

Depredation on commercial longline and recreational hook and line fisheries by small cetaceans in the Southeast U.S.

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Small cetaceans are known to depredate on both commercial and recreational fisheries around the world (Donoghue 2002; Read 2005). In the mid-Atlantic, pilot whale depredation on commercial pelagic longline catches has resulted in serious injuries to the whales and significant loss of fish catch (Waring *et al.* 2006; L. Garrison, unpublished data). In the Gulf of Mexico, bottlenose dolphins have been observed to steal Spanish mackerel from recreational anglers fishing off piers and from small boats (S. Carlson, pers. comm.), as well as from anglers onboard chartered fishing vessels (Zollett and Read 2006; R. Hardy, pers. comm.). The problem of depredation by small cetaceans appears to be increasing in the Southeastern United States, for reasons not fully understood. I will discuss available information regarding both the nature and frequency of these interactions, preliminary modeling of interactions to help discern what factors may be linked to depredation (in the longline fishery), research that has been conducted to date, plans for additional research, and actions that NOAA Fisheries is taking in conjunction with fishermen and other stakeholders to reduce interactions. Of particular relevance to symposium participants is the identification of commonalities in depredation and behavioral patterns that will aid in finding possible solutions that may be applicable across species and fisheries.

References:

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