



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1011 E. Tudor Rd.

Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AFES/MMM

AUG 24 2006

Ms. Caryn Rea
Senior Staff Biologist
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.
700 G Street, ATO 1902
PO Box 100360
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0360

Dear Ms. Rea:

This responds to your request dated August 15, 2006, for a Letter of Authorization (LOA) to incidentally take polar bears and Pacific walrus during oil and gas operations within the Greater Kuparuk Area and Alpine Oilfield Units. On August 2, 2006, final regulations that authorize the incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus during year-round oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production operations in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska were issued for a period of five years. In accordance with these regulations, enclosed is a LOA (06-03) that allows ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. (CPAI), to take small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus incidental to year-round oil and gas exploration, production, operations, and restoration activities within the Greater Kuparuk Area and Alpine units, provided annual monitoring reports are received by January 15 of each year. Activities are ongoing and expected continue through the life of the regulations.

Polar bear conservation has benefited from monitoring programs associated with the Incidental Take program since 1993. Monitoring serves to assess the effect of industrial activities on polar bears by evaluating trends and effects of bear encounter rates, take frequency, as well as the location and timing of encounters. In addition, the monitoring and protection measures for marine mammals described in CPAI's Bear Avoidance and Human Encounter/Interaction plan are appropriate, and hereby incorporated into the terms of the LOA by reference. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologists are available for consultation if questions or concerns arise during the project period at the phone numbers listed below and noted in your interaction plan.

Historical polar bear denning activity reveals that polar bear denning habitat occurs along creek cutbanks and river bluffs. Approximately 1782 miles (2870 km) of potential polar bear denning habitat is located between the Colville River and the Canning River; of that, approximately 300 miles (480 km) of potential polar bear habitat occurs within the boundaries of the above-mentioned Oilfield Units (see enclosed maps). Disturbance during denning could lead to

Ms. Caryn Rea

2

abandonment of dens and possible mortality to cubs. Use caution when operating near these areas during the maternal denning period (late October to mid April). The U.S. Geological Survey has posted information identifying polar bear denning habitat and GIS coverage available for downloading from the Alaska Science Center (ASC) website, plus associated documents. The den habitat map (ARC/INFO export file), the mapping manuscript (PDF file) and a picture of den habitat (JPG file) are now available on the ASC website (<http://www.absc.usgs.gov/dataproducts.htm>). Please use these resources when planning activities in potential denning areas and contact us immediately if any dens are found in the Oilfield Units during oil and gas activities. In addition, biologists with the USFWS are also available for consultation if questions or concerns about arise regarding polar bears and walrus during this authorization.

This authorization is issued in accordance with our regulations listed at 71 FR 43926, dated August 2, 2006. Should you have any further questions contact Mr. Craig Perham of our Marine Mammals Management Office at (907) 786-3800 or 786-3810.

Sincerely,



Rosa Meehan, Ph.D.
Chief, Marine Mammals Management

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Richard Shideler, ADF&G
FFWFO
LE

MMM

ISSUED: August 22, 2006
EXPIRES: August 2, 2011

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION
(06-03)

ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. (CPAI) is hereby authorized to take small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus incidental to conducting year-round development and production activities at the Greater Kuparuk and Alpine units on the North Slope of Alaska identified within your LOA request (August 15, 2006). This also includes contractors of CPAI performing CPAI-approved work under the scope of operations to be conducted. The scope of operations is limited to the activities that will be conducted during the exploration, production, operations, and rehabilitation of oil and gas facilities within the boundaries of the Greater Kuparuk Unit and Alpine Unit. In addition, it includes the travel corridors to access these sites. Activities within these fields are ongoing and are expected to continue through the end of the current incidental take regulations. Authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. The polar bear plan is approved and all provisions, unless noted specifically, are incorporated into this Letter of Authorization by reference.
2. CPAI Operations Managers, or their designates, will be fully aware, understand, and capable of implementing the conditions of this authorization.
3. Intentional take is prohibited.
4. This authorization is valid only for those activities identified in the request for a Letter of Authorization dated August 15, 2006.
5. Activities will not operate nor pass within 1 mile of known polar bear dens, and all observed dens will be reported to the Marine Mammals Management Office, Fish and Wildlife Service within 24 hours. The Fish and Wildlife Service will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate action. Potential responses may range from cessation or modification of work to conducting additional monitoring.

6. Polar bear monitoring, reporting, and survey activities will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR 18, section 18.128. The basic monitoring and reporting requirements follow:
- cooperate with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and other designated Federal, State, or local agencies to monitor the impacts of oil and gas exploration activities on polar bears;
 - designate a qualified individual or individuals to observe, record, and report the effects of the activity on polar bears;
 - at the discretion of the Fish and Wildlife Service, allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to place an observer on the site to monitor the impacts of the activity on polar bears;
 - submit an annual monitoring report to the Marine Mammals Management Office, which will be received by January 15 of each year.
7. This authorization expires August 2, 2011.



Chief, Marine Mammals Management



Date