



Mississippi Restoration Area

Reduction of Marine Mammal Fishery Interactions through Trawl Technique and Component Material Improvements

June 2022

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The overall goal of this project is to provide restoration benefits to Gulf of Mexico common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus truncatus*) by decreasing the number of interactions and associated mortality of dolphins in commercial shrimp skimmer trawls in Mississippi state waters, while maintaining catch efficiency and fishing performance/usability.

The project will be conducted by researchers working with the fishing community to evaluate the performance and usability of both trawl covers and trawls constructed of alternative materials in comparison to the standard polyethylene webbing. The project will also compare shrimp catch rates and net maintenance between the alternative materials and the standard webbing. Drones and acoustic underwater cameras (ARIS/DIDSON) would also be explored to use in observing dolphin behavior during trawling operations. Testing will occur aboard chartered commercial shrimp trawl vessels and NOAA research vessels. After testing is complete, data will be evaluated to identify preferred trawl configuration(s) that minimize dolphin interactions while maintaining catch and operations (performance and usability). A plan will be developed and implemented for voluntary gear modifications, which may include, but is not limited to, incentivized use of alternate gear.

IMPLEMENTING TRUSTEES AND PROJECT PARTNERS

The Implementing Trustees for this project will be the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

ALLOCATION

\$3,090,000

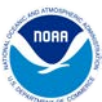
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