

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
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May 13, 2008

TO: Dr. Lance Garrison,
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Larry Beerkircher,
POP Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 1, 2008.

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, 2008. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 11.1 % of the selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1), which included target coverage of 100% in the Gulf of Mexico during March 9th to March 31st. In addition, the POP monitored effort inside areas normally closed to pelagic longlining as part of a cooperative research project with NOVA Southeastern University (Table 2). During the quarter, observers recorded one (1) marine mammal (1-Risso's Dolphin-dead) and zero (0) seabirds, in addition to nine (9) sea turtles (8-leatherback-alive; 1-loggerhead-alive) in regular fishery operations. During observations in the closed areas, observers documented two sea turtles (2-leatherback-alive).

Attached for you are the original Marine Mammal Life History (MMLH) forms submitted by observers during Quarter 1, along with copies of the associated haul logs. The POP will maintain copies of the individual life history forms in our files until you have completed your data review or entry. I recommend that the original forms be returned (with any changes in red and initialed) to the POP staff or the file cabinets in Room 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). Since you are the point-of-contact (POC) person overseeing the Miami BO tasking, I am providing you with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list forms filled out by the observer from Quarter 1. A PDF file will be created and will be posted on the SEFSC-POP secured website. The originals will remain on file in the observer office, room 314. Analyses associated with Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) or 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. Finally, the POP observers recorded no sawfish catches during the quarter; this species is not likely to occur in the pelagic environment.

Attachments

Table (1) of the Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2008 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed; Table (2) of the Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2008 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed in the experimental fishery; MMLH Forms, photocopies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: POP office files;
Guy Davenport, Jim Bohnsack (cover letters only).

Table 1: Percent coverage (by hauls), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for January 1 to March 31, 2008 during regular fishing operations.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	REQUIRED 8% COVERAGE	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS		
			A	D	U	A	D	A	D	
GOM-2	131 (12.6%)	83	4/	0/0	0	0	0	1	0	0
FEC-3	38 (19.0%)	16	3/	1/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	8 (5.3%)	12	0/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	0 (0.0%)	13	0/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OFFSHORE	10 (7.3%)	11	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	187 (11.1%)	135	8/	1/0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	106,701
FEC	25,951
SAB	6,030
OFF	11,220
TOTAL	149,902

Table 2: Effort (hauls and hooks) and the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds) summarized by geographical area for January 1 to March 31, 2008 during experimental fishing operations inside closed areas.

(A=Alive, D=Dead, U=Unknown. LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL HAULS OBSERVED	TURTLES			MAMMALS		BIRDS		
		A	D	U	A	D	A	D	
		LB/LH/O							
FEC-3	5	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	7	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	12	2/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
FEC	2,330
SAB	3,500
TOTAL	5,830
