

In Reply Refer To:

2022-0005613

February 9, 2022

Memorandum

To: Deputy *Deepwater Horizon* Department of the Interior Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Case Manager

From: Acting Field Supervisor, Mississippi Field Office

Subject: Informal Consultation for the Proposed Maintaining Enhanced Marine Mammal Stranding Network Capacity and Diagnostic Capabilities Project

This memorandum acknowledges our receipt of your memorandum on February 3, 2022. This response is in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) (ESA). We have reviewed your proposed project and concur with your February 3, 2022 determinations for endangered and threatened species, their critical habitat, and at-risk species (should they become listed). We based our concurrence on the justification below. Where more than one justification was applicable, multiple boxes are checked and additional comments are added.

Species-specific surveys were conducted and there are no endangered, threatened, or at-risk species or designated critical habitat on site. Comments: _____

Endangered, threatened, and at-risk species are not known from and are not expected to occur within the vicinity of the proposed project. Comments: _____

Appropriate avoidance and minimization measures have been included within the project description to ensure that any effects to listed species (or at-risk species should they become listed) are insignificant or discountable. Comments: Gulf sturgeon, gulf sturgeon CH, red knot, piping plover, piping plover CH, loggerhead sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle CH, Green sea turtle, and Kemp's Ridley sea turtle

Critical habitat is not present on site and does not occur within the vicinity of the proposed project. Comments: _____

Appropriate avoidance and minimization measures have been included within the project description to ensure PCEs and/or critical habitat will not be adversely modified or destroyed. Comments: _____

The proposed project is completely beneficial to the listed or at-risk species and/or critical habitat considered. Comments: _____

Unless the project description changes, or new information reveals that the effects of the proposed action may affect listed species in a manner or to an extent not considered, or a new species or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by the proposed action, no further action pursuant to the ESA is necessary.

If you have questions, please contact David Felder at 601-321-1131 or email david_felder@fws.gov.