

§ 300.189

50 CFR Ch. III (10–1–05 Edition)

tuna or any tag affixed to a bluefin tuna imported from a country with a BSD tag program before removal is allowed under §300.187; fail to write the tag number on the shipping package or container as specified in §300.187; or reuse any NMFS-issued numbered tag affixed to any Pacific bluefin tuna, or any tag affixed to a bluefin tuna imported from a country with a BSD tag program, or any tag number previously written on a shipping package or container as prescribed by §300.187.

(k) Import, or attempt to import, any fish or fish product regulated under this subpart in a manner inconsistent with any ports of entry designated by NMFS as authorized by §300.188.

(l) Ship, transport, purchase, sell, offer for sale, import, enter for consumption, export, re-export, or have in custody, possession, or control any fish or fish product regulated under this subpart that was imported, entered for consumption, exported, or re-exported contrary to this subpart.

(m) Fail to provide a validated statistical document for imports at time of entry into the customs territory of the United States of fish or fish products regulated under this subpart, regardless of whether the importer, exporter, or re-exporter holds a valid trade permit issued pursuant to §300.182 or whether the fish products are imported as an entry for consumption.

CHAPTER IV—JOINT REGULATIONS (UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE); ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMITTEE REGULATIONS

SUBCHAPTER A

<i>Part</i>		<i>Page</i>
401	Anadromous fisheries conservation, development and enhancement	737
402	Interagency cooperation—Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended	740
403	Transfer of marine mammal management authority to States	758
424	Listing endangered and threatened species and designating critical habitat	766

SUBCHAPTER B [RESERVED]

SUBCHAPTER C—ENDANGERED SPECIES EXEMPTION PROCESS

450	General provisions	775
451	Application procedure	776
452	Consideration of application by the Secretary	778
453	Endangered Species Committee	781

SUBCHAPTER A

PART 401—ANADROMOUS FISHERIES CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

- Sec.
- 401.1 Administration.
 - 401.2 Definitions.
 - 401.3 Submission of documents.
 - 401.4 Activities prohibited.
 - 401.5 Coordination with States.
 - 401.6 Prosecution of work.
 - 401.7 General information for the Secretary.
 - 401.8 Availability of funds.
 - 401.9 Payments to cooperators.
 - 401.10 Request for payment.
 - 401.11 Property as matching funds.
 - 401.12 Ownership of property.
 - 401.13 Personnel.
 - 401.14 Inspection.
 - 401.15 Record retention.
 - 401.16 Records and reporting.
 - 401.17 Safety and accident prevention.
 - 401.18 Contracts.
 - 401.19 Statements and payrolls.
 - 401.20 Officials not to benefit.
 - 401.21 Patents and inventions.
 - 401.22 Civil rights.
 - 401.23 Audits.

AUTHORITY: Anadromous Fish Conservation Act (79 Stat. 1125, as amended, 84 Stat. 214, 88 Stat. 398), 16 U.S.C. 757a-757f.

SOURCE: 40 FR 26678, June 25, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

§ 401.1 Administration.

The Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service shall jointly administer the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act for the Secretaries.

§ 401.2 Definitions.

As used in this part, terms shall have the meanings ascribed in this section.

(a) *Secretary*. The Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Interior, or their authorized representatives.

(b) *Act*. The Anadromous Fish Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 757a through 757f.

(c) *Eligible states*. Any coastal State of the United States, the State of Vermont, and the States bordering the Great Lakes. The area within the Columbia River basin is excluded.

(d) *State fishery agency*. Any department(s), division(s), commis-

official(s) of a State empowered under its laws to regulate a commercial or sport fishery.

(e) *Non-Federal interest*. Any organization, association, institution, business, school, individual, or group of individuals, municipality and others outside the Federal Government, in addition to State fishery agencies, which desire to cooperate within the terms of the Act.

(f) *Cooperator*. One or more States acting jointly or severally or other non-Federal interests, participating in a project agreement or grant-in-aid award with the Secretary.

(g) *Anadromous fish*. Aquatic, gill breathing, vertebrate animals bearing paired fins which migrate to and spawn in fresh water, but which spend part of their life in an oceanic environment; also fish in the Great Lakes that ascend streams to spawn.

(h) *Application for Federal assistance*. A description of work to be accomplished, including objectives and needs, expected results and benefits, approach, cost, location and time required for completion.

(i) *Project agreement*. The formal document executed between the Secretary of the Interior and the Cooperator, committing the Cooperator to the performance of described activities and the Federal Government to participation in the financing of those activities.

(j) *Grant-in-Aid award*. The formal document executed between the Secretary of Commerce and the Cooperator, committing the Cooperator to the performance of described activities and the Federal Government to participation in the financing of those activities.

§ 401.3 Submission of documents.

Applications for Federal assistance and other documents for projects relating generally to recreational fisheries shall be submitted to the concerned Regional Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or for projects relating generally to commercial fisheries of the concerned Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

§ 401.4

§ 401.4 Activities prohibited.

Law enforcement, public relations, harvesting, marketing and processing activities, construction of fisherman use facilities, and activities concerned with landlocked anadromous fish populations (except fish in the Great Lakes that ascend streams to spawn) may not be financed under the Act.

§ 401.5 Coordination with States.

The Secretary will approve an Application For Federal Assistance only after he has coordinated the application with the State office established to review applications under Executive Order 12372 (if the State has established such an office and wishes to review these applications) and other non-Federal entities which have management authority over the resource to be affected.

[48 FR 29137, June 24, 1983]

§ 401.6 Prosecution of work.

(a) Project work shall be carried through to a state of completion acceptable to the Secretary with reasonable promptness. Failure to render satisfactory performance reports or failure to complete the project to the satisfaction of the Secretary shall be cause for suspension of Federal assistance for the project until the project provisions are satisfactorily met. Federal assistance may be terminated upon determination by the Secretary that satisfactory progress has not been maintained. The Secretary shall have the right to inspect and review work at any time.

(b) Research and development work shall be continuously coordinated by the Cooperator with studies conducted by others to avoid unnecessary duplication.

(c) All work shall be performed in accordance with applicable local laws, except when in conflict with Federal laws or regulations, in which case Federal laws or regulations shall prevail.

§ 401.7 General information for the Secretary.

Before any Federal funds may be obligated for any project an applicant shall furnish to the Secretary, upon his request, information regarding the

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

laws affecting anadromous fish and the authority of the applicant to participate in the benefits of the Act.

(a) *Document signature.* Individuals authorized to sign project documents under the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 197, as amended), 16 U.S.C. 779 through 779f, or the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (64 Stat. 430, as amended), 16 U.S.C. 777 through 777f, may likewise sign project documents contemplated in this part.

(b) *Program information.* The Secretary may, from time to time, request, and the Cooperators shall furnish, information relating to the administration and maintenance of any project established under the Act.

§ 401.8 Availability of funds.

The period of availability of funds to the States or other non-Federal interests for obligation shall be established by the administering Federal agency.

§ 401.9 Payments to cooperators.

Payments shall be made to Cooperators in accordance with provisions of grant-in-aid awards or project agreements.

§ 401.10 Request for payment.

Request for payment shall be on forms provided by the Secretary, certified as therein prescribed, and submitted to the Regional Director by the Cooperator.

§ 401.11 Property as matching funds.

The non-Federal share of the cost of projects may be in the form of real or personal property. Specific procedures to be used by grantees in placing the value on real or personal property for matching funds are set forth in Attachment F of Federal Management Circular 74-7.

§ 401.12 Ownership of property.

When real property is acquired pursuant to the provisions of the Act, title to such property, or interests therein, shall be vested in the United States, and the conveying instrument shall recite the United States of America as the grantee. However, if the Secretary determines that under the terms of the application for Federal assistance and

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 401.21

grant-in-aid award or project agreement, the intent and purpose of the Act may be better served by other ownership of such property, an appropriate transfer may be made. When real or personal property is utilized as matching funds, title to such property shall be in the Cooperator unless otherwise specified in the grant-in-aid award or project agreement.

§ 401.13 Personnel.

The Cooperator shall maintain an adequate and competent force of employees to initiate and carry approved work to satisfactory completion.

§ 401.14 Inspection.

Cooperator supervision of each project shall include adequate and continuous inspection. The project will be subject at all times to Federal inspection.

§ 401.15 Record retention.

All records of accounts and reports with supporting documentation thereto, as set forth in Attachment C of Federal Management Circular 74-7, will be retained by the Cooperator for a period of 3 years after submission of the final expenditure report on the project. Record retention for a period longer than 3 years is required if audit findings have not been resolved.

§ 401.16 Records and reporting.

Performance reports and other reports shall be furnished as requested by the Secretary. Cost records shall be maintained separately for each project. The accounts and records maintained by the Cooperator, together with all supporting documents, shall be open at all times to the inspection of authorized representatives of the United States, and copies thereof shall be furnished when requested.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0648-0102)

[40 FR 26678, June 25, 1975, as amended at 48 FR 57302, Dec. 29, 1983]

§ 401.17 Safety and accident prevention.

In the performance of each project, the Cooperator shall comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local

laws governing safety, health and sanitation.

§ 401.18 Contracts.

A Cooperator may use its own regulations or guidelines in obtaining services by contract or otherwise, provided that they adhere to applicable Federal laws, regulations, policies, guidelines, and requirements, as set forth in Attachment 0 of Federal Management Circular 74-7. However, the Cooperator is the responsible authority, without recourse to the Federal agency, regarding the settlement of such contractual issues.

§ 401.19 Statements and payrolls.

The regulations of the Secretary of Labor applicable to contractors and subcontractors (29 CFR part 3), made pursuant to the Copeland "Anti-Kick-back" Act (18 U.S.C. 874), as amended, are made a part of the regulations in this part by reference. The Cooperator will comply with the regulations in this part and any amendments or modifications thereof, and the Cooperator's prime contractor will be responsible for the submission of statements required of subcontractors thereunder. The foregoing shall apply except as the Secretary of Labor may specifically provide for reasonable limitation, variations, tolerances, and exemptions.

§ 401.20 Officials not to benefit.

No Member of, or Delegate to, Congress, or resident Commissioner, shall be admitted to any share or any part of any project agreement made under the Act, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom. This provision shall not be construed to extend to this agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

§ 401.21 Patents and inventions.

Determination of the patent rights in any inventions or discoveries resulting from work under project agreements entered into pursuant to the Act shall be consistent with the "Government Patent Policy" (President's memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, August 23, 1971, and statement of Government Patent Policy as printed in 36 FR 16889).

§ 401.22

§ 401.22 Civil rights.

Each application for Federal assistance, grant-in-aid award, or project agreement shall be supported by a statement of assurances executed by the Cooperator providing that the project will be carried out in accordance with title VI, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with the Secretary's regulations promulgated thereunder.

§ 401.23 Audits.

The State is required to conduct an audit at least every two years in accordance with the provisions of Attachment P OMB Circular A-102. Failure to conduct audits as required may result in withholding of grant payments or such other sanctions as the Secretary may deem appropriate.

[49 FR 30074, July 26, 1984]

PART 402—INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION—ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973, AS AMENDED

Subpart A—General

- Sec.
- 402.01 Scope.
- 402.02 Definitions.
- 402.03 Applicability.
- 402.04 Counterpart regulations.
- 402.05 Emergencies.
- 402.06 Coordination with other environmental reviews.
- 402.07 Designation of lead agency.
- 402.08 Designation of non-Federal representative.
- 402.09 Irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

Subpart B—Consultation Procedures

- 402.10 Conference on proposed species or proposed critical habitat.
- 402.11 Early consultation.
- 402.12 Biological assessments.
- 402.13 Informal consultation.
- 402.14 Formal consultation.
- 402.15 Responsibilities of Federal agency following issuance of a biological opinion.
- 402.16 Reinitiation of formal consultation.

Subpart C—Counterpart Regulations For Implementing the National Fire Plan

- 402.30 Definitions.

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

- 402.31 Purpose.
- 402.32 Scope.
- 402.33 Procedures.
- 402.34 Oversight.

Subpart D—Counterpart Regulations Governing Actions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act

- 402.40 Definitions.
- 402.41 Purpose.
- 402.42 Scope and applicability
- 402.43 Interagency exchanges of information.
- 402.44 Advance coordination for FIFRA actions.
- 402.45 Alternative consultation on FIFRA actions that are not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat.
- 402.46 Optional formal consultation procedure for FIFRA actions.
- 402.47 Special consultation procedures for complex FIFRA actions.
- 402.48 Conference on proposed species or proposed critical habitat.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

SOURCE: 51 FR 19957, June 3, 1986, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 402.01 Scope.

(a) This part interprets and implements sections 7(a)–(d) [16 U.S.C. 1536(a)–(d)] of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (“Act”). Section 7(a) grants authority to and imposes requirements upon Federal agencies regarding endangered or threatened species of fish, wildlife, or plants (“listed species”) and habitat of such species that has been designated as critical (“critical habitat”). Section 7(a)(1) of the Act directs Federal agencies, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary of the Interior or of Commerce, as appropriate, to utilize their authorities to further the purposes of the Act by carrying out conservation programs for listed species. Such affirmative conservation programs must comply with applicable permit requirements (50 CFR parts 17, 220, 222, and 227) for listed species and should be coordinated with the appropriate Secretary. Section 7(a)(2) of the Act requires every Federal agency, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, to insure that

any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out, in the United States or upon the high seas, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or results in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Section 7(a)(3) of the Act authorizes a prospective permit or license applicant to request the issuing Federal agency to enter into early consultation with the Service on a proposed action to determine whether such action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Section 7(a)(4) of the Act requires Federal agencies to confer with the Secretary on any action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. Section 7(b) of the Act requires the Secretary, after the conclusion of early or formal consultation, to issue a written statement setting forth the Secretary's opinion detailing how the agency action affects listed species or critical habitat Biological assessments are required under section 7(c) of the Act if listed species or critical habitat may be present in the area affected by any major construction activity as defined in § 404.02. Section 7(d) of the Act prohibits Federal agencies and applicants from making any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources which has the effect of foreclosing the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives which would avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of listed species or resulting in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Section 7(e)-(o)(1) of the Act provide procedures for granting exemptions from the requirements of section 7(a)(2). Regulations governing the submission of exemption applications are found at 50 CFR part 451, and regulations governing the exemption process are found at 50 CFR parts 450, 452, and 453.

(b) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) share responsibilities for administering the Act. The Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants are found in 50 CFR

17.11 and 17.12 and the designated critical habitats are found in 50 CFR 17.95 and 17.96 and 50 CFR part 226. Endangered or threatened species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS are located in 50 CFR 222.23(a) and 227.4. If the subject species is cited in 50 CFR 222.23(a) or 227.4, the Federal agency shall contact the NMFS. For all other listed species the Federal Agency shall contact the FWS.

§ 402.02 Definitions.

Act means the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Action means all activities or programs of any kind authorized, funded, or carried out, in whole or in part, by Federal agencies in the United States or upon the high seas. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (a) actions intended to conserve listed species or their habitat;
- (b) the promulgation of regulations;
- (c) the granting of licenses, contracts, leases, easements, rights-of-way, permits, or grants-in-aid; or
- (d) actions directly or indirectly causing modifications to the land, water, or air.

Action area means all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action.

Applicant refers to any person, as defined in section 3(13) of the Act, who requires formal approval or authorization from a Federal agency as a prerequisite to conducting the action.

Biological assessment refers to the information prepared by or under the direction of the Federal agency concerning listed and proposed species and designated and proposed critical habitat that may be present in the action area and the evaluation potential effects of the action on such species and habitat.

Biological opinion is the document that states the opinion of the Service as to whether or not the Federal action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Conference is a process which involves informal discussions between a Federal agency and the Service under section

7(a)(4) of the Act regarding the impact of an action on proposed species or proposed critical habitat and recommendations to minimize or avoid the adverse effects.

Conservation recommendations are suggestions of the Service regarding discretionary measures to minimize or avoid adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or critical habitat or regarding the development of information.

Critical habitat refers to an area designated as critical habitat listed in 50 CFR parts 17 or 226.

Cumulative effects are those effects of future State or private activities, not involving Federal activities, that are reasonably certain to occur within the action area of the Federal action subject to consultation.

Designated non-Federal representative refers to a person designated by the Federal agency as its representative to conduct informal consultation and/or to prepare any biological assessment.

Destruction or adverse modification means a direct or indirect alteration that appreciably diminishes the value of critical habitat for both the survival and recovery of a listed species. Such alterations include, but are not limited to, alterations adversely modifying any of those physical or biological features that were the basis for determining the habitat to be critical.

Director refers to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or his authorized representative; or the Fish and Wildlife Service regional director, or his authorized representative, for the region where the action would be carried out.

Early consultation is a process requested by a Federal agency on behalf of a prospective applicant under section 7(a)(3) of the Act.

Effects of the action refers to the direct and indirect effects of an action on the species or critical habitat, together with the effects of other activities that are interrelated or interdependent with that action, that will be added to the environmental baseline. The environmental baseline includes the past and present impacts of all Federal, State, or private actions and other human activities in the action area, the antici-

pated impacts of all proposed Federal projects in the action area that have already undergone formal or early section 7 consultation, and the impact of State or private actions which are contemporaneous with the consultation in process. Indirect effects are those that are caused by the proposed action and are later in time, but still are reasonably certain to occur. Interrelated actions are those that are part of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification. Interdependent actions are those that have no independent utility apart from the action under consideration.

Formal consultation is a process between the Service and the Federal agency that commences with the Federal agency's written request for consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Act and concludes with the Service's issuance of the biological opinion under section 7(b)(3) of the Act.

Incidental take refers to takings that result from, but are not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity conducted by the Federal agency or applicant.

Informal consultation is an optional process that includes all discussions, correspondence, etc., between the Service and the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative prior to formal consultation, if required.

Jeopardize the continued existence of means to engage in an action that reasonably would be expected, directly or indirectly, to reduce appreciably the likelihood of both the survival and recovery of a listed species in the wild by reducing the reproduction, numbers, or distribution of that species.

Listed species means any species of fish, wildlife, or plant which has been determined to be endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Act. Listed species are found in 50 CFR 17.11-17.12.

Major construction activity is a construction project (or other undertaking having similar physical impacts) which is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as referred to in the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)].

Preliminary biological opinion refers to an opinion issued as a result of early consultation.

Proposed critical habitat means habitat proposed in the FEDERAL REGISTER to be designated or revised as critical habitat under section 4 of the Act for any listed or proposed species.

Proposed species means any species of fish, wildlife, or plant that is proposed in the FEDERAL REGISTER to be listed under section 4 of the Act.

Reasonable and prudent alternatives refer to alternative actions identified during formal consultation that can be implemented in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the action, that can be implemented consistent with the scope of the Federal agency's legal authority and jurisdiction, that is economically and technologically feasible, and that the Director believes would avoid the likelihood of jeopardizing the continued existence of listed species or resulting in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Reasonable and prudent measures refer to those actions the Director believes necessary or appropriate to minimize the impacts, *i.e.*, amount or extent, of incidental take.

Recovery means improvement in the status of listed species to the point at which listing is no longer appropriate under the criteria set out in section 4(a)(1) of the Act.

Service means the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate.

§ 402.03 Applicability.

Section 7 and the requirements of this part apply to all actions in which there is discretionary Federal involvement or control.

§ 402.04 Counterpart regulations.

The consultation procedures set forth in this part may be superseded for a particular Federal agency by joint counterpart regulations among that agency, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Such counterpart regulations shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER in proposed form and shall be subject to public comment for at least 60 days before final rules are published.

§ 402.05 Emergencies.

(a) Where emergency circumstances mandate the need to consult in an expedited manner, consultation may be conducted informally through alternative procedures that the Director determines to be consistent with the requirements of sections 7(a)–(d) of the Act. This provision applies to situations involving acts of God, disasters, casualties, national defense or security emergencies, etc.

(b) Formal consultation shall be initiated as soon as practicable after the emergency is under control. The Federal agency shall submit information on the nature of the emergency action(s), the justification for the expedited consultation, and the impacts to endangered or threatened species and their habitats. The Service will evaluate such information and issue a biological opinion including the information and recommendations given during the emergency consultation.

§ 402.06 Coordination with other environmental reviews.

(a) Consultation, conference, and biological assessment procedures under section 7 may be consolidated with interagency cooperation procedures required by other statutes, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, implemented at 40 CFR Parts 1500–1508) or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) (16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*). Satisfying the requirements of these other statutes, however, does not in itself relieve a Federal agency of its obligations to comply with the procedures set forth in this part or the substantive requirements of section 7. The Service will attempt to provide a coordinated review and analysis of all environmental requirements.

(b) Where the consultation or conference has been consolidated with the interagency cooperation procedures required by other statutes such as NEPA or FWCA, the results should be included in the documents required by those statutes.

§ 402.07

§ 402.07 Designation of lead agency.

When a particular action involves more than one Federal agency, the consultation and conference responsibilities may be fulfilled through a lead agency. Factors relevant in determining an appropriate lead agency include the time sequence in which the agencies would become involved, the magnitude of their respective involvement, and their relative expertise with respect to the environmental effects of the action. The Director shall be notified of the designation in writing by the lead agency.

§ 402.08 Designation of non-Federal representative.

A Federal agency may designate a non-Federal representative to conduct informal consultation or prepare a biological assessment by giving written notice to the Director of such designation. If a permit or license applicant is involved and is not the designated non-Federal representative, then the applicant and Federal agency must agree on the choice of the designated non-Federal representative. If a biological assessment is prepared by the designated non-Federal representative, the Federal agency shall furnish guidance and supervision and shall independently review and evaluate the scope and contents of the biological assessment. The ultimate responsibility for compliance with section 7 remains with the Federal agency.

§ 402.09 Irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

After initiation or reinitiation of consultation required under section 7(a)(2) of the Act, the Federal agency and any applicant shall make no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources with respect to the agency action which has the effect of foreclosing the formulation or implementation of any reasonable and prudent alternatives which would avoid violating section 7(a)(2). This prohibition is in force during the consultation process and continues until the requirements of section 7(a)(2) are satisfied. This provision does not apply to the conference requirement for proposed species or proposed critical habitat under section 7(a)(4) of the Act.

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

Subpart B—Consultation Procedures

§ 402.10 Conference on proposed species or proposed critical habitat.

(a) Each Federal agency shall confer with the Service on any action which is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. The conference is designed to assist the Federal agency and any applicant in identifying and resolving potential conflicts at an early stage in the planning process.

(b) The Federal agency shall initiate the conference with the Director. The Service may request a conference if, after a review of available information, it determines that a conference is required for a particular action.

(c) A conference between a Federal agency and the Service shall consist of informal discussions concerning an action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the proposed critical habitat at issue. Applicants may be involved in these informal discussions to the greatest extent practicable. During the conference, the Service will make advisory recommendations, if any, on ways to minimize or avoid adverse effects. If the proposed species is subsequently listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated prior to completion of the action, the Federal agency must review the action to determine whether formal consultation is required.

(d) If requested by the Federal agency and deemed appropriate by the Service, the conference may be conducted in accordance with the procedures for formal consultation in § 402.14. An opinion issued at the conclusion of the conference may be adopted as the biological opinion when the species is listed or critical habitat is designated, but only if no significant new information is developed (including that developed during the rulemaking process on the proposed listing or critical habitat designation) and no significant changes to the Federal action are made that would alter the content of the opinion. An incidental take statement provided with

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 402.12

a conference opinion does not become effective unless the Service adopts the opinion once the listing is final.

(e) The conclusions reached during a conference and any recommendations shall be documented by the Service and provided to the Federal agency and to any applicant. The style and magnitude of this document will vary with the complexity of the conference. If formal consultation also is required for a particular action, then the Service will provide the results of the conference with the biological opinion.

§ 402.11 Early consultation.

(a) *Purpose.* Early consultation is designed to reduce the likelihood of conflicts between listed species or critical habitat and proposed actions and occurs prior to the filing of an application for a Federal permit or license. Although early consultation is conducted between the Service and the Federal agency, the prospective applicant should be involved throughout the consultation process.

(b) *Request by prospective applicant.* If a prospective applicant has reason to believe that the prospective action may affect listed species or critical habitat, it may request the Federal agency to enter into early consultation with the Service. The prospective applicant must certify in writing to the Federal agency that (1) it has a definitive proposal outlining the action and its effects and (2) it intends to implement its proposal, if authorized.

(c) *Initiation of early consultation.* If the Federal agency receives the prospective applicant's certification in paragraph (b) of this section, then the Federal agency shall initiate early consultation with the Service. This request shall be in writing and contain the information outlined in § 402.14(c) and, if the action is a major construction activity, the biological assessment as outlined in § 402.12.

(d) *Procedures and responsibilities.* The procedures and responsibilities for early consultation are the same as outlined in § 402.14(c)-(j) for formal consultation, except that all references to the "applicant" shall be treated as the "prospective applicant" and all references to the "biological opinion" or the "opinion" shall be treated as the

"preliminary biological opinion" for the purpose of this section.

(e) *Preliminary biological opinion.* The contents and conclusions of a preliminary biological opinion are the same as for a biological opinion issued after formal consultation except that the incidental take statement provided with a preliminary biological opinion does not constitute authority to take listed species.

(f) *Confirmation of preliminary biological opinion as final biological opinion.* A preliminary biological opinion may be confirmed as a biological opinion issued after formal consultation if the Service reviews the proposed action and finds that there have been no significant changes in the action as planned or in the information used during the early consultation. A written request for confirmation of the preliminary biological opinion should be submitted after the prospective applicant applies to the Federal agency for a permit or license but prior to the issuance of such permit or license. Within 45 days of receipt of the Federal agency's request, the Service shall either:

(1) Confirm that the preliminary biological opinion stands as a final biological opinion; or

(2) If the findings noted above cannot be made, request that the Federal agency initiate formal consultation.

§ 402.12 Biological assessments.

(a) *Purpose.* A biological assessment shall evaluate the potential effects of the action on listed and proposed species and designated and proposed critical habitat and determine whether any such species or habitat are likely to be adversely affected by the action and is used in determining whether formal consultation or a conference is necessary.

(b) *Preparation requirement.* (1) The procedures of this section are required for Federal actions that are "major construction activities"; provided that a contract for construction was not entered into or actual construction was not begun on or before November 10, 1978. Any person, including those who may wish to apply for an exemption from section 7(a)(2) of the Act, may prepare a biological assessment under

the supervision of the Federal agency and in cooperation with the Service consistent with the procedures and requirements of this section. An exemption from the requirements of section 7(a)(2) is not permanent unless a biological assessment has been prepared.

(2) The biological assessment shall be completed before any contract for construction is entered into and before construction is begun.

(c) *Request for information.* The Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative shall convey to the Director either (1) a written request for a list of any listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat that may be present in the action area; or (2) a written notification of the species and critical habitat that are being included in the biological assessment.

(d) *Director's response.* Within 30 days of receipt of the notification of, or the request for, a species list, the Director shall either concur with or revise the list or, in those cases where no list has been provided, advise the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative in writing whether, based on the best scientific and commercial data available, any listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat may be present in the action area. In addition to listed and proposed species, the Director will provide a list of candidate species that may be present in the action area. Candidate species refers to any species being considered by the Service for listing as endangered or threatened species but not yet the subject of a proposed rule. Although candidate species have no legal status and are accorded no protection under the Act, their inclusion will alert the Federal agency of potential proposals or listings.

(1) If the Director advises that no listed species or critical habitat may be present, the Federal agency need not prepare a biological assessment and further consultation is not required. If only proposed species or proposed critical habitat may be present in the action area, then the Federal agency must confer with the Service if required under § 402.10, but preparation of a biological assessment is not re-

quired unless the proposed listing and/or designation becomes final.

(2) If a listed species or critical habitat may be present in the action area, the Director will provide a species list or concur with the species list provided. The Director also will provide available information (or references thereto) regarding these species and critical habitat, and may recommend discretionary studies or surveys that may provide a better information base for the preparation of an assessment. Any recommendation for studies or surveys is not to be construed as the Service's opinion that the Federal agency has failed to satisfy the information standard of section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(e) *Verification of current accuracy of species list.* If the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative does not begin preparation of the biological assessment within 90 days of receipt of (or concurrence with) the species list, the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative must verify (formally or informally) with the Service the current accuracy of the species list at the time the preparation of the assessment is begun.

(f) *Contents.* The contents of a biological assessment are at the discretion of the Federal agency and will depend on the nature of the Federal action. The following may be considered for inclusion:

(1) The results of an on-site inspection of the area affected by the action to determine if listed or proposed species are present or occur seasonally.

(2) The views of recognized experts on the species at issue.

(3) A review of the literature and other information.

(4) An analysis of the effects of the action on the species and habitat, including consideration of cumulative effects, and the results of any related studies.

(5) An analysis of alternate actions considered by the Federal agency for the proposed action.

(g) *Incorporation by reference.* If a proposed action requiring the preparation of a biological assessment is identical, or very similar, to a previous action for which a biological assessment was prepared, the Federal agency may fulfill

the biological assessment requirement for the proposed action by incorporating by reference the earlier biological assessment, plus any supporting data from other documents that are pertinent to the consultation, into a written certification that:

(1) The proposed action involves similar impacts to the same species in the same geographic area;

(2) No new species have been listed or proposed or no new critical habitat designated or proposed for the action area; and

(3) The biological assessment has been supplemented with any relevant changes in information.

(h) *Permit requirements.* If conducting a biological assessment will involve the taking of a listed species, a permit under section 10 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1539) and part 17 of this title (with respect to species under the jurisdiction of the FWS) or parts 220, 222, and 227 of this title (with respect to species under the jurisdiction of the NMFS) is required.

(i) *Completion time.* The Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative shall complete the biological assessment within 180 days after its initiation (receipt of or concurrence with the species list) unless a different period of time is agreed to by the Director and the Federal agency. If a permit or license applicant is involved, the 180-day period may not be extended unless the agency provides the applicant, before the close of the 180-day period, with a written statement setting forth the estimated length of the proposed extension and the reasons why such an extension is necessary.

(j) *Submission of biological assessment.* The Federal agency shall submit the completed biological assessment to the Director for review. The Director will respond in writing within 30 days as to whether or not he concurs with the findings of the biological assessment. At the option of the Federal agency, formal consultation may be initiated under § 402.14(c) concurrently with the submission of the assessment.

(k) *Use of the biological assessment.* (1) The Federal agency shall use the biological assessment in determining whether formal consultation or a conference is required under § 402.14 or

§ 402.10, respectively. If the biological assessment indicates that there are no listed species or critical habitat present that are likely to be adversely affected by the action and the Director concurs as specified in paragraph (j) of this section, then formal consultation is not required. If the biological assessment indicates that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat, and the Director concurs, then a conference is not required.

(2) The Director may use the results of the biological assessment in (i) determining whether to request the Federal agency to initiate formal consultation or a conference, (ii) formulating a biological opinion, or (iii) formulating a preliminary biological opinion.

§ 402.13 Informal consultation.

(a) Informal consultation is an optional process that includes all discussions, correspondence, etc., between the Service and the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative, designed to assist the Federal agency in determining whether formal consultation or a conference is required. If during informal consultation it is determined by the Federal agency, with the written concurrence of the Service, that the action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat, the consultation process is terminated, and no further action is necessary.

(b) During informal consultation, the Service may suggest modifications to the action that the Federal agency and any applicant could implement to avoid the likelihood of adverse effects to listed species or critical habitat.

§ 402.14 Formal consultation.

(a) *Requirement for formal consultation.* Each Federal agency shall review its actions at the earliest possible time to determine whether any action may affect listed species or critical habitat. If such a determination is made, formal consultation is required, except as noted in paragraph (b) of this section. The Director may request a Federal agency to enter into consultation if he

identifies any action of that agency that may affect listed species or critical habitat and for which there has been no consultation. When such a request is made, the Director shall forward to the Federal agency a written explanation of the basis for the request.

(b) *Exceptions.* (1) A Federal agency need not initiate formal consultation if, as a result of the preparation of a biological assessment under § 402.12 or as a result of informal consultation with the Service under § 402.13, the Federal agency determines, with the written concurrence of the Director, that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any listed species or critical habitat.

(2) A Federal agency need not initiate formal consultation if a preliminary biological opinion, issued after early consultation under § 402.11, is confirmed as the final biological opinion.

(c) *Initiation of formal consultation.* A written request to initiate formal consultation shall be submitted to the Director and shall include:

(1) A description of the action to be considered;

(2) A description of the specific area that may be affected by the action;

(3) A description of any listed species or critical habitat that may be affected by the action;

(4) A description of the manner in which the action may affect any listed species or critical habitat and an analysis of any cumulative effects;

(5) Relevant reports, including any environmental impact statement, environmental assessment, or biological assessment prepared; and

(6) Any other relevant available information on the action, the affected listed species, or critical habitat.

Formal consultation shall not be initiated by the Federal agency until any required biological assessment has been completed and submitted to the Director in accordance with § 402.12. Any request for formal consultation may encompass, subject to the approval of the Director, a number of similar individual actions within a given geographical area or a segment of a comprehensive plan. This does not relieve the Federal agency of the re-

quirements for considering the effects of the action as a whole.

(d) *Responsibility to provide best scientific and commercial data available.* The Federal agency requesting formal consultation shall provide the Service with the best scientific and commercial data available or which can be obtained during the consultation for an adequate review of the effects that an action may have upon listed species or critical habitat. This information may include the results of studies or surveys conducted by the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative. The Federal agency shall provide any applicant with the opportunity to submit information for consideration during the consultation.

(e) *Duration and extension of formal consultation.* Formal consultation concludes within 90 days after its initiation unless extended as provided below. If an applicant is not involved, the Service and the Federal agency may mutually agree to extend the consultation for a specific time period. If an applicant is involved, the Service and the Federal agency may mutually agree to extend the consultation provided that the Service submits to the applicant, before the close of the 90 days, a written statement setting forth:

(1) The reasons why a longer period is required,

(2) The information that is required to complete the consultation, and

(3) The estimated date on which the consultation will be completed.

A consultation involving an applicant cannot be extended for more than 60 days without the consent of the applicant. Within 45 days after concluding formal consultation, the Service shall deliver a biological opinion to the Federal agency and any applicant.

(f) *Additional data.* When the Service determines that additional data would provide a better information base from which to formulate a biological opinion, the Director may request an extension of formal consultation and request that the Federal agency obtain additional data to determine how or to what extent the action may affect listed species or critical habitat. If formal consultation is extended by mutual agreement according to § 402.14(e), the

Federal agency shall obtain, to the extent practicable, that data which can be developed within the scope of the extension. The responsibility for conducting and funding any studies belongs to the Federal agency and the applicant, not the Service. The Service's request for additional data is not to be construed as the Service's opinion that the Federal agency has failed to satisfy the information standard of section 7(a)(2) of the Act. If no extension of formal consultation is agreed to, the Director will issue a biological opinion using the best scientific and commercial data available.

(g) *Service responsibilities.* Service responsibilities during formal consultation are as follows:

(1) Review all relevant information provided by the Federal agency or otherwise available. Such review may include an on-site inspection of the action area with representatives of the Federal agency and the applicant.

(2) Evaluate the current status of the listed species or critical habitat.

(3) Evaluate the effects of the action and cumulative effects on the listed species or critical habitat.

(4) Formulate its biological opinion as to whether the action, taken together with cumulative effects, is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

(5) Discuss with the Federal agency and any applicant the Service's review and evaluation conducted under paragraphs (g)(1) through (3) of this section, the basis for any finding in the biological opinion, and the availability of reasonable and prudent alternatives (if a jeopardy opinion is to be issued) that the agency and the applicant can take to avoid violation of section 7(a)(2). The Service will utilize the expertise of the Federal agency and any applicant in identifying these alternatives. If requested, the Service shall make available to the Federal agency the draft biological opinion for the purpose of analyzing the reasonable and prudent alternatives. The 45-day period in which the biological opinion must be delivered will not be suspended unless the Federal agency secures the written consent of the applicant to an exten-

sion to a specific date. The applicant may request a copy of the draft opinion from the Federal agency. All comments on the draft biological opinion must be submitted to the Service through the Federal agency, although the applicant may send a copy of its comments directly to the Service. The Service will not issue its biological opinion prior to the 45-day or extended deadline while the draft is under review by the Federal agency. However, if the Federal agency submits comments to the Service regarding the draft biological opinion within 10 days of the deadline for issuing the opinion, the Service is entitled to an automatic 10-day extension on the deadline.

(6) Formulate discretionary conservation recommendations, if any, which will assist the Federal agency in reducing or eliminating the impacts that its proposed action may have on listed species or critical habitat.

(7) Formulate a statement concerning incidental take, if such take may occur.

(8) In formulating its biological opinion, any reasonable and prudent alternatives, and any reasonable and prudent measures, the Service will use the best scientific and commercial data available and will give appropriate consideration to any beneficial actions taken by the Federal agency or applicant, including any actions taken prior to the initiation of consultation.

(h) *Biological opinions.* The biological opinion shall include:

(1) A summary of the information on which the opinion is based;

(2) A detailed discussion of the effects of the action on listed species or critical habitat; and

(3) The Service's opinion on whether the action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat (a "jeopardy biological opinion"); or, the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat (a "no jeopardy" biological opinion). A "jeopardy" biological opinion shall include reasonable and prudent alternatives, if any. If the Service is unable to develop such alternatives, it will indicate that

to the best of its knowledge there are no reasonable and prudent alternatives.

(i) *Incidental take.* (1) In those cases where the Service concludes that an action (or the implementation of any reasonable and prudent alternatives) and the resultant incidental take of listed species will not violate section 7(a)(2), and, in the case of marine mammals, where the taking is authorized pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, the Service will provide with the biological opinion a statement concerning incidental take that:

(i) Specifies the impact, i.e., the amount or extent, of such incidental taking on the species;

(ii) Specifies those reasonable and prudent measures that the Director considers necessary or appropriate to minimize such impact;

(iii) In the case of marine mammals, specifies those measures that are necessary to comply with section 101(a)(5) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and applicable regulations with regard to such taking;

(iv) Sets forth the terms and conditions (including, but not limited to, reporting requirements) that must be complied with by the Federal agency or any applicant to implement the measures specified under paragraphs (i)(1)(ii) and (i)(1)(iii) of this section; and

(v) Specifies the procedures to be used to handle or dispose of any individuals of a species actually taken.

(2) Reasonable and prudent measures, along with the terms and conditions that implement them, cannot alter the basic design, location, scope, duration, or timing of the action and may involve only minor changes.

(3) In order to monitor the impacts of incidental take, the Federal agency or any applicant must report the progress of the action and its impact on the species to the Service as specified in the incidental take statement. The reporting requirements will be established in accordance with 50 CFR 13.45 and 18.27 for FWS and 50 CFR 220.45 and 228.5 for NMFS.

(4) If during the course of the action the amount or extent of incidental taking, as specified under paragraph

(i)(1)(i) of this Section, is exceeded, the Federal agency must reinitiate consultation immediately.

(5) Any taking which is subject to a statement as specified in paragraph (i)(1) of this section and which is in compliance with the terms and conditions of that statement is not a prohibited taking under the Act, and no other authorization or permit under the Act is required.

(j) *Conservation recommendations.* The Service may provide with the biological opinion a statement containing discretionary conservation recommendations. Conservation recommendations are advisory and are not intended to carry any binding legal force.

(k) *Incremental steps.* When the action is authorized by a statute that allows the agency to take incremental steps toward the completion of the action, the Service shall, if requested by the Federal agency, issue a biological opinion on the incremental step being considered, including its views on the entire action. Upon the issuance of such a biological opinion, the Federal agency may proceed with or authorize the incremental steps of the action if:

(1) The biological opinion does not conclude that the incremental step would violate section 7(a)(2);

(2) The Federal agency continues consultation with respect to the entire action and obtains biological opinions, as required, for each incremental step;

(3) The Federal agency fulfills its continuing obligation to obtain sufficient data upon which to base the final biological opinion on the entire action;

(4) The incremental step does not violate section 7(d) of the Act concerning irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources; and

(5) There is a reasonable likelihood that the entire action will not violate section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(1) *Termination of consultation.* (1) Formal consultation is terminated with the issuance of the biological opinion.

(2) If during any stage of consultation a Federal agency determines that its proposed action is not likely to occur, the consultation may be terminated by written notice to the Service.

(3) If during any stage of consultation a Federal agency determines, with the concurrence of the Director, that

its proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any listed species or critical habitat, the consultation is terminated.

[51 FR 19957, June 3, 1986, as amended at 54 FR 40350, Sept. 29, 1989]

§ 402.15 Responsibilities of Federal agency following issuance of a biological opinion.

(a) Following the issuance of a biological opinion, the Federal agency shall determine whether and in what manner to proceed with the action in light of its section 7 obligations and the Service's biological opinion.

(b) If a jeopardy biological opinion is issued, the Federal agency shall notify the Service of its final decision on the action.

(c) If the Federal agency determines that it cannot comply with the requirements of section 7(a)(2) after consultation with the Service, it may apply for an exemption. Procedures for exemption applications by Federal agencies and others are found in 50 CFR part 451.

§ 402.16 Reinitiation of formal consultation.

Reinitiation of formal consultation is required and shall be requested by the Federal agency or by the Service, where discretionary Federal involvement or control over the action has been retained or is authorized by law and:

(a) If the amount or extent of taking specified in the incidental take statement is exceeded;

(b) If new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered;

(c) If the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species or critical habitat that was not considered in the biological opinion; or

(d) If a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the identified action.

Subpart C—Counterpart Regulations for Implementing the National Fire Plan

SOURCE: 68 FR 68264, Dec. 8, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

§ 402.30 Definitions.

The definitions in § 402.02 are applicable to this subpart. In addition, the following definitions are applicable only to this subpart.

Action Agency refers to the Department of Agriculture Forest Service (FS) or the Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), or National Park Service (NPS).

Alternative Consultation Agreement (ACA) is the agreement described in § 402.33 of this subpart.

Fire Plan Project is an action determined by the Action Agency to be within the scope of the NFP as defined in this section.

National Fire Plan (NFP) is the September 8, 2000, report to the President from the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture entitled "Managing the Impact of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment" outlining a new approach to managing fires, together with the accompanying budget requests, strategies, plans, and direction, or any amendments thereto.

Service Director refers to the FWS Director or the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

§ 402.31 Purpose.

The purpose of these counterpart regulations is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the consultation process under section 7 of the ESA for Fire Plan Projects by providing an optional alternative to the procedures found in §§ 402.13 and 402.14(b) of this part. These regulations permit an Action Agency to enter into an Alternative Consultation Agreement (ACA) with the Service, as described in § 402.33, which will allow the Action Agency to determine that a Fire Plan Project is "not likely to adversely affect" (NLAA) a listed species or designated critical habitat without formal

§ 402.32

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

or informal consultation with the Service or written concurrence from the Service. An NLAA determination for a Fire Plan Project made under an ACA, as described in § 402.33, completes the Action Agency's statutory obligation to consult with the Service for that Project. In situations where the Action Agency does not make an NLAA determination under the ACA, the Action Agency would still be required to conduct formal consultation with the Service when required by § 402.14. This process will be as protective to listed species and designated critical habitat as the process established in subpart B of this part. The standards and requirements for formal consultation under subpart B for Fire Plan Projects that do not receive an NLAA determination are unchanged.

§ 402.32 Scope.

(a) Section 402.33 establishes a process by which an Action Agency may determine that a proposed Fire Plan Project is not likely to adversely affect any listed species or designated critical habitat without conducting formal or informal consultation or obtaining written concurrence from the Service.

(b) Section 402.34 establishes the Service's oversight responsibility and the standard for review under this subpart.

(c) Nothing in this subpart C precludes an Action Agency at its discretion from initiating early, informal, or formal consultation as described in §§ 402.11, 402.13, and 402.14, respectively.

(d) The authority granted in this subpart is applicable to an Action Agency only where the Action Agency has entered into an ACA with the Service. An ACA entered into with one Service is valid with regard to listed species and designated critical habitat under the jurisdiction of that Service whether or not the Action Agency has entered into an ACA with the other Service.

§ 402.33 Procedures.

(a) The Action Agency may make an NLAA determination for a Fire Plan Project without informal consultation or written concurrence from the Director if the Action Agency has entered into and implemented an ACA. The Action Agency need not initiate formal

consultation on a Fire Plan Project if the Action Agency has made an NLAA determination for the Project under this subpart. The Action Agency and the Service will use the following procedures in establishing an ACA.

(1) *Initiation:* The Action Agency submits a written notification to the Service Director of its intent to enter into an ACA.

(2) *Development and Adoption of the Alternative Consultation Agreement:* The Action Agency enters into an ACA with the Service Director. The ACA will, at a minimum, include the following components:

(i) A list or description of the staff positions within the Action Agency that will have authority to make NLAA determinations under this subpart C.

(ii) Procedures for developing and maintaining the skills necessary within the Action Agency to make NLAA determinations, including a jointly developed training program based on the needs of the Action Agency.

(iii) A description of the standards the Action Agency will apply in assessing the effects of the action, including direct and indirect effects of the action and effects of any actions that are interrelated or interdependent with the proposed action.

(iv) Provisions for incorporating new information and newly listed species or designated critical habitat into the Action Agency's effects analysis of proposed actions.

(v) A mutually agreed upon program for monitoring and periodic program evaluation to occur at the end of the first year following signature of the ACA and periodically thereafter.

(vi) Provisions for the Action Agency to maintain a list of Fire Plan Projects for which the Action Agency has made NLAA determinations. The Action Agency will also maintain the necessary records to allow the Service to complete the periodic program evaluations.

(3) *Training:* Upon completion of the ACA, the Action Agency and the Service will implement the training program outlined in the ACA to the mutual satisfaction of the Action Agency and the Service.

(b) The Action Agency may, at its discretion, allow any subunit of the Action Agency to implement this subpart as soon as the subunit has fulfilled the training requirements of the ACA, upon written notification to the Service. The Action Agency shall at all times have responsibility for the adequacy of all NLAA determinations it makes under this subpart.

(c) The ACA and any related oversight or monitoring reports shall be made available to the public through a notice of availability in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

§ 402.34 Oversight.

(a) Through the periodic program evaluation set forth in the ACA, the Service will determine whether the implementation of this subpart by the Action Agency is consistent with the best available scientific and commercial information, the ESA, and section 7 regulations.

(b) The Service Director may use the results of the periodic program evaluation described in the ACA to recommend changes to the Action Agency's implementation of the ACA. If and as appropriate, the Service Director may suspend any subunit participating in the ACA or exclude any subunit from the ACA.

(c) The Service Director retains discretion to terminate the ACA if the Action Agency fails to comply with the requirements of this subpart, section 7 of the ESA, or the terms of the ACA. Termination, suspension, or modification of an ACA does not affect the validity of any NLAA determinations made previously under the authority of this subpart.

Subpart D—Counterpart Regulations Governing Actions by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act

SOURCE: 69 FR 47759, Aug. 5, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

§ 402.40 Definitions.

The definitions in § 402.02 are applicable to this subpart. In addition, the fol-

lowing definitions are applicable only to this subpart.

(a) *Alternative consultation agreement* is the agreement described in § 402.45.

(b) *Effects determination* is a written determination by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) addressing the effects of a FIFRA action on listed species or critical habitat. The contents of an effects determination will depend on the nature of the action. An effects determination submitted under § 402.46 or § 402.47 shall contain the information described in § 402.14(c)(1)–(6) and a summary of the information on which the determination is based, detailing how the FIFRA action affects the listed species or critical habitat. EPA may consider the following additional sections for inclusion in an effects determination:

(1) A conclusion whether or not the FIFRA action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat and a description of any reasonable and prudent alternatives that may be available;

(2) A description of the impact of any anticipated incidental taking of such listed species resulting from the FIFRA action, reasonable and prudent measures considered necessary or appropriate to minimize such impact, and terms and conditions necessary to implement such measures; and

(3) A summary of any information or recommendations from an applicant. An effects determination shall be based on the best scientific and commercial data available.

(c) *FIFRA action* is an action by EPA to approve, permit or authorize the sale, distribution or use of a pesticide under sections 136–136y of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, 7 U.S.C. 136 *et seq.* (FIFRA). In any consultation under this subpart, EPA shall determine the nature and scope of a FIFRA action.

(d) *Listed species* is a species listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Act.

(e) *Partial biological opinion* is the document provided under § 402.47(a), pending the conclusion of consultation under § 402.47(b), stating the opinion of the Service as to whether or not a

§ 402.41

FIFRA action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of one or more listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of one or more critical habitats, and describing the impact of any anticipated incidental taking of such listed species resulting from the FIFRA action, reasonable and prudent measures considered necessary or appropriate to minimize such impact, and terms and conditions necessary to implement such measures.

(f) *Service Director* refers to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(g) *Service Representative* is the person or persons designated to participate in advance coordination as provided in this subpart.

§ 402.41 Purpose.

The purpose of these counterpart regulations is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing consultation process under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act), 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, by providing Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (referred to jointly as “Services” and individually as “Service”) and EPA with additional means to satisfy the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Act for certain regulatory actions under FIFRA. These additional means will permit the Services and EPA to more effectively use the scientific and commercial data generated through the FIFRA regulatory process as part of the best scientific and commercial data available to protect listed species and critical habitat. The procedures authorized by these counterpart regulations will be as protective of listed species and critical habitat as the process established in subpart B of this part.

§ 402.42 Scope and applicability.

(a) *Available consultation procedures.* This subpart describes consultation procedures available to EPA to satisfy the obligations of section 7(a)(2) of the Act in addition to those in subpart B of this part for FIFRA actions authorized, funded, or carried out by EPA in which EPA has discretionary Federal involvement or control. EPA retains discre-

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

tion to initiate early, informal, or formal consultation as described in §§ 402.11, 402.13, and 402.14 for any FIFRA action. The procedures in this subpart may be employed for FIFRA actions as follows:

(1) Interagency exchanges of information under § 402.43 and advance coordination under § 402.44 are available for any FIFRA action.

(2) Alternative consultation under § 402.45 is available for a listed species or critical habitat if EPA determines the FIFRA action is not likely to adversely affect the listed species or critical habitat.

(3) Optional formal consultation under § 402.46 is available for any FIFRA action with respect to any listed species or critical habitat.

(4) The special procedures in § 402.47 are available for consultations on FIFRA actions that will be unusually complex due to factors such as the geographic area or number of species that may be affected by the action.

(5) EPA shall engage in consultation as to all listed species and critical habitat that may be affected by a FIFRA action, and may in its discretion employ more than one of the available consultation procedures for a FIFRA action that may affect more than one listed species or critical habitat.

(6) EPA shall engage in consultation on actions involving requests for emergency exemptions under section 18 of FIFRA that may affect listed species or critical habitat, and may choose to do so under § 402.05 or other provisions of this subpart or subpart B of this part. Any required formal consultation shall be initiated as soon as practicable after the emergency is under control. For the purposes of § 402.05(b) the definition of formal consultation in § 402.02 includes the procedures in § 402.46.

(7) EPA must prepare a biological assessment for a FIFRA action to the extent required by § 402.12.

(8) EPA must comply with § 402.15 for all FIFRA actions.

(9) After a consultation under this subpart has been concluded, EPA shall reinitiate consultation as required by § 402.16 as soon as practicable after a circumstance requiring reinitiation occurs, and may employ the procedures

in this subpart or subpart B of this part in any reinitiated consultation.

(b) *Exchanges of scientific information.* As part of any of the additional consultation procedures provided in this subpart, EPA and the Services shall establish mutually-agreeable procedures for regular and timely exchanges of scientific information to achieve accurate and informed decision-making under this subpart and to ensure that the FIFRA process considers the best scientific and commercial data available on listed species and critical habitat in a manner consistent with the requirements of FIFRA and ESA.

§ 402.43 Interagency exchanges of information.

EPA may convey to the Service a written request for a list of any listed species or critical habitat that may be present in any area that may be affected by a FIFRA action. Within 30 days of receipt of such a request the Service shall advise EPA in writing whether, based on the best scientific and commercial data available, any listed species or critical habitat may be present in any such area. EPA may thereafter request the Service to provide available information (or references thereto) describing the applicable environmental baseline for each species or habitat that EPA determines may be affected by a FIFRA action, and the Service shall provide such information within 30 days of the request.

§ 402.44 Advance coordination for FIFRA actions.

(a) *Advance coordination.* EPA may request the Service to designate a Service Representative to work with EPA in the development of an effects determination for one or more listed species or critical habitat. EPA shall make such a request in writing and shall provide sufficient detail as to a FIFRA action planned for consultation to enable the Service to designate a representative with appropriate training and experience who shall normally be available to complete advance coordination with EPA within 60 days of the date of designation. Within 14 days of receiving such a request, the Service

shall advise EPA of the designated Service Representative.

(b) *Participation of Service Representative in preparation of effects determination.* The Service Representative designated under paragraph (a) of this section shall participate with EPA staff in the preparation of the effects determination identified under paragraph (a) of this section. EPA shall use its best efforts to include the designated Service Representative in all relevant discussions on the effects determination, to provide the designated Service Representative with access to all documentation used to prepare the effects determination, and to provide the designated Service Representative office and staff support sufficient to allow the Service Representative to participate meaningfully in the preparation of the effects determination. EPA shall consider all information timely identified by the designated Service Representative during the preparation of the effects determination.

§ 402.45 Alternative consultation on FIFRA actions that are not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat.

(a) *Consultation obligations for FIFRA actions that are not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat when alternative consultation agreement is in effect.* If EPA and the Service have entered into an alternative consultation agreement as provided below, EPA may make a determination that a FIFRA action is not likely to adversely affect a listed species or critical habitat without informal consultation or written concurrence from the Director, and upon making such a determination for a listed species or critical habitat, EPA need not initiate any additional consultation on that FIFRA action as to that listed species or critical habitat. As part of any subsequent request for formal consultation on that FIFRA action under this subpart or subpart B of this part, EPA shall include a list of all listed species and critical habitat for which EPA has concluded consultation under this section.

(b) *Procedures for adopting and implementing an alternative consultation agreement.* EPA and the Service may enter into an alternative consultation

agreement using the following procedures:

(1) *Initiation.* EPA submits a written notification to the Service Director of its intent to enter into an alternative consultation agreement.

(2) *Required contents of the alternative consultation agreement.* The alternative consultation agreement will, at a minimum, include the following components:

(i) *Adequacy of EPA Determinations under the ESA.* The alternative consultation agreement shall describe actions that EPA and the Service have taken to ensure that EPA's determinations regarding the effects of its actions on listed species or critical habitat are consistent with the ESA and applicable implementing regulations.

(ii) *Training.* The alternative consultation agreement shall describe actions that EPA and the Service intend to take to ensure that EPA and Service personnel are adequately trained to carry out their respective roles under the alternative consultation agreement. The alternative consultation agreement shall provide that all effects determinations made by EPA under this subpart have been reviewed and concurred on by an EPA staff member who holds a current certification as having received appropriate training under the alternative consultation agreement.

(iii) *Incorporation of new information.* The alternative consultation agreement shall describe processes that EPA and the Service intend to use to ensure that new information relevant to EPA's effects determinations is timely and appropriately considered.

(iv) *Incorporation of scientific advances.* The alternative consultation agreement shall describe processes that EPA and the Service intend to use to ensure that the ecological risk assessment methodologies supporting EPA's effects determinations incorporate relevant scientific advances.

(v) *Oversight.* The alternative consultation agreement shall describe the program and associated record keeping procedures that the Service and EPA intend to use to evaluate EPA's processes for making effects determinations consistent with these regulations and the alternative consultation agree-

ment. The alternative consultation agreement shall provide that the Service's oversight will be based on periodic evaluation of EPA's program for making effects determinations under this subpart. Periodic program evaluation will occur at the end of the first year following signature of the alternative consultation agreement and should normally occur at least every five years thereafter.

(vi) *Records.* The alternative consultation agreement shall include a provision for EPA to maintain a list of FIFRA actions for which EPA has made determinations under this section and to provide the list to the Service on request. EPA will also maintain the necessary records to allow the Service to complete program evaluations.

(vii) *Review of Alternative Consultation Agreement.* The alternative consultation agreement shall include provisions for regular review and, as appropriate, modification of the agreement by EPA and the Service, and for departure from its terms in a particular case to the extent deemed necessary by both EPA and the Service.

(3) *Training.* After EPA and the Service enter into the alternative consultation agreement, EPA and the Service will implement the training program outlined in the alternative consultation agreement to the mutual satisfaction of EPA and the Service.

(4) *Public availability.* The alternative consultation agreement and any related oversight or monitoring reports shall be made available to the public to the extent provided by law.

(c) *Oversight of alternative consultation agreement implementation.* Through the program evaluations set forth in the alternative consultation agreement, the Service will determine whether the implementation of this section by EPA is consistent with the best scientific and commercial information available, the ESA, and applicable implementing regulations. The Service Director may use the results of the program evaluations described in the alternative consultation agreement to recommend changes to EPA's implementation of

the alternative consultation agreement. The Service Director retains discretion to terminate or suspend the alternative consultation agreement if, in using the procedures in this subpart, EPA fails to comply with the requirements of this subpart, section 7 of the ESA, or the terms of the alternative consultation agreement. Termination, suspension, or modification of an alternative consultation agreement does not affect the validity of any NLAA determinations made previously under the authority of this subpart.

§ 402.46 Optional formal consultation procedure for FIFRA actions.

(a) *Initiation of consultation.* EPA may initiate consultation on a FIFRA action under this section by delivering to the Service a written request for consultation. The written request shall be accompanied by an effects determination as defined in § 402.40(b) and a list or summary of all references and data relied upon in the determination. All such references and data shall be made available to the Service on request and shall constitute part of the Service's administrative record for the consultation. The time for conclusion of the consultation under section 7(b)(1) of the Act is calculated from the date the Service receives the written request from EPA. Any subsequent interchanges regarding EPA's submission, including interchanges about the completeness of the effects determination, shall occur during consultation and do not extend the time for conclusion of the consultation unless EPA withdraws the request for consultation.

(b) *Additional information determination.* For an effects determination prepared without advance coordination under § 402.44, the Service may determine that additional available information would provide a better information base for the effects determination, in which case the Service Director shall notify the EPA Administrator within 45 days of the date the Service receives the effects determination. The notification shall describe such additional information in detail, and shall identify a means for obtaining that information within the time period available for consultation. EPA shall provide a copy of the Service Director's

notification to any applicant. EPA may thereafter revise its effects determination, and may resubmit the revised effects determination to the Service. If EPA advises the Service it will not resubmit a revised effects determination to the Service, its initiation of consultation on the effects determination is deemed withdrawn.

(c) *Service responsibilities.* (1) Within the later of 90 days of the date the Service receives EPA's written request for consultation or 45 days of the date the Service receives an effects determination resubmitted under paragraph (b) of this section, and consistent with section 7(b)(1) of the Act, the Service shall take one of the following actions:

(i) If the Service finds that the effects determination contains the information required by § 402.40(b) and satisfies the requirements of section 7(b)(4) of the Act, and the Service concludes that the FIFRA action that is the subject of the consultation complies with section 7(a)(2) of the Act, the Service will issue a written statement adopting the effects determination; or

(ii) The Service will provide EPA a draft of a written statement modifying the effects determination, which shall meet the requirements of § 402.14(i), and as modified adopting the effects determination, and shall provide a detailed explanation of the scientific and commercial data and rationale supporting any modification it makes; or

(iii) The Service will provide EPA a draft of a biological opinion finding that the FIFRA action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat, and describing any reasonable and prudent alternatives if available.

(2) If the Service acts under paragraphs (c)(1)(ii) or (c)(1)(iii) of this section, EPA shall, on request from an applicant, provide the applicant a copy of the draft written statement or draft biological opinion received from the Service. The Service shall at the request of EPA or an applicant discuss with EPA and the applicant the Service's review and evaluation under this section, and the basis for its findings. EPA and any applicant may submit written comments to the Service within 30 days after EPA receives the draft

§ 402.47

written statement or opinion from the Service unless the Service, EPA and any applicant agree to an extended deadline consistent with section 7(b)(1) of the Act.

(3) The Service will issue a final written statement or final biological opinion within 45 days after EPA receives the draft statement or opinion from the Service unless the deadline is extended under section 7(b)(1) of the Act.

(d) *Opinion of the Secretary.* The written statement or opinion by the Service under paragraphs (c)(1) or (c)(3) of this section shall constitute the opinion of the Secretary and the incidental take statement, reasonable and prudent measures, and terms and conditions under section 7(b) of the Act.

(e) *Delegation of Authority for Service decisions.* Any written statement modifying an effects determination or any biological opinion issued under this section shall be signed by the Service Director and such authority may not be delegated below the level of Assistant Director for Endangered Species (FWS) or Director of Office of Protected Resources (NOAA Fisheries).

§ 402.47 Special consultation procedures for complex FIFRA actions.

(a) *Successive effects determinations.* If EPA determines after conferring with the Service that consultation on a FIFRA action will be unusually complex due to factors such as the geographic area or number of species that may be affected by the action, EPA may address the effects of the action through successive effects determinations under this subpart addressing groupings or categories of species or habitats as established by EPA. EPA may initiate consultation based upon each such effects determination using the procedure in § 402.46(a), and the provisions of § 402.46(b) and (c) shall apply to any such consultation. When consultation is conducted under this section, the written statement or opinion provided by the Service under § 402.46(c) constitutes a partial biological opinion as to the species or habitats that are the subject of the consultation. While not constituting completion of consultation under section 7(a)(2), EPA retains authority to use such a partial biological opinion along with other

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

available information in making a finding under section 7(d) of the Act.

(b) *Opinion of the Secretary.* After conclusion of all consultation on the FIFRA action, the partial biological opinions issued under paragraph (a) of this section shall then collectively constitute the opinion of the Secretary and the incidental take statement, reasonable and prudent measures, and terms and conditions under section 7(b) of the Act except to the extent a partial biological opinion is modified by the Service in accordance with the procedures in § 402.46(c). The Service shall so advise EPA in writing upon issuance of the last partial biological opinion for the consultation.

§ 402.48 Conference on proposed species or proposed critical habitat.

EPA may employ the procedures described in § 402.10 to confer on any species proposed for listing or any habitat proposed for designation as critical habitat. For the purposes of § 402.10(d), the procedures in § 402.46 are a permissible form of formal consultation.

PART 403—TRANSFER OF MARINE MAMMAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY TO STATES

Sec.

- 403.01 Purpose and scope of regulations.
- 403.02 Definitions.
- 403.03 Review and approval of State request for management authority.
- 403.04 Determinations and hearings under section 109(c) of the MMPA.
- 403.05 State and Federal responsibilities after transfer of management authority.
- 403.06 Monitoring and review of State management program.
- 403.07 Revocation and return of State management authority.
- 403.08 List of States to which management has been transferred.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, as amended by Pub. L. 97–58.

SOURCE: 48 FR 22456, May 18, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

§ 403.01 Purpose and scope of regulations.

The regulations contained in this part implement section 109 of the Act which, upon a finding by the Secretary

of compliance with certain requirements, provides for the transfer of marine mammal management authority to the states.

(a) The regulations of this part apply the procedures for the transfer of marine mammal management authority to a state, the form and minimum requirements of a state application for the transfer of management authority, the relationship between Federal and state wildlife agencies both prior and subsequent to the transfer of management authority, and the revocation and return of management authority to the Federal Government.

(b) Nothing in this part shall prevent:

(1) The taking of a marine mammal by or on behalf of a Federal, state or local government official, in accordance with § 18.22 or § 216.22 of this Title and section 109(h) of the Act, or (2) the adoption or enforcement of any state law or regulation relating to any marine mammal taken before December 21, 1972.

(c) The information collection requirements contained in §§ 403.03, 403.06, and 403.07 of this part do not require approval by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, because there are fewer than 10 respondents annually.

§ 403.02 Definitions.

The following definitions apply to this part:

(a) The term *species* includes any population stock.

(b) *Optimum Sustainable Population* or *OSP* means a population size which falls within a range from the population level of a given species or stock which is the largest supportable within the ecosystem to the population level that results in maximum net productivity. Maximum net productivity is the greatest net annual increment in population numbers or biomass resulting from additions to the population due to reproduction and/or growth less losses due to natural mortality.

(c) *State management program* means existing and proposed state statutes, regulations, policies and other authorities which form the framework for the conservation of a species of marine mammals.

(d) *State regulation* means the whole or part of a state agency statement of general or particular applicability and future effect designed to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or policy or describing the organization, procedure, or practice requirements of a state agency and which is duly promulgated in accordance with established procedure.

(e) The *Act* means the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, as amended by Pub. L. 97-58.

(f) The *Secretary* means the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, depending on the species involved. Under section 3(11) of the Act, the Secretary of Commerce has jurisdiction over members of the order Cetacea and members, other than walrus, of the order Pinnipedia; the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction over all other mammals. These secretarial authorities have been delegated to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service, respectively.

(g) The *Service* or *Services* means the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as appropriate depending on the species involved. Any determination or finding required by this part to be made by the "Service" must be made by the Director of the FWS or by the Assistant Administrator of the NMFS, or their delegees, as appropriate.

§ 403.03 Review and approval of State request for management authority.

(a) Any state may request the transfer of management authority for a species of marine mammals by submitting a written request to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service ("Director") for species of marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the FWS, or to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of the National Marine Fisheries Service ("Assistant Administrator") for species of marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the NMFS. The request must include:

(1) Copies of existing and proposed statutes, regulations, policies and other authorities of state law which comprise those aspects of the state

§ 403.03

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

management program outlined in paragraph (b) of this section, and, in the case of Alaska, paragraphs (d) (1) through (3) of this section;

(2) A narrative discussion of the statutes, regulations, policies and other authorities which comprise those aspects of the state management program outlined in paragraph (b) of this section, and, in the case of Alaska, paragraph (d) of this section, which explains the program in terms of the requirements of the Act and the regulations of this part; and

(3) Supplementary information as required by paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) A request for transfer of marine mammal management authority will not be approved unless it contains the following:

(1) The scientific and common names and estimated range of the species of marine mammals subject to the state management program.

(2) Provisions of state law concerning the take of marine mammals that—

(i) Require that the taking of marine mammals be humane as defined by section 3(4) of the Act;

(ii) Do not permit the taking of marine mammals until the following have occurred:

(A) The state, pursuant to the requirements of §403.04 of this part, has determined that the species is at its Optimum Sustainable Population (OSP) and determined the maximum number of animals that may be taken without reducing the species below its OSP, and, in the case of Alaska, when a species is below OSP, the maximum numbers that can be taken for subsistence uses while allowing the species to increase toward its OSP;

(B) The determination as to OSP and maximum take are final and implemented under state law; and

(C) A cooperative allocation agreement, if required under §403.05(a) of this part, is implemented;

(iii) Do not permit take in excess of the maximum number of animals that may be taken as determined pursuant to §403.04 of this part; provided that for Alaska, subsistence take may be allowed in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section, and if the species is below OSP, any level of take allowed

for subsistence use shall permit the species to increase toward OSP;

(iv) Do not permit take that is for scientific research or public display purposes except such take by or on behalf of the state, or pursuant to a Federal permit issued under §18.31 or §216.31 of this title; and

(v) Regulate the incidental taking of the species in a manner consistent with section 101(a) (2), (4) and (5) of the Act.

(3) Provisions for annually acquiring and evaluating data and other new evidence relating to OSP of the species and the maximum allowable take, and if warranted on the basis of such evaluation, for requiring reevaluations of OSP and maximum allowable take determinations pursuant to §403.04.

(4) Procedures for the resolution of differences between the state and the appropriate Service that might arise during the development of a cooperative allocation agreement pursuant to §403.05(a) of this part.

(5) Procedures for the submission of an annual report meeting the requirements of §403.06(b) of this part to the appropriate Service regarding the administration of the state management program during the reporting period.

(6) A description of—

(i) The organization of state offices involved in the administration and enforcement of the state management program;

(ii) Any permit system relating to the marine mammals, the laws that apply to such permits, and the procedures to be used in granting or withholding such permits;

(iii) State laws relating to judicial review of administrative decisions as they relate to the state management program;

(iv) State laws relating to administrative rulemaking as they relate to the state management program;

(c) In addition to the aspects of the state management program required to be submitted by paragraph (b) of this section, the state shall submit information, in summary form, relating to:

(1) The anticipated staffing and funding of state offices involved in the administration and enforcement of the state management program;

(2) Anticipated research and enforcement activities relating to conservation of the species for which management authority is sought; and

(3) Such other materials and information as the Service may request or which the state may deem necessary or advisable to demonstrate the compatibility of the state management program with the policy and purposes of the Act and the rules and regulations issued under the Act.

(d) In addition to the requirements contained in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, a request for the transfer of marine mammal management authority by the State of Alaska must contain the following concerning subsistence use of the species—

(1) A statute and regulations concerning the take of marine mammals that ensure that

(i) The taking of marine mammal species for subsistence uses will be the priority consumptive uses of the species;

(ii) If restrictions on subsistence uses of the species are required, such restrictions shall be based upon the customary and direct dependence upon the species as the mainstay of livelihood, local residency, and the availability of alternative resources; and

(iii) The taking of marine mammal species for subsistence uses is accomplished in a non-wasteful manner;

(2) Statutes or regulations that ensure that the appropriate state agency will—

(i) Authorize nonsubsistence consumptive uses of a marine mammal species only if such uses will have no significant adverse impact on subsistence uses of the species;

(ii) Regulate nonsubsistence consumptive uses in a manner which, to the maximum extent practicable, provides economic opportunities, including, but not limited to, licensing of marine mammal hunting guides and the assignment of guiding areas, for residents of rural coastal villages of Alaska who engage in subsistence uses of the species; and

(iii) Make written findings supporting the authorizations and regulations described in this paragraph based solely on the administrative record before the agency;

(3) A narrative discussion of the statutes or regulations required under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, and any additional policies or procedures concerning the regulation of nonsubsistence consumptive uses of marine mammals. This discussion must explain how the State's program satisfies the requirements of section 109(f) of the Act, namely that the regulation of nonsubsistence consumptive uses of marine mammals provides, to the maximum extent practicable, economic opportunities for the residents of rural coastal villages of Alaska who engage in subsistence uses of the species.

(e) To assist states in preparing the state management program for submission, the Service will also, at the written request of any state, make a preliminary review of any aspects of the state management program. This review will be advisory in nature and shall not be binding upon the Services. Notwithstanding preliminary review by the Service, once any proposed aspect of the state management program has been prepared and submitted in final form, it shall be subject to final review and approval under paragraphs (f) through (h) of this section.

(f)(1) After receiving the state's request, for management authority, the Service shall make an initial determination on whether the state's management program meets the requirements of the Act and these regulations.

(2) Within 45 days after receiving the state's request, unless the state and the Service agree to another time period, the Service shall publish a general notice of its initial determination in the FEDERAL REGISTER together with, in the case of a positive determination, the text of a proposed rule to transfer management authority to the state. The general notice shall contain a summary of the major components of the state's management program and shall indicate where the full text of the management program may be inspected or copied. The public shall be allowed to submit written comments and to request an informal public hearing on the Service's initial determination and the state's management program within 60 days of publication of the general notice.

(g) If requested, the Service may conduct an informal public hearing after publishing 30 days' advance notice of the date, location, and time of such hearing in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(h) After considering all comments and other relevant information, the Service shall publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER its final determination on whether the state has developed and will implement a management program that meets the requirement of the Act and these regulations. In the case of a positive final determination, the Service shall publish with the notice a final regulation transferring management authority for the species to the state after the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) The state's determinations pursuant to § 403.04 of this part are final and implemented under state law;

(2) Any cooperative allocation agreement required under § 403.05(a) of this part is implemented; and

(3) The state has enacted and submitted to the Service laws and policies that are substantially the same as those provided pursuant to § 403.03(a) in proposed form in the state's management program.

§ 403.04 Determinations and hearings under section 109(c) of the MMPA.

(a) *Introduction.* In order to gain approval of its marine mammal management program the state must provide for a process, consistent with section 109(c) of the Act, to determine the optimum sustainable population of the species and the maximum number of animals that may be taken from populations it manages without reducing the species below OSP. The state process must be completed before the state may exercise any management authority over the subject marine mammals, and it must include the elements set forth below.

(b) *Basis, purpose, and scope.* The process set forth in this section is applicable to and required for only the determination of the OSP of the species and maximum number that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP and, in the case of Alaska if the species is below OSP, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if any, for subsistence uses without

preventing the species from increasing toward its OSP. The state need not allow the maximum take, as determined in accordance with this process, that is biologically permissible. The state may change regulations establishing bag limits, quotas, seasons, areas, manner of take, etc. within the maximum biologically permissible take pursuant to its other rulemaking criteria, authority, and procedures. Compliance with the process set forth in this section would not be required again unless the state proposes to modify its determinations of the status of the species with respect to its OSP or the maximum permissible take from that species.

(c) *Initial determination by the State.* The state agency with responsibility for managing the species in the event management authority is transferred to the state shall make initial determinations on the basis of the best scientific evidence available of:

(1) Whether or not it is at its OSP; (2) if so, the maximum number of that species that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP; and (3) if not, in the case of Alaska, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if any, for subsistence uses without preventing the species from increasing toward its OSP.

(d) *Notice and review of initial determinations and request for hearing.* The state agency shall provide notice of its initial determinations to the Service and the public and shall provide access to or copies of the documentation supporting its determinations to the Service and the public. The state agency shall indicate, in the notice of its initial determinations, the location(s) and hours during which such documentation may be inspected, and the costs, if any of copies of such documentation. The state agency shall also indicate in the notice that any interested person may request a hearing regarding the initial determinations, and the state shall provide a reasonable time, not less than 30 days, for making the request, taking into account the time required to advise the public of the initial determinations and to make the supporting documentation readily available to interested persons for their consideration. If a request for a

hearing is not made within the prescribed time period, the initial determinations shall be treated as final.

(e) *Notice of hearing.* If a request for a hearing is made within the prescribed time period by any interested person, the state agency shall provide notice of the hearing to the Service and the public not less than 30 days in advance of the scheduled date(s) of the hearing(s). The notice shall include the date(s), location(s), and purpose of the hearing, a recitation of the initial determinations, the name(s) of the person(s) who will preside at the hearing, and the manner and date by which interested persons must notify the state agency or presiding officer(s) of their desire to participate in the hearing. The state shall also make available and distribute upon request a list of witnesses and description of the documentation and other evidence that will be relied upon by the state's witnesses in support of its initial determinations sufficiently in advance of the hearing date so as to allow interested persons to prepare questions and supporting or rebuttal testimony for the hearing.

(f) *Conduct of the hearing.* (1) The hearing shall be publicly conducted and reported verbatim by an official reporter.

(2) The state shall sponsor all written documentation in support of its determinations with witnesses who are able, by virtue of training and experience, to respond fully to cross-examination regarding the facts and conclusions contained therein provided that, except by agreement of the parties, the state agency may not call any witnesses or introduce any documentation into the record unless the advance notice requirements of paragraph (e) of this section are met with respect to such witnesses or documentation.

(3) Any interested person who has notified the state agency of his desire to participate in the hearing pursuant to paragraph (e) of this section may participate in the hearing by presenting oral or written testimony or cross-examining the witnesses or other parties with respect to matters relevant to the state's initial determinations, provided that any such written documentation must be sponsored by a witness who is able, by virtue of train-

ing and experience, to respond fully to cross-examination regarding the facts and conclusions contained therein.

(4) The presiding officer(s) shall conduct the hearing in accordance with such other rules of evidence, criteria, and procedures as are necessary and appropriate for the expeditious and effective determination of the issues. The presiding officer(s) may provide for oral argument and/or written briefs at the end of the hearing.

(5) Final determinations on the issues specified in paragraph (c) of this section must be supported by the best available scientific information so as to insure that any taking will be consistent with the maintenance of OSP.

(g) *Review of the hearing record and final determinations.* (1) The state agency shall provide for either:

(i) Review and evaluation of the hearing record by the presiding officer(s) and transmittal by the presiding officer(s) of recommended final determinations to the decision-maker(s) in the state agency; or

(ii) Review and evaluation of the hearing record and final determinations by the state agency without benefit of any recommendations by the presiding officer(s). In any event, the final determinations by the state agency must be made solely on the basis of the record developed at the hearing. The state agency in making its final determinations, and/or presiding officer(s) in making his (their) recommended determinations, may not rely on oral or written evidence which was not presented at the hearing and made available to the parties for cross-examination and rebuttal testimony. Any such oral or written information transmitted to the presiding officer(s) or other members of the state agency responsible for the final determinations shall be treated as *ex parte* communications and may not be considered part of the record for decision.

(2) The state agency shall make final determinations of the issues set forth in paragraph (c) of this section and shall include in its statement of final determinations a statement of findings and conclusions and the reasons or basis therefor.

§ 403.05

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

(3) The state agency shall advise the Service and the public of its final determinations and shall provide access to or copies of its decision document and Hearing Record.

(h) *Judicial review.* The state agency's final determinations after a hearing must be supported by substantial evidence in the record of the hearing. Opportunity for judicial review of the state agency's final determinations must be available under state law. The scope of judicial review shall be equivalent to that provided for in 5 U.S.C. 706(2) (A) through (E).

§ 403.05 State and Federal responsibilities after transfer of management authority.

(a) After determinations required by section 403.04 of this part have been made in respect to a species whose range extends beyond the territorial waters of the state, the state shall not exercise management authority until a cooperative allocation agreement with the Secretary has been signed and the Service has transferred management authority pursuant to § 403.03(h). The cooperative allocation agreement shall provide procedures for allocating, on a timely basis, the maximum amount of take as determined by the state pursuant to § 403.04 of this part. Such allocation shall give first priority to incidental take within the zone described in section 3(14)(B) of the Act as provided for under section 101(a) of the Act, except that in the case of Alaska, first priority shall be given to subsistence use.

(b) For those species to which paragraph (a) of this section applies, the state may request the Service to regulate the taking of the species within the zone described in section 3(14)(B) of the Act for subsistence uses and/or hunting in a manner consistent with the regulation by the state of such taking within the state. If such a request is made, the Service shall adopt and enforce within such zone, such of the state's regulatory provisions as the Service considers to be consistent with the administration within such zone of section 101(a) of the Act.

(c) If management authority for a species has been transferred to a state pursuant to this subpart, the Service

shall provide to the state an opportunity to review all requests for permits to remove live animals from habitat within the state for scientific research or public display purposes. If the state finds that issuance of the permit would not be consistent with its management program for the species:

(1) The state shall so inform the Service, together with the reasons for such finding, within 30 days of its receipt of the application, and the Service shall not issue the permit; and

(2) The Service shall provide to the permit applicant and the state an opportunity to adjust the permit application or otherwise reconcile it with the state management program for the species.

(d) After management of a species has been transferred to the state, state and Federal authorities shall cooperate to the maximum extent practicable in conserving the species of marine mammals.

§ 403.06 Monitoring and review of State management program.

(a) The Service has responsibility to monitor and review implementation of all state management programs approved pursuant to this part.

(b) In order to facilitate such review, each state to which management authority has been transferred shall submit an annual report, not later than 120 days after the close of such state's first full fiscal or calendar year following the effective date of the Service's approval of the State management program, and at the same time each following year, or at such other time as may be agreed upon. The report shall contain the following information current for each reporting period:

(1) Any changes in the state laws which comprise those aspects of the state management program submitted pursuant to § 403.03(b), and, in the case of Alaska, § 403.03(d), of this part;

(2) Pertinent new data on the marine mammal species or the marine ecosystems in question including a summary of the status, trend and general health of the species;

(3) A summary of available information relating to takings under the state management program;

(4) A summary of state actions to protect species' habitat;

(5) A summary of all state research activity on the species;

(6) Any significant changes in the information provided with the original request for transfer of management authority;

(7) A summary of enforcement activity;

(8) A summary of budget and staffing levels for the marine mammal activities in the categories of research, management and enforcement;

(9) Any other information which the Service may request, consistent with the Act as amended, or which the state deems necessary or advisable to facilitate review by the Service of state management of the species.

(c) Each state having an approved management program shall file a report, in a timely manner, not to exceed 45 days from the occurrence of any of the following:

(1) Any change in a relevant state law (amendments, repealers, or new legislation or regulations or judicial precedent) as submitted pursuant to paragraphs (b)(2) through (b)(5), and in the case of Alaska, paragraph (d), of § 403.03 of this part that may impair the State's ability to implement the program;

(2) Any significant natural or man-made occurrence or any new scientific information that may warrant reconsideration of the determinations made pursuant to § 403.04 of this part.

(d) All components of the state request for transfer of management authority, as well as annual reports submitted under paragraph (b) of this section and any reports submitted under paragraph (c) of this section, shall be available for inspection and copying at the Office of the Chief, Division of Wildlife Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240, or, as appropriate, at the Office of Protected Species and Habitat Conservation, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20235, and at the appropriate Service's regional office.

§ 403.07 Revocation and return of State management authority.

(a) *Revocation of management.* The Service shall have responsibility to review management of a species transferred to a state under this part and to determine whether or not the implementation of the state management program continues to comply with the requirements of the Act, this part and the state's approved management program.

(1) Upon receipt of any substantial factual information suggesting that the state management program is not being implemented or is being implemented in a manner inconsistent with the Act, this part, or the state's approved management program, the Service shall, as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days after receipt, determine whether or not the state continues to comply with the requirements of the Act, this part and the state's approved management program.

(2) Whenever pursuant to a review as specified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the Service determines that any substantial aspect of the state management program is not in compliance with the requirements of the Act, this part or the state's approved management program, it shall provide written notice to the state of its intent to revoke management authority, together with a statement, in detail, of those actions or failures to act upon which such intent to revoke is based. The Service shall publish notice of such intent to revoke in the FEDERAL REGISTER and invite public comment thereon, and shall conduct an informal public hearing on the matter if requested by the state or if the Service otherwise determines it to be necessary. The Service shall provide to the state an opportunity for consultation between the Service and the state concerning such actions or failures and necessary remedial actions to be taken by the state.

(3) If within 90 days after notice is provided under paragraph (a)(2) of this section, the state has not taken such remedial measures as are necessary, in the judgment of the Service, to bring the state management program into compliance with the provision of the Act, this part and the state's approved

§ 403.08

management program, the Service shall revoke the transfer of management authority by written notice to the state and publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) *Voluntary return of management authority to the Service.* (1) If a state desires to return management of a species of marine mammals to the Service, it shall provide the Service notice of intent to return management. The Service shall accept the return of management, and such return shall become effective, upon publication of a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER to this effect no sooner than 30 days (except in an emergency as determined by the Service) nor longer than 60 days after the state has provided notice of its intent to return management or unless otherwise agreed upon.

(2) If implementation of any aspect of the state management program is enjoined by court order, the state shall advise the Service of such injunction and its effect on the state management program. If the state determines that the effect of the injunction is to preclude effective conservation and management of the species under the terms of the state management program, it shall so notify the Service and such notification shall be treated as a notice of intent to return management as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. If the state determines that the injunction does not preclude effective conservation and management of marine mammals under the terms of the state management program, it shall so notify the Service together with the basis for the state's determination and such notice shall be treated as a report submitted pursuant to the terms of § 403.06(c)(1) of this part. In either case, the state shall provide notice to the Service as soon as practicable but not more than 30 days after issuance of the injunction. Management authority returned to the Service pursuant to this paragraph may be re-transferred to the state, notwithstanding the requirements of § 403.03, when, in the judgment of the Service, the cause for return of management authority to the Service has been alleviated in such a way as to allow effective conservation and management of the species consistent with

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

the requirements of the Act and this part.

(c) When revocation of a management authority pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section becomes final, or when a state returns management pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, the Service shall resume such management authority and provide for the conservation of the species within the state in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

§ 403.08 List of States to which management has been transferred.

The following states have received management authority pursuant to this part for the species listed and, where appropriate, cooperative allocation agreements pursuant to § 403.05(c) are in force: [Reserved]

PART 424—LISTING ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES AND DESIGNATING CRITICAL HABITAT

Subpart A—General Provisions

- Sec.
424.01 Scope and purpose.
424.02 Definitions.

Subpart B—Revision of the Lists

- 424.10 General.
424.11 Factors for listing, delisting, or reclassifying species.
424.12 Criteria for designating critical habitat.
424.13 Sources of information and relevant data.
424.14 Petitions.
424.15 Notices of review.
424.16 Proposed rules.
424.17 Time limits and required actions.
424.18 Final rules—general.
424.19 Final rules—impact analysis of critical habitat.
424.20 Emergency rules.
424.21 Periodic review.

AUTHORITY: Pub. L. 93-205, 87 Stat. 884; Pub. L. 95-632, 92 Stat. 3751; Pub. L. 96-159, 93 Stat. 1225; Pub. L. 97-304, 96 Stat. 1411 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

SOURCE: 49 FR 38908, Oct. 1, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions**§ 424.01 Scope and purpose.**

(a) Part 424 provides rules for revising the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants and, where appropriate, designating or revising their critical habitats. Criteria are provided for determining species to be endangered or threatened and for designating critical habitats. Procedures for receiving and considering petitions to revise the lists and for conducting periodic reviews of listed species also are established.

(b) The purpose of these rules is to interpret and implement those portions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), that pertain to the listing of species and the determination of critical habitats.

§ 424.02 Definitions.

(a) The definitions of terms in 50 CFR 402.02 shall apply to this part 424, except as otherwise stated.

(b) *Candidate* means any species being considered by the Secretary for listing as an endangered or a threatened species, but not yet the subject of a proposed rule.

(c) *Conservation*, *conserve*, and *conserving* mean to use and the use of all methods and procedures that are necessary to bring any endangered or threatened species to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to the Act are no longer necessary. Such methods and procedures include, but are not limited to, all activities associated with scientific resources management such as research, census, law enforcement, habitat acquisition and maintenance, propagation, live trapping, and transplantation, and, in the extraordinary case where population pressures within a given ecosystem cannot be otherwise relieved, may include regulated taking.

(d) *Critical habitat* means (1) the specific areas within the geographical area currently occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (i) essential to the conservation of the species and (ii) that may require special management considerations or protection, and (2) specific areas outside the geo-

graphical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed upon a determination by the Secretary that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

(e) *Endangered species* means a species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

(f) *List* or *lists* means the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants found at 50 CFR 17.11(h) or 17.12(h).

(g) *Plant* means any member of the plant kingdom, including, without limitation, seeds, roots, and other parts thereof.

(h) *Public hearing* means an informal hearing to provide the public with the opportunity to give comments and to permit an exchange of information and opinion on a proposed rule.

(i) *Secretary* means the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as appropriate, or their authorized representatives.

(j) *Special management considerations or protection* means any methods or procedures useful in protecting physical and biological features of the environment for the conservation of listed species.

(k) *Species* includes any species or subspecies of fish, wildlife, or plant, and any distinct population segment of any vertebrate species that interbreeds when mature. Excluded is any species of the Class Insecta determined by the Secretary to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of the Act would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man.

(l) *State agency* means any State agency, department, board, commission, or other governmental entity that is responsible for the management and conservation of fish, plant, or wildlife resources within a State.

(m) *Threatened species* means any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

(n) *Wildlife or fish and wildlife* means any member of the animal kingdom, including without limitation, any

vertebrate, mollusk, crustacean, arthropod, or other invertebrate, and includes any part, product, egg, or offspring thereof, or the dead body or parts thereof.

Subpart B—Revision of the Lists

§ 424.10 General.

The Secretary may add a species to the lists or designate critical habitat, delete a species or critical habitat, change the listed status of a species, revise the boundary of an area designated as critical habitat, or adopt or modify special rules (see 50 CFR 17.40–17.48 and parts 222 and 227) applied to a threatened species only in accordance with the procedures of this part.

§ 424.11 Factors for listing, delisting, or reclassifying species.

(a) Any species or taxonomic group of species (e.g., genus, subgenus) as defined in § 424.02(k) is eligible for listing under the Act. A taxon of higher rank than species may be listed only if all included species are individually found to be endangered or threatened. In determining whether a particular taxon or population is a species for the purposes of the Act, the Secretary shall rely on standard taxonomic distinctions and the biological expertise of the Department and the scientific community concerning the relevant taxonomic group.

(b) The Secretary shall make any determination required by paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section *solely* on the basis of the best available scientific and commercial information regarding a species' status, without reference to possible economic or other impacts of such determination.

(c) A species shall be listed or reclassified if the Secretary determines, on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after conducting a review of the species' status, that the species is endangered or threatened because of any one or a combination of the following factors:

(1) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;

(2) Over utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;

(3) Disease or predation;

(4) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or

(5) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

(d) The factors considered in delisting a species are those in paragraph (c) of this section as they relate to the definitions of endangered or threatened species. Such removal must be supported by the best scientific and commercial data available to the Secretary after conducting a review of the status of the species. A species may be delisted only if such data substantiate that it is neither endangered nor threatened for one or more of the following reasons:

(1) *Extinction*. Unless all individuals of the listed species had been previously identified and located, and were later found to be extirpated from their previous range, a sufficient period of time must be allowed before delisting to indicate clearly that the species is extinct.

(2) *Recovery*. The principal goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service is to return listed species to a point at which protection under the Act is no longer required. A species may be delisted on the basis of recovery only if the best scientific and commercial data available indicate that it is no longer endangered or threatened.

(3) *Original data for classification in error*. Subsequent investigations may show that the best scientific or commercial data available when the species was listed, or the interpretation of such data, were in error.

(e) The fact that a species of fish, wildlife, or plant is protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (see part 23 of this title 50) or a similar international agreement on such species, or has been identified as requiring protection from unrestricted commerce by any foreign nation, or to be in danger of extinction or likely to become so within the foreseeable future by any State agency or by any agency of a foreign nation that is responsible for the conservation of fish, wildlife, or plants, may constitute evidence that the species is endangered or

threatened. The weight given such evidence will vary depending on the international agreement in question, the criteria pursuant to which the species is eligible for protection under such authorities, and the degree of protection afforded the species. The Secretary shall give consideration to any species protected under such an international agreement, or by any State or foreign nation, to determine whether the species is endangered or threatened.

(f) The Secretary shall take into account, in making determinations under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nation, or any political subdivision of a State or foreign nation, to protect such species, whether by predator control, protection of habitat and food supply, or other conservation practices, within any area under its jurisdiction, or on the high seas.

§ 424.12 Criteria for designating critical habitat.

(a) Critical habitat shall be specified to the maximum extent prudent and determinable at the time a species is proposed for listing. If designation of critical habitat is not prudent or if critical habitat is not determinable, the reasons for not designating critical habitat will be stated in the publication of proposed and final rules listing a species. A final designation of critical habitat shall be made on the basis of the best scientific data available, after taking into consideration the probable economic and other impacts of making such a designation in accordance with § 424.19.

(1) A designation of critical habitat is not prudent when one or both of the following situations exist:

(i) The species is threatened by taking or other human activity, and identification of critical habitat can be expected to increase the degree of such threat to the species, or

(ii) Such designation of critical habitat would not be beneficial to the species.

(2) Critical habitat is not determinable when one or both of the following situations exist:

(i) Information sufficient to perform required analyses of the impacts of the designation is lacking, or

(ii) The biological needs of the species are not sufficiently well known to permit identification of an area as critical habitat.

(b) In determining what areas are critical habitat, the Secretary shall consider those physical and biological features that are essential to the conservation of a given species and that may require special management considerations or protection. Such requirements include, but are not limited to the following:

(1) Space for individual and population growth, and for normal behavior;

(2) Food, water, air, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements;

(3) Cover or shelter;

(4) Sites for breeding, reproduction, rearing of offspring, germination, or seed dispersal; and generally;

(5) Habitats that are protected from disturbance or are representative of the historic geographical and ecological distributions of a species.

When considering the designation of critical habitat, the Secretary shall focus on the principal biological or physical constituent elements within the defined area that are essential to the conservation of the species. Known primary constituent elements shall be listed with the critical habitat description. Primary constituent elements may include, but are not limited to, the following: roost sites, nesting grounds, spawning sites, feeding sites, seasonal wetland or dryland, water quality or quantity, host species or plant pollinator, geological formation, vegetation type, tide, and specific soil types.

(c) Each critical habitat will be defined by specific limits using reference points and lines as found on standard topographic maps of the area. Each area will be referenced to the State(s), county(ies), or other local governmental units within which all or part of the critical habitat is located. Unless otherwise indicated within the critical habitat descriptions, the names of the State(s) and county(ies) are provided for information only and

§ 424.13

do not constitute the boundaries of the area. Ephemeral reference points (*e.g.*, trees, sand bars) shall not be used in defining critical habitat.

(d) When several habitats, each satisfying the requirements for designation as critical habitat, are located in proximity to one another, an inclusive area may be designated as critical habitat.

Example: Several dozen or more small ponds, lakes, and springs are found in a small local area. The entire area could be designated critical habitat if it were concluded that the upland areas were essential to the conservation of an aquatic species located in the ponds and lakes.

(e) The Secretary shall designate as critical habitat areas outside the geographical area presently occupied by a species only when a designation limited to its present range would be inadequate to ensure the conservation of the species.

(f) Critical habitat may be designated for those species listed as threatened or endangered but for which no critical habitat has been previously designated.

(g) Existing critical habitat may be revised according to procedures in this section as new data become available to the Secretary.

(h) Critical habitat shall not be designated within foreign countries or in other areas outside of United States jurisdiction.

§ 424.13 Sources of information and relevant data.

When considering any revision of the lists, the Secretary shall consult as appropriate with affected States, interested persons and organizations, other affected Federal agencies, and, in cooperation with the Secretary of State, with the country or countries in which the species concerned are normally found or whose citizens harvest such species from the high seas. Data reviewed by the Secretary may include, but are not limited to scientific or commercial publications, administrative reports, maps or other graphic materials, information received from experts on the subject, and comments from interested parties.

§ 424.14 Petitions.

(a) *General.* Any interested person may submit a written petition to the

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

Secretary requesting that one of the actions described in § 424.10 be taken. Such a document must clearly identify itself as a petition and be dated. It must contain the name, signature, address, telephone number, if any, and the association, institution, or business affiliation, if any, of the petitioner. The Secretary shall acknowledge in writing receipt of such a petition within 30 days.

(b) *Petitions to list, delist, or reclassify species.* (1) To the maximum extent practicable, within 90 days of receiving a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species, the Secretary shall make a finding as to whether the petition presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted. For the purposes of this section, “substantial information” is that amount of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the measure proposed in the petition may be warranted. The Secretary shall promptly publish such finding in the FEDERAL REGISTER and so notify the petitioner.

(2) In making a finding under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall consider whether such petition—

(i) Clearly indicates the administrative measure recommended and gives the scientific and any common name of the species involved;

(ii) Contains detailed narrative justification for the recommended measure, describing, based on available information, past and present numbers and distribution of the species involved and any threats faced by the species;

(iii) Provides information regarding the status of the species over all or a significant portion of its range; and

(iv) Is accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation in the form of bibliographic references, reprints of pertinent publications, copies of reports or letters from authorities, and maps.

The petitioner may provide information that describes any recommended critical habitat as to boundaries and physical features, and indicates any benefits and/or adverse effects on the species that would result from such

designation. Such information, however, will not be a basis for the determination of the substantiality of a petition.

(3) Upon making a positive finding under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall commence a review of the status of the species concerned and shall make, within 12 months of receipt of such petition, one of the following findings:

(i) The petitioned action is not warranted, in which case the Secretary shall promptly publish such finding in the FEDERAL REGISTER and so notify the petitioner.

(ii) The petitioned action is warranted, in which case the Secretary shall promptly publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a proposed regulation to implement the action pursuant to § 424.16 of this part, or

(iii) The petitioned action is warranted, but that—

(A) The immediate proposal and timely promulgation of a regulation to implement the petitioned action is precluded because of other pending proposals to list, delist, or reclassify species, and

(B) Expedient progress is being made to list, delist, or reclassify qualified species,

in which case, such finding shall be promptly published in the FEDERAL REGISTER together with a description and evaluation of the reasons and data on which the finding is based.

(4) If a finding is made under paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section with regard to any petition, the Secretary shall, within 12 months of such finding, again make one of the findings described in paragraph (b)(3) with regard to such petition, but no further finding of substantial information will be required.

(c) *Petitions to revise critical habitat.*

(1) To the maximum extent practicable, within 90 days of receiving a petition to revise a critical habitat designation, the Secretary shall make a finding as to whether the petition presents substantial scientific information indicating that the revision may be warranted. The Secretary shall promptly publish such finding in the FEDERAL REGISTER and so notify the petitioner.

(2) In making the finding required by paragraph (c)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall consider whether a petition contains—

(i) Information indicating that areas petitioned to be added to critical habitat contain physical and biological features essential to, and that may require special management to provide for, the conservation of the species involved; or

(ii) Information indicating that areas designated as critical habitat do not contain resources essential to, or do not require special management to provide for, the conservation of the species involved.

(3) Within 12 months after receiving a petition found under paragraph (c)(1) of this section to present substantial information indicating that revision of a critical habitat may be warranted, the Secretary shall determine how he intends to proceed with the requested revision, and shall promptly publish notice of such intention in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(d) *Petitions to designate critical habitat or adopt special rules.* Upon receiving a petition to designate critical habitat or to adopt a special rule to provide for the conservation of a species, the Secretary shall promptly conduct a review in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) and applicable Departmental regulations, and take appropriate action.

§ 424.15 Notices of review.

(a) If the Secretary finds that one of the actions described in § 424.10 may be warranted, but that the available evidence is not sufficiently definitive to justify proposing the action at that time, a notice of review may be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The notice will describe the measure under consideration, briefly explain the reasons for considering the action, and solicit comments and additional information on the action under consideration.

(b) The Secretary from time to time also may publish notices of review containing the names of species that are considered to be candidates for listing under the Act and indicating whether sufficient scientific or commercial information is then available to warrant proposing to list such species, the

§ 424.16

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

names of species no longer being considered for listing, or the names of listed species being considered for delisting or reclassification. However, none of the substantive or procedural provisions of the Act apply to a species that is designated as a candidate for listing.

(c) Such notices of review will invite comment from all interested parties regarding the status of the species named. At the time of publication of such a notice, notification in writing will be sent to State agencies in any affected States, known affected Federal agencies, and, to the greatest extent practicable, through the Secretary of State, to the governments of any foreign countries in which the subject species normally occur.

§ 424.16 Proposed rules.

(a) *General.* Based on the information received through §§ 424.13, 424.14, 424.15, and 424.21, or through other available avenues, the Secretary may propose revising the lists as described in § 424.10.

(b) *Contents.* A notice of a proposed rule to carry out one of the actions described in § 424.10 shall contain the complete text of the proposed rule, a summary of the data on which the proposal is based (including, as appropriate, citation of pertinent information sources), and shall show the relationship of such data to the rule proposed. If such a rule designates or revises critical habitat, such summary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, include a brief description and evaluation of those activities (whether public or private) that, in the opinion of the Secretary, if undertaken, may adversely modify such habitat, or may be affected by such designation. Any proposed rule to designate or revise critical habitat shall contain a map of such habitat. Any such notice proposing the listing, delisting, or reclassification of a species or the designation or revision of critical habitat shall also include a summary of factors affecting the species and/or critical habitat.

(c) *Procedures*—(1) *Notifications.* In the case of any proposed rule to list, delist, or reclassify a species, or to designate or revise critical habitat, the Secretary shall—

(i) Publish notice of the proposal in the FEDERAL REGISTER;

(ii) Give actual notice of the proposed regulation (including the complete text of the regulation) to the State agency in each State in which the species is believed to occur, and to each county or equivalent jurisdiction therein in which the species is believed to occur, and invite the comment of each such agency and jurisdiction;

(iii) Give notice of the proposed regulation to any Federal agencies, local authorities, or private individuals or organizations known to be affected by the rule;

(iv) Insofar as practical, and in cooperation with the Secretary of State, give notice of the proposed regulation to list, delist, or reclassify a species to each foreign nation in which the species is believed to occur or whose citizens harvest the species on the high seas, and invite the comment of such nation;

(v) Give notice of the proposed regulation to such professional scientific organizations as the Secretary deems appropriate; and

(vi) Publish a summary of the proposed regulation in a newspaper of general circulation in each area of the United States in which the species is believed to occur.

(2) *Period of public comments.* At least 60 days shall be allowed for public comment following publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER of a rule proposing the listing, delisting, or reclassification of a species, or the designation or revision of critical habitat. All other proposed rules shall be subject to a comment period of at least 30 days following publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The Secretary may extend or reopen the period for public comment on a proposed rule upon a finding that there is good cause to do so. A notice of any such extension or reopening shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, and shall specify the basis for so doing.

(3) *Public hearings.* The Secretary shall promptly hold at least one public hearing if any person so requests within 45 days of publication of a proposed regulation to list, delist, or reclassify a species, or to designate or revise critical habitat. Notice of the location and

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 424.18

time of any such hearing shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER not less than 15 days before the hearing is held.

§ 424.17 Time limits and required actions.

(a) *General.* (1) Within 1 year of the publication of a rule proposing to determine whether a species is an endangered or threatened species, or to designate or revise critical habitat, the Secretary shall publish one of the following in the FEDERAL REGISTER:

(i) A final rule to implement such determination or revision,

(ii) A finding that such revision should not be made,

(iii) A notice withdrawing the proposed rule upon a finding that available evidence does not justify the action proposed by the rule, or

(iv) A notice extending such 1-year period by an additional period of not more than 6 months because there is substantial disagreement among scientists knowledgeable about the species concerned regarding the sufficiency or accuracy of the available data relevant to the determination or revision concerned.

(2) If an extension is made under paragraph (a)(1)(iv) of this section, the Secretary shall, within the extended period, take one of the actions described in paragraphs (a)(1) (i), (ii), or (iii) of this section.

(3) If a proposed rule is withdrawn under paragraph (a)(1)(iii) of this section, the notice of withdrawal shall set forth the basis upon which the proposed rule has been found not to be supported by available evidence. The Secretary shall not again propose a rule withdrawn under such provision except on the basis of sufficient new information that warrants a reproposal.

(b) *Critical habitat designations.* A final rule designating critical habitat of an endangered or a threatened species shall to the extent permissible under § 424.12 be published concurrently with the final rule listing such species, unless the Secretary deems that—

(1) It is essential to the conservation of such species that it be listed promptly; or

(2) Critical habitat of such species is not then determinable,

in which case, the Secretary, with respect to the proposed regulation to designate such habitat, may extend the 1-year period specified in paragraph (a) of this section by not more than one additional year. Not later than the close of such additional year the Secretary must publish a final regulation, based on such data as may be available at that time, designating, to the maximum extent prudent, such habitat.

§ 424.18 Final rules—general.

(a) *Contents.* A final rule promulgated to carry out the purposes of the Act will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. This publication will contain the complete text of the rule, a summary of the comments and recommendations received in response to the proposal (including applicable public hearings), summaries of the data on which the rule is based and the relationship of such data to the final rule, and a description of any conservation measures available under the rule. Publication of a final rule to list, delist, or reclassify a species or designate or revise critical habitat shall also provide a summary of factors affecting the species. A rule designating or revising critical habitat will also contain a description of the boundaries and a map of such habitat and will, to the maximum extent practicable, be accompanied by a brief description and evaluation of those activities (whether public or private) that might occur in the area and which, in the opinion of the Secretary, may adversely modify such habitat or be affected by such designation.

(b) *Effective date.* A final rule shall take effect—

(1) Not less than 30 days after it is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, except as otherwise provided for good cause found and published with the rule; and

(2) Not less than 90 days after (i) publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER of the proposed rule, and (ii) actual notification of any affected State agencies and counties or equivalent jurisdictions in accordance with § 424.16(c)(1)(ii).

(c) *Disagreement with State agency.* If a State agency, given notice of a proposed rule in accordance with

§ 424.19

§ 424.16(c)(1)(ii), submits comments disagreeing in whole or in part with a proposed rule, and the Secretary issues a final rule that is in conflict with such comments, or if the Secretary fails to adopt a regulation for which a State agency has made a petition in accordance with § 424.14, the Secretary shall provide such agency with a written justification for the failure to adopt a rule consistent with the agency's comments or petition.

§ 424.19 Final rules—impact analysis of critical habitat.

The Secretary shall identify any significant activities that would either affect an area considered for designation as critical habitat or be likely to be affected by the designation, and shall, after proposing designation of such an area, consider the probable economic and other impacts of the designation upon proposed or ongoing activities. The Secretary may exclude any portion of such an area from the critical habitat if the benefits of such exclusion outweigh the benefits of specifying the area as part of the critical habitat. The Secretary shall not exclude any such area if, based on the best scientific and commercial data available, he determines that the failure to designate that area as critical habitat will result in the extinction of the species concerned.

§ 424.20 Emergency rules.

(a) Sections 424.16, 424.17, 424.18, and 424.19 notwithstanding, the Secretary may at any time issue a regulation implementing any action described in § 424.10 in regard to any emergency pos-

50 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–05 Edition)

ing a significant risk to the well-being of a species of fish, wildlife, or plant. Such rules shall, at the discretion of the Secretary, take effect immediately on publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER. In the case of any such action that applies to a resident species, the Secretary shall give actual notice of such regulation to the State agency in each State in which such species is believed to occur. Publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER of such an emergency rule shall provide detailed reasons why the rule is necessary. An emergency rule shall cease to have force and effect after 240 days unless the procedures described in §§ 424.16, 424.17, 424.18, and 424.19 (as appropriate) have been complied with during that period.

(b) If at any time after issuing an emergency rule, the Secretary determines, on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available, that substantial evidence does not then exist to warrant such rule, it shall be withdrawn.

§ 424.21 Periodic review.

At least once every 5 years, the Secretary shall conduct a review of each listed species to determine whether it should be delisted or reclassified. Each such determination shall be made in accordance with §§ 424.11, 424.16, and 424.17 of this part, as appropriate. A notice announcing those species under active review will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Notwithstanding this section's provisions, the Secretary may review the status of any species at any time based upon a petition (see § 424.14) or upon other data available to the Service.

SUBCHAPTER B [RESERVED]

SUBCHAPTER C—ENDANGERED SPECIES EXEMPTION PROCESS

PART 450—GENERAL PROVISIONS

AUTHORITY: Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*, as amended.

§ 450.01 Definitions

The following definitions apply to terms used in this subchapter.

Act means the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*

Agency action means all actions of any kind authorized, funded or carried out, in whole or in part by Federal agencies, including, in the instance of an application for a permit or license, the underlying activity for which the permit or license is sought.

Alternative courses of action means all reasonable and prudent alternatives, including both no action and alternatives extending beyond original project objectives and acting agency jurisdiction.

Benefits means all benefits of an agency action, both tangible and intangible, including but not limited to economic, environmental and cultural benefits.

Biological assessment means the report prepared pursuant to section 7(c) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1536(c).

Biological opinion means the written statement prepared pursuant to section 7(b) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1536(b).

Chairman means the Chairman of the Endangered Species Committee, who is the Secretary of the Interior.

Committee means the Endangered Species Committee established pursuant to section 7(e) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1536(e).

Critical habitat refers to those areas listed as Critical Habitat in 50 CFR parts 17 and 226.

Destruction or adverse modification is defined at 50 CFR 402.02.

Federal agency means any department, agency or instrumentality of the United States.

Irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources means any commitment of resources which has the effect of foreclosing the formulation or implementation of any reasonable or prudent al-

ternatives which would not violate section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

Jeopardize the continued existence of is defined at 50 CFR 402.02.

Mitigation and enhancement measures means measures, including live propagation, transplantation, and habitat acquisition and improvement, necessary and appropriate (a) to minimize the adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or their critical habitats and/or (b) to improve the conservation status of the species beyond that which would occur without the action. The measures must be likely to protect the listed species or the critical habitat, and be reasonable in their cost, the availability of the technology required to make them effective, and other considerations deemed relevant by the Committee.

Permit or license applicant means any person whose application to an agency for a permit or license has been denied primarily because of the application of section 7(a)(2) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2).

Person means an individual, corporation, partnership, trust, association, or any other private entity, or any public body or officer, employee, agent, department, or instrumentality of the Federal government, of any State or political subdivision thereof, or of any foreign government.

Proposed action means the action proposed by the Federal agency or by a permit or license applicant, for which exemption is sought.

Secretary means the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, or his or her delegate, depending upon which Secretary has responsibility for the affected species as determined pursuant to 50 CFR 402.01.

Service means the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate.

To the extent that such information is available to the applicant means all pertinent information the applicant has on the subject matter at the time the application is submitted, and all other pertinent information obtainable from

the appropriate Federal agency pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request.

[50 FR 8126, Feb. 28, 1985]

PART 451—APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Sec.

451.01 Definitions.

451.02 Applications for exemptions.

451.03 Endangered Species Committee.

AUTHORITY: Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, as amended.

SOURCE: 50 FR 8127, Feb. 28, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 451.01 Definitions.

All definitions contained in 50 CFR 450.01 are applicable to this part.

§ 451.02 Applications for exemptions.

(a) *Scope.* This section prescribes the application procedures for applying for an exemption from the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, as amended.

(b) *Where to apply.* Applications should be made to the appropriate Secretary(ies) by writing:

(1) The Secretary, Attention: Endangered Species Committee, Department of the Interior, 18th and C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

(2) The Secretary, Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20030.

(c) *Who may apply.* (1) A Federal agency, (2) the Governor of the State in which an agency action will occur, if any, or (3) a permit or license applicant may apply to the Secretary for an exemption for an agency action if, after consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Act, the Secretary's opinion indicates that the agency action would violate section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(d) *When to apply.* (1) Except in the case of agency action involving a permit or license application, an application for an exemption must be submitted to the Secretary within 90 days following the termination of the consultation process.

(2) In the case of agency action involving a permit or license application, an application for an exemption may

be submitted after the Federal agency concerned formally denies the permit or license. An applicant denied a permit or license may not simultaneously seek administrative review within the permitting or licensing agency and apply for an exemption. If administrative review is sought, an application for an exemption may be submitted if that review results in a formal denial of the permit or license. For an exemption application to be considered, it must be submitted within 90 days after the date of a formal denial of a permit or license.

(e) *Contents of the application when submitted.* Exemption applicants must provide the following information at the time the application is submitted.

(1) Name, mailing address, and phone number, including the name and telephone number of an individual to be contacted regarding the application.

(2) If the applicant is a Federal agency:

(i) A comprehensive description of the proposed agency action and if a license or permit denial is involved, a comprehensive description of the license or permit applicant's proposed action.

(ii) In the case of a denial of a license or permit, a description of the permit or license sought, including a statement of who in the Federal agency denied the permit or license, the grounds for the denial, and a copy of the permit or license denial.

(iii) A description of all permit(s), license(s) or other legal requirements which have been satisfied or obtained, or which must still be satisfied or obtained, before the proposed action can proceed.

(iv) A description of the consultation process carried out pursuant to section 7(a) of the Act.

(v) A copy of the biological assessment, if one was prepared.

(vi) A copy of the biological opinion.

(vii) A description of each alternative to the proposed action considered by the Federal agency, by the licensing or permitting agency, and by the permit or license applicant, to the extent known.

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 451.02

(viii) A statement describing why the proposed agency action cannot be altered or modified to avoid violating section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(ix) A description of resources committed by the Federal agency, or the permit or license applicant, if any, to the proposed action subsequent to the initiation of consultation.

(3) If the applicant is a permit or license applicant other than a Federal agency:

(i) A comprehensive description of the applicant's proposed action.

(ii) A description of the permit or license sought from the Federal agency, including a statement of who in that agency denied the permit or license and the grounds for the denial.

(iii) A description of all permit(s), license(s) or other legal requirements which have been satisfied or obtained, or which must still be satisfied or obtained, before it can proceed with the proposed action.

(iv) A copy of the permit or license denial.

(v) A copy of the biological assessment, if one was prepared.

(vi) A copy of the biological opinion.

(vii) A description of the consultation process carried out pursuant to section 7(a) of the Act, to the extent that such information is available to the applicant.

(viii) A description of each alternative to the proposed action considered by the applicant, and to the extent that such information is available to the applicant, a description of each alternative to the proposed action considered by the Federal agency.

(ix) A statement describing why the applicant's proposed action cannot be altered or modified to avoid violating section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(x) A description of resources committed to the proposed action by the permit or license applicant subsequent to the initiation of consultation.

(4) If the applicant is the Governor of a State in which the proposed agency action may occur:

(i) A comprehensive description of the proposed agency action and if a license or permit denial is involved, a comprehensive description of the license or permit applicant's proposed action.

(ii) A description of the permit or license, if any, sought from the Federal agency, including a statement of who in that agency denied the permit or license and the grounds for the denial, to the extent that such information is available to the Governor.

(iii) A description of all permit(s), license(s) or other legal requirements which have been satisfied or obtained, or which must still be satisfied or obtained before the agency can proceed with the proposed action, to the extent that such information is available to the Governor.

(iv) A copy of the biological assessment, if one was prepared.

(v) A copy of the biological opinion.

(vi) A description of the consultation process carried out pursuant to section 7(a) of the Act, to the extent that such information is available to the Governor.

(vii) A description of all alternatives considered by the Federal agency, by the licensing or permitting agency, and by the permit or license applicant, to the extent that such information is available to the Governor.

(viii) A statement describing why the proposed agency action cannot be altered or modified to avoid violating section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(ix) A description of resources committed to the proposed action subsequent to the initiation of consultation, to the extent that such information is available to the Governor.

(5) Each applicant, whether a Federal agency, a permit or license applicant, or a Governor, must also submit the following:

(i) A complete statement of the nature and the extent of the benefits of the proposed action.

(ii) A complete discussion of why the benefits of the proposed action clearly outweigh the benefits of each considered alternative course of action.

(iii) A complete discussion of why none of the considered alternatives are reasonable and prudent.

(iv) A complete statement explaining why the proposed action is in the public interest.

(v) A complete explanation of why the action is of regional or national significance.

§ 451.03

(vi) A complete discussion of mitigation and enhancement measures proposed to be undertaken if an exemption is granted.

(6) When the exemption applicant is a license or permit applicant or a Governor, a copy of the application shall be provided by the exemption applicant at the time the application is filed, to the Federal agency which denied the license or permit.

(f) *Review of the application by the Secretary.* (1) Upon receiving the application, the Secretary shall review the contents thereof and consider whether the application complies with the requirements set forth in paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) of this section.

(2) The Secretary shall reject an application within 10 days of receiving it if he determines that it does not comply with paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) of this section. If the Secretary rejects an application because it does not contain the information required by paragraph (e) of this section, the applicant may resubmit a revised application so long as the applicant does so during the 90 day period specified in paragraph (d) of this section.

(3) If the Secretary finds that the application meets the requirements of paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section, he will consider the application in accordance with part 452.

(g) *Notification of the Secretary of State.* The Secretary will promptly transmit to the Secretary of State a copy of all applications submitted in accordance with § 451.02.

(h) *Public notification.* Upon receipt of an application for exemption, the Secretary shall promptly publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER (1) announcing that an application has been filed, (2) stating the applicant's name, (3) briefly describing the proposed agency action and the result of the consultation process, (4) summarizing the information contained in the application, (5) designating the place where copies of the application can be obtained and (6) specifying the name of the person to contact for further information. The Secretary will promptly notify each member of the Committee upon receipt of an application for exemption.

(i) The information collection requirements contained in part 451 do not

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

require approval by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, because it is anticipated there will be fewer than ten respondents annually.

§ 451.03 Endangered Species Committee.

(a) *Scope.* This section contains provisions governing the relationship between the Secretary and the Endangered Species Committee.

(b) *Appointment of State member.* (1) Upon receipt of an application for exemption, the Secretary shall promptly notify the Governors of each affected State, if any, as determined by the Secretary, and request the Governors to recommend individuals to be appointed to the Endangered Species Committee for consideration of the application. Written recommendations of these Governors must be received by the Secretary within 10 days of receipt of notification. The Secretary will transmit the Governors' recommendations to the President and will request that the President appoint a State resident to the Endangered Species Committee from each affected State within 30 days after the application for exemption was submitted.

(2) When no State is affected, the Secretary will submit to the President a list of individuals with expertise relevant to the application and will request the President to appoint, within 30 days after the application for exemption was submitted, an individual to the Endangered Species Committee.

PART 452—CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION BY THE SECRETARY

Sec.	
452.01	Purpose and scope.
452.02	Definitions.
452.03	Threshold review and determinations.
452.04	Secretary's report.
452.05	Hearings.
452.06	Parties and intervenors.
452.07	Separation of functions and ex parte communications.
452.08	Submission of Secretary's report.
452.09	Consolidated and joint proceedings.

AUTHORITY: Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*, as amended.

SOURCE: 50 FR 8129, Feb. 28, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 452.05

§ 452.01 Purpose and scope.

This part prescribes the procedures to be used by the Secretary when examining applications for exemption from section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act.

§ 452.02 Definitions.

Definitions applicable to this part are contained in 50 CFR 450.01.

§ 452.03 Threshold review and determinations.

(a) *Threshold determinations.* Within 20 days after receiving an exemption application, or a longer time agreed upon between the exemption applicant and the Secretary, the Secretary shall conclude his review and determine:

(1) Whether any required biological assessment was conducted;

(2) To the extent determinable within the time period provided, whether the Federal agency and permit or license applicant, if any, have refrained from making any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources; and

(3) Whether the Federal agency and permit or license applicant, if any, have carried out consultation responsibilities in good faith and have made a reasonable and responsible effort to develop and fairly consider modifications or reasonable and prudent alternatives to the proposed action which would not violate section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

(b) *Burden of proof.* The exemption applicant has the burden of proving that the requirements of § 452.03(a) have been met.

(c) *Negative finding.* If the Secretary makes a negative finding on any threshold determination, the Secretary shall deny the application and notify the exemption applicant in writing of his finding and grounds therefor. The exemption process shall terminate when the applicant receives such written notice. The Secretary's denial shall constitute final agency action for purposes of judicial review under chapter 7 of title 5 of the United States Code.

(d) *Positive finding.* If the Secretary makes a positive finding on each of the threshold determinations, he shall notify the exemption applicant in writing that the application qualifies for consideration by the Endangered Species Committee.

(e) *Secretary of State opinion.* The Secretary shall terminate the exemption process immediately if the Secretary of State, pursuant to his obligations under section 7(i) of the Act, certifies in writing to the Committee that granting an exemption and carrying out the proposed action would violate an international treaty obligation or other international obligation of the United States.

§ 452.04 Secretary's report.

(a) *Contents of the report.* If the Secretary has made a positive finding on each of the threshold determinations, he shall proceed to gather information and prepare a report for the Endangered Species Committee:

(1) Discussing the availability of reasonable and prudent alternatives to the proposed action;

(2) Discussing the nature and extent of the benefits of the proposed action;

(3) Discussing the nature and extent of the benefits of alternative courses of action consistent with conserving the species or the critical habitat;

(4) Summarizing the evidence concerning whether the proposed action is of national or regional significance;

(5) Summarizing the evidence concerning whether the proposed action is in the public interest;

(6) Discussing appropriate and reasonable mitigation and enhancement measures which should be considered by the Committee in granting an exemption; and

(7) Discussing whether the Federal agency and permit or license applicant, if any, have refrained from making any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

(b) *Preparation of the report.* The report shall be prepared in accordance with procedures set out in § 452.05 and § 452.09.

§ 452.05 Hearings.

(a) *Hearings.* (1) To develop the record for the report under § 452.04, the Secretary, in consultation with the members of the Committee, shall hold a hearing in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 554, 555, and 556.

(2) The Secretary shall designate an Administrative Law Judge to conduct the hearing. The Secretary shall assign

technical staff to assist the Administrative Law Judge.

(3) When the Secretary designates the Administrative Law Judge, the Secretary may establish time periods for conducting the hearing and closing the record.

(4) The Secretary may require the applicant to submit further discussions of the information required by § 451.02(e)(5). This information will be made part of the record.

(b) *Prehearing conferences.* (1) The Administrative Law Judge may, on his own motion or the motion of a party or intervenor, hold a prehearing conference to consider:

(i) The possibility of obtaining stipulations, admissions of fact or law and agreement to the introduction of documents;

(ii) The limitation of the number of witnesses;

(iii) Questions of law which may bear upon the course of the hearings;

(iv) Prehearing motions, including motions for discovery; and

(v) Any other matter which may aid in the disposition of the proceedings.

(2) If time permits and if necessary to materially clarify the issues raised at the prehearing conference, the Administrative Law Judge shall issue a statement of the actions taken at the conference and the agreements made. Such statement shall control the subsequent course of the hearing unless modified for good cause by a subsequent statement.

(c) *Notice of hearings.* Hearings and prehearing conferences will be announced by a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER stating: (1) The time, place and nature of the hearing or prehearing conference; and (2) the matters of fact and law to be considered. Such notices will ordinarily be published at least 15 days before the scheduled hearings.

(d) *Conduct of hearings*—(1) *Admissibility of evidence.* Relevant, material, and reliable evidence shall be admitted. Immaterial, irrelevant, unreliable, or unduly repetitious parts of an admissible document may be segregated and excluded so far as practicable.

(2) *Motions, objections, rebuttal and cross-examination.* Motions and objections may be filed with the Administrative Law Judge, rebuttal evidence

may be submitted, and cross-examination may be conducted, as required for a full and true disclosure of the facts, by parties, witnesses under subpoena, and their respective counsel.

(i) *Objections.* Objections to evidence shall be timely, and the party making them may be required to state briefly the grounds relied upon.

(ii) *Offers of proof.* When an objection is sustained, the examining party may make a specific offer of proof and the Administrative Law Judge may receive the evidence in full. Such evidence, adequately marked for identification, shall be retained in the record for consideration by any reviewing authority.

(iii) *Motions.* Motions and petitions shall state the relief sought, the basis for relief and the authority relied upon. If made before or after the hearing itself, these matters shall be in writing and shall be filed and served on all parties. If made at the hearing, they may be stated and responded to orally, but the Administrative Law Judge may require that they be reduced to writing. Oral argument on motions and deadlines by which to file responses to written motions will be at the discretion of the Administrative Law Judge.

(e) *Applicant responsibility.* In proceedings conducted pursuant to this section, the exemption applicant has the burden of going forward with evidence concerning the criteria for exemption.

(f) *Open meetings and record.* All hearings and all hearing records shall be open to the public.

(g) *Requests for information, subpoenas.*

(1) The Administrative Law Judge is authorized to exercise the authority of the Committee to request, subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, that any person provide information necessary to enable the Committee to carry out its duties. Any Federal agency or the exemption applicant shall furnish such information to the Administrative Law Judge. (2) The Administrative Law Judge may exercise the authority of the Committee to issue subpoenas for the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of relevant papers, books, and documents.

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 453.01

(h) *Information collection.* The information collection requirements contained in § 452.05 do not require approval by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, because it is anticipated there will be fewer than ten respondents annually.

§ 452.06 Parties and intervenors.

(a) *Parties.* The parties shall consist of the exemption applicant, the Federal agency responsible for the agency action in question, the Service, and intervenors whose motions to intervene have been granted.

(b) *Intervenors.* (1) The Administrative Law Judge shall provide an opportunity for intervention in the hearing. A motion to intervene must state the petitioner's name and address, identify its representative, if any, set forth the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding and show that the petitioner's participation would assist in the determination of the issues in question.

(2) The Administrative Law Judge shall grant leave to intervene if he determines that an intervenor's participation would contribute to the fair determination of issues. In making this determination, the Administrative Law Judge may consider whether an intervenor represents a point of view not adequately represented by a party or another intervenor.

§ 452.07 Separation of functions and ex parte communications.

(a) *Separation of functions.* (1) The Administrative Law Judge and the technical staff shall not be responsible for or subject to the supervision or direction of any person who participated in the endangered species consultation at issue;

(2) The Secretary shall not allow an agency employee or agent who participated in the endangered species consultation at issue or a factually related matter to participate or advise in a determination under this part except as a witness or counsel in public proceedings.

(b) *Ex parte communications.* The provisions of 5 U.S.C. 557(d) apply to the hearing and the preparation of the report.

§ 452.08 Submission of Secretary's report.

(a) Upon closing of the record, the Administrative Law Judge shall certify the record and transmit it to the Secretary for preparation of the Secretary's report which shall be based on the record. The Secretary may direct the Administrative Law Judge to reopen the record and obtain additional information if he determines that such action is necessary.

(b) The Secretary shall submit his report and the record of the hearing to the Committee within 140 days after making his threshold determinations under § 452.03(a) or within such other period of time as is mutually agreeable to the applicant and the Secretary.

§ 452.09 Consolidated and joint proceedings.

(a) When the Secretary is considering two or more related exemption applications, the Secretary may consider them jointly and prepare a joint report if doing so would expedite or simplify consideration of the issues.

(b) When the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce are considering two or more related exemption applications, they may consider them jointly and prepare a joint report if doing so would expedite or simplify consideration of the issues.

PART 453—ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMITTEE

Sec.

453.01 Purpose.

453.02 Definitions.

453.03 Committee review and final determinations.

453.04 Committee information gathering.

453.05 Committee meetings.

453.06 Additional Committee powers.

AUTHORITY: Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*, as amended.

SOURCE: 50 FR 8130, Feb. 28, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 453.01 Purpose.

This part prescribes the procedures to be used by the Endangered Species Committee when examining applications for exemption from section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

§ 453.02

§ 453.02 Definitions.

Definitions applicable to this part are contained in 50 CFR 450.01.

§ 453.03 Committee review and final determinations.

(a) *Final determinations.* Within 30 days of receiving the Secretary's report and record, the Committee shall grant an exemption from the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the Act for an agency action if, by a vote in which at least five of its members concur:

(1) It determines that based on the report to the Secretary, the record of the hearing held under § 452.05, and on such other testimony or evidence as it may receive:

(i) There are no reasonable and prudent alternatives to the proposed action;

(ii) The benefits of such action clearly outweigh the benefits of alternative courses of action consistent with conserving the species or its critical habitat, and such action is in the public interest;

(iii) The action is of regional or national significance; and

(iv) Neither the Federal agency concerned nor the exemption applicant made any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources prohibited by section 7(d) of the Act; and,

(2) It establishes such reasonable mitigation and enhancement measures, including, but not limited to, live propagation, transplantation, and habitat acquisition and improvement, as are necessary and appropriate to minimize the adverse effects of the proposed action upon the endangered species, threatened species, or critical habitat concerned. Any required mitigation and enhancement measures shall be carried out and paid for by the exemption applicant.

(b) *Decision and order.* The Committee's final determinations shall be documented in a written decision. If the Committee determines that an exemption should be granted, the Committee shall issue an order granting the exemption and specifying required mitigation and enhancement measures. The Committee shall publish its decision and order in the FEDERAL REGISTER as soon as practicable.

50 CFR Ch. IV (10-1-05 Edition)

(c) *Permanent exemptions.* Under section 7(h)(2) of the Act, an exemption granted by the Committee shall constitute a permanent exemption with respect to all endangered or threatened species for the purposes of completing such agency action—

(1) Regardless of whether the species was identified in the biological assessment, and

(2) Only if a biological assessment has been conducted under section 7(c) of the Act with respect to such agency action. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an exemption shall not be permanent if—

(i) The Secretary finds, based on the best scientific and commercial data available, that such exemption would result in the extinction of a species that was not the subject of consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Act or was not identified in any biological assessment conducted under section 7(c) of the Act, and

(ii) The Committee determines within 60 days after the date of the Secretary's finding that the exemption should not be permanent.

If the Secretary makes a finding that the exemption would result in the extinction of a species, as specified above, the Committee shall meet with respect to the matter within 30 days after the date of the finding. During the 60 day period following the Secretary's determination, the holder of the exemption shall refrain from any action which would result in extinction of the species.

(d) *Finding by the Secretary of Defense.* If the Secretary of Defense finds in writing that an exemption for the agency action is necessary for reasons of national security, the Committee shall grant the exemption notwithstanding any other provision in this part.

§ 453.04 Committee information gathering.

(a) *Written submissions.* When the Chairman or four Committee members decide that written submissions are necessary to enable the Committee to make its final determinations, the Chairman shall publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER inviting written submissions from interested persons.

FWS, Interior/NOAA, Commerce

§ 453.06

The notice shall include: (1) The address to which such submissions are to be sent; (2) the deadline for such submissions; and (3) a statement of the type of information needed.

(b) *Public hearing.* (1) When the Chairman or four Committee members decide that oral presentations are necessary to enable the Committee to make its final determinations, a public hearing shall be held.

(2) The public hearing shall be conducted by (i) the Committee or (ii) a member of the Committee or other person, designated by the Chairman or by four members of the Committee.

(3) *Notice.* The Chairman shall publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a general notice of a public hearing, stating the time, place and nature of the public hearing.

(4) *Procedure.* The public hearing shall be open to the public and conducted in an informal manner. All information relevant to the Committee's final determinations shall be admissible, subject to the imposition of reasonable time limitations on oral testimony.

(5) *Transcript.* Public hearings will be recorded verbatim and a transcript thereof will be available for public inspection.

§ 453.05 Committee meetings.

(a) The committee shall meet at the call of the Chairman or five of its members.

(b) Five members of the Committee or their representatives shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any function of the Committee, except that in no case shall any representative be considered in determining the

existence of a quorum for the transaction of a Committee function which involves a vote by the Committee on the Committee's final determinations.

(c) Only members of the Committee may cast votes. In no case shall any representative cast a vote on behalf of a member.

(d) Committee members appointed from the affected States shall collectively have one vote. They shall determine among themselves how it will be cast.

(e) All meetings and records of the Committee shall be open to the public.

(f) The Chairman shall publish a notice of all Committee meetings in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The notice will ordinarily be published at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

§ 453.06 Additional Committee powers.

(a) *Secure information.* Subject to the Privacy Act, the Committee may secure information directly from any Federal agency when necessary to enable it to carry out its duties.

(b) *Subpoenas.* For the purpose of obtaining information necessary for the consideration of an application for an exemption, the Committee may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of relevant papers, books, and documents.

(c) *Rules and orders.* The Committee may issue and amend such rules and orders as are necessary to carry out its duties.

(d) *Delegate authority.* The Committee may delegate its authority under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section to any member.