

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

May 13, 2008

TO: Sheryan Epperly,
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 nine (9) sea turtles (8-leatherback-alive; 1-loggerhead-alive), in addition to one (1) marine mammal (1-Risso's Dolphin-dead) and zero (0) seabirds in regular fishery operations. During observations in the closed areas, observers documented two sea turtles (2-leatherback-alive).

Attached for you are the original Sea Turtle Life History (STLH) forms submitted by observers during Quarter 1, along with copies of the associated haul logs. The photographs of the sea turtles, and any associated biopsy samples, will be provided with this document. 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 STLH forms 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 as Lance Garrison, with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list form 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) 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 (1) of the Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2008 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed in the regular fishery; 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; STLH Forms and associated turtle photographs and biopsy samples, 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
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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
