



# United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office  
101 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 110  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
January 13, 2023

## Memorandum

To: Kevin Pendergast, Deputy State Director, Division of Resources, Bureau of Land Management

From: Sarah Conn, Project Leader, Northern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Subject: Formal consultation for the Willow Master Development Plan.

This document transmits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service or USFWS) biological opinion (BO) in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), on a proposal by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to issue authorization to Conoco Phillips Alaska Inc. (CPAI) to construct, operate, and maintain the Willow Master Development Plan (MDP) Project (Project) on lands managed by BLM within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). This BO evaluates the potential effects of the proposed Project on species under the Service's jurisdiction that are listed as threatened or endangered, and designated critical habitat pursuant to the ESA.

The ESA establishes a national program for conserving threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, plants, and the habitats on which they depend. Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA states that Federal agencies must ensure that their activities are not likely to:

- Jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species, or
- Result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat.

This consultation addresses potential effects of the proposed Project on threatened spectacled eiders (*Somateria fischeri*), Alaska-breeding Steller's eiders (*Polysticta stelleri*), polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*), northern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*), and areas designated as critical habitat for these four species, as appropriate.

A complete record of this consultation is on file at the Northern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 101 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701. If you have comments or concerns regarding this BO, please contact Sarah Conn, Project Leader, Northern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office, at (907) 456-0499.