



**Billing Code: 4310-55**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

**[FWS-R7-FHC-2013-N047]**

**[FF07CAMM00.FX.FR133707PB000]**

**Letters of Authorization to Take Marine Mammals**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Issuance.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, or we), has issued letters of authorization for the nonlethal take of polar bears and Pacific walrus incidental to oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and the adjacent northern coast of Alaska and incidental to oil and gas industry exploration activities in the Chukchi Sea and the adjacent western coast of Alaska. These letters of authorization stipulate conditions and methods that minimize impacts to polar bears and Pacific walrus from these activities.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Craig Perham at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 341, Anchorage, AK 99503; (800) 362-5148 or (907) 786-3810.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

On August 3, 2011, we published in the **Federal Register** a final rule (76 FR 47010) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus during year-round oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska. The rule established subpart J in part 18 of title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and is effective through August 3, 2016. The rule prescribed a process under which we issue Letters of Authorization (LOAs) to applicants conducting activities as described under the provisions of the regulations.

Each LOA stipulates conditions or methods that are specific to the activity and location. Holders of LOAs must use methods and conduct activities in a manner that minimizes to the greatest extent practicable adverse impacts on Pacific walrus and polar bears, their habitat, and on the availability of these marine mammals for subsistence purposes. Intentional take and lethal incidental take is prohibited.

In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and our regulations at 50 CFR 18, subpart J, we issued LOAs to each of the following companies in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska:

**Beaufort Sea Letters of Authorization**

<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>DATE ISSUED</b>
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company	Production	Trans-Alaska Pipeline Operation & Maintenance	November 15, 2011
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company	Production	Trans-Alaska Pipeline Operation & Maintenance	December 11, 2012
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	Summer Seismic Survey	August 3, 2011
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Production	North Slope Production	August 3, 2011
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Development	Liberty Development Project	January 10, 2012
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Development	Red Dog #1 Plug and Abandonment Project	January 10, 2012
BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	Simpson Lagoon Seismic Survey	July 16, 2012
Brooks Range Petroleum Corporation	Exploration	North Tarn/Mustang Exploration Program	November 20, 2011
Brooks Range Petroleum Corporation	Exploration	Tofcat Exploration Program	February 1, 2012
Brooks Range Petroleum Corporation	Exploration	Mustang Exploration Program	January 15, 2013
CGGVeritas	Exploration	Tabasco 3D Seismic Survey	November 30, 2011
CGGVeritas	Exploration	Great Bear 3D Seismic Survey	March 19, 2012
CGGVeritas	Exploration	Great Bear Winter 3D Seismic Survey	February 1, 2013
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Production	North Slope Production	August, 3, 2011
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Exploration	Hydrate Production Test, Ignik Sikumi I, Prudhoe Bay Unit	December 1, 2011
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Development	Hemi Springs Plug and Abandonment Program	January 15, 2012
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Development	North Staines River #1 Well Inspection	March 19, 2012
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc	Development	Gravel Borehole Project	March 19, 2012
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	Winter Exploration Drilling Program	December 15, 2012
Eni US Operating Co., Inc.	Development	Nikaitchuq Development Project	August 15, 2012
ExxonMobil	Exploration	Prudhoe Bay Bathymetry &	April 1, 2012

Production Company		Noise Monitoring Survey	
ExxonMobil Production Company	Development	Point Thomson	February 1, 2012
ExxonMobil Production Company	Development	Point Thomson	February 1, 2013
Great Bear Petroleum, LLC	Exploration	Great Bear Exploration and Evaluation Program	January 19, 2012
Ion Geophysical	Exploration	2D Seismic Survey	October 17, 2012
North Slope Borough	Development	Gas Fields Well Drilling Program	May 1, 2012
Olgoonik Fairweather, LLC	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Acoustic Monitoring Recorder Deployment and Retrieval Project	July 15, 2012
Olgoonik Fairweather, LLC	Exploration	Marine Fish Transboundary Cruise Environmental Studies Program	September 19, 2012
Pioneer Natural Resources Alaska, Inc.	Production	North Slope Production	August 3, 2011
Pioneer Natural Resources Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	North Slope Exploration Program	October 17, 2011
Pioneer Natural Resources Alaska, Inc.	Development	Nuna Development Program	April 20, 2012
Repsol E&P USA, Inc.	Exploration	Colville River Delta Winter Drilling	December 7, 2011
Repsol E&P USA, Inc.	Exploration	Colville River Delta Winter Drilling	February 7, 2013
Savant Alaska, LLC	Development	Badami Unit Redevelopment Project	April 15, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Ice Observation and On-Ice Argos Data Buoy Deployment Program	January 10, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Open Water Marine Survey Program and Onshore Environmental Baseline Study Activities	June 4, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Camden Bay OCS Exploration Drilling	June 4, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Beaufort Sea Ice Observation and On-Ice Argos Data Buoy Deployment Program	January 1, 2013

On June 11, 2008, we published in the **Federal Register** a final rule (73 FR 33212) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of polar bears and Pacific walrus during year-round oil and gas industry exploration activities in the Chukchi Sea and adjacent western coast of Alaska. The rule established subpart I of 50 CFR part 18 and is effective until June 11, 2013. The process under which we issue LOAs to applicants and the requirements that the holders of LOAs must follow is the same as described above for LOAs issued under 50 CFR 18, subpart J.

In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA and our regulations at 50 CFR 18, subpart I, we issued LOAs to the following companies in the Chukchi Sea:

**Chukchi Sea Letters of Authorization**

<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>DATE ISSUED</b>
Olgoonik Fairweather, LLC	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Baseline Environmental Studies Program	July 15, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Ice Observation Flights Program	January 10, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Coastal Marine and Onshore Environmental Baseline Study	June 4, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea OCS Exploratory Drilling Program	June 4, 2012
Shell Offshore, Inc.	Exploration	Chukchi Sea Ice Observation Flights Program	February 1, 2013

\_\_\_\_\_

Geoffrey Haskett

Regional Director, Alaska Region

\_\_\_\_\_ March 12, 2013 \_\_\_\_\_

Date

[FR Doc. 2013-07339 Filed 03/28/2013 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 03/29/2013]