Marine Mammals and Commercial Fisheries

Minimizing Bycatch through Collaboration

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt

Marine Mammal Take Reduction Planning

Why Take Reduction Planning?

- The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy declared bycatch as the largest threat currently facing marine mammals in the United States.
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) mandates NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to develop and implement Take Reduction Plans for preventing the depletion and assisting in the recovery of certain marine mammal stocks that are seriously injured or killed in commercial fisheries.

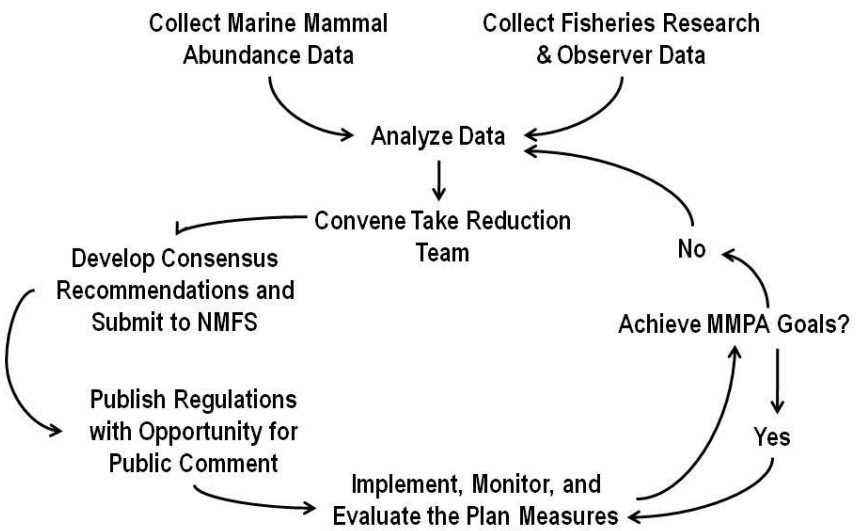
Components of a Plan

Each Plan is designed to minimize serious injuries and deaths through a combination of voluntary and regulatory measures and must include:

- An analysis of the most recent marine mammal Stock Assessment Reports,
- Estimates of total mortality and serious injury for each marine mammal stock,
- Recommended regulatory or voluntary bycatch reduction measures, and
- A timeline for achieving the take reduction goals.

Take Reduction Planning Process

- Take Reduction Teams are established when fisheries interact with certain marine mammal stocks.
- Teams are composed of members from the fishing industry, fishery management councils, Federal agencies, coastal states, academia, and environmental organizations.
- NMFS develops regulations based on Team consensus recommendations.
- After public comments are received, NMFS implements, monitors, and evaluates measures set forth within the Plans.



National Marine Fisheries Service

Office of Protected Resources

The Office of Protected Resources works to conserve, protect, and recover species through research, management, and education.

Goals, Assessments, and Reevaluation

Under the MMPA, Plans must achieve both short and long-term goals for reducing bycatch.

- The immediate goal is to reduce bycatch to below the stock's Potential Biological Removal Level (PBR) within 6 months of implementation.
- The long-term goal is to reduce bycatch to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 5 years.
- During the planning and monitoring processes, the economic situation and technology available within the fishery are considered when evaluating the long-term goal.

Collaboration

Take reduction planning and monitoring would not be possible without strong collaboration between NMFS and its regional partners, including the fishing industry, scientists, environmental groups, and other government agencies. Teams use the best available data when recommending research priorities and management measures within each Plan.

ATLANTIC OCEAN TEAMS

Atlantic Large Whale (http://go.usa.gov/ldN)
- Species: North Atlantic right, humpback and fin whales
- Fisheries: Trap/pot and gillnet

Harbor Porpoise (http://go.usa.gov/kV6)
- Species: Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy harbor porpoises
- Fisheries: Northeast sink and Mid-Atlantic gillnet

Pelagic Longline (http://go.usa.gov/kVt)
- Species: Pilot whales and Risso's dolphins
- Fisheries: Pelagic longline

Atlantic Trawl Gear (http://go.usa.gov/kVA)
- Species: Atlantic white-sided and common dolphins, and pilot whales
- Fisheries: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic mid-water and bottom trawls

Bottlenose Dolphin (http://go.usa.gov/kVs)
- Species: Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphins
- Fisheries: Gillnet; long haul seine; stop net; trap/pot; pound net; haul/beach seine

PACIFIC OCEAN TEAMS

Pacific Offshore Cetacean (http://go.usa.gov/kVF)
- Species: Beaked, short-finned pilot, pygmy sperm, sperm, and humpback whales, and northern right whale dolphins
- Fisheries: California drift gillnet

False Killer Whale (http://go.usa.gov/kVM)
- Species: Hawaii pelagic, Hawaii insular, and Palmyra Atoll false killer whales
- Fisheries: Hawaii deep-set and shallow-set longline

Contact the Office of Protected Resources for more information

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/