

# Key Outcomes Memorandum

**Date:** February 17, 2006

**To:** Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (PLTRT) Members

**From:** Scott McCreary and Eric Poncelet, CONCUR, Inc.

**Re:** Key Outcomes Memorandum – January 25-27, 2006 PLTRT Meeting

**cc:** NOAA Fisheries staff

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## Executive Summary – Key Outcomes and Next Steps

On January 25-27, 2006, the Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (PLTRT) participated in its third meeting, convened in Miami, Florida. The primary objectives for the meeting were to: 1) address the framing of the PLTRT scope, 2) provide briefings from work teams and other information gathering efforts, and discuss implications for the Take Reduction Plan (TRP), 3) draft, discuss, review, and revise working sections of the Preliminary Draft TRP, and 4) outline a game plan for finalizing the TRP.

**Key outcomes** from the meeting are as follows. The PLTRT:

- Agreed to include Risso's dolphins in the scope of the TRP and to text conveying that decision.
- Reviewed recent data on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bycatch estimates, genetic analyses of pilot whales in the NW Atlantic, observer data form revisions, sea turtle disentanglement gear, lessons learned from efforts to reduce takes of sea turtles and from the Alaska sablefish bottom longline fishery, and enforcement capabilities.
- Received a report on the most significant variables affecting pilot whale and Risso's dolphin bycatch as determined by a predictive model.
- Developed a preliminary list of primary management strategies for reducing mortalities and serious injuries of pilot whales and Risso's dolphins. Key strategies included:
  - Reduce mainline length to 20 miles or less.
  - Adopt active avoidance measures.
  - Institute a mandatory certification program for avoidance and safe handling/release strategies.
  - Place mandatory informational placards in vessel wheelhouses.
- Identified key information needs associated with additional candidate management strategies, and discussed the prioritization of broader research and data collection needs.
- Established work teams to assist in preparations for the next PLTRT meeting, including work teams on: 1) developing a TRP section on improved observer data collection, 2) determining the uniqueness of vessel interaction, 3) revising the TRP section on research and data collection, 4) preparing informational placards, 5) further developing and using the predictive model, 6) enhancing collection of marine mammal biopsies, and 7) further defining key management strategies.

Project next steps are outlined in section IV below. The next PLTRT meeting is scheduled to take place on April 25-27, 2006 in St. Petersburg, Florida.

## **I. Introduction and Outline**

On January 25-27, 2006, the Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (PLTRT) participated in its third meeting. The meeting took place in Miami, FL. This Key Outcomes Memorandum summarizes the main results of the meeting. The memorandum is organized as follows:

- I. Introduction and Outline
- II. Meeting Objectives, Participants, and Materials
- III. Key Outcomes
  - A. Membership additions and changes
  - B. Expansion of PLTRT scope
  - C. Plan for revising serious injury guidelines
  - D. Briefings and updates
  - E. Recommendations for management strategies for reducing mortalities and serious injuries of pilot whales and Risso's dolphins
  - F. Recommendations for additional research and data collection
  - G. Work Teams to be convened
  - H. Revising the preliminary Draft TRP
  - I. Key information needs for next PLTRT meeting
  - J. Meeting schedule
- IV. Next Steps

## **II. Meeting Objectives, Participants, and Materials**

### **A. Meeting objectives**

The primary objectives for the meeting were as follows:

- 1) Address the framing of the PLTRT scope
- 2) Provide briefings from work teams and other information gathering efforts, and discuss implications for the Take Reduction Plan (TRP)
- 3) Draft, discuss, review, and revise working sections of the Preliminary Draft TRP
- 4) Outline a game plan for finalizing the TRP

### **B. Participation**

PLTRT members in attendance included: Nelson Beideman (Blue Water Fishermen's Association), Jean Cramer (Thunder Mountain Consulting), Brendan Cummings (Center for Biological Diversity), Glenn Delaney, Damon Gannon (Mote Marine Lab), Gail Johnson (Fishing Vessel Seneca), David Kerstetter (University of Miami), Jessica Koelsch (The Ocean Conservancy), Beth Lowell (Oceana), Bill McLellan (University of North Carolina,

Wilmington), Dan Mears (Fishing Vessel Monica), Vince Pyle (Fishing Vessel Carol Ann), Mike Simpkins (Marine Mammal Commission), Rich Seagraves (Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council), Nina Young (Orcas Consulting), Sharon Young (Humane Society of the United States), Vicki Cornish (NOAA Fisheries), Laura Engleby (NOAA Fisheries), and Kristy Long (NOAA Fisheries). PLTRT members Jim Budi and Scott Rucky were not able to attend.

NOAA Fisheries staff participating in an advisory capacity included: John Barylsky, Charlie Bergmann, Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Sheryan Epperly, Lance Garrison, Dennis Lee, Tony Martinez, Mark Minton, Karen Raine, Patricia Rosel, Cheryl Scannell (by phone), John Watson, and Kate Wells.

Katie Moore attended on behalf of the United States Coast Guard. Jan Straley (University of Alaska, Southeast) and Aaron Thode (Scripps Institution of Oceanography) gave a presentation to the team by phone.

Scott McCreary and Eric Poncelet of CONCUR, Inc. facilitated the meeting.

### **C. Meeting materials**

Meeting materials and presentations for this PLTRT meeting may be found at the password-protected project website: <http://www.concurinc.com/PLTRT>. Other related materials may be found at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/pl-trt.htm>.

## **III. Key Outcomes**

### **A. Membership additions and changes**

Participants welcomed Beth Lowell (Oceana) as a new member of the PLTRT. Beth replaces Charlotte Hudson-Gray.

### **B. Expansion of PLTRT scope**

PLTRT members discussed the option of expanding the scope of the PLTRT. NOAA Fisheries staff indicated the agency's strong preference that the PLTRT address both pilot whales and Risso's dolphins in the same TRP.

Representatives of the fishing industry and the environmental community both expressed their willingness to expand the scope to include Risso's dolphins. The fishing industry's willingness was provisional on the following: 1) the PLTRT review the preliminary draft TRP to fill in information gaps for Risso's (especially with regard to research needs), 2) the TRP clearly state industry's concerns regarding the relative lack of information regarding Risso's dolphins, 3) reducing bycatch of pilot whales in the Mid Atlantic Bight (MAB) remains a priority focus of the TRP, and 4) any expansion of geographic focus would be accompanied by appropriate expansion of stakeholder participation.

PLTRT members discussed and agreed to include the following text regarding scope in the TRP:

“Upon further review of the observer data during the team’s discussion, it was noted that there are also serious injuries and mortalities of Risso’s dolphins (*Grampus griseus*) incidental to the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery (NMFS 2005; Garrison, unpublished data presented to the team). Estimated serious injury and mortality levels exceed the insignificance threshold<sup>1</sup> for Risso’s dolphins as well as for both species of pilot whales.

Therefore, NMFS requested that the team include in their draft Take Reduction Plan recommendations to reduce bycatch of Risso’s dolphins as well as long- and short-finned pilot whales. The team agreed to include Risso’s dolphins in the plan, but to initially focus mitigation measures on those that would have the greatest potential for reducing bycatch of all three species, and primarily in areas where all three species overlap (i.e., Mid-Atlantic Bight), keeping in mind that the range and bycatch of these species extend beyond the Mid-Atlantic.”

PLTRT members agreed that the TRP should clearly state, in an introductory section, the importance of basing management measures on adequate information for both pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins. The TRP should also indicate where any expansion of measures geographically over the course of implementing the TRP may need to be accompanied by a corresponding expansion of stakeholder participation.

PLTRT members will reconfirm the above text on scope as they continue development of a final TRP.

### **C. Plan for revising serious injury guidelines**

Vicki Cornish (NOAA Fisheries) reported on NOAA Fisheries’ plans to revise the marine mammal serious injury guidelines. An expert workshop is tentatively scheduled for early May in Seattle, WA (to be confirmed). The workshop would draw on current marine mammal knowledge and expertise to further examine the implications of different types of injuries resulting from marine mammal interactions (e.g., entanglement, hooking, ship strikes). The goal is to make the guidelines more specific and operational.

Any proposed revisions to the guidelines would be made available for public review and comment.

### **D. Briefings and updates**

PLTRT members, NOAA Fisheries staff, and others provided a series of informational briefings and updates. The PowerPoint presentations may be viewed at <http://www.concurinc.com/PLTRT>.

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<sup>1</sup> The insignificance threshold is defined as 10% of a stock’s Potential Biological Removal level [69 FR 43338, July 20, 2004].

### **1. Third and fourth quarter bycatch preliminary estimates**

Lance Garrison (NOAA Fisheries) provided an update on the third and fourth quarter bycatch estimates from the longline fishery. Lance reported that, assuming 2004 effort (as defined by number of hooks), bycatch for the year 2005 will be above the 2000-2004 average and close to, but still below, the potential biological removal (PBR) threshold for pilot whales. Lance and several PLTRT members noted that 2005 effort looks to be less than 2004 effort. Final estimates will be made in the spring when logbook data becomes available.

### **2. Genetic analysis of pilot whales in the NW Atlantic: Results of Mitochondrial DNA Analysis**

Patricia Rosel (NOAA Fisheries) presented an update on “Genetic analyses of pilot whales in the NW Atlantic”. She reported that data gaps are being filled in, but some gaps remain. Key findings include:

- The greatest area of overlap in the ranges of long- and short-finned pilot whales in the Northwest Atlantic is between 38 and 40 degrees north. This occurs during the summer.
- Long-finned pilot whales are found primarily along the shelf break. Short-finned pilot whales are found both along the shelf break and in deeper waters.
- Increased sampling of both pilot whale species is required to determine the degree of overlap during the winter.

Lance Garrison presented on “Stock definition and assessment of trans-boundary stocks under NMFS guidelines.” He examined whether pilot whale stocks are moving out of the US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and whether there is homogeneity of pilot whale stock in different parts of the northern Atlantic. He reported that no information exists on movement into Canadian waters for long-finned pilot whales or to the Caribbean for short-finned pilot whales, and that no valid abundance or mortality estimates exist outside of the US EEZ. He noted that the Guidelines for Assessing Marine Mammal Stocks (GAMMS) directs NMFS to calculate PBR based on the abundance of the species/stock in the US EEZ in the absence of information regarding movement of individuals between the EEZ and offshore pelagic areas. This is consistent with the precautionary approach mandated in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). He added that even less information on movement beyond the EEZ is available for Risso’s dolphins.

### **3. Revision of observer data form**

Vicki Cornish reported on the efforts of the Observer Data Form Work Team to produce an updated “Marine Mammal Life History Form.” The Work Team adapted information from the sea turtle life history form and focused on readily collectible information from marine mammal interactions.

PLTRT members provided the following additional comments:

- The effectiveness of the data form should be evaluated periodically.

- Separate data forms may be required for different gear types, given the differences in variables that may be collected.
- Possible additional information fields include: carcass condition and identification number assigned to the animal.
- The form should be renamed to reflect the fact that life history information is not collected on the form.
- An additional form focusing on life history information may be needed for those rare cases when an animal is brought on board the vessel (i.e., mortalities).

NOAA Fisheries staff noted that some information (e.g., vessel and gear characteristics, damage to catch) is included on other observer log forms.

Key implementation next steps include developing more detailed instructions for observers using the form and conducting training for observers. NOAA Fisheries hopes to begin using the new form in the second quarter of 2006, after the observers have been trained in how to fill out the form.

#### Request for additional written comments

PLTRT members were invited to provide additional written comments on the data form to Vicki Cornish ([Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov](mailto:Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov)) by February 10, 2006 (with cc's to Lance Garrison, [lance.garrison@noaa.gov](mailto:lance.garrison@noaa.gov), and Dennis Lee, [dennis.lee@noaa.gov](mailto:dennis.lee@noaa.gov)).

#### **4. Possible bycatch reduction strategies: latest developments from the Alaska sablefish bottom longline fishery**

Jan Straley (University of Alaska, Southeast) and Aaron Thode (Scripps Institution of Oceanography) participated by phone and presented on recent experience in the Alaska sablefish bottom longline fishery regarding depredation by sperm whales.

Among the key findings, Jan and Aaron reported that boat activity and behavior of the vessel captain is very important. In particular, the repeated engagement of engines during haul back causes cavitation, which makes a distinctive sound that may help whales to locate boats. Jan and Aaron also mentioned that depredation by sperm whales may be a learned behavior.

PLTRT members explored possible parallels between the Alaskan bottom longline and Atlantic pelagic longline cases, discussing the possibility of acoustic deterrents, similarities/differences between sperm whale, pilot whale, and Risso's dolphin hearing and sound production, and the effects of different haul back techniques. Jan and Aaron reported that a "circle haul" technique has been shown to reduce the amount of noise coming from vessels as a result of shifting gears. PLTRT members also noted that many of the research questions and methods used for the sperm whale research may have application to bycatch of pilot whales and Risso's dolphins in the longline fishery, but that there may be important differences in hearing and sound production between sperm whales and pilot whales/Risso's dolphins, and gear/oceanographic differences.

## **5. Disentanglement strategies**

### **a. Disentanglement demonstration**

Charlie Bergmann (NOAA Fisheries), assisted by gear manufacturer Shawn Dick, demonstrated the use of de-hookers and disentanglement gear that are typically used on longline vessels in response to sea turtle interactions. They also demonstrated a new, notched prototype that has been developed expressly for dehooking circle hooks.

Sheryan Epperly reported that de-hookers had successfully been used with marine mammals in the Northeast Distant (NED) region.

### **b. Handling/release guideline for marine mammals**

PLTRT members discussed the existing marine mammal Handling/Release Guidelines for pelagic longline gear. Members noted that the Disentanglement Strategies Work Team (led by Jim Budi) had begun but not completed its work highlighting current disentanglement experiences from the longline fleet. Members recommended continuing the process of collecting anecdotal accounts of marine mammal disentanglement.

## **6. Possible bycatch reduction strategies – latest developments from work with sea turtles**

John Watson (NOAA Fisheries) presented on “Pelagic Longline Sea Turtle Mitigation Measures.” Participants discussed applying some of the gear modifications, altered fishing tactics, safe handling and release procedures, and research techniques that arose from sea turtle bycatch reduction efforts to the case of marine mammals. John reported on the benefits and productivity of the cooperative research. Several PLTRT members emphasized the importance of “incentives” in changing fishing behaviors.

PLTRT members discussed the possibility of using the observer program to collect marine mammal biopsies, recognizing the many burdens already faced by observers. Lance Garrison, Patty Rosel, and Dennis Lee will follow up on this issue.

## **7. Update on enforcement regarding marine mammal interactions**

John Barylsky (Special Agent NOAA Office for Law Enforcement, SE division) presented on the role and capacity of NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement with regard to enforcing potential marine mammal management strategies. Katie Moore (US Coast Guard) did the same for the US Coast Guard. John and Katie discussed resource and staff constraints facing their organizations. Both also strongly recommended that the PLTRT develop a TRP with these enforcement constraints in mind. Katie distributed a document developed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission entitled “Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures.” This document is available on the ASMFC website at: [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org).

## 8. Development of a predictive model

Lance Garrison presented on “Predicting the rate of pelagic fishery interactions with marine mammals, turtles, and target species.” He reviewed the explanatory variables addressed by the model (e.g., environment, space, time, gear type, fishing intensity, catch) and highlighted several that had been added since the last PLTRT meeting in September 2005 (i.e., lunar index, haul time of day, wave height, wind speed, weather, live bait, and damage to catch).

Model results show several key variables as being significant in predicting bycatch of pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins. These included:

Species	Key variables
Pilot whales	Geographic area - Mid Atlantic Bight
	All interactions observed within 40 km of shelf break
	Temperature - Peak interaction rates between 70-80 degrees F
	Interaction rate 3 times higher in sets with damage to swordfish catch
	Interaction rate twice as high in sets with mainline lengths greater than 20 miles
Risso’s dolphins	Geographic area – Mid Atlantic Bight and Northeast Coastal
	All interactions observed within 40 km of shelf break
	Apparent bait effect in MAB with increased rates of squid baits
	Similar to pilot whales in mainline and swordfish damage effects
	Weaker overall main effects relative to pilot whales

PLTRT members suggested adding the following variables to the model, contingent on the availability of relevant data:

- Uniqueness of vessel interaction. Are the same boats responsible for most of the bycatch? And, if so, why?
- Boat effects (e.g., recognizable sounds associated with the method of haul back, engine type, etc.)
- Ambient noise levels

Lance also presented on the model results for turtle, swordfish, and tuna catch. He recommended that these be consulted when developing mitigation measures for pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins.

## E. Recommendations for management strategies for reducing mortalities and serious injuries of pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins

The PLTRT members began their discussions on the potential management strategies for inclusion in the TRP that were developed at the last meeting. Based on the results of the predictive model, a multi-interest work group offered a four-point proposal. Other potential management strategies were explored as well.



## 1. Four-point proposal

### a. Reduce mainline length to 20 miles or less

A first proposed management measure consisted of reducing the mainline length so as not to exceed 20 miles.

#### Considerations:

- ***Appropriate measure of effort.*** Several PLTRT members requested that Lance work with a work team to continue refining the model as it pertained to the representation of fishing effort. These participants pointed out that the model measures effort via number of “sets,” while fishermen typically measure effort via number of hooks. Lance explained that he looked at both the length of line per set and the number of hooks, but that only length of line was significant in predicting bycatch.
- ***Restrictions on total effort.*** Some PLTRT members noted that fishermen might respond to a 20-mile mainline length limit by splitting longer mainlines into two separate sets, and questioned whether a restriction on number of sets (or hooks) might also be needed.
- ***Geographic area.*** While PLTRT members broadly agreed that this management measure was appropriate for the MAB, several members also recommended expanding the requirement to the Northeast Coastal (NEC) region, given that long-finned pilot whale and Risso’s dolphin takes occur there as well. These participants expressed the concern that limiting the measure to the MAB might result in displaced fishing effort.
- ***Enforcement feasibility.*** Enforcement participants commented that this proposed measure would be hard to enforce at sea and that adequate assurance would likely require the presence of observers (or the involvement of some other third party). Team members recommended requesting additional observers, although the agency members noted that observers are not for enforcement.

#### Information needs identified:

- PLTRT members requested that NOAA Fisheries examine data from 1999-2000 when there was a 25-mile limit on mainline length in the MAB.
- PLTRT members suggested that additional research be performed on: 1) the minimum distance required between sets, and 2) the exact mechanism that links shorter mainlines to reduced bycatch.

### b. Adopt active avoidance measures

PLTRT members proposed including a management measure that would require vessels, after a specified number/type of marine mammal interactions in a specified area, to stop fishing in that area for a specified period of time. Team members generally supported the view that higher levels of interactions should require higher levels of response. Ideally, such management measures would take place in real time.

Considerations: Key elements of this management measure require additional definition and further discussion:

- ***The “trigger” for avoidance action.*** What number or type of interactions would trigger a responsive action? Would the interactions be calculated per boat or per area?
- ***Type of management actions.*** Who would have to take responsive action—the boat that had the interaction, or other vessels in the area as well? How far away would the boat(s) have to move, and for how long?
- ***Appropriateness of current requirements.*** How effective is the current requirement that vessels move 1 nautical mile after the first interaction? There was much discussion around this point, and many team members felt this was not a viable management strategy in the Mid-Atlantic Bight because of the close proximity in which vessels set their gear.
- ***Enforcement.*** How would the measure be enforced? Is Dynamic Area Management (DAM) sufficient? Is another form of real-time management more appropriate? Can the process be enforced simply through observer reports and logbooks? Would third parties be required? Can VMS be used to monitor whether avoidance actions were taken?
- ***Reporting.*** How would these actions be reported?
- ***Regulations.*** Can such a measure be regulated? PLTRT members suggested looking at the effectiveness of DAMs as implemented under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.

**c. Institute a mandatory certification program for safe handling/release and bycatch avoidance strategies**

PLTRT members recommended that the TRP require a mandatory certification program for longline vessels. The certification program would cover such issues as: safe handling/release, mitigation measures, captain’s communications (see section III.D.5 below), sampling and biopsies, auxiliary log forms/information, and other potential information identified in Section VII.G of the Preliminary Draft TRP. This requirement would apply to longline fishing in the MAB, NEC, and South Atlantic Bight (SAB) regions. The certification program proposed under the Amendment 2 of the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan could be used as a mechanism for incorporating information regarding marine mammal interactions.

**d. Place mandatory informational placard in vessel wheelhouses**

PLTRT members recommended that the TRP require mandatory placement of an informational placard in vessel wheelhouses throughout the Atlantic pelagic longline fleet. The placard would be based on the existing marine mammal Handling/Release Guidelines for pelagic longline gear. It would also draw on information presented in the mandatory certification program (see III.D.3 above). Members also recommended that the placard include reference to the legal requirement of filling out the “Marine Mammal Reporting Form.”

A Work Team will be convened to prepare a draft placard. Work Team participants include: Kristy Long, Dan Mears, Vince Pyle, Karyl Brewster-Geisz, and Charlie Bergmann. The Work Team will incorporate draft text produced by Jim Budi.

## 2. Other potential management strategies discussed

Participants also reviewed and discussed the following management strategies, identified in Section VII of the Preliminary Draft TRP. The first was discussed in more detail than the others.

### a. Improve captain's communications

Participants recommended including a management measure in the TRP that would improve the quality of captain's communications. Participants acknowledged that such measures would have to be voluntary and linked to best practices. Improved captain's communications would be implemented via certification workshops (see III.D.3 above), recertification (for those already certified), dissemination of educational materials, and the placement of a new informational placard (see III.D.4) in vessel wheelhouses. This measure might also involve assigning an industry liaison and establishing agency points of contact.

#### Considerations:

- **Enforcement.** PLTRT members acknowledged that enforcing captain's communications would be difficult.
- **Incentives and disincentives.** Members noted that there may be disincentives to improved captain's communications (e.g., for reasons of competition).
- **Benefit.** Members commented that it will be difficult to quantify the benefits of improved captain's communications if not made mandatory.
- **Regulations.** Members questioned how voluntary communications would translate into a regulation.

### b. Additional candidate management strategies requiring further research or investigation

PLTRT members reviewed and discussed the list of potential management strategies identified during the brainstorming activity at the September PLTRT meeting. Members identified the following potential management strategies as having promise but as also requiring additional research before they could be added to the TRP:

- Use decoy vessels
- Use effective deterrents (nature of deterrent to be determined via research) [Note: participants commented that this strategy could fit both under the overarching categories of "avoiding exposure to vessel gear" and "reducing the probability of interaction once in the vicinity of gear".]
- Set gear with tension to reduce likelihood of entanglement
- Modify hooks (e.g., weak hooks)
- Increase the detectability of gear
- Adopt circle haul back technique

- Allow fishermen to improve vessels so they can fish farther out to sea and move out of areas of high bycatch

Members requested that the above topics be included in the TRP section on Research Needs (see III.F below).

**c. Improving the effectiveness of observer data collections**

PLTRT members broadly supported including information from Section VII.H of the Preliminary Draft TRP in a new section of the TRP that would focus broadly on improving data collection. A small Work Team (Vicki Cornish and Bill McLellan) will be convened to prepare draft language for this new section.

**F. Recommendations for additional research and data collection**

Laura Engleby (NOAA Fisheries) presented the results of work team efforts to prioritize research and data collection needs. PLTRT members made the following comments:

Research needs:

- Re-categorize some of the research and data collection needs. For example, make conducting a population estimate for short- and long-finned pilot whales a “near term” need.
- Add a research recommendation to conduct genetic sampling/biopsies in the winter from NJ to NC (near term)
- Add a research recommendation on monitoring and evaluation of the proposed management measures
- Add research recommendations associated with the possible management strategies identified in III.E.6 above.
- Add introductory language framing all of the research and data collection needs as “priorities” and describing the near, short, and long-term categories as a means of showing temporal emphasis.

Data collection/mining needs:

Team members recommended that the following information be collected and presented at the next PLTRT meeting:

- Analyze the effects of reducing mainline length (to 20 miles or less) on catch and bycatch
- Review data from 1999-2000 when mainline length in the MAB was restricted to a maximum of 25 miles
- Use the predictive model to conduct “what if” scenarios regarding the use of 20 mile or less mainline length
- Review the results of the experimental Cooperative Research Program (CRP) program off of Cape Hatteras
- Analyze observer coverage in the Atlantic to determine geographic distribution
- Analyze interaction data and fishery data to determine “hot spots”
- Investigate possible correlations between individual vessels and marine mammal interactions

- Examine possible relationship between knots in mainline and links to increased cavitation (noise) as gear moves through the water column

PLTRT members agreed that the Research Needs Work Team should continue to assist in the revision of the TRP section on research and data collection needs.

## G. Work Teams to be Convened

Participants agreed to convene the following work teams to assist in preparations for the next PLTRT meeting:

1. **Develop TRP section on improved observer data collection:** Vicki Cornish (lead) and Bill McLellan. This work team will build on section VII.H of the Preliminary Draft TRP to develop a new section for the TRP.
2. **Assess uniqueness of vessel interaction:** Lance Garrison (lead), Nina Young, David Kerstetter, and Nelson Beideman. This Work Team will assist Lance in mining data to determine if correlations exist between particular vessels and marine mammal interactions.
3. **Revise research needs section of TRP:** Laura Engleby (lead), David Kerstetter, Bill McLellan, Damon Gannon, Nelson Beideman, Nina Young, Glenn Delaney, and John Watson. This Work Team will assist in the revision of the TRP section on recommendations for additional research and data collection.
4. **Outline text for informational placard:** Kristy Long (lead), Jessica Koelsch, Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Nelson Beideman, Charlie Bergmann, Dan Mears, Vince Pyle, Glenn Delaney. This Work Team will draw on the existing marine mammal Handling/Release Guidelines for pelagic longline gear and information produced by Jim Budi to prepare an informational placard to appear in vessel wheelhouses.
5. **Continue development and use of predictive modeling to provide quantitative assessment of alternative mitigation measures:** Lance Garrison (lead), Damon Gannon, Jean Cramer, and David Kerstetter. This Work Team will continue development of the predictive model, taking into account comments made at the January 2006 PLTRT meeting. This Work Team will also assist Lance Garrison in using the model to examine “what if” scenarios.
6. **Enhance collection of marine mammal biopsies:** Patricia Rosel (lead), Lance Garrison, and Dennis Lee. This work team will explore the possibility of using observers to collect marine mammal biopsies (building on sea turtle experience).
7. **Refine details of key management strategies:** open to all PLTRT members. PLTRT members will be invited to convene via teleconference to discuss proposed revisions to key management strategies: 1) reducing mainline length to less than 20 miles, and 2) taking active avoidance measures. NOAA Fisheries staff will clarify key decisions to be made. NOAA Fisheries staff and CONCUR will convene the meetings.

## H. Revising the Preliminary Draft TRP

NOAA Fisheries staff will revise the Preliminary Draft TRP per discussions at the January 2006 PLTRT meeting and transmit this to PLTRT members for review within 2-3 weeks. NOAA Fisheries staff requested that PLTRT members provide any additional written comments to the revised draft within a two-week comment period, and that these comments be transmitted to Vicki Cornish at [Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov](mailto:Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov) (preferably in “track changes” format).

PLTRT members discussed the importance of refining the draft TRP to the greatest degree possible during the interim period between the January and April PLTRT meetings.

PLTRT members also requested that draft regulatory language for the TRP (and, in particular, the management strategies) be developed prior to the April 2006 PLTRT meeting so they can be discussed during the meeting.

## I. Key information needs for next PLTRT meeting

Possible briefings for the next PLTRT meeting include:

- Update on trawl TRT by Mark Minton
- Update on HMS FMP (Amendment 2) by Karyl Brewster-Geisz
- Presentation of near term data collection/mining needs (see III.E above)

## J. Meeting schedule

NOAA Fisheries staff announced their desire to reschedule the April PLTRT meeting date from April 26-28 to April 25-27, 2006. CONCUR will contact the hotel in St. Petersburg to explore the possibility.

## IV. Next Steps

Key next steps include the following:

### A. Project facilitators

- CONCUR to develop and transmit Key Outcomes Memorandum to PLTRT members **by February 17, 2006**. DONE
- CONCUR to post January 25-27, 2006 meeting materials and presentations on project website **by February 10, 2006**. DONE
- CONCUR to send reminder note on reimbursement **by February 6, 2006**. DONE
- CONCUR to contact St. Petersburg hotel to explore moving the April meeting dates from April 26-28 to April 25-27, 2006 (**by February 6, 2006**). DONE

**B. NOAA Fisheries core staff (Vicki, Laura, Kristy, and Kate)**

- NOAA Fisheries staff to revise Preliminary Draft TRP per January 2006 PLTRT meeting discussions and transmit to PLTRT members for review **by February 21, 2006**.
- NOAA Fisheries staff to prepare draft regulatory text for recommended management measures **prior to April 2006 PLTRT meeting (contingent on refinement of management strategies)**.

**C. PLTRT members (and NOAA Fisheries support staff)**

- PLTRT members (and NOAA Fisheries support staff) are invited to provide written comments on revised Draft TRP **after a two-week comment period (tentative by March 7, 2006)**. Please transmit to Vicki Cornish at [Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov](mailto:Vicki.cornish@noaa.gov). In preparing comments, PLTRT members should consider the following:
  - Confirm that the draft TRP does not contain any glaring inaccuracies
  - Confirm that key information has not been omitted
  - Add clarifying detail where requested or appropriate
- PLTRT members (and NOAA Fisheries support staff) to provide written comment on revised Observer Data Form (“Marine Mammal Life History Form”) **by February 10, 2006**. DONE
- Work Teams to meet in a timely manner to produce required information for the April 2006 PLTRT meeting.