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February 22, 2011

**BY EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

Harriet M. (“Holly”) Deal  
Attorney-Adviser  
United States Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
Southeast Region  
75 Spring Street, SW  
Room 304  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Request for wildlife response information

Dear Holly:

In support of the effort to assess natural resource damages resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, we write to request that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provide information regarding the wildlife recovery efforts conducted as part of the response to the spill. This includes materials held by each of the agencies and entities that dedicated personnel to wildlife recovery efforts, as well as those held directly by USFWS.

This information is needed to estimate acute, spill-related mortality among Gulf of Mexico wildlife using a beached carcass model. This approach — which underlies several of the cooperative data collection efforts, such as the Beached Bird Survey — estimates total acute mortality as a function of the dead and injured wildlife collected during the spill response, the intensity of wildlife collection effort, and physical processes that naturally add and remove carcasses from the areas being searched. The information requested will help to document the intensity of the wildlife collection effort, and will supplement data collected cooperatively in other areas of the Gulf Coast.

Harriet M. ("Holly") Deal

February 22, 2011

Page 2

Generally, we seek information about the instructions under which wildlife recovery teams operated, as well as the spatial distribution, frequency, and intensity of wildlife search and recovery efforts. Because we are not familiar with the record-keeping procedures for these efforts, we cannot list the specific documents that would be responsive to our request. Instead, we describe below three broad types of relevant documents that, in our experience, are likely to be generated in an effort of this type: 1) SOPs/instructions under which wildlife recovery teams operated; 2) daily personnel assignments; and 3) individual search documentation. In addition, we request 4) a search narrative providing an overview of wildlife recovery efforts. More detail regarding the narrative information requested is provided below.

All requests pertain to the wildlife recovery efforts throughout the response to the spill, i.e., from April 20, 2010 through the present.

**1. *SOPS/Instructions***

Teams are frequently provided with written instructions and/or SOPs describing how searches should be conducted, when wildlife should be recovered, and how recovered wildlife should be treated and documented. For example, teams may have been instructed to move at the minimum speed to maintain steering while searching for wildlife by boat, or they may have been instructed to collect dead wildlife only if it was oiled. We are requesting all written instructions/SOPs provided to wildlife recovery teams. These instructions/SOPs may be specific to areas of operations and/or time periods. If instructions were provided to teams verbally but not in written form for some part(s) of the effort, we request a narrative describing those instructions.

**2. *Daily Personnel Assignments***

Table 1 is an example of the type of data that have been recorded as part of daily personnel assignments from a single day during past spills. We request any similar documents, i.e., those that detail the location and activity of wildlife recovery personnel deployed to the field.

Harriet M. ("Holly") Deal  
 February 22, 2011  
 Page 3

**Table 1. Example of daily personnel assignments.**

<b>Person and Organization</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Search Type</b>	<b>Search Location</b>	<b>Time Arriving in Field</b>	<b>Time Leaving Field</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Smith, Anne (USFWS)	LA-1	Boat-Based Scout Team	Grid A-7	0700	1800	(302) 867-5309
Wesson, Jim (LADWF)	LA-1	Boat-Based Scout Team	Grid A-7	0700	1800	(123) 456-7891
Brady, Jan (USFWS)	LA-2	Foot-Based Recovery Team	Grid B-3	0600	1900	(302) 867-5309

**3. Individual Search Documentation**

This will typically include the following:

- Date, start time, and end time for each individual search;
- The name and contact information of the group leader/supervisor;
- Search mode (foot, boat, ATV);
- The number of individuals in the group and each individual's duty (boat handler, searcher, etc.);
- The group's purpose (Wildlife Collection Team, Wildlife Search Team, Wildlife Scout Team);
- A GPS track log of each team's days. The track log may be supported by field notes that indicate when and where searches began and ended;
- The location of all dead wildlife observed, a description of each dead individual (species, degree of scavenging, etc.), a determination of visual oiling for each dead individual (and/or photographs documenting same), and a note indicating whether or not the carcass was collected. If no carcasses were observed, this may be noted; and
- The location of all live oiled wildlife observed, a description of each live oiled individual (e.g., species), an evaluation of the degree of visual oiling (photographs are preferred), and a note indicating whether or not the live oiled animal was collected. If no live oiled wildlife were observed, this may be noted.

Harriet M. ("Holly") Deal

February 22, 2011

Page 4

The documentation described above is often completed during the response as each team uses GPS to track their movements and fills out forms that document each of their individual search efforts. If this is the case, we request all of the original search documentation and any associated electronic files (GPS, track logs, spreadsheets, GIS layers, photographs, etc.).

If the search effort was not documented during the response, it can be reconstructed by reviewing documentation that is generally available. For each individual in the field, this might include:

- Daily time sheet;
- Daily expense forms (location of hotel and items purchased such as "life jacket for boat" often indicate the area of activity and general location);
- Field notebooks;
- GPS track logs;
- Documentation of daily safety briefings (this often identifies the members of individual teams and the nature of their activity for the day);
- Safety tracking documentation (logs of who is on a team and/or when teams report deploying to the field, call in from the field for safety checks, or report returning from the field);
- Paperwork, written descriptions, maps, or figures illustrating where and when response personnel searched for oiled wildlife; and
- A list of wildlife recovered, the location of recovery, and the individual making the recovery.

#### 4. *Narrative*

As noted above, we request a narrative overview of recovery operations. This overview should identify:

- The type of recovery effort;
- The date range for the effort;
- The number of teams;
- The number of persons per team;
- The location; and
- The general procedure for and frequency of searches.

By way of example, a portion of such a narrative overview might read as follows:

Harriet M. ("Holly") Deal

February 22, 2011

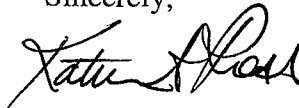
Page 5

*From May 5, 2010 through August 31, 2010, there were three types of wildlife recovery teams operating in Louisiana: collection teams, search teams, and scout teams.*

- 1. Collection teams respond to reports of distressed wildlife. These four-person teams (one boat handler, two capture specialists, and a bird care specialist) were dispatched to areas where oiled wildlife was recently reported. They did not search for, nor did they recover, oiled wildlife while en route. They observed and/or recovered the oiled wildlife that was reported; once the animal was recovered, they did not conduct an additional search of the area.*
- 2. Search teams conducted systematic searches of areas where oiled wildlife reports and observations were occurring at elevated levels. These three-person teams (two observers and boat handler) moved through oiled wildlife "hot spots" searching for and collecting dead animals (regardless of oiling) as well as live oiled animals. Often these teams repeatedly searched the same loop or pattern over days or weeks as they wait for oiled birds to become "capturable."*
- 3. Scout teams were deployed to areas where they may or may not have been reports and observations of oiled wildlife. Two-person teams (one boat handler, one observer) searched these areas and may have collected live oiled wildlife and or dead wildlife they encountered, but their primary purpose was to document their observations and determine if an area required systematic search.*

We appreciate the willingness of USFWS to provide this essential NRDA data. Should you have any questions regarding the data request itself, please contact Jeff Wakefield at [jwakefield@cardno.com](mailto:jwakefield@cardno.com). When the requested data are ready for delivery please contact me at [Katherine.Ross@aporter.com](mailto:Katherine.Ross@aporter.com) to arrange for transfer of the data.

Sincerely,



Katherine A. Ross

Cc (via email): Deepwater Horizon Administrative Record  
Robin Bullock, NRDA Director, BP GCRO

Harriet M. ("Holly") Deal

February 22, 2011

Page 6

Christopher Plaisted (NOAA)

Bennet Bearden (GSA)

Stephanie Morris (LOSCO)

Lisa Ouzts (MS)

Larry Morgan (FL)

Christa McIntock (TX)

Buddy Cox (AL)