

Overview: Ecology and Biology

- 26 study plans
- If the trend for large proportion of study plans in biology ecology, may need to consider additional biology representation on SC
- Overall very pleased with the quality and presentation of the project outlines
- Agreed with regional rankings except where noted
- Encourage more chemical sampling where available

Atlantic OCS Region

Tracking Offshore Occurrence of Common Terns & Oystercatchers with VHF Arrays (A Pilot Study)

- Include all colonies.
- Distribute tern captures between multiple colonies.
- Potentially add additional species.

Good collaboration with FWS

Determining Offshore Use by Diving Marine Birds Using Satellite Telemetry

- Concern regarding adequate sample size based on likelihood of high mortality rates with implanted transmitters.
- Very mission central, needed study.

Good collaboration with FWS

Pacific OCS Region

- Concentrate on larger interdisciplinary/integrated studies, acknowledging that this will require increased funds and staffing.
- Develop a study plan for alternative energy throughout the region.

Developing and Applying a Vulnerability Index for Scaling the Possible Adverse Effects of Offshore Renewable Energy Projects on Seabirds on the Pacific OCS

- Need to include sampling effort as a consideration in mapping distributions.
- Cost effective synthesis of existing data.
- Be careful in selection of vulnerability criteria.
- Good tool for identifying data gaps for future

studies.

Biological Productivity of Fish Associated with Offshore Oil and Gas Structures on the Pacific OCS

- Synthesis of existing data.
- Important demonstration for California on rigs as reefs

Pacific Region Intertidal Sampling and Monitoring (PRISM) Study

- Inexpensive study
- Dove-tails with existing studies.

Nocturnal Surveys for Ashy Storm-Petrels and Xantus's Murrelets at Offshore Oil Production Platforms, Southern California

- Valuable study for risks of birds at rigs.
- Study needs to be longer duration for both species.
- Will result in increased cost.
- Use of marine radar: evaluate automated radar systems (DeTect).
- Opportunity to plan the study on lighting.

Condition of the Rocky Shoreline

- Seems well thought out.
- Considers both biological and physical parameters.

Characterizing and Quantifying Sea Lion and Seal Use of Offshore Man-made Structures in California

- Use cameras (either archival or remote).
- Need to think more about why the information is needed.
- Develop a linkage to the productivity study (whether sea lions presence or absent)

Influence of Pacific Offshore Platforms on Marine Fish Ecology

- Consider an e-book.
- Good compilation of existing information.
- Consider adding a synthesis chapter.

Nearshore Marine Bird Surveys from Southern California Points and Beaches: Baseline for Offshore Renewable Energy and Post-lease Oil and Gas Projects

- Enlarge the scope to include all of California.
- Use this study to update the Catalog of California Seabird Colonies.
- Include Environmental Sensitivity Index Mapping

National/ Headquarters

Working Group and Research Planning to Identify the Habitat Value and Function of Shoal/Ridge/Trough Complexes on the Outer Continental Shelf

- Useful for both sand and gravel as well as renewable energy.
- Include a component of bird usage.
- May be confounded by commercial fishing.

Assessment of Coastal Vegetation Recovery from the Deepwater Horizon Event

- Need to include analytical chemistry. Include weathering of hydrocarbons.
- If field and mesocosm study need additional funding.
- If field study, select sites based on quantifiable initial oil spill assessment.

Abundance and Distribution of Commercially Important Estuarine Dependent Species Populations within the Gulf of Mexico—Implications of an Oil Spill on Spawning, Recruitment, Settlement and Vitality

- Potential NRDA conflicts.
- Import continuing study.
- Include analytical chemistry.

Eastern brown pelicans: dispersal, seasonal movements, and monitoring of PAHs and other oil contaminants among breeding colonies in the northern Gulf of Mexico

- Need to be sure and chose the most appropriate toxicity markers for oil.
- Disturbance in a pelican colony may not be permitted.
- Satellite telemetry valuable whether at colony or elsewhere.

Movements, site fidelity, and monitoring of PAHs and other contaminants in wintering lesser scaup in the northern Gulf of Mexico

- As presented disconnect between tagging and migration.
- Consider tagging as birds arrive in fall.

An experimental test of avian response to light color and intensity on offshore oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico

- Be sure you can compare results between different studies examining avian response to light.
- Consider using radar rather than thermal imaging.
- Consult with the Dutch regarding lights.

Monitoring of breeding Least Terns and wintering Piping Plovers in the northern Gulf of Mexico

- Possible permit issues.
- Potential limited availability of towers for receivers.

Effects of Seismic Surveys on Fish Health and Behavior: In Situ Monitoring

- Consider the possible use of cameras underwater on platforms.
- Be sure and provide update to the SAC after acoustic workshop.

Monitoring Recovery of Estuarine Dependent Nekton after a Large-scale Oil Spill

- Needs to be further developed.

Sperm Whale Prey Contaminants Analysis

- Archived samples available. Important baseline data for future comparisons.
- Provide a study profile at the next SAC meeting.

Alaska OCS Region

- Well integrated with PO and lower trophic level

Satellite Tracking of Bowhead Whales: Habitat Use, Passive Acoustic and Environmental Monitoring

- Like the use funding to develop new tag technology
- Good community involvement
- Need to organize, explain and justify the

coordination between all cetacean
research in Arctic

Distribution & Habitat Use of Fish in the Nearshore Ecosystem of the Beaufort & Chukchi Seas

- Recommend adding toxicity biomarkers and stable isotopes (of fish and stomach contents) requiring increased budget (perhaps doubling)
- Needs a way of evaluating interannual variability
- Be sure to link in existing studies such as the Central Beaufort Fish Survey
- Felt should be ranked higher in region list

Ice Seal Movements and Foraging: Village-based Satellite Tracking and Acoustic Monitoring of Ringed, Bearded, and Spotted Seals

- High community involvement
- Tissue analyses to link in with other food web and pollutant research

Polar Bear Movement Patterns and Habitat Use in Relation to Oil and Gas Activities in the Chukchi Sea

- Good interagency coordination, Russians?
- Focuses research in Chukchi where limited bear data and large ice habitat changes with climate change
- Other chemical analyses should be considered if not already covered by other agencies
- Like addition of saltwater switch to look at time in water

***Improving Estimates of Abundance and Distribution
of Avian Species during Peak Spring and Fall
Migration Pathways through Near Shore Areas of the
Eastern Chukchi Sea***

- Necessary for oil spill planning
- Good interagency coordination

Ecology of Beluga Whales in the Eastern-Chukchi, Western-Beaufort Seas

- Need to see more development of the study plan to describe prey base and oceanographic conditions (sea ice etc.)
- Addresses important need of winter distribution

Pacific Walrus Foraging Habitat and Prey Identification from Seasonal Haulouts Along the Chukchi Sea Coastline

- Would like to have an index of how much broken ice available at the time of land haulout useage to put in context
- Basic information on gut passage time needed to estimate how local information reflects
- good use of scats