

VA Pound Net Fishery

Fishing gear type: Pound Net

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The 2010 LOF included a superscript "1" following bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal stock) because the annual mortality and serious injury of that stock in this fishery was greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. When the stocks of bottlenose dolphins killed/injured in this fishery were updated on the 2011 LOF, the superscript "1" was retained after each of these stocks because NMFS cannot yet differentiate to which stock a killed/injured animal belongs. Until NMFS is able to do so, each stock of bottlenose dolphin is considered to be driving the classification of the fishery.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Bottlenose dolphin, Northern Migratory coastal⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Northern North Carolina (NC) estuarine system; Bottlenose dolphin, Southern Migratory coastal⁽¹⁾.

Estimated number of current participants: 231

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan (BDTRP), 50 CFR 229.35.

Year added to the LOF: 2001

Category when originally listed: Category II

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was categorized as a Category II based on evidence of coastal bottlenose dolphin mortality in pound nets, especially in the Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay. NMFS proposed to list the fishery to cover the entire mid-Atlantic; however, it was limited to Virginia because of where interactions occurred. Other pound net effort was incorporated into the Category III "U.S. mid-Atlantic mixed species stop seine/weir/pound net fishery." Using stranding data only (therefore minimum estimates) from 1993-1997, 2 (or 0.4 animals/year) bottlenose dolphin carcasses were found with marks consistent with pound nets, which was 1.6% of PBR (PBR=25). One other stranding in the area was suspected to be from an interaction with pound net gear.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 187

Past names, if any: None.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses stationary gear. Pound net gear includes a large mesh lead posted perpendicular to the shoreline and extending outward to the corral, or "heart," where the catch accumulates.

Target species: Weakfish, spot, and croaker.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: Effort in this fishery occurs in nearshore coastal and estuarine waters off Virginia. This fishery includes all pound net effort in Virginia state waters, including waters inside the Chesapeake Bay.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: There has not been formal observer coverage in this fishery; however, the Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP) has monitoring and characterization that occurs sporadically in this fishery.

Management and regulations: The fishery is managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission under the Interstate Fishery Management Plans for Atlantic Croaker and Spot, and is an affected fishery under the BDTRP.

History of Changes on the LOF

2012 LOF:

- Added bottlenose dolphin (Northern NC estuarine system stock) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. Stranding data for 2004-2008 indicate 17 bottlenose dolphins (Northern NC estuarine system stock) were killed in pound net gear and 3 were released alive. The level of injury for the 3 dolphins released alive was undetermined. These interactions occurred primarily inside estuarine waters near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in summer months. Nine of these mortalities occurred during the summer (July-September) and, therefore, could be from the Northern NC estuarine system stocks. The 2010 SAR states that this fishery is known to interact with this stock.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 52 to 231.

2011 LOF:

- Updated the stock name for bottlenose dolphins killed/injured in this fishery, based on the revised stock structure presented in the final 2008 and 2009 SARs. Replaced bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal) with the following stocks: bottlenose dolphin (Northern Migratory coastal) and bottlenose dolphin (Southern Migratory coastal).
- Retained a superscript “1” after each of these stocks because the 2010 LOF includes a superscript “1” following bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal) and NMFS cannot yet differentiate to which stock a killed/injured animal belongs. Until NMFS is able to do so, each stock of bottlenose dolphin is considered to be driving the classification of the fishery.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 41 to 52.

2010 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 187 to 41.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “1” in Table 2 after bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal), indicating that it is driving the categorization of this fishery.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Report (SAR).