

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations. A CCP will be prepared for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) located within the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia. A Wilderness Review of Back Bay NWR will also be completed concurrently in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended and Refuge Planning Policy 602 FW Chapters 1, 2, and 3. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*): (1) To advise other agencies and the public of our intentions; and (2) to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental documents.

ADDRESSES: Address comments, questions, and request for more information to the following: Refuge Manager, Back Bay National Wildlife

Refuge, 4005 Sandpiper Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-4325, 757-721-2412.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law, all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. The CCP guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuges purposes. The planning process will consider many elements including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection and acquisition, public uses, and cultural resources. Public input into this planning process is essential. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clearer understanding of the desired future conditions for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service has already held a series of local public meetings in Virginia Beach during January 2002 to solicit comments. The Service will continue to solicit public input via open houses, public meetings, workshops, and written comments. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and announcements will inform people of the time and place of additional opportunities for public input to the CCP. Back Bay NWR encompasses over 8,700 acres of beach, dunes, woodland, farm fields, and marsh habitats. Comments on the protection of threatened and endangered species and migratory birds, and the protection and management of their habitats will be solicited as part of the planning process. A Draft CCP and EIS are planned for public review in 2003.

Review of the project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Mamie A. Parker,
Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Letters of Authorization To Take Marine Mammals

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of issuance of letters of authorization to take marine mammals incidental to oil and gas industry activities.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implementing regulations [50 CFR 18.27(f)(3)], notice is hereby given that the following Letters of Authorization to take polar bears incidental to oil and gas industry exploration activities in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska have been issued to the following companies:

Company	Activity	Location	Date issued
ExxonMobil	Exploration	Gwydyr Bay	April 2, 2002.
Phillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	Puviaq	April 3, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Scott Schliebe at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, (800) 362-5148 or (907) 786-3812.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Letter of Authorization is issued in accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Rules and Regulations "Marine Mammals; Incidental Take During Specified Activities (65 FR 16828; March 30, 2000)."

Dated: April 11, 2002.

David B. Allen,
Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 02-11382 Filed 5-7-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Request for Public Comments on Proposed Information Collection To Be Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for Review Under the Paperwork Reduction Act

The proposal to extend the collection of information described below will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). Copies of the proposed collection of information and related forms may be obtained by contacting the Bureau's clearance officer

at the phone number listed below. Comments and suggestions on the proposal should be made within 60 days directly to the Bureau clearance officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 807 National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia, 20192, telephone (703) 648-7313.

Specific public comments are requested as to:

1. Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions on the bureaus, including whether the information will have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of the bureau's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;