

The Council's Role in Protected Species' Conservation

**South Atlantic Fishery
Management Council**
**Ecosystem Research and Monitoring
Workshop**
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Margaret Murphy
Protected Resources
SAFMC, Charleston, SC
margaret.murphy@safmc.net



Overview

- **legislative mandates specific to protected species**
- **current reporting programs**
- **data needs for better fishery management regarding protected species and fisheries interactions**

Legislative Mandates

ESA (Section 7)

- ensure activity authorized, funded or implemented not likely to jeopardize or destroy / adversely modify designated critical habitat

- council prepares assessment evaluate likely effects of proposed fishery action(s) - and the fishery itself -

- aids determining further action required under the ESA (informal/formal consultation)



MMPA

- **primary goals of the two agencies ensure marine mammal stocks are maintained at, or in some cases restored to, optimum sustainable population (OSP) level**
- **with respect to fisheries:**
 - mandated goal to reduce incidental mortality or serious injury by commercial fishing operations below Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level
 - future goal to reduce significant injury and mortality to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate goal
- **one development to come out of this mandated goal was the development of take reduction teams/plans**

Three Tier Classification

- **Category I** - frequent incidental mortality and serious injury
- **Category II** - occasional incidental mortality and serious injury
- **Category III** - a remote likelihood of or no known incidental mortality and serious injury
 - Category I and II required to register with Marine Mammal Authorization Program and must comply with take reduction plans and any additional MMAP requirements such as carrying an on-board observer when requested



MBTA



- **protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act**
 - prohibits taking any migratory bird except as permitted by regulations issued by the Department of the Interior

- **conservation law to protect seabirds with regard to fisheries has been lacking**
 - to address on-going concerns with seabird and fisheries interactions, NOAA Fisheries recently initiated an Interagency Seabird Working Group

 - initiative looks to find practicable and effective solutions for reducing or eliminating seabird/fishery interactions

Executive Order 13186

- signed January 2001, requires every Federal agency that takes action(s) likely to have negative impact on migratory birds to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with USFWS
- MOU outlines how an agency will promote conservation of migratory birds
- other obligations include
 - supporting various conservation planning efforts already underway
 - incorporating bird conservation considerations into agency planning (NEPA analyses and reporting annually level of take occurring)

Reporting Programs: Fishery Observer Programs

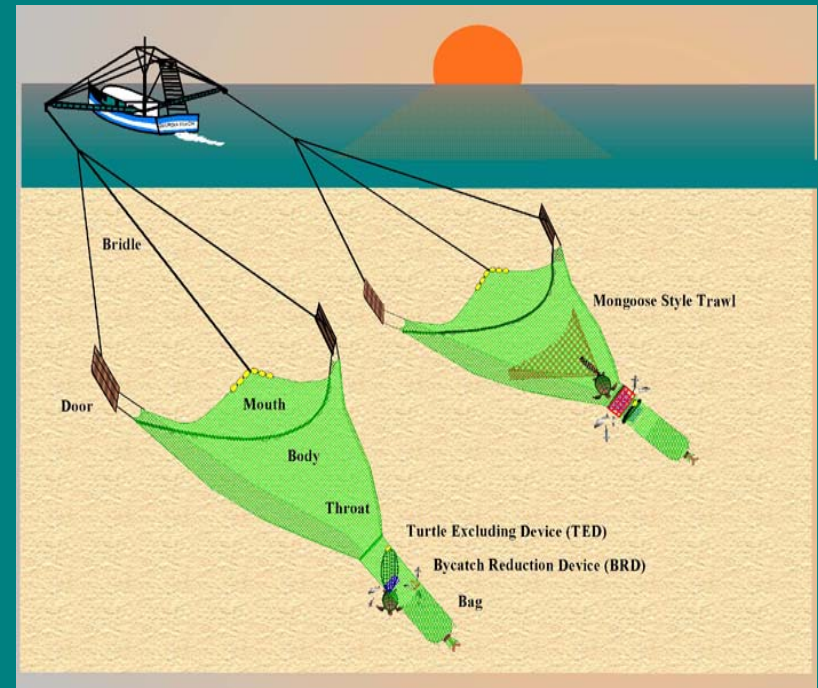
Otter Trawl Category 3 LOF

penaeid (1991)

- 1000 annual days at sea
- voluntary
- < 1% of fishery covered, 88% coverage in GOM
- bycatch: dolphins, manatees, sea turtles

rock (2001)

- 100 annual days at sea
- voluntary
- 4 sea turtles (3 trynets)



calico scallop (2002)

- 100 annual days at sea, voluntary

Council considering TEDs, tow time limits, mandatory observers

Mandatory Logbook and Bycatch Reporting

SEFSC Discard Data Program (2001)

Selects annually 20% of permitted fishermen in Coastal Migratory Pelagic & Snapper Grouper (GOM reef fish)

• Gillnet

- SAFMC prohibits use of drift gillnets and limits use of long gillnets (float line > 1,000yds)
- Southeast Atlantic gillnet fisheries are listed as a Category II - no reports of interactions with sea turtles, marine mammals or sea birds from SDDP

• Trolling

- Sea birds

Snapper Grouper Vertical H&L/Bottom Longline

Sea turtle catch data from the SDDP for the southeast U.S. Atlantic (2001-2003)

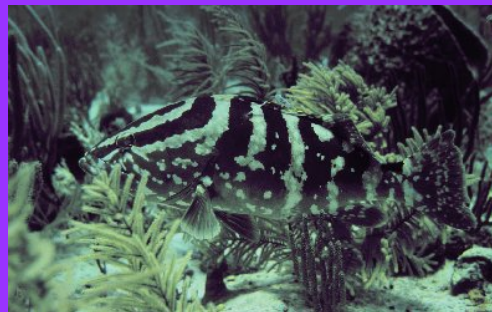
Period	Month	Logbook Statistical Grid	Species Caught	Number Caught	Discard Condition
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Vertical Hook-and-Line Sea Turtle Catch Data

1	4	2482	Unidentified	1	Alive
1	11	3377	Loggerhead	1	Alive
2	2	2780	Loggerhead	1	Alive
2	11	3474	Loggerhead	1	Alive
2	11	3476	Unknown	1	Alive
2	12	3476	Unknown	1	Alive

Bottom Longline Sea Turtle Catch Data

1	8	3674	Leatherback	1	Alive
3	1	3575	Loggerhead	1	Unknown



Pot/Trap Gear



■ **black sea bass (discard report form)**

- to date, no interactions reported, anecdotal reports of sea turtles being nuisance
- Category 2 LOF
- concern re: large whales, sea turtles

■ **golden crab (fishery logbook)**

- 100% coverage, small fishery, no buoys used in southern zone
- no reports of interactions, Category 3 LOF

■ **spiny lobster**

- loggerhead turtles eat spiny lobster and known to damage spiny lobster traps
- Category 3 LOF

Data Needs for Better Management

- **Better detail on in water fishery effort**
 - ACCSP
 - MRFSS
 - FEP
- **Improved reporting**
 - Increased observer programs / coverage
 - Expand self-reporting to entire fisheries
 - Increase detail of interaction
 - commercial and recreational
 - Evaluate use of stranding data

Research

- develop gear/strategies
 - modify fishing operations to reduce likelihood of interactions - increase survivorship
- demographic, behavioral, spatial and temporal patterns of protected species
 - overlay distribution/habitat usage with fishery effort to identify high risk areas
- information on co-occurrence - relationship between protected species and managed fish species
 - predator/prey, habitat usage/preferences

Monitoring

what is the bycatch in our fisheries

- identify if problem exists, and if so, to what degree
- where/when/how is bycatch occurring
 - trawl, (skimmers/butterfly and cast nets)
 - longline, hook-and-line
 - gillnets, pound nets
 - trap/pot, buoy anchor lines
 - discarded/lost gear



Monitoring

- **enhance/develop monitoring & reporting programs to better determine CPUE**
 - particularly need reporting in recreational fisheries
- **monitor effectiveness of current & modified gear/fishing practice**

Outreach

- **Programs to raise awareness & distribute materials to fishermen**
 - status of species, occurrence, threats
 - training in proper gear usage, handling and release techniques
- **REPORTING**
 - interactions (why it's important)
 - lost gear



Resources

- recovery plans
- status reviews
- strategic plans
- biological opinions
- take reduction plans
- fishery management plans
- FEP/IMS