

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

Observer Program Summaries for the West Coast Drift Gillnet Fishery

As referenced in June 2021 [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#) the West Coast Region Observer Program (WCROP) has been coordinating with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) staff to make observer data more accessible through APEX reports stored in PacFIN. These data management changes also improve NMFS' ability to integrate different fisheries data sources (e.g., observer and logbook data). Observer data through the 2021/2022 fishing season is now available in an APEX Report accessible through PacFIN. The APEX report with [observer summary data for the drift gillnet fishery](#) is available on the report dashboard. Whereas prior reports posted to the [WCROP website](#) focused on fishing seasons that span multiple calendar years, the APEX reports enable users to filter reports by calendar year or by fishing season. Additionally, users can summarize total sets and trips in a given season or calendar year. Using report filters, the data can be isolated or aggregated across calendar years or fishing seasons. At this time, the observed catch, trip, and set data are complete, but the APEX reports do not yet include total effort data, which is needed to determine observer coverage levels (see Table 1 for information on the 2021/2022 season). The WCROP is still working with PSMFC on how best to source this information so that updates are dynamic. The total number of sets in the fishery is an estimate which is periodically updated throughout and following the fishing season. Information on numbers of sets in the fishery come from various sources and undergo quality assurance checks. When the APEX reports are fully functional, they will include this information along with relevant metadata.

In the meantime, in Table 2 of this report, we include an Observer Program summary for calendar year 2021 and fishing season 2021/2022. This summary includes effort information (e.g., number of active vessels, number of sets observed, and an estimated total number of sets), as well as protected species reported by observers. During the 2021/2022 DGN fishing season, approximately 23 percent of the estimated fishing effort was observed. The data indicate that 55 percent of the observed catch was kept, and that 91 percent of the returned catch was released alive.

Negligible Impact Determination

On May 10, NMFS announced we are issuing a permit under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to authorize the incidental, but not intentional, take of the Endangered Species Act-listed CA/OR/WA stocks of humpback whales and sperm whales in the drift gillnet fishery. We have determined the fishery meets the permit requirements under MMPA section 101(a)(5)(E) that: 1) the incidental mortality and serious injury from commercial fisheries will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks; 2) a recovery plan for all affected species or stocks of threatened or endangered marine mammals has been developed or is under development; and, 3) where required under MMPA section 118, a take reduction plan has been developed or is being developed, a monitoring program is implemented, and vessels participating in the fishery are registered. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

Table 1. Drift Gillnet Observed Catch Summary for 2021/2022 Fishing Season

Species Name	Total Catch	Total Kept	Returned Alive	Returned Dead	Returned Unknown
Swordfish, Broadbill	52	52	0	0	0
Tuna, Bluefin	465	459	0	6	0
Opah	2	2	0	0	0
Mackerel, Pacific	5	5	0	0	0
Shark, Common Thresher	12	12	0	0	0
Dolphin, Short-Beaked Common	13	0	0	13	0
Yellowtail	15	15	0	0	0
Shark, Shortfin Mako	20	19	0	1	0
Seabass, White	1	1	0	0	0
Sardine, Pacific	1	0	0	1	0
Slender Mola	11	0	11	0	0
Mola, Common	403	0	402	1	0
Shark, Blue	18	0	6	12	0
Dolphin, Risso's	1	0	0	1	0
Stingray, Pelagic	1	0	0	1	0
Ray, Bat	1	0	1	0	0
Whale, Humpback	1	0	1	0	0
Ray, Pacific Electric	2	0	2	0	0
Sea Lion, California	3	0	0	3	0

Source: PacFIN APEX Report

Table 2. Drift Gillnet Observer Summary for Calendar Year 2021 and the 2021/2022 Fishing Season

	Calendar Year 2021	2021-2022 Season
Number of Active Vessels	7	7
Total Estimated Sets	162	195
Observed Sets	37	38
Unobservable Sets	47	52
% Unobservable	29.01%	27%
% Coverage	22.84%	19.49%
Observed Trips	10	9
Protected Species Interactions		
Short Beaked Common Dolphin	1	13
Risso's Dolphin	1	1
California Sea Lion	3	3
Humpback Whale	2	1

Source: WCROP