, National Park Service personnel did monitor the affected area for signs of wildlife exposure/impacts, but did not suggest or require that responders take any specific mitigating actions.</p>
USEPA Region 10	USEPA did not conduct any emergency consultations in 2017. However, during the BPXA Flow Station 1, Drill Site 2, Well 3 release incident in April, the USDOJ Regional Environmental Officer was consulted for concurrence that emergency consultation was not warranted at that time.
Alaska RRT	The ARRT received formal FOOSC notifications and updates of several cases mentioned above, most notably: BPXA Well 3; Tug POWATAN; Hilcorps' Platforms 'Bruce' and 'Anna,' and the fish processing vessel AKUTAN. The ARRT monitored progress of the responses to, in part, ensure compliance with FWS Conservation Recommendations, but there were no Incident Specific activations of the ARRT, requests for support, nor ESA consultations at the regional level.

b. When impacts to listed species and critical habitat were avoided or not.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOOSC)	During all incidents involving ESA consultation (Section 2.a.), responders adhered to recommended mitigation measures, and no known impacts to listed species or their critical habitat occurred.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOOSC)	Recommendations from FWS and NMFS were communicated to the responsible party in both incidents. No impacts to listed species or critical habitat were reported.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOOSC)	See 2.a. above.

USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	<p>The ARRT has asked all FOSCs to include in their regular briefings to the ARRT (required at least annually but usually given thrice annually) content specifically related to impacts of responses to listed species and critical habitat. This affords the action agencies and the Services' ARRT representatives both a summary of activities at the local responder level and an opportunity to seek additional information in follow-up questions during ARRT meetings. The ARRT meeting agenda format has also been amended to include a regular report-out on ESA related subject matter such as progress on compliance efforts, national level working groups (NRT), etc.</p>

c. Evaluation of effectiveness of emergency consultation processes with FWS and any improvements made to procedures

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>The below lessons learned were addressed in the Section 7 Consultation Closeouts for the above cases and were forwarded to USFWS and NMFS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The consultation should be conducted as early as possible in the response to allow responders to prepare for recommended mitigation measures before arriving on-scene. 2. It could be beneficial to include a member of the Environmental Unit representing the FOSC in the incident management team (IMT). This would allow a single point of contact to relay consultation recommendations to the Operations Section and personnel on-scene. 3. Highly recommend Environmental Unit Leader ICS training for USFWS and NMFS members that will represent their agency during a response. 4. Keeping IMT personnel updated on forthcoming mitigation recommendations would allow the Operations Section to adequately prepare, and reflect associated tasking on form ICS-204s for formal direction and documentation. <p>With regards to documenting wildlife encounters, information such as observation distance, vessel speed, and</p>
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	overflight heights should be collected from designated observers.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Emergency Consultations were effective in providing recommendations to the responsible party as they hired a contractor to mitigate the hazards to the environment. Recommendations were not always applicable to the operation and were generic.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	See 2.a. above.
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	See response to 2.b. above and note the improvements described by the FOSEs in the development of a standardized ESA Consultation Closeout form for the region. The ARRT will consider adding this new form to Alaska Unified Plan. By agreement with the Services, this 2017 Annual Report meets the recommendation for annual reporting.

3. During spill responses involving listed sea otters, to what degree did vessel operators follow the “Boat Operation Guidance to Avoid Disturbing Sea Otters”?

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	The Southwest DPS of the Northern sea otter were an applicable listed species for some of our responses, and the Boat Operation Guidance to Avoid Disturbing Sea Otters was passed verbally and via email from the FOSECR to the salvage company. The salvor observed several sea otters within their search grid, and reported that “all operations were conducted in accordance with the recommendations in the Alaska Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation initiation documents.” FOSECR’s provided training on this subject to our primary response contractor in the summer of 2017 after receiving training from USFWS and NMFS.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	FWS is involved in training response teams for Alyeska/SERVS but not other contractors in PWS. The Coast Guard has observed Alyeska/SERVS utilizing the Sea Otter guidelines, but not any other OSROs.

USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>During the T/V OCEAN EAGLE response, crewmembers on board USCGC LIBERTY (the On-Scene Command vessel) observed 10-15 sea otters approximately 100-400 yards from the area where emergency repairs were being completed on the towing vessel. However, on-scene vessels did not exceed recommended speed limits, and the animals remained at least 100 yards or more from all response operations. As such, the requirements set forth in “Boat Operation Guidance to Avoid Disturbing Sea Otters” were not directly applicable.</p> <p>Otter sightings have not been noted for any other Sector Juneau cases during CY17.</p>
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	N/A

4. What, if any, site-specific Ecological Risk Assessments (ERA) for threatened and endangered species and sensitive habitat areas were conducted in your AOR? Was FWS involved in and/or notified of such ERAs? Were these ERAs incorporated into your SCP?

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	No Ecological Risk Assessments have been conducted in the Sector Anchorage AOR in 2017.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	The ICS 232 (Resources at Risk) form was completed for the Polar Tankers exercise in October 2017, and for two capsized vessels in Prince William Sound. (F/V ALL IN; F/V STOIC) These incident specific resources at risk summaries were not incorporated into the PWS SCP. FWS was involved during the exercise and both real world incidents.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Sector Juneau and its subunits did not conduct any ERA with USFWS during CY2017.
USEPA Region 10	No Ecological Risk Assessments have been conducted by USEPA in Alaska in 2017
Alaska RRT	No formal ERAs were conducted in the Alaska region in 2017. The last such ERA was conducted in the Northwest Arctic subarea in March 2012. FWS was involved in that effort.

5. Refer to Conservation Recommendations 5.a.- e. These region-wide dispersant use policy issues are addressed below by the Alaska RRT.

Because ESA formal consultation of the *Alaska Unified Plan* included a review of the then draft *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska* (Alaska Unified Plan, Annex F, Appendix I), precautions described in Conservation Recommendation 5.d. were incorporated into the final version following issuance of the FWS BiOp. Moreover, as required by section 1.4 of the *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska*, in 2017 the FOSC for each of the five subareas affected by establishment of the Preauthorization Area completed a community-based technical evaluation and implementation of so-called dispersant use ‘avoidance areas.’ These are temporal and/or spacial designations within the Preauthorization Area where the more protective Case-by-Case Dispersant Use protocol (Tab 1, Part 1B) are required vice the protocol for the overall Preauthorization Area. These areas have been added to the respective subarea contingency plan.

Recommendations 5.a. and 5.c are within the purview of or subject to completion of ongoing work of national level standards-setting organizations or working groups such as NOAA’s on-going National State-of-Science Dispersant Initiative (anticipate completion in Fy18). Recommendation 5.e. is under the sole authority of EPA headquarters (working on proposed revision of *National Contingency Plan*, Subpart J). The Alaska RRT continues to monitor ongoing work, per Recommendation 5.b., at the national level through regular participation in National Response Team (NRT) meetings and direct liaison with federal agency headquarters.

6. {Applicable only to FOSC for Western Alaska and the North Slope SubArea (specifically Hanna Shoal).} Describe any relevant dispersant use planning, exercises, or response coordination with FWS.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Sector Anchorage did not participate in any dispersant use exercises or responses in 2017 in this area, outside of participation in RRT discussions.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	The Alaska RRT has passed this Recommendation on to the relevant FOSC for consideration and looks forward to further opportunities to work with FWS.

7. {Applicable only to areas where short-tailed albatrosses are found.} Describe any relevant dispersant use planning, exercises, or response coordination with FWS.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>Sector Anchorage did not participate in any dispersant use exercises or responses in 2017, outside of participation in RRT discussions.</p> <p>The US Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency and State of Alaska held 4 public outreach meetings in Kenai, Valdez, Kodiak and Unalaska and provided an information table at the 26th annual Bureau of Indian Affairs Providers Conference in Anchorage. The meetings were used to gather public input to identify off-shore locations where the use of oil spill dispersants should be avoided within the Preauthorization areas found in the Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska. The meetings featured presentations on the policy and the science of dispersants. The public comment period ended 09 January 2017 in which 34 comments were submitted some of which directly mentioned the short-tailed albatross. The technical committee of federal and state agency personnel (including DOI, USFWS, and NMFS reps) reviewed the comments before recommending Avoidance Areas (which revert some portions of the Preauthorization Area to Undesignated Area) for Federal On-Scene Coordinators approval. This would include the information obtained on locations where short-tailed albatrosses are found. Such areas were documented in the relevant subarea contingency plan.</p>
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Short-tailed Albatross habitat was identified and was incorporated into the PWS SCP Dispersant Avoidance Area in accordance with recommendation from the DOI.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Short-tailed albatrosses primarily inhabit territories in and around the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Strait, which are beyond the boundaries of the Sector Juneau AOR.
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	The Alaska RRT has passed this Recommendation on to the relevant FOSSCs for consideration and has ensured regional policy requires consultation with FWS during response planning.

8. Describe any section 7 consultation with FWS for oil spill preparedness drills, exercises, or other pre-spill activities.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Sector Anchorage was a participant in several exercises and drills, including a GRS deployment in Barrow and community tribal response training in Dillingham. However, Sector was not the hosting party and therefore did not conduct any section 7 consultations for 2017 drills or exercises.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	The FOSC for Prince William Sound has a QRC that requires the notification to resource trustees (DOI & NOAA) for all spill responses. During incidents that pose a potential for oil discharges, DOI and NOAA are also notified as a courtesy in case the situation were to change.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	In August 2017, Sector Juneau field-tested Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) SE05-03, Pirate Cove, located near Sitka, AK. The exercise involved deploying containment boom in a configuration not listed in the current Strategy, to determine whether that configuration could be an appropriate supplemental response option. During the planning phases of that exercise, Sector Juneau personnel contacted both DOI and USFWS personnel to gauge their interest in participating. Although those agencies were not able to participate (travel funding limitations), Sitka-based NPS personnel did participate. However, for that particular exercise, NPS personnel were primarily concerned with historic and/or cultural resources, as opposed to ESA concerns.
USEPA Region 10	EPA did not conduct training or exercise activities in Alaska with potential to adversely impact threatened or endangered species or their critical habitats.
Alaska RRT	The Alaska RRT has informed the FOSCs and their exercise planners of the need to consider Section 7 consultation during oil spill preparedness drills and other pre-spill activities and is monitoring.

9. Refer to Conservation Recommendation 9. These region-wide dispersant use policy issues are addressed below by the Alaska RRT.

No pollution response cases in 2017 were considered for dispersant use. Moreover, because ESA formal consultation of the *Alaska Unified Plan* included a review of the then draft *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska* (Alaska Unified Plan, Annex F, Appendix I), this Recommendation was addressed through procedures described in the final version which includes consultation of Service biologists in certain instances (including in molting and wintering areas). Moreover, as required by section 1.4 of the *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska*, in 2017 the FOSC for each of the five subareas affected by establishment of the Preauthorization Area completed a community-based technical evaluation

and implementation of so-called dispersant use ‘avoidance areas.’ These are temporal and/or spacial designations within the Preauthorization Area where the more protective Case-by-Case Dispersant Use protocol (Tab 1, Part 1B) are required vice the protocol for the overall Preauthorization Area. These areas have been added to the respective subarea contingency plan.

10. {Applicable only to FOSC for Western Alaska and the Northwest Arctic SubArea (specifically St. Lawrence Island).} Describe any relevant effort to establish a winter no transit zone for vessel traffic in spectacled eider critical habitat south/southwest of St. Lawrence Island.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	USCG District 17 staff are working in conjunction with the Bering Sea Port Access Routing Study (PARS) to address critical habitat concerns around St. Lawrence Island. Current recommendations to USCG Headquarters include establishing an area to be avoided around St. Lawrence Island to address various agency wildlife concerns. More information is available through the District 17 Chief of the Waterways Management Branch.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	N/A

11. Describe your efforts to use a standardized emergency consultation form (across all FOSC areas) for consultation initiation and conclusion.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	The Alaska Region Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation Initiation form (revised 2/20/2015) has been used for each case initiated by Sector Anchorage in 2017. Sector Anchorage, USFWS, NMFS and the D17 Scientific Support Coordinator developed a template for the emergency consultation closeout that addresses concerns for both USFWS and NMFS, intended for use throughout District 17.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	MSU Valdez Response Department participated in the initiative to create a standardized ESA Consultation initiation form. It has been added to the unit’s QRC.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Whenever a response could impact protected species and/or habitat, USCG responders generally initiate contact with USFWS and/or NMFS by phone or email. If more formal

	communications are warranted (based on initial input from the trustees), responders will then submit the attached “Alaska Region Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation Initiation” form. The form has been standardized in such a way as to guide virtually any action agency through the consultation process, even if a responder has little prior experience. The agencies involved in development and standardization of that form included: DOI, USFWS, NPS, NMFS and NOAA Scientific Support Coordinators, the EPA, and USCG [District 17, Sectors, Marine Safety Detachments (MSD), etc.].
USEPA Region 10	USEPA has no objection to inclusion of the standardized emergency consultation form developed by the services as part of the Unified Plan.
Alaska RRT	See response to 2.c. above and note the improvements described by the FOSCs in the development of a standardized ESA Consultation Closeout form for the region. The ARRT will consider adding this new form to Alaska Unified Plan.

12. Refer to Conservation Recommendation 12.

This will be addressed by the Alaska RRT in future revision to *Wildlife Protection Guidelines* (Annex G) of the Alaska Unified Plan.

13. Refer to Conservation Recommendation 13.

This will be addressed by the Alaska RRT in future revision to *Alternative Countermeasures* (Annex F) of the Alaska Unified Plan.

NMFS BiOp (pages 147-151), see attached

7.2 Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPM)

7.2.1 Terms and Conditions (T&C)

For RPM#1 – *“The USCG/EPA shall implement measures to reduce the probability of exposing bowhead whales, humpback whales, Cook Inlet beluga whales, western DPS Stellar sea lions, ringed seals, bearded seals, and salmon to oil spill response related stressors.”*

1. Describe efforts to ensure all field deployed response personnel involved with spill response in a manner which may result in incidental take are provided the information outlined in the NMFS BiOp.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	For any case where NMFS, USFWS, SSC, or ADF&G, either verbally or via a formal Section 7 Consultation or form ICS-232, make recommendations for response operations to
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	<p>include avoiding incidental take, those recommendations are carefully reviewed by the FO SCR and passed to responders on-scene as applicable.</p> <p>Sector IMD coordinated and attended training with the Scientific Support Coordinator on the ESA section 7 emergency consultation procedures, including an overview of the NMFS and FWS biological opinions, to increase responder awareness.</p>
<p>USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FO SC)</p>	<p>The FO SC advocates for NMFS involvement in any major incident or exercise in the Prince William Sound Area. Responders are encouraged to develop an ICS 232, review ESI maps and communicate with resource trustees before undertaking or directing any response efforts. Recommend including the BiOP as a part of regular Alyeska/SERVS/ and Fishing Vessel Program Training to ensure awareness of the document. Recommend formalized training for all MSU Valdez response personnel on BiOp recommendations and required consultation procedures. Recommend FWS/NMFS develop a formalized information packet available for distribution to contracted personnel during spill response to outline best practices, BiOp information and ESA regulations.</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FO SC)</p>	<p>During Summer 2017, Sector Juneau Incident Management Division (IMD) staff received approximately 4 hours of classroom training from NMFS Protected Species Division personnel. Members from MSD Ketchikan also attended the training, remotely. The training addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences between formal and informal Section 7 consultations • The definition of ‘take,’ and Incidental Take Statements (ITS) • Common stressors that may ‘affect’ protected species, triggering Section 7 consultation; examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collision/ship strikes ○ Acoustic impacts from noisy response equipment ○ Use of dispersants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In situ burning operations ○ Shoreline-based response activities affecting habitat • Options to mitigate impacts on protected species, as identified in the “Conservation Recommendations” section of the 2015 NMFS BiOp • Section 7 consultation procedures and documentation • Section 7 post-response consultation close-out procedures and documentation
USEPA Region 10	USEPA did not conduct any responses in Alaska in 2017
Alaska RRT	This will be addressed by the Alaska RRT in future revision to <i>Wildlife Protection Guidelines (Annex G)</i> of the Alaska Unified Plan.

2. Describe efforts to ensure all contracted personnel involved with spill response in a manner which may result in incidental take are provided the information outlined in the NMFS BiOp.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	For any case where NMFS, USFWS, SSC, or ADF&G, either verbally or via a formal Section 7 consultation or form ICS-232, make recommendations for response operations to include avoiding incidental take, those recommendations are carefully reviewed by the FOSSCR and passed to the contractor on-scene as applicable.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Recommend including the BiOp as a part of regular Alyeska/SERVS and Fishing Vessel Program Training to ensure awareness of the document. Recommend FWS/NMFS develop a formalized information packet available for distribution to contracted personnel during spill response to outline best practices, BiOp information and ESA regulations.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Whenever trustee agencies provide explicit mitigation recommendations for smaller responses, those recommendations are verbally conveyed to response contractors, usually during daily ‘tailgate’ meetings. If a formal Incident Command post is established, relevant

	<p>guidance would likely be captured on approved ICS 204 Forms (work assignments and instructions), and subsequently routed from field-based Division/Group Supervisors to contractors.</p> <p>Any mitigation actions taken by contractors would most likely be reported to on-scene USCG responders verbally, if taken and/or if reported at all. Instances of either mitigating actions taken or ‘take’ committed by contractor assets – even if unintentional – are likely the most difficult to track/document.</p>
USEPA Region 10	USEPA did not conduct any spill responses in Alaska in 2017
Alaska RRT	This will be addressed by the Alaska RRT in future revision to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .

3. Tiered Emergency Consultation

- A. What measures are taken to contact a Section 7 biologist from NMFS to confirm whether a spill response is within the range of a listed species or a designated critical habitat?

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>For all cases, the Sector FOSCRs make regular contact with a DOI representative who acts as a liaison between the USCG and NMFS. However, DOI often connects the appropriate NMFS representative with the duty FOSCR if needed. For Emergency Section 7 Consultations, the Sector FOSCRs contact the D17 Scientific Support Coordinator to initiate and follow up directly with NMFS, USFWS, and the SSC as needed to clarify questions or recommendations.</p> <p>MSD Homer conducted the following emergency consultation:</p> <p>On 19NOV16, Hilcorp Inc. advised MSD Homer that an unknown oil was discovered in one of the Tyonek Platform legs. They stated that there was no potential path of discharge for the oil but that they would be investigating further to determine the source. On 26NOV16, Hilcorp advised MSD Homer that sampling concluded that the unknown oil was about 69,000 gallons of diesel fuel and had originated from a fuel tank on the platform that has a fuel line that runs through the leg. Hilcorp Inc. contracted a local Oil Spill Response Organization to transfer the diesel fuel out of the leg and dispose of it. An Emergency ESA Section 7 Consultation was initiated and completed on 27NOV16.</p>
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	MSU Valdez personnel contact the NOAA SSC to report all spills in the PWS COTP Zone. If response equipment or

	<p>actions are to potentially impact endangered species or critical habitat, the NMFS representative is contacted directly.</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>At a minimum, Sector Juneau responders have access to the following 5 options for determining whether a response is within range of a protected species or designated habitat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact (phone or email) with the NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator (SCC). Responders generally contact the SCC regardless of whether protected species/habitats may be impacted. However, if protected resources <i>are</i> at risk, the SCC's input can be a good way to determine appropriate paths forward. • ICS Form 232, Resources at Risk. The SCC usually provides this form, explicitly identifying species/habitats that may be affected. • Published Geographic Response Strategies, accessible either on-line or via hard copy kept in the Sector Juneau Response Department. • Information collected from the web-based NOAA Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA) database. During 2017, all Sector Juneau IMD personnel received training and gained password-enabled access to ERMA, allowing them to determine whether protected species/habitats inhabit response working grounds. • Direct contact (phone or email) with Juneau-based NMFS Protected Species Division personnel. If the options above do not provide enough clarity, pollution responders will sometimes seek technical

	<p>assistance from NMFS personnel prior to initiating formal consultation.</p> <p>It is important to note that trustee agency representatives generally will not explicitly advise USCG to initiate consultation. The trustees are fairly responsive with regards to helping to identify the species/habitats in a given area, but they then leave actual consultation (i.e. identifying mitigating actions; seeking trustee agency concurrence) up to USCG discretion. Responders should be careful to avoid the assumption that trustees will state when consultation should take place. USCG may not receive such explicit guidance, and if USCG interprets the absence of guidance as an indication that consultation is <i>not</i> necessary, then USCG could be at risk of not adhering to its obligations.</p>
USEPA Region 10	USEPA did not conduct any spill responses in Alaska in 2017
Alaska RRT	<p>FOSCs understand and comply with the requirements of the 2001 Interagency MOU. This MOU is currently under review by a National Response Team subcommittee and may be revised to clarify certain policies and practices. Meanwhile, the ARRT has shared with FOSCs the content of T&C 3.A. – 3.G. and is monitoring compliance. These requirements, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i>.</p>

B. Describe your process for Emergency Consultation with NMFS.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	For Emergency Section 7 Consultations, the Sector FOSCRs contact the D17 Scientific Support Coordinator to initiate and follow up directly with NMFS, USFWS, and the SSC as needed to clarify questions or recommendations.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	MSU Valdez personnel contact the NMFS (Sadie Wright) via phone and/or email to pass all pertinent information. Once the Consultation initiation form is completed and approved it will be the primary information gathering tool used to transmit response data to the NMFS.
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	If USCG determines that consultation is warranted, responders will submit the “Alaska Region Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation Initiation”

	<p>form to the appropriate trustee agency representative(s) (USFWS or NMFS, depending on species affected). On the form, USCG is responsible for identifying response actions, affected species, and intended mitigating actions. The trustee agency then reviews those intentions, and may offer additional recommendations if necessary. Trustee agency representatives usually know when to expect a consultation form, based on corresponding phone or email contact.</p> <p>If the response cannot satisfy mitigating actions stated on the form, the onus is on USCG to reconvene with trustee agency representatives and jointly identify more realistic options.</p>
USEPA Region 10	The process for emergency consultation is described in the 2001 Interagency MOU, and in Section II of Annex G (Wildlife Protection Guidelines) of the Unified Plan.
Alaska RRT	<p>FOSCs understand and comply with the requirements of the 2001 Interagency MOU. This MOU is currently under review by a National Response Team subcommittee and may be revised to clarify certain policies and practices.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the ARRT has shared with FOSCs the content of T&C 3.A. – 3.G. and is monitoring compliance. These requirements, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i>.</p>

- C. Describe your process to review each spill response to ensure that all adverse effects to listed species, their prey, and the habitats were within the range of effects considered in the NMFS BiOp.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	<p>In all cases, the Sector FOSCRs make regular contact with a DOI representative who acts as a liaison between the USCG and NMFS. For Emergency Section 7 Consultations, the Sector FOSCRs contact the D17 Scientific Support Coordinator to initiate and follow up directly with NMFS, USFWS, and the SSC as needed to clarify questions or recommendations.</p> <p>Any feedback provided from NMFS, USFWS or the SSC is carefully reviewed by duty personnel and applied to the response. Recommendations are clearly articulated to the responding party, whether the Responsible Party, USCG or a contract organization.</p>
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<p>USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>The BiOp is available as guidance for all MSU Valdez responders to during actual or planned response operations. Responders are encouraged to develop an ICS 232, review ESI maps and communicate with resource trustees before undertaking or directing any response efforts.</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>Juneau-based NMFS personnel have developed a form titled, “Post-Response Consultation Close-out Form.” The form is intended to be used in concert with the “Alaska Region Spill Response Emergency Endangered Species Act Consultation Initiation” form, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of species observed during a response; • The range at which species were observed; • Behaviors displayed by observed species; • Any form of adverse effect or incidental take, including mortality or injury. <p>The information captured in a Close-out Form can be compared to recommendations set forth in the 2015 BiOp. Any effects that depart from/violate BiOp requirements would need to be summarized and submitted to the appropriate trustee agency as soon as practicable, for corrective action.</p>
<p>USEPA Region 10</p>	<p>USEPA will review each incident to determine whether or not response activities were within the range of effects considered in the NMFS BiOp. In 2017, no spill responses were conducted by USEPA in Alaska.</p>
<p>Alaska RRT</p>	<p>FOSCs understand and comply with the requirements of the 2001 Interagency MOU. This MOU is currently the under review by a National Response Team subcommittee and may be revised to clarify certain policies and practices. Meanwhile, the ARRT has shared with FOCSs the content of T&C 3.A. – 3.G. and is monitoring compliance. These requirements, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be</p>

	considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .
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D. Refer to T&C 3.D.

Considered under response in subpara. B. above.

E. Describe measures taken to ensure notification of responders that no take of North Pacific right whales is authorized.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Take of North Pacific right whales has not been addressed directly this year, as this species has not been a particular concern within the response area for any Western Alaska FO SC cases in 2017. However, all recommendations listed by NMFS or USFWS under Section 7 consultations are carefully considered by the FO SCR and passed to responders as applicable.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FO SC)	N/A
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FO SC)	Sector Juneau responders did not discuss Northern Pacific Right Whale requirements/measures during CY17.
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	N/A This Recommendation will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .

F. Describe any instances in which marine mammals were taken in a manner other than that described in the NMFS ITS (Incidental Take Statement).

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FO SC)	There were no known incidental takes resulting from response activities in 2017.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FO SC)	N/A
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FO SC)	There were no known instances of incidental take during Sector Juneau-led responses in 2017.

USEPA Region 10	No marine mammals were taken in Alaska as a result of USEPA spill response activities in 2017.
Alaska RRT	N/A This Recommendation, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .

G. Describe any instances during a USCG-supervised spill response in which a sick, injured, or dead marine mammal(s) under NMFS’s authority were observed and reported to NMFS Alaska Region through the incident commander.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	Sea otters were observed transiting in the distance during several responses but were not in the vicinity of discharged product or sheen. Contractors on-scene notified the Incident Management Team via email, including photos and location. The Environmental Unit was notified, including a NMFS representative participating via conference call. The observation was also addressed in appropriate ESA documentation and closeout, which was forwarded to NMFS and USFWS. Other than distant on-scene observations, no sick, injured, or dead marine mammals were observed or reported for this or other cases in 2017.
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	There were no known reports of sick, injured, or dead marine mammals observed during Sector Juneau-led responses in 2017.
USEPA Region 10	N/A
Alaska RRT	N/A This Recommendation, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .

For RPM#2 – *“The USCG/EPA shall implement a monitoring and documentation program that allows NMFS to evaluate the spill response action exposure estimates contained in this Biological Opinion that underlie the ITS.”*

1. Describe your FOSC efforts to document effects of response methods to listed species, their prey, and habitat to include:
 - A. Species Affected
 - B. Habitat Area and Type
 - C. Temporal Effects

<p>USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>For each case where an Emergency Section 7 consultation was made, the FOSCRs conduct Section 7 Consultation closeout statements for NMFS and USFWS, working closely with agency representatives to address their needs and concerns.</p> <p>Sector Anchorage, NMFS, USFWS and the SSC developed a template for ESA closeout which will streamline the process to specifically address the needs of both the NMFS and USFWS Biological Opinions, to include the above list.</p>
<p>USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>The FOSC in Prince William Sound makes every effort to involve NMFS in Exercises and relevant training to drive the documentation process for the effects of response operations on listed species and habitats. When new response methods and equipment are proposed, potential environmental impacts are considered before authorization for use in certain areas. Standardized ESA forms are used to document potential or actual impacts to listed species and critical habitats.</p>
<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>Responders observed NMFS-protected marine mammals in the vicinity of two responses, including one vessel grounding (T/V OCEAN EAGLE) and one sinking (M/V WHIMSEA).</p> <p><u>M/V WHIMSEA</u></p> <p>During WHIMSEA operations, USCG responders observed a humpback whale surfacing just outside the containment boom that marked the perimeter of the response area (located within Statter Harbor Marina in Auke Bay, Juneau). The animal surfaced briefly, re-submerged, and was not observed again.</p> <p>USCG responders contacted NMFS personnel via phone to convey that information, and subsequently sent a follow-up email message. NMFS determined that the observed</p>

	<p>behaviors likely did <i>not</i> indicate that response operations had caused disruption or disturbance.</p> <p><u>T/V OCEAN EAGLE</u></p> <p>During the OCEAN EAGLE case, USCGC MAPLE (the On-Scene Command vessel) observed 3 orca whales, seemingly transiting the vicinity of response operations. MAPLE crewmembers observed the animals for approximately 20 minutes, and that information was conveyed to NMFS via email. Similar to the WHIMSEA case, NMFS personnel did not feel that the behaviors observed indicated signs of distress or injury related to response operations.</p> <p>On a separate note, in March 2017, NMFS issued Sector Juneau a Letter of Concurrence for the M/V BIG RED grounding, which occurred in August 2016. The Letter of Concurrence states NMFS' position that, among other things, the BIG RED response "did not likely adversely affect humpback whales or DPS Stellar sea lions."</p>
USEPA Region 10	The USEPA made no efforts to document effects of response methods to listed species, as it conducted no spill responses in Alaska in 2017.
Alaska RRT	The ARRT has shared with FOSCs the content of T&C 1.A. – 1.C. and is monitoring compliance. These requirements, and any changes to the 2001 MOU, will be considered for inclusion in updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i> .

D. Refer to T&C 1.D. regarding submission of an Annual Monitoring Report.

This submission constitutes compliance with Annual Monitoring Report requirement.

8.o Conservation Recommendations

With the exception of item 6 (which is a matter solely for the EPA's National Product Schedule), the conservation recommendations provided in this section are the responsibility of the Alaska RRT or are incident-specific measures. However, FOSCs are free to establish relevant policy at the SubArea Committee/SubArea Contingency Plan level or implement these or similar measures during a response.

USCG Western Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A
USCG Prince William Sound Captain of the Port (FOSC)	N/A

<p>USCG South East Alaska Captain of the Port (FOSC)</p>	<p>Although Sector Juneau does not have any input on this inquiry, IMD members have spoken with Juneau-based NMFS personnel about developing a standardized form to issue to contractors, documenting protected species observations during response operations. USCG and NMFS will meet during Winter 2018 to discuss and/or propose such a form for use throughout the region.</p>
<p>USEPA Region 10</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Alaska RRT</p>	<p>The ARRT has shared these Conservation Recommendations with the FOSCs. Some are being implemented during response operations. All will be considered for inclusion in future updates to relevant portions of the <i>Alaska Unified Plan</i>. NMFS will be notified of these updates and other implementation efforts via future <i>ARRT Annual ESA Compliance Reports</i>.</p>