

water/broken ice period are particularly vulnerable to the effects of an oil spill, which lessees must account for in their OSCP's.

The levels of effect on other resources--including subsistence, marine and coastal birds, local water quality, bowheads, fish and Essential Fish Habitat, and other organisms--were similar to those levels in the multiple-sale EIS (Section IV.C.1.b and USDOJ, MMS, 2003). Specifically, there still would be potentially significant effects on subsistence-harvest patterns and sociocultural systems in the unlikely event of a large oil spill. While an oil spill under certain conditions still would result in a potentially significant effect to spectacled and Steller's eiders, the coincidence of all the factors that would have to occur simultaneously to result in such an impact to spectacled eiders is improbable. A spill of 1,500 bbl or 4,600 bbl in the proposed lease area still would lead to hydrocarbon concentrations in the surface water in excess of the 1.5 parts per million (ppm) acute toxic criteria during the first day in a local area. Our reanalysis of potential effects for bowhead whales supports the conclusion that no significant impacts to this endangered species are expected due to activities associated with proposed Lease Sale 202, including the effects of an assumed oil spill. This EA concludes that no new impact to pinnipeds, belugas, or gray whales was identified for the proposed sale that was not already assessed in the multiple-sale EIS. The updated conclusion about the effects of proposed Sale 202 on fishes and EFH is that the effects of an oil spill would be considered higher than in Sales 186 and 195 but still moderate because in most cases, fishes and EFH would recover within one generation. Therefore, no new significant impact was identified for the Proposed Action that was not already assessed in the multiple-sale EIS.

Section IV.D about alternatives concludes that the effects of most of the alternatives are very similar to the effects of the Proposed Action; the effects of only subsistence-harvest patterns are changed slightly by most of the alternatives. However, the Eastern Deferral would help to moderate the level of effects on bowhead whales, polar bear, and subsistence whaling. An alternative to the Nuiqsut Subsistence Whaling Deferral would be the MMS exclusion of leasing incentives from the Nuiqsut subsistence area.

Section IV.E about cumulative effects concludes that the level of spill risk to polar bears would be greater than assessed in the multiple-sale EIS, as explained in Section IV.C. The existing MMS operating regulations, the standard mitigation measures, and the proposed new ITL's in Section III.C.2, would moderate the risk to polar bears. The level of cumulative effects on other marine mammals, subsistence-harvest patterns, marine and coastal birds, local water quality, fish and Essential Fish Habitat, archaeology, and other resources would be the same as assessed in the multiple-sale EIS. Thus, there would be no new cumulative significant effect that is not already analyzed in the multiple-sale EIS.

V. OUTREACH AND GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The draft Area Identification explains that the EA will analyze the comments received in response to the Request for Information (RFI). The RFI included instructions for interested parties to submit written comments by mail, email, or hand delivery.

Comments were received from ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. indicating their interest in opportunities to discover and develop significant oil and gas accumulations. They support efforts by the MMS to conduct sales on a regular basis within the Alaskan outer continental shelf (OCS). One public comment was received from Jean Public from New Jersey in opposition to Lease Sale 202. Comments were also received from the Chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) and Earthjustice. These comments are summarized briefly below and more detailed summaries are available from Minerals Management Service (MMS).

- (1) Because of the large number of bids received in Sale 195, the AEWC requested that the MMS give greater protection to the subsistence whaling areas around Kaktovik and Barrow, and to design a deferral area around Cross Island to protect whaling activities in Nuiqsut.

The AEWG also requests that MMS revise its significant thresholds to prohibit activity in a single hunting season and undertake a new, rigorous cumulative impact analysis in its environmental review for Lease Sale 202 to account for the increase of industrial activity.

(2) Earthjustice comments were submitted on behalf of the Alaska Coalition, Alaska Wilderness League, Arctic Connections Gwich'in Steering Committee, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society. Earthjustice believes MMS should not hold Lease Sale 202 because of the serious risk to ecologically important areas and the nearby communities that depend on coastal resources. Earthjustice is concerned about the risks posed to sensitive marine life and coastal environment from the proposed oil and gas activities on the OCS. Earthjustice believes the multiple-sale environmental impact statement (EIS) is inadequate and a new EIS be prepared if MMS decides to proceed with Lease Sale 202.

Because of our commitments to ongoing consultative processes among the MMS, North Slope Borough, AEWG, and the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, MMS will continue working with North Slope interests to resolve outstanding issues. The MMS has considered the information provided in comments to our RFI as we prepared this environmental assessment (EA). The EA will determine whether further National Environmental Policy Act analysis is warranted.

Also, the assessment in this EA benefited from comments that were submitted to MMS about the concurrent assessments for proposed Chukchi Sea Sale 193 and the 5-Year Program. This EA summarizes some of the written comments in Section III.A; however, the EA does not present an exhaustive list of all the individual comments received. Also, it neither presents responses to the comments or conclusions nor summarizes the decisions related to the content of the comments. The comments about proposed Sale 202 were received through a variety of channels, including:

Government-to-Government meetings were held with the federally recognized Native Alaskan Tribes, including the Native Village of Barrow (February 2, 2006); and the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (February 2, 2006).

The MMS held open public meetings in Barrow (February 1, 2006); and Anchorage, Alaska (February 9, 2006); and a toll-free phone session (February 10, 2006).

Contacts with the State of Alaska and local governments.

Outreach and information meetings with nongovernment organizations, including the AEWG, Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, and Alaska Walrus Commission.

In-house activities including Chukchi Sea Science Update during October 2005 (USDOI, MMS, 2005b:Appendix E), in which recognized experts made a variety of presentations to MMS staff regarding the physical, biological, and social resources of the Beaufort and Chukchi area.

Approximately two dozen organizations or individuals, including Alaskan Natives, environmental organizations; private industry, and local, State, tribal, and Federal government agencies; and organizations provided written or other input. In addition to written comments received in response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS, we also examined comments that MMS received during the 5-Year Program process for relevance to the Sale 193 EIS. We documented comments made during the public meetings. Some commenter's submitted input through multiple channels. The comments originated predominantly from within Alaska.

More than 120 persons participated in the public scoping meetings. The meetings were advertised in local media; through notices posted in the villages; announcements made via local communication channels, such as community citizen band radios; and word of mouth.

During public meetings and Government-to-Government meetings, MMS personnel discussed past lease sales, proposed Sales 202 and 193, and other OCS activities including the 5-year draft proposed program process and schedule, the Programmatic Environmental Assessment of potential seismic survey activity in the summer of 2006 in the Beaufort Sea and Chukchi seas, and the potential continuation of that activity in 2007. Inupiat translation was provided where needed. These presentations highlighted our desire to receive input on the resources, issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures to be included in the environmental analysis. We emphasized that the EIS is an information document that discloses the potential effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives, including potential mitigation measures to the decisionmakers, and that no decision regarding the proposed action had been made.

After review of this assessment, MMS might decide that there would be no new significant effect that already had not been assessed in the multiple-sale EIS, that the preparation of an EIS would not be necessary, and that preparation of a Finding of No New Significant Impacts (FONNSI) would be appropriate. The agency then would announce the availability of the EA and FONNSI in the *Federal Register* and would distribute the assessment. After the announcement, the agency would solicit public comments on the assessment for 30 days before preparing a Record of Decision that includes responses to review comments.

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Table III-1
Possible Sales-Related Activities, Updated with the Percentage of Leases Issued during Sales 186 and 195

	Near/Shallow Zone		Midrange/Medium Zone		Far/Deepwater Zone		Total Projects
	Leasing and Exploration	Development Projects	Leasing and Exploration	Development Projects	Leasing and Exploration	Development Projects	
Sale 186	70% (25%)	2	20% (16%)	1	10% (59%)	0	3
Sale 195	50%	1	30%	1	20%	0	2
Sale 202	40%	0	30%	0	30%	1	1
Total	53%	3	27%	2	20%	1	6

**Table III-2
Representative Development Schedule for Sale 202**

Year	Exploration Wells	Delineation Wells	Exploration Drilling Rigs	Production Platforms	Production Wells	Injection Wells	Production Drilling Rigs	Offshore Pipelines (miles)	New Shorebases	Field #1 Oil Production (MMbbl)	Cumulative Oil Production (MMbbl)
2003	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2004	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2005	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2006	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2007	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2008	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2009	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2010	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2011	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2012	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2013	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2014	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2015	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
2016	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2017	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2018	1	—	1	1	4	4	1	35	—	—	—
2019	—	—	—	1	14	8	2	—	—	30.8	30.8
2020	—	—	—	—	20	8	2	—	—	38.6	69.4
2021	—	—	—	—	20	9	2	—	—	38.6	108.0
2022	—	—	—	—	10	5	1	—	—	38.6	146.6
2023	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	38.6	185.2
2024	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	38.6	223.8
2025	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	34.0	257.8
2026	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29.9	287.7
2027	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	26.3	314.0
2028	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.2	337.2
2029	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20.4	357.6
2030	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17.9	375.5
2031	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15.8	391.3
2032	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.9	405.2
2033	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12.2	417.4
2034	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10.8	428.2
2035	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9.5	437.7
2036	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.3	446.0
2037	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.3	453.3
2038	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.7	460.0
2039	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	6	5	—	2	68	34	—	35	1	460.0	—

Table III-3

Summary of Basic Exploration Development, Production, and Transportation Assumptions for All Alternatives¹

Phase Activity/Event	Sale 186	Sale 195	Sale 202
	Timeframe and Assumed Number	Timeframe and Assumed Number	Timeframe and Assumed Number
Exploration			
Well Drilling	2004-2010	2007-2014	2010-2018
Exploration Rigs	1-2	1-2	1
Exploration Wells	6	6	6
Delineation Wells	6	6	5
Drilling Discharges			
Drilling Muds (short tons, dry)	1,040	1,040	935
Cuttings (short tons, dry)	6,300	6,300	5,775
Support Activities (Annual)			
Helicopter Flights ²	155	155	140
Supply-Boat Trips	0-14	0-14	0-7
Surface Transport ³	see footnote ³	see footnote ³	see footnote ³
Shallow-Hazards Site Surveys			
Blocks Surveyed	6	6	6
Total Area Covered ⁴ (mi ²)	54	54	54
Development And Production			
Platforms Installed	2009-2014	2012-2017	2018-2019
—	3	3	2
Production and Injection Service Wells	2009-2016	2012-2019	2018-2022
—	102	102	102
Number of Fields	3	2	1
Oil Production	2010-2033	2013-2036	2019-2038
Total (MMbbl)	460	460	460
Peak Yearly (MMbbl)	2016	2018	2020-2024
—	43.8	39.4	38.6
Monthly Support Activities			
Helicopter Flights: Construction ⁵	300-600	300-600	600
Helicopter Flights: Development	28-56	28-56	56
Helicopter Flights: Production	12-28	12-28	28
Supply-Boat Trips	see Footnote ⁶	see Footnote ⁶	see Footnote ⁶
Surface Transport ⁷			
Construction Phase	12,000	6,000	N/A
Operation Phase	30-60	25-30	N/A
Drilling Discharges			
Drilling Muds (short tons, dry)	13,300	13,300	13,300
Cuttings (short tons, dry)	84,000	84,000	84,000
Shallow-Hazard Surveys⁸			
Total Area Covered (mi ²)	105	105	70
Transportation			
Oil Pipeline Installation	2008-2014	2012-2016	2018
Offshore Length (miles)	40	40	35
Onshore Length (miles)	—	—	85 ⁹
Tanker Transport			
Peak Years of Production	2016	2018	2020-2024
Number of Loadings ¹⁰	63	56	55
Oil Spills	See Table IV.A-5		

Most of the information in this table may be found in Appendix B of this EIS.

¹The figures presented in this table forecast activities beginning and ending in discrete time periods. This is done for the purpose of a consistent and methodical and based on a situational average. ² Helicopter trips are expressed in an annual average. ³ Surface transport estimates vary according to the location of the exploration platform. Even if the exploration platform is located in the landfast-ice zone, surface transport volumes by ice road to the drill site will be less than half on the volumes forecast for a postfind construction phase. During the operations phase, vehicle trips could decline 100-200 per season. ⁴An OCS block is 8.9 mi². ⁵Helicopter support trips will decline sharply after the construction phase; however, Far Zone structures will consistently require greater levels of air support. ⁶Marine support traffic for the construction phase will vary from 150-200 per open-water season for each nearshore platform to as many as 250 for structures beyond the landfast-ice zone. Vessel traffic will decline into the production phase, with 4-6 trips per season for nearshore platforms. ⁷Based on a 90 day ice-road season. Estimates for Sale 195 are based on one platform in landfast ice zone. The platform assumed for Sale 202 will be beyond the landfast-ice zone. ⁸The MMS's site-clearance seismic-survey requirements specify a minimum of 35 mi² (92 km²) for a block-wide survey. Three days would be required for a 54 mi² site-clearance survey and 7 days for a 105 mi² survey. ⁹The portrayed mileage is a rough estimate of a pipeline route from Smith Bay to the Kuparuk mainline. Should the pipeline landfall occur at Point Thomson, it would connect at the Badami field 12 miles distance.

¹⁰Assuming 100,000 deadweight-ton tankers. Please note that all vessel trips inherently round trips. In reality, these periods may blend with and overlap each other. Estimates made in this table are speculative.

Table III-4. Projected number of State of Alaska and OCS seismic surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas between 2006 and 2010.

Year	2D/3D Seismic Surveys		High-resolution, Site-clearance Surveys		State Water Surveys 2D/3D Seismic Surveys ³	
	Beaufort ¹ Sea	Chukchi ² Sea	Beaufort Sea	Chukchi Sea	Beaufort Sea	Chukchi Sea
2006	4	4	3	0	1	0
2007	3	4	2	0	0	0
2008	3	4	2	0	1	0
2009	2	3	2	1	0	0
2010	2	3	2	1	1	0

Source: USDOl, MMS, 2006a

1. Survey is likely to be a streamer type, but ocean-bottom-cable surveys also could occur.
2. Because of deeper water, surveys are more likely to be all streamer type.
3. No high-resolution site-clearance surveys are predicted to occur.

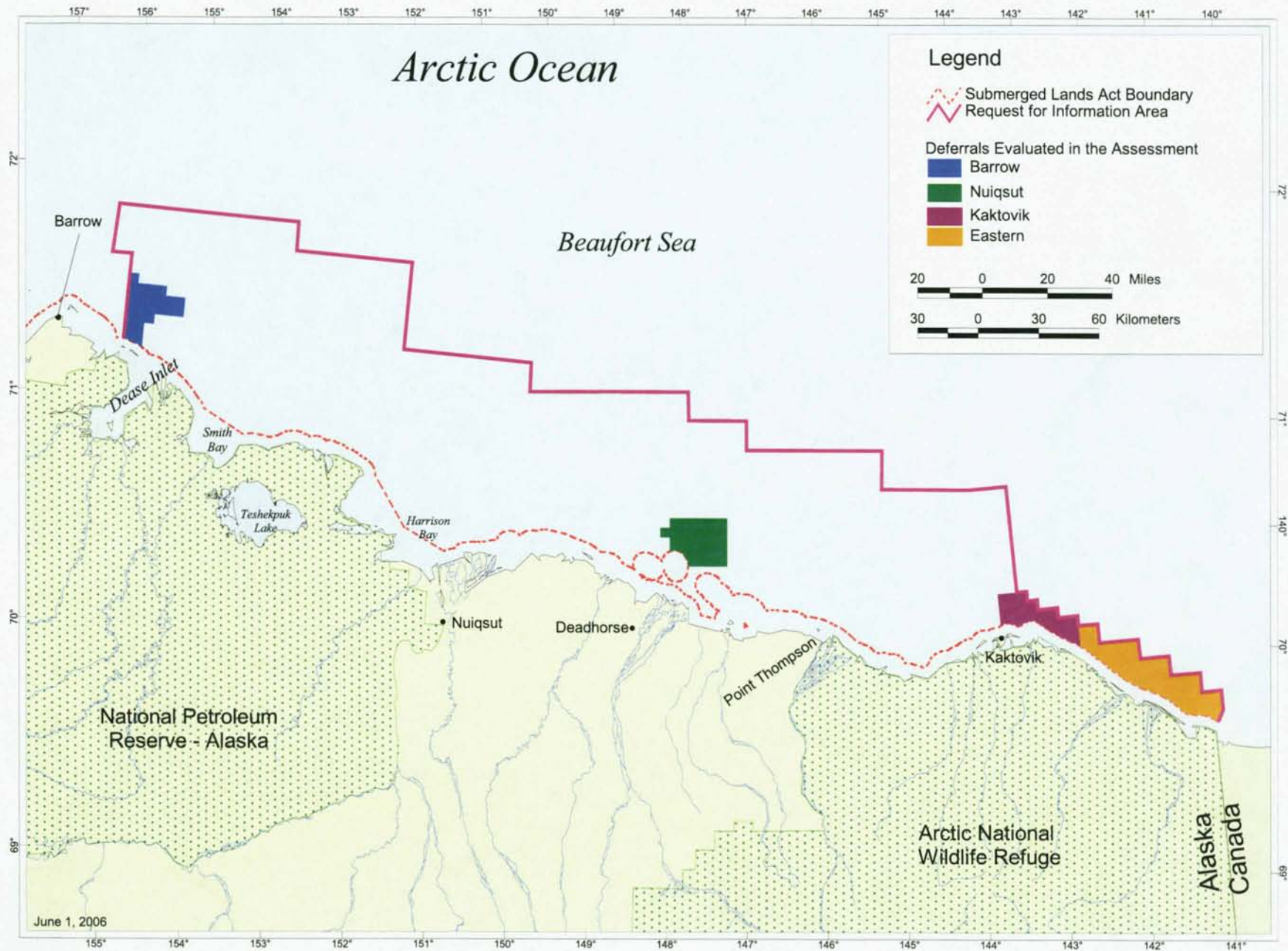
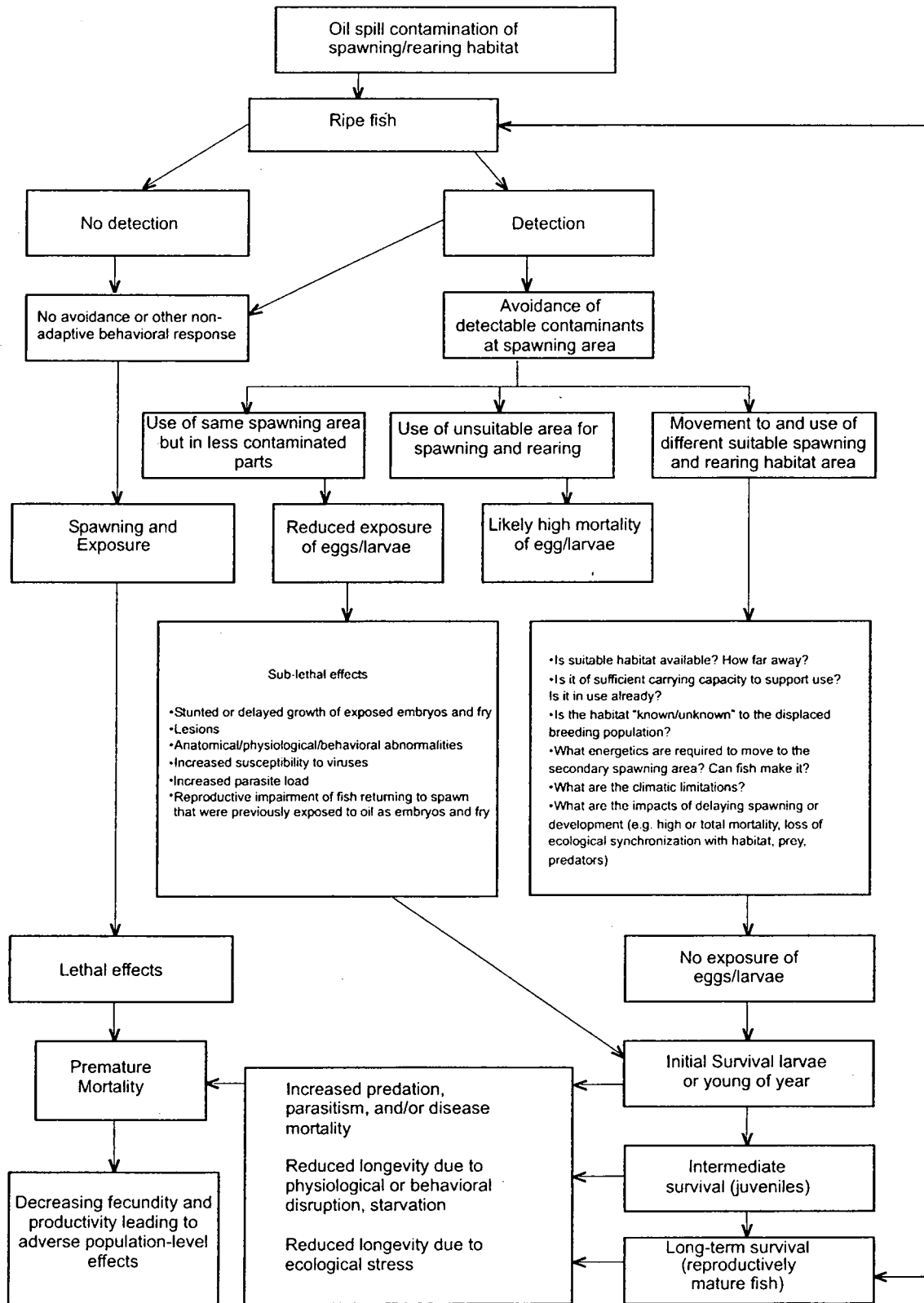


Figure 1. Proposed Action and Alternatives, Proposed Sale 202, March 2007.



Source: USDOJ, MMS

Figure 2. Oil Spill Impacts Model for Selected Fishes using Nearshore/Intertidal Substrates as Spawning and/or Rearing Habitats (e.g., pink or chum salmon, Pacific herring, capelin).