



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

DEC 9 502007

Donald M. Baltz, Ph.D.
Chair, Atlantic Scientific Review Group
Coastal Fisheries Institute
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803-7503

Dear Dr. Baltz:

Thank you for your letter to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries transmitting recommendations from the January 2007 meeting of the Atlantic Scientific Review Group. Your letter was forwarded to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Office of Protected Resources for a response because this office is responsible for national coordination for assessment and conservation of marine mammals.

The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) is planning to reconvene the harbor porpoise team December 17-19, 2007, as a combined meeting of the New England and Mid-Atlantic portions of the team. NERO has completed several administrative steps (e.g., contacting team members and soliciting an external facilitator) in preparation for the meeting. NERO has worked with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center to compile the necessary information for a successful meeting and has been investigating the effectiveness of altered net configurations for reducing bycatch and pinger testers for increasing compliance with existing regulations. Results of these investigations will be on the agenda for the upcoming meeting.

NMFS continues to support the activities of other Take Reduction Teams to the extent that resources allow, including the implementation of conservation measures and continued monitoring to evaluate success of existing plans.

I appreciate your continued support and cooperation as members of the regional Scientific Review Groups and look forward to working with you to conserve marine mammals and other living marine resources.

Sincerely,

James H. Lecky
Director
Office of Protected Resources

