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April 26, 2005

TO: Wayne Witzell,  
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Dennis Lee,  
SEFSC Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 1, 2005.

The Miami Laboratory Pelagic Observer Program (POP) is providing you with a summary report of the incidental take of marine mammals, turtles, and birds that have been recorded by observers aboard longline vessels for January 1 to March 31, 2005. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 8.2% of selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1). During the quarter, observers recorded 16 sea turtles (9-leatherbacks-alive; 7-loggerheads-alive), in addition two (2) marine mammals (1-Risso's dolphin-alive; 1-bottlenose dolphin-alive) and two (2) seabirds (1-Herring Gull-dead; 1- Shearwater-dead).

Enclosed you will find the copies Sea Turtle Life History (STLH) forms submitted by observers during the regular longline coverage. Ms. Stokes, Miami Protected Resources, reviewed all of the STKH forms prior to her extended leave. The accompanying photographs will be provided to your office.

In addition to the POP reporting of Protected Resource (PR) species recorded during observed longline fishing, observers have been requested to inspect the turtle handling and dehooking gear available aboard the vessels as a requirement of the 2004 Biological Opinion (BO). As a requirement of the BO tasking for the Miami Laboratory, I am providing you with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list form either filled out by the observer or by POP staff during debriefing from quarter 1. A PDF file will be created and will be posted on the SEFSC-POP secured website.. Although it is not clear how this information will be processed, the originals will remain on file in the observer office, room 314. Finally, neither the Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) nor the Net Mortality Ratio (NMR) mentioned in the 2004 BO are provided as our program staffing does not have the expertise to conduct these analyses.

#### Attachments

Table of the Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2005 by geographical area and sets observed; copies of STLH forms and associated turtle photographs for regular longline coverage; and copies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: Cheryl Brown; Gerry Scott, Jim Bohnsack (cover letters only).

Table 1: Percent coverage (by sets),the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for January 1 -March 31, 2005. (A=Alive, D=Dead, LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, U=unknown).

AREA	REQUIRED		TURTLES				MAMMALS		BIRDS	
	TOTAL SETS OBSERVED	8% COVERAGE	A	D	LB/LH/U	A	D	A	D	
CAR-1	10(4%)	19	0/ 2/ 0	0		0	0	0	0	
GOM-2	113(9%)	95	6/ 2/ 0	0		1	0	0	0	
FEC-3	16(5%)	23	3/ 0/ 0	0		0	0	0	0	
SAB-4	13(6%)	17	0/ 2/ 0	0		1	0	0	2	
MAB-5	21(21%)	8	0/ 1/ 0	0		0	0	0	0	
OFF-8&9	5(3%)	12	0/ 0/ 0	0		0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	178(8+%)	174	9/ 7/ 0	0		2	0	0	2	

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
CAR	8,112
GOM	90,348
FEC	9,034
SAB	8,618
MAB	12,287
NCA	<u>4,080</u>
TOTAL	132,479

NOTE: OFF means Offshore waters combining areas 8 and 9 (SAR and NCA)