

SENSITIVE AREAS: PART TWO - AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

A. BACKGROUND/CRITERIA

The following relative priority listing was developed by the Sensitive Areas Work Group, with representatives from state and federal agencies and the private sector. The list prioritizes resources into designations of major, moderate, and lesser concern. Resources are not prioritized within each designation. These designations are for consideration in initial spill response activities; they are not applicable to extended clean-up activities. This prioritization scheme must be used in conjunction with spill-specific information (e.g., size and location of spill, type of product, trajectory) to determine the actual protection priorities for that discharge.

The following criteria were developed as tools to establish levels of concern. These criteria are not listed in priority order.

CRITERIA FOR RELATIVE PRIORITY RATING

- # human economic disruption -- economic/social value; human food source disruption, health/safety
- # mortality -- wildlife, fish, other organisms (how many potentially killed in relation to abundance)
- # animal displacement and sensitivity to displacement
- # aesthetic degradation
- # habitat availability and rarity
- # sublethal effects, including sensitivity to physical or toxic effects of oil and hazardous substances, and long-term affects to habitat, species, or both
- # threatened and endangered species, and/or other legal designation
- # persistent concentration of oil or hazardous substances
- # reproduction rate or recolonizing potential
- # relative importance to ecosystem
- # potential for physical contact with spill--pathway of oil or hazardous substances
- # resource sensitivity to response measures

B. AREAS OF MAJOR CONCERN

Shoreline Geomorphology - Coastal Habitat Types:

- Estuaries
- Sheltered Tidal Flats
- Sheltered Rocky Shores
- Marsh/Supratidal Wet Meadows
- Kelp Beds
- Eelgrass Beds
- Intertidal Areas of High Diversity

Threatened or Endangered Species Habitat:

- Sea Lion Rookeries and Haulouts
- Humpback Whale Summer, Fall, and Winter Concentrations

Harbor Seal Haulouts (>50 seals)

Seabird Colonies (>500 birds)

Marbled Murrelet Nearshore Feeding Concentrations (>50 birds)

Waterfowl/Shorebird Migratory, Molting, and Winter Concentrations

(>500, any Number of Harlequin Ducks, Loons, Swans, Black Oyster Catchers)

Large Anadromous Fish Streams (>10,000 fish peak escapement)

Eulachon Spawning Concentrations (including seal, sea lion and eagle feeding concentrations)

Herring Spawning Areas

Nearshore Juvenile Marine Fish-Rearing in Kelp and Reefs

Sea Otter Concentrations (>100 individuals)

Land Management Designations:

Federal: Wild and Scenic Rivers
National Natural Landmarks
National Wildlife Refuges
National Parks and Preserves
Designated Wilderness Areas
Resource Natural Areas

State: Refuges
Sanctuaries
Critical Habitat Areas
State Park-Managed Lands

Cultural Resources/Archaeological Sites:

- National Historic Landmarks
- Burial Sites
- National Register Eligible Sites
- Intertidal Sites

Subsistence and Personal Use Harvest Areas:

- High-use Salmon Harvest Areas (>10% of local households)
- High-use Marine Invertebrates Harvest Areas (>10% of local households)

High Commercial Use Areas:

- Intensive Commercial Fishing by season
- Salmon Hatchery and Ocean Pens
- Shore-based Fish Processing Plants during operation
- Set-net Fisheries (e.g., Yakutat forelands)
- Mariculture Farms

High Recreational Use Areas

- High-use Commercial Wildlife Viewing (e.g., eagles, bears, marine mammals)

Waterfront Buildings on Pilings

Marinas and Harbors
Floating Camps

C. AREAS OF MODERATE CONCERN

Shoreline Geomorphology - Coastal Habitat Types:

Exposed Tidal Flat

Cutthroat, Dolly Varden, Steelhead Streams and Estuaries

Cetacean Concentrations (non-humback)

Harbor Seal Haulouts (10-50 seals)

Sea Otter Established Populations (low density)

Seabird Colonies (100-500 birds)

Waterfowl/Shorebird Migratory, Molting, and Winter Concentrations (250-500 birds)

Osprey Feeding Concentrations (e.g., Wrangell Narrows)

Anadromous Fish Streams (500-10,000 total escapement or 100-500 pink/chum salmon)

Subsistence and Personal Use Harvest Areas:

Intensive Personal-use Clamming

Marine Mammal Subsistence Use

Commercial Harvest Areas:

Intensive Crabbing

Abalone Harvesting

Recreational Use Areas:

Moderate-use Commercial Wildlife Viewing

Recreation Areas

Non-estuarine Sport-fishing Streams

Land Management Designations:

Federal: National Monuments (non-wilderness)

Native Allotments

Indian Reservations

Cultural Resources/Archaeological Sites:

Un-surveyed, High-probability Sites

Shipwreck in Tidal or Beach over 50 Years Old

D. AREAS OF LESSER CONCERN

Shoreline Geomorphology - Coastal Habitat Types:

Sheltered Gravel Beaches

Sheltered Sand and Gravel Beaches

Harbor Seal Haulouts (<10 seals)

Peregrine Falcon Nesting Cliffs

Waterfowl Nearshore Molting Areas (<500 birds)

Bald Eagle Nests

Seabird Colonies (< 100 birds)

Waterfowl/Shorebird Migratory, Molting, and Winter Concentrations (< 250 birds)

Anadromous Fish Streams (<500 total escapement or <100 pink/chum salmon)

Herring Winter Concentrations

Subsistence and Personal Use Harvest Areas:

Low-use Invertebrates Harvest

Commercial Harvest Areas:

Houseboats (moveable)

- Log Transfer Facility
- Log Storage
- Floating (moveable) Fish Processor
- Recreational Use Areas:
 - Intensive Sport-fishing by Season
 - Recreation facilities (cabin, campground, tent platform, dock/mooring, boat launch)
 - Undeveloped Recreation Areas
- Land Management Designations:
 - Federal:
 - Public Lands
 - National Forests
 - National Preserves
 - State:
 - General Public Lands
- Cultural Resources/Archaeological Sites:
 - Sites Adjacent to Shorelines (inland over 300 feet elevation)
 - Unsurveyed, Low-probability Sites
 - Surveyed with no Sites
 - Shipwreck not Tidal or Beach and Less Than 50 Years Old