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October 25, 2007

TO : Guy Davenport

FROM : Larry Beerkircher,  
Pelagic Observer Program

SUBJECT: Third quarter (2007) observer coverage summary.

The Pelagic Observer Program (POP) achieved an 8.5% overall coverage rate for the third quarter period of 2007 (July 1 to September 30). Selection letters were sent by certified mail service (return receipt) on June 15, 2007 to 42 vessel permit holders (owners and/or operators) who were selected for coverage based on fishing activity in the northwestern Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico) for notification of observer coverage. The POP had the responsibility of the regular 8% coverage requirement in the Northwest Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. During this quarter the POP was not involved in any cooperative research projects.

Of special note, there were two (2) vessels (Seven Arrows and Addie Byrd) selected for coverage for Quarter 2 (2007) but which did not depart for observed fishing trips until Quarter 3. Further, there was one vessel (Bookie) selected for Quarter 3 but whose observed fishing trip did not return to the dock until after the end of the Quarter. For the purposes of this quarterly report, vessel hauls on or after July 1 until September 30, along with any incidental takes observed during this quarterly period (number of sets observed, days at-sea, animals caught) will be included in this summary. Overall during this quarter, observers spent 322 days at sea on 28 fishing vessels, which resulted in 213 hauls observed and a coverage rate of 8.5%. During the 28 observed trips (Table 1), set effort occurred in the geographical areas of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), the Florida East Coast (FEC), the South Atlantic Bight (SAB), the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB), the Northeast Coastal (NEC), the Northeast Distant (NED), and Offshore (OFF).

During the pelagic longline trips covered by observers, a total of 165,089 hooks were fished. The total catch observed consisted of 9,108 fish representing 41 species of fish. The catch data was comprised of 2,253 swordfish, 511 bigeye tuna, 1,573 yellowfin tuna, 5 bluefin tuna, 238 albacore tuna, 374 other tuna species, 548 dolphin fish (mahi), 123 wahoo, 326 billfish species, 616 other finfish (escolar, lancetfish, etc.),

633 skates/rays, 0 small coastal sharks, 246 large coastal sharks, and 1,751 pelagic sharks. During the quarter, observers also recorded incidental takes of protected species (Table 2) which included 60 sea turtles (13-leatherback-alive; 47-loggerheads-alive), in addition to 8 marine mammals (4-pilot whales-alive; 1-Risso's dolphin-alive; 3-Unid marine mammals-alive). No seabirds were observed captured this quarter, further, the POP recorded no sawfish catches during the quarter; this species is not likely to occur in the pelagic environment.

During the quarter, the POP did not place observers on 16 of 42 of these vessels selected (38%, Table 3); thus reducing the target coverage of the POP by 80 sets. There were three selected vessels listed in Table 4 as not being covered due to no observer being available. These vessels reduced the POP's coverage opportunities by a minimum of 11 sets. Four vessels did not take observers due to either a lack of a safety decal, lack of bunk/life raft space, or non-communication with the POP office (reducing coverage by 11 sets); and the remainder (9 vessels) did not conduct pelagic longline fishing operations during the quarter. The percent of "non-compliant" vessels (fishing, but not in compliance with observer notification and safety regulations) out of the total selection list for Quarter 3, 2007 was only 9.5%; this represents one of the lowest non-compliance figures ever reported by this program. This continues what might appear to be a trend (29% in Q4 2006, 25% in Q1 2007, and 22.7% in Q2 2007) in non-compliance figures. The POP is optimistic that this represents a gradual, but real, improvement in vessel compliance resulting from a gradual increase in enforcement activities. The POP intends to continue, and expand, compliance enforcement activities in future quarters, as allowed by conflicting time demands of special projects, etc.

In keeping with the BO reporting requirements from the POP office, observers filled out the turtle handling and release gear forms on all of the 28 third quarter covered vessels. Of the vessels selected and observed in Quarter 3, 93% of the vessels had the equipment needed for removing gear from turtles in the water (at least 3 of 4 items aboard), and 96% had most of the equipment for removing gear if the turtle is boated (6 or more items aboard). Additionally, 50% of the observed vessels also had the turtle tether aboard, which is voluntary at this time. A PDF document of the observer turtle gear forms will be posted on a secure site of the POP website. Finally, the cumulative number of unique vessels observed since the effective date of the sea turtle conservation regulations (July, 2004), now stands at 90 vessels covered (Table 4).

Attachments:

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4.

cc: The POP office files; Gregg Houghaboom, NOAA-Fisheries  
SERO/OLE liaison.

Table 1: Regular coverage (8%) of the longline fleet. Number of vessels observed, areas of fishing activity, total hauls observed, and total days at-sea conducted by the SEFSC Miami Laboratory **POP** from July 1 to September 30, 2007.

Vessel Name	Trip Number	Area	Total Hauls	Total Sea Days
1022773 EAGLE EYE II	D04044	NED	17	24
1114578 MOTHER CAT	D04042	TUN	13	24
510728 MISS SUZANNE	T02033	MAB/NEC	6	9
532569 SENECA	M01037	NED	13	24
539456 BOOKIE	A02028	MAB	11	13
541694 EAGLET II	B03006	MAB	1	5
586413 HATUNA MATATA	J02065	GOM	13	18
602041 PROVIDER	D04043	SAB	5	8
604915 FRANCES ANNE	J02067	MAB	11	12
609121 CAROL ANN	X01013	SAB	8	11
611304 SEVEN ARROWS	T02032	SAB	5	7
630306 DEFIANCE	W02008	MAB	4	4
643282 OUTLAW	T02035	FEC	7	12
646506 JANICE ANNE	S01091	FEC	5	8
656259 KRISTIN LEE	U03017	FEC	7	10
668316 CAPT LUU	X03002	GOM	8	13
911631 ST JOSEPH & PETER	Q02066	GOM	6	10
912738 JOSHUA NICOLE	S01092	FEC	8	8
918932 MORNING STARS	S01090	GOM	7	12
919799 BLUE SEA I	P01131	GOM	6	10
919844 FORTUNA II	X03003	MAB	4	6
926359 QUEENSLAND	P01132	GOM	8	13
929813 CAPT BOB	B03005	MAB	7	10
931858 LIEN HIEP	W02007	GOM	6	9
936041 CECILIA II	P01130	GOM	8	13
956008 DAKOTA	T02034	NEC	7	11
995485 SEA QUEEN III	J02066	GOM	9	14
MD9128BD ADDIE BYRD	J02064	MAB	3	4
TOTAL	28		213	322

Table 2: Percent coverage (by hauls), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for July 1 to September 30, 2007 (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	71 (6.8%)	83	1/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEC-3	27 (14.4%)	15	0/	3/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	18 (24%)	6	0/	1/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	42 (7.5%)	45	3/	10/0	0	0	8	0	0	0
NEC-6	12 (3.8%)	25	3/	2/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NED-7	30 (10.4%)	23	6/	31/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OFFSHORE	13 (26.0%)	4	0/	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	213 (8.5%)	201	13/	47/0	0	0	8	0	0	0

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	51,918
FEC	11,188
SAB	8,673
MAB	41,378
NEC	11,044
NED	27,388
OFF	13,500
TOTAL	165,089

Table 3: Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 2, 2007 (April 1 to June 30); excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: **(1)**No bunk available;**(2)**Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;**(3)** Lack of current CFVSE decal; **(4)**No communication with observer office/staff; **(5)**Not fishing (involved in another fishery);**(6)**Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and **(7)**other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
ASHLEY NICOLE	985618	Reason 6. Certified letter received. Owner contacted POP to inform that vessel had been sold out of the country. POP requested 6 sets for the quarter. Logbook submissions: Submitted no fishing reports for July and August.
BACKWASH III	NJ4755FP	Reason 4 and 7. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP office to schedule a trip in July, but no observer was available. No further communications were received; although POP believes this vessel may have fished in September. POP requested 1 set for the quarter. Landings reported on 7/27.
BIGEYE	628300	Reason 4. Certified letter received. Vessel made two trips during selection period without contacting POP. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. Landings reported on 8/1 and 9/29.
BLUEFIN	597797	Reason 6. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to indicate the vessel would not be fishing during the quarter. POP requested 4 sets for the quarter. No Fishing reports submitted for July and August.

Table 3 (continued): Listing of vessels that were not covered by Pelagic Observer Program (POP) during quarter 2, 2007 (April 1 to June 30) ; excluding vessels selected for coverage in the Gulf of Mexico. Short explanations provided. Vessel non-compliance of observer coverage may be based on more than one category of explanation. The following categories are provided: **(1)**No bunk available;**(2)**Observer presence exceeds the liferaft capacity;**(3)** Lack of current CFVSE decal; **(4)**No communication with observer office/staff; **(5)**Not fishing (involved in another fishery);**(6)**Not fishing (new owner, repair, sunk, no permits); and **(7)**other.

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
BOBALOU	600322	Reason 2 and 7. Certified letter received. Early in quarter, owner called to say that current configuration was a 4 man crew and 4 man life raft, but would call when that changed. In September, the owner called to indicate a 3 man crew, but at that point the POP had all observers on other vessels. POP requested 3 sets for the quarter. Landings reported on 7/8, 7/25, 8/2, 8/27, 9/3, and 9/15.
CHRISTOPHER JOE	608436	Reason 3 and 5. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to schedule an observer, but the vessel did not have a current CFVSE decal. On this trip, the vessel was struck by lightning and due to damage did not fish again during the quarter. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.

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<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
LIBERTY	944957	Reason 5. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to inform us that the vessel was involved in bottom longlining for reef fish. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.
MISS LENA	918933	Reason 4. Certified letter received. No communications were received by the POP. POP requested 5 sets for the quarter. Vessel reported landings on 7/31.
MONICA	597421	Reason 4 and 7. Certified letter received. Poor communications from owner early in quarter, late in quarter owner called to schedule a trip but no observers were available. Vessel took an observer in the first month of quarter 4 2007. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter. Landing reported on 8/29.
SARAH BETH	608322	Reason 5. Vessel owner called to inform POP that vessel would be trawling during the quarter. POP requested 8 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.

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<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
SEA FARMER	1178506	Reason 1 and 2. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to inform POP that vessel carries a 4 man crew with a 3 bunks and 4 man life raft. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. Vessel landings reported 7/29, 8/5, 8/21, 8/28 and 9/2.
SECOND CHANCE	573056	Reason 6. Certified letter received. Owner called the POP to inform POP that vessel had burned and sunk. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. No landings information was available at the time of this report.
TAR BABY	989329	Reason 4. Certified letter received. No communications received by POP during quarter. POP requested 2 sets for the quarter. Landing reported 7/31.
TRAN BROTHERS	681390	Reason 4 and 6. Certified letter received. No communications to POP, but no landings had been reported either. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter.
VITAMIN SEA	671127	Reason 4 and 6. Certified letter received. No communications to POP, but no landings had been reported either. POP requested 7 sets for the quarter.

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<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Doc #</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
WHITEWATER	1026595	Reason 4 and 6. Certified letter received. Vessel was under repairs for most of quarter, but when it finally departed the dock, no notification was given the POP. However, vessel took an observer during the first month of quarter 4, 2007. POP requested 15 sets for the quarter.

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Table 4: The POP coverage completed aboard the pelagic longline fleet by quarter and year since the publication of the 2004 Biological Opinion. The number of trips observed include vessels that are covered multiple times during a quarter. The number of unique vessels observed represents those vessels only covered at least once by an observer.

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Quarter	Year	No. of Vessels Selected	No. of Trips Observed	No. of Unique Vessels Observed
3	2004	44	29	29
4	2004	30	28	14
1	2005	34	26	12
2	2005	45	22	9
3	2005	41	19	7
4	2005	28	14	1
1	2006	31	20	4
2	2006	33	23	2
3	2006	39	22	2
4	2006	24	17	1
1	2007	20	17	1
2	2007	65	43	4
3	2007	42	28	4
Cumulative Totals			308	90

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