

STRIPED DOLPHIN (*Stenella coeruleoalba*): Hawaii Stock

STOCK DEFINITION AND GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

Striped dolphins are found in tropical to warm-temperate waters throughout the world (Perrin et al. 2009). Sightings have historically been infrequent in nearshore waters (Shallenberger 1981, Mobley et al. 2000, Baird et al. 2013). Summer/fall shipboard surveys of the waters within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Hawaiian Islands, resulted in 15 sightings of striped dolphins in 2002 and 29 in 2010 (Figure 1; Barlow 2006, Bradford et al. 2013).

Striped dolphins have been intensively exploited in the western North Pacific, where three migratory stocks are provisionally recognized (Kishiro and Kasuya 1993). In the eastern tropical Pacific all striped dolphins are provisionally considered to belong to a single stock (Dizon et al. 1994). For the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) stock assessment reports, striped dolphins within the Pacific U.S. EEZ are divided into two discrete areas: 1) waters off California, Oregon and Washington, and 2) waters around Hawaii (this report), including animals found both within the Hawaiian Islands EEZ and in adjacent high seas waters. Because data on abundance, distribution, and human-caused impacts are largely lacking for high seas waters, the status of the Hawaii stock is evaluated based on data from U.S. EEZ waters of the Hawaiian Islands (NMFS 2005). Striped dolphins involved in eastern tropical Pacific tuna purse-seine fisheries are managed separately under the MMPA.

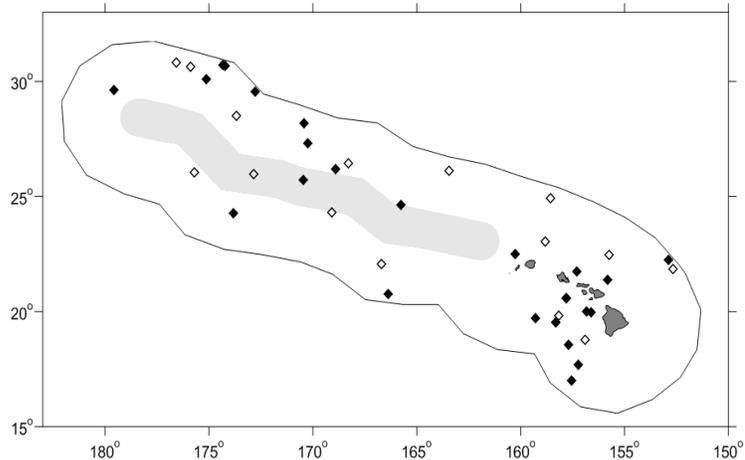


Figure 1. Striped dolphin sighting locations during the 2002 (open diamonds) and 2010 (black diamonds) shipboard surveys of U.S. EEZ waters surrounding the Hawaiian Islands (Barlow 2006, Bradford et al. 2013; see Appendix 2 for details on timing and location of survey effort). Outer line represents approximate boundary of survey area and U.S. EEZ. Gray shading indicates area of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

POPULATION SIZE

Population estimates are available for Japanese waters (Miyashita 1993) and the eastern tropical Pacific (Wade and Gerrodette 1993), but it is not known whether any of these animals are part of the same population that occurs around the Hawaiian Islands. A 2002 shipboard line-transect survey of the entire Hawaiian Islands EEZ resulted in an abundance estimate of 13,143 (CV=0.46) striped dolphins (Barlow 2006). The recent 2010 shipboard line-transect survey of the Hawaiian Islands EEZ resulted in an abundance estimate of 20,650 (CV=0.36) striped dolphins (Bradford et al. 2013). This is currently the best available abundance estimate for this stock.

Minimum Population Estimate

The minimum population size is calculated as the lower 20th percentile of the log-normal distribution (Barlow et al. 1995) of the 2010 abundance estimate, or 15,391 striped dolphins.

Current Population Trend

The broad and overlapping confidence intervals around the 2002 and 2010 estimates preclude assessment of trends with the available data.

CURRENT AND MAXIMUM NET PRODUCTIVITY RATES

No data are available on current or maximum net productivity rate.

POTENTIAL BIOLOGICAL REMOVAL

The potential biological removal (PBR) level for the Hawaii stock of striped dolphins is calculated as the minimum population size within the U.S. EEZ of the Hawaiian Islands (15,391) times one half the default maximum net growth rate for cetaceans ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 4%) times a recovery factor of 0.5 (for a stock of unknown status with no known fishery mortality and serious injury within the Hawaiian Islands EEZ ; Wade and Angliss 1997), resulting in a PBR of 154 striped dolphins per year.

HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY AND SERIOUS INJURY

New Serious Injury Guidelines

NMFS updated its serious injury designation and reporting process, which uses guidance from previous serious injury workshops, expert opinion, and analysis of historic injury cases to develop new criteria for distinguishing serious from non-serious injury (Angliss and DeMaster 1998, Andersen et al. 2008, NMFS 2012). NMFS defines serious injury as an “*injury that is more likely than not to result in mortality*”. Injury determinations for stock assessments revised in 2013 or later incorporate the new serious injury guidelines, based on the most recent 5-year period for which data are available.

Fishery Information

Information on fishery-related mortality and serious injury of cetaceans in Hawaiian waters is limited, but the gear types used in Hawaiian fisheries are responsible for marine mammal mortality and serious injury in other fisheries throughout U.S. waters. Entanglement in gillnets and hooking or entanglement in various hook and line fisheries have been reported for small cetaceans in Hawaii (Nitta & Henderson, 1993). One striped dolphin stranded entangled in fishing gear in 2005, but the responsible fishery cannot be determined, as the entangled gear was not described (NMFS PIR MMRN). No estimates of human-caused mortality or serious injury are currently available for nearshore hook and line or gillnet fisheries because these fisheries are not observed or monitored for protected species bycatch.

There are currently two distinct longline fisheries based in Hawaii: a deep-set longline (DSL) fishery that targets primarily tunas, and a shallow-set longline fishery (SSL) that targets swordfish. Both fisheries operate within U.S. waters and on the high seas. Between 2007 and 2011, one striped dolphin was killed and two seriously injured on the high seas in the SSL fishery (100% observer coverage), and one striped dolphin was killed on the high seas in the DSL fishery (20-22% observer coverage) (Figure 2, Bradford & Forney 2013, McCracken 2013). Average 5-yr estimates of annual mortality and serious injury for 2007-2011 are 1.4 (CV = 0.9) dolphins outside of U.S. EEZs, and zero within the Hawaiian Islands EEZ (Table 1). Eight unidentified cetaceans were taken in the DSL fishery, and two unidentified cetaceans were taken in the SSL fishery, some of which may have been striped dolphins.

STATUS OF STOCK

The Hawaii stock of striped dolphins is not considered strategic under the 1994 amendments to the MMPA. The status of striped dolphins in Hawaiian waters relative to OSP is unknown, and there are insufficient data to

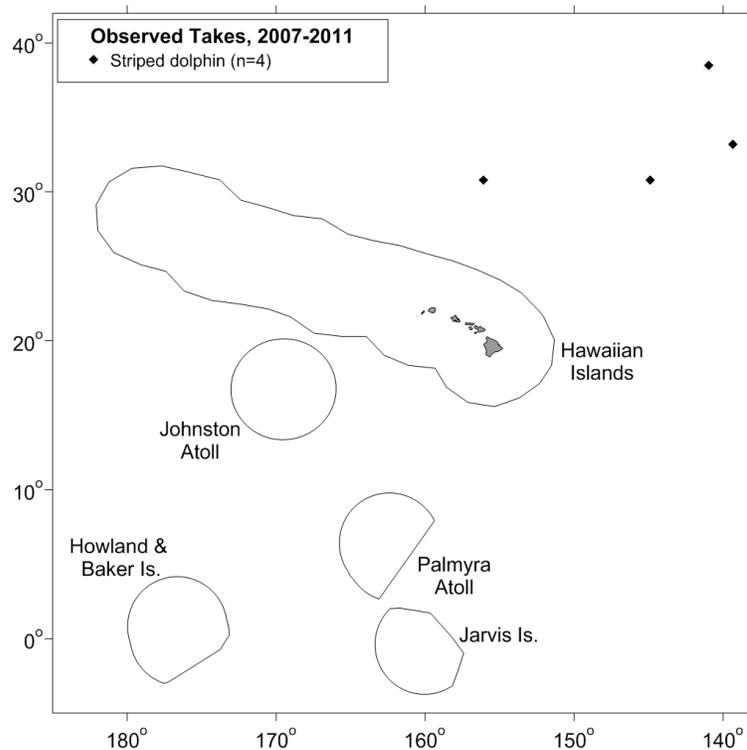


Figure 2. Locations of striped dolphin takes (filled diamonds) in Hawaii-based longline fisheries, 2007-2011. Solid lines represent the U.S. EEZs. Fishery descriptions are provided in Appendix 1.

evaluate trends in abundance. Striped dolphins are not listed as “threatened” or “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act (1973), nor designated as “depleted” under the MMPA. Given the absence of recent recorded fishery-related mortality or serious injuries in U.S. EEZ waters, total fishery mortality and serious injury for striped dolphins can be considered insignificant and approaching zero. One striped dolphin stranded in the main Hawaiian Islands tested positive for *Brucella* (Chernov, 2010) and another for *Morbillivirus* (Jacob 2012). *Brucella* is a bacterial infection that may limit recruitment by compromising male and female reproductive systems if it is common in the population, and can also cause neurological disorders that may result in death (Van Bressem et al. 2009). Although *morbillivirus* is known to trigger lethal disease in cetaceans (Van Bressem et al. 2009), its impact on the health of the stranded animal is not known as it was found in only a few tested tissues (Jacob 2012). The presence of *Morbillivirus* in 10 species (Jacob 2012) and *Brucella* in 3 species (Cherbov 2010, West unpublished data) raises concerns about the history and prevalence of these diseases in Hawaii and the potential population impacts on Hawaiian cetaceans. It is not known if *Brucella* or *Morbillivirus* are common in the Hawaii stock.

Table 1. Summary of available information on incidental mortality and serious injury of striped dolphin (Hawaii stock) in commercial longline fisheries, within and outside of U.S. EEZs (McCracken & Forney 2010). Mean annual takes are based on 2007-2011 data unless otherwise indicated. Information on all observed takes (T) and combined mortality events & serious injuries (MSI) is included. Total takes were prorated to deaths, serious injuries, and non-serious injuries based on the observed proportions of each outcome.

| Fishery Name | Year | Data Type | Percent Observer Coverage | Observed total interactions (T) and mortality events, and serious injuries (MSI), and total estimated mortality and serious injury (M&SI) of striped dolphins | | | |
|---|------|---------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Outside U.S. EEZs | | Hawaiian EEZ | |
| | | | | Obs. T/MSI | Estimated M&SI (CV) | Obs. T/MSI | Estimated M&SI (CV) |
| Hawaii-based deep-set longline fishery | 2007 | Observer data | 20% | 0 | 0 (-) | 0 | 0 (-) |
| | 2008 | | 22% | 0 | 0 (-) | 0 | 0 (-) |
| | 2009 | | 21% | 0 | 0 (-) | 0 | 0 (-) |
| | 2010 | | 21% | 0 | 0 (-) | 0 | 0 (-) |
| | 2011 | | 20% | 1/1 | 4 (1.5) | 0 | 0 (-) |
| Mean Estimated Annual Take (CV) | | | | 0.8 (0.9) | | 0 (-) | |
| Hawaii-based shallow-set longline fishery | 2007 | Observer data | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2008 | | 100% | 1/1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2009 | | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2010 | | 100% | 2/2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2011 | | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean Annual Takes (100% coverage) | | | | 0.6 | | 0 | |
| Minimum total annual takes within U.S. EEZ | | | | | | 0 (-) | |

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