

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Miami Laboratory
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

April 11, 2006

TO: Sheryan Epperly,
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Dennis Lee,
SEFSC Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 1, 2006.

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, 2006. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 6.3% of the selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1). During the quarter, observers recorded 9 sea turtles (6-leatherbacks-alive; 3-loggerheads-alive), in addition seven (7) marine mammals (7-Pilot Whales-alive) and no (0) seabirds.

Enclosed you will find the original Sea Turtle Life History (STLH) forms submitted by observers during the regular longline coverage, along with any accompanying photographs of sea turtles. The POP will maintain copies of the STLH forms in our files until you or Lesley Stokes have completed your data review or entry. I recommend that the original IT forms with any changes (in red and initialed) be returned to the POP staff or the file cabinets in Rm 324 when the reviews have been completed.

In closing, 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, as well a Lance Garrison, 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. Analyses associated with Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) nor the Net Mortality Ratio (NMR) mentioned in the 2004 BO are not provided, as the POP staffing does not have the expertise to provide these results.

Attachments

Table of the Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2006 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed; Original STLF forms and associated turtle photographs for regular longline coverage; and photocopies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: POP office files;
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, 2006. (A=Alive, D=Dead, LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, U=unknown).

AREA	REQUIRED		TURTLES		MAMMALS		BIRDS	
	TOTAL SETS OBSERVED	8% COVERAGE	A	D	A	D	A	D
CAR-1	0(0%)	11	0/0/0	0	0	0	0	0
GOM-2	54(4%)	100	1/0/0	0	0	0	0	0
FEC-3	9(3%)	23	1/1/0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	11(8%)	0	3/0/0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	21(15%)	11	0/0/0	0	7	0	0	0
SAR-8	16(8%)	0	1/2/0	0	0	0	0	0
NCA-9	0(0%)	9	0/0/0	0	0	0	0	0
TUN-10	10(8%)	0	0/0/0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	121(6+%)	154	6/3/0	0	7	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	39,320
FEC	8,450
SAB	7,591
MAB	10,278
SAR	14,876
NCA	4,105
TOTAL	86,620