



NOAA FISHERIES

An Endangered Species:

- Smalltooth sawfish are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Federal law prohibits injuring or harming sawfish
- Captured sawfish should be released immediately

Materials Needed:

- Measuring tape
- Net pick or boat hook
- Knife, line cutter, scissors
- Ropes
- Water quality meter (if available)
- Datasheets
- GPS
- Camera
- PIT reader (if available)

Reporting:

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Endangered Sawfish Handling, Release, and Reporting Procedures

for Individuals with Permitted Incidental Sawfish Take (commercial fishermen, non-targeted researchers, etc.)



General Handling and Release Guidelines

- Work quickly to free and release the sawfish as soon as possible
- Keep sawfish in the water as much as possible
- Keep sawfish wet if it must be removed from the water
- Leave sawfish in net or on line until ready for release
- Do NOT stand or sit next to the rostrum
- Tie rope around tip of saw or tail only if needed to control sawfish for safety

Line Gear (longline, rod and reel, etc.) Specifics

- Keep the sawfish, especially the gills, in the water as much as possible
- Use line-cutting poles, long-handled dehookers, and/or boat hooks to remove line or gear
- DO NOT attempt to remove the hook, just cut the line as close to the hook as possible
- If line is tangled around the body or saw, untangle and remove as much of the line from around the sawfish as possible and then cut the line close to the hook

Net Gear (trawls, gillnets, etc.) Specifics

- Keep the sawfish, especially the gills, in the water as much as possible
- Use line-cutting pole, scissors, and/or knife to cut free any net tangled around the saw by cutting the mesh along the length of the saw
- Once the mesh is cut, work it free with a boat hook or line-cutting pole

Data Recording

Please record as much information as you can quickly and safely including:

- Date and time
- Latitude and longitude (or detailed location description)
- Habitat description (water depth, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen)
- Photographs (in/on gear, body, rostrum)
- Markings, scars, wounds
- Tag number and type if applicable
- Lengths (saw and total, estimate if necessary)
- Sex
- Release condition including any remaining gear