



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
Sustainable Fisheries Division
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802

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SAFETY NOTICE FOR DEEP SET BUOY GEAR EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT OPERATORS

The West Coast Region Observer Program (WCROP) would like to make captains, crew and observers aware of potential safety hazards associated with hauling deep-set buoy gear.

Several incidents have occurred this season with weights flying into vessels, crew and hydraulic equipment. These incidents are likely the result of hauling too fast with too much drag on the bandit reel and too much bend in the arm. This may cause fish to spit hooks and a rapid release of tension on the line.

The following guidelines are recommended for successful and safe operation of DSBG.

- Be aware of your position relative to the gear at all times.
- During the haul, maintain awareness of the tension on the main line and bandit reel, if needed reduce drag and slow down the hauling speed.
- If the 3.6kg (8 lb.) weight quickly breaks the surface, it may fly up with significant force upon leaving the water potentially resulting in serious injury to crew or damage the vessel.
- Focus on the gear while it is being deployed or retrieved at all times.
- Keep hands away from the spool while it is in motion.
- Minimize loose line on the deck, especially when catch is being hauled in.
- Bring fish to color as soon as practical and allow fish to be retained to wear out before bringing onboard.
- DO NOT step into loops/bites created by lines, especially close to the gunwhales.
- Observers should wait until gear is completely hauled and that the catch is secured/dead before approaching it to take biometric data etc.
- Observers should take biological samples in an area away from fishing operations as much as practical.

Safety on board the vessel is everyone's responsibility, please use caution while learning to properly use DSBG.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (562) 980-4033 or charles.villafana@noaa.gov

Sincerely,

Charles Villafana
West Coast Region Observer Program Manager

