

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 anticipated

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.

[51 FR 19957, June 3, 1986, as amended at 73 FR 76286, Dec 16, 2008; 74 FR 20422, May 4, 2009]

#### § 402.03 Applicability.

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

[74 FR 20423, May 4, 2009]

#### § 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