

To: Pelagic Longline Team Members
From: Scott McCreary and Bennett Brooks, CONCUR, Inc.
Date: August 22, 2008
Re: Key Outcomes Memorandum – April 2006 Meeting

Attached is the Summary Key Outcomes Memorandum prepared by CONCUR for the April 25-27, 2006, Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (TRT) meeting. This document summarizes the primary recommendations and next steps agreed to at the meeting. It was distributed to Team members via email in May 2006. No additional meeting summaries were prepared based on the meeting.

Summary Key Outcomes Memorandum

(Sent to PLTRT via email on May 3, 2006)

Date: May 3, 2006

To: Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (PLTRT) Members

From: Scott McCreary and Eric Poncelet, CONCUR, Inc.

Re: Key Outcomes Memorandum – April 25-27, 2006 PLTRT Meeting

cc: NOAA Fisheries staff

The fourth PLTRT meeting took place in St. Petersburg, Florida from April 25-27, 2006.

The primary objectives for the meeting were to:

- 1) Present briefings from work teams and information-gathering efforts, and discuss the implications for the Take Reduction Plan (TRP)
- 2) Discuss, review, and revise the Draft TRP (April 18, 2006 version)
- 3) Outline plan for completing the Draft TRP to present to NMFS by May 31, 2006
- 4) Outline next steps for achieving the goals of the PLTRP.

Key outcomes from the meeting were as follows:

- PLTRT members deliberated and reached agreement on key elements of a proposed management strategy (for Section VIII of Draft TRP). PLTRT members recommended that the following four measures be implemented via regulation:
 - a) Set a 20 nautical-mile upper limit on mainline length for all pelagic longline sets within the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB).
 - b) Establish a Cape Hatteras Special Research Area, an area defined to capture hot spots of bycatch and a concentration of fishing effort, with the following approximate coordinates: southern boundary = 35 degrees N, northern boundary = 36 degrees 25 minutes N, western boundary = 75 degrees W, and eastern boundary = 74 degrees 35 minutes W. (The southern boundary coincides exactly with the southern boundary of the MAB). Vessels fishing in this area: must be capable of carrying observers and must carry an observer, if requested by NMFS; must be willing and able to participate in any NMFS-approved research; and must maintain daily communications with other vessel operators fishing in this area.
 - c) Develop and distribute an informational placard that must be displayed in the wheelhouse and the working deck of all active pelagic longline vessels in the Atlantic Fishery.
 - d) Develop and implement a mandatory certification program to educate owners and operators of pelagic longline vessels about ways to reduce serious injury and mortality of marine mammals.

PLTRT members recommended that the following additional measures be implemented via non-regulatory means:

- e) Provide for 12-15% observer coverage throughout all highly migratory species fisheries that interact with pilot whales or Risso's dolphins.
 - f) Encourage vessel operators to maintain daily communications with other local vessel operators regarding protected species interactions, with the goal of identifying and exchanging information relevant to avoiding protected species and all other bycatch.
 - g) Employ careful handling/release equipment and methods, including the development of new technologies.
 - h) Provide quarterly reports of bycatch of marine mammals in the pelagic longline fishery to the PLTRT.
- PLTRT members identified research and data collection tasks for Section IX of the Draft TRP. PLTRT members organized these tasks into three time frames, keyed to how long the tasks would take to complete once initiated--i.e., near term tasks completed within one year of initiation, short term tasks completed within 1-3 years of initiation, and long term tasks completed within 5 years of initiation. The PLTRT recommended that priority be given to research on species that are closest to PBR, research that evaluates the effects of the TRP's recommended management measures, and research on species-specific abundance, mortality, and post-hooking survivorship. They also stressed that research framed as "longer term" is not intrinsically of lower priority than more near/short term research.
 - PLTRT members offered several specific revisions to the other TRP sections. Specific PLTRT members agreed to prepare new or revised text for specific sections of the plan.
 - PLTRT members agreed that implementation of the package of measures, through rulemaking, should begin as soon as the Draft TRP is completed. They also recognized that rulemaking involves several layers of review within NMFS, NOAA, DOC, and OMB. As such, they recognized that rulemaking to implement the TRP may take 12-15 months, or longer.
 - PLTRT members agreed to an adaptive management-based approach for achieving the goals of the TRP (section IX. of the TRP). Members recommended scheduling future PLTRT meetings to coincide with the availability of new bycatch estimates and other critical data as well as the outcomes of key research. In particular, members recommended that quarterly bycatch estimates be used as the trigger for potential conference calls with the whole Team (to be scheduled as needed), and that the calls be used to take stock of the need to convene in person. Members agreed provisionally to schedule a conference call approximately 6 months after completion of the TRP to discuss the status of the Plan document and implementation of measures. Members discussed the possibility of convening an in-person meeting approximately one year from either the completion or the publishing of the TRP.
 - PLTRT members agreed to a series of next steps to support completing the Draft TRP by May 31, 2006.
 - NMFS staff concluded the meeting with broad statements of thanks and appreciation.

