

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ACTIVITIES

Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team Meeting

NMFS held a webinar for the Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team on May 26, 2016, to discuss updates and information related to the management of the large-mesh drift gillnet (DGN) fishery. Jim Carretta from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) provided data from the current draft marine mammal Stock Assessment Report, including the latest minimum population estimates of strategic marine mammal stocks, updates on potential biological removal (PBR) levels, and updated estimates of serious injury and mortality to marine mammal stocks. The presentation noted that the estimated serious injury/mortality of two stocks covered by the Take Reduction Plan (TRP), the sperm whale and short-finned pilot whale, are below PBR but above the zero mortality rate goal (ZMRG, or 10 % of PBR); the estimated serious injury/mortality of all other marine mammal stocks, including those covered under the TRP, are below both PBR and ZMRG.

He also presented his analyses of bycatch in the DGN fishery using a tree-based (or clustering algorithm) model, which is intended to both provide a more accurate approach for modeling rare-event bycatch estimates and reduce the volatility in annual bycatch estimates. Based on this approach, the tree model suggests a bycatch estimate of 0.5 sperm whales per year from 2010 to 2014 versus a bycatch estimate of 3.4 animals per year over the same reporting period using previous bycatch estimation methods (the current PBR for sperm whales is 2.7). SWFSC has vetted this approach through the Scientific Review Group and plans to publish the regression tree bycatch estimates in the DGN fishery as a Technical Memorandum this summer.

The Team reiterated its concerns regarding the relatively large percentage of unobservable fishing effort in the DGN fleet and discussed strategies for targeting those vessels for boardings by enforcement agencies, in addition to the use of electronic monitoring.

West Coast Region Recreational Fisheries Coordinator

NMFS recently hired a Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, Zachary Schakner, who will work to carry out the intent of the [West Coast Regional Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy Implementation Plan](#). Zachary recently completed a PhD in biology at UCLA focusing on recreational fisheries issues with California sea lions. Zac is looking forward to continuing his work with the recreational fisheries community to apply science based policy actions that promote sustainable fisheries. Please contact Zac (Zachary.Schakner@noaa.gov or 562-980-4040) to not only introduce yourself, but to talk with him about how best to implement the actions in the West Coast Region's implementation plan.