



NOAA FISHERIES Protected Resources

The Office of Protected Resources works to conserve, protect, and recover species through research, management, and education in conjunction with our Regional Offices, Science Centers, and various partners.



Marine Mammals and Commercial Fisheries

Minimizing Bycatch through Collaboration

Why Take Reduction Planning?

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) mandates NOAA Fisheries 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.

The Planning Process

- NOAA Fisheries convenes Take Reduction Teams, composed of stakeholders that make recommendations for reducing serious injury and deaths (bycatch) to acceptable levels.
- The Teams design each Plan to reduce bycatch within a specific timeframe through a combination of voluntary and regulatory measures implemented by NOAA Fisheries.

Goals, Assessments, and Reevaluation

Under the MMPA, each Plan must be developed so that:

- Bycatch rates are below the stock's Potential Biological Removal Level within 6 months, and
- Bycatch is reduced to insignificant levels approaching a zero serious injury and mortality rate within 5 years.

Take Reduction Teams

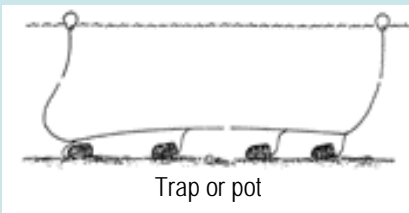
Pacific Ocean

Pacific Offshore Cetacean (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFEz>)

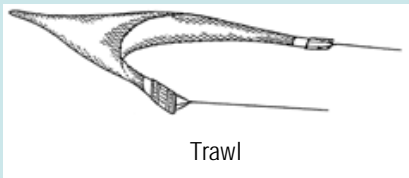
- Marine Mammals: West coast beaked, short-finned pilot, pygmy sperm, sperm, and humpback whales
- Fisheries: California drift gillnet
- Key Measures: Minimum set depths, pinger requirements, and educational workshops
- Status: Bycatch for beaked and pygmy sperm whales has been reduced to insignificant levels.

False Killer Whale (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFm4>)

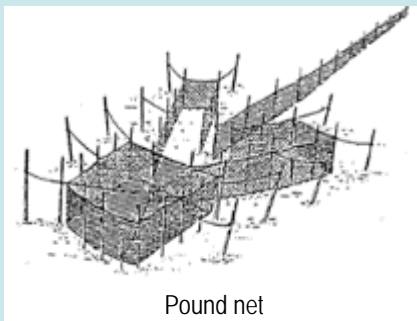
- Marine Mammals: Hawaii pelagic and insular, and Palmyra Atoll false killer whales
- Fisheries: Hawaii deep-set and shallow-set longline targeting tuna and swordfish
- Key Measures: Proposed use of weak circle hooks, time/area closures, and handling and release procedures
- Status: Amendments to the 2012 Plan under development.



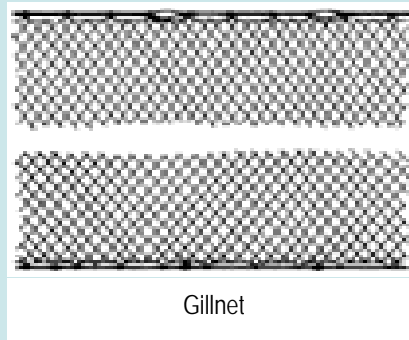
Trap or pot



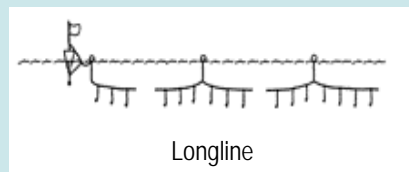
Trawl



Pound net



Gillnet



Longline

Atlantic Ocean

Atlantic Large Whale (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFmb>)

- Marine Mammals: North Atlantic right, humpback, and fin whales
- Fisheries: U.S. East coast trap/pot and gillnet
- Key Measures: Gear modifications, marking requirements, and time/area closures
- **Status:** Monitoring and assessing the Plan that was amended in 2015.

Atlantic Trawl Gear (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFm5>)

- Marine Mammals: White-sided dolphins, common dolphins, short-finned and long-finned pilot whales
- Fisheries: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic mid-water and bottom trawls
- Key Measures: Voluntarily minimizing tow times and increasing radio communications
- **Status:** Strategy developed in 2008 for monitoring bycatch and conducting priority research and outreach projects.

Bottlenose Dolphin (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFmN>)

- Marine Mammals: Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphins
- Fisheries: North Carolina – inshore gillnet, long haul seine, roe mullet stop net; Southeast Atlantic – gillnet; Mid-Atlantic – haul/beach seine, coastal gillnet, blue crab trap/pot; Virginia pound net
- Key Measures: seasonal gillnet restrictions, gear proximity requirements, and gear length restrictions
- **Status:** Monitoring and assessing the Plan that was amended in 2012 and 2015.

Harbor Porpoise (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFmm>)

- Marine Mammals: Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy harbor porpoises
- Fisheries: Northeast sink gillnet and Mid-Atlantic gillnet
- Key Measures: Pinger use, time/area closures, and gear modification requirements
- **Status:** Monitoring and assessing the Plan that was amended in 2013.

Pelagic Longline (<https://go.usa.gov/xEFmy>)

- Marine Mammals: Short- and long-finned pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins
- Fisheries: Atlantic pelagic longline
- Key Measures: Handling and release procedures, mainline length restrictions, and a special research area
- **Status:** Amendments to the 2009 Plan under development.

Additional Resources

Marine Mammal Take Reduction Program

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-take-reduction-plans-and-teams>

MMPA List of Fisheries

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-protection-act-list-fisheries>

Marine Mammal Protection

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/marine-mammal-protection>

Bycatch

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/bycatch>