

NMFS Protected Resources Division Information Sheet

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Protected Resources Division is charged with the protection and conservation of marine species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act. This document provides information on management and other protective measures for protected marine species.

As a reminder, all species caught, including all protected species, must be reported on the Fishing Vessel Trip Report (FVTR). Additionally if you catch a marine mammal, contact (978) 281-9328 for additional reporting requirements.

Marine Mammal Take Reduction Plans

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP)

ALWTRP regulations are intended to reduce the serious injury and mortality of the North Atlantic right, humpback & fin whales in commercial gillnet and trap/pot fisheries from Maine through Florida. The ALWTRP was recently modified to regulate additional trap/pot and gillnet fisheries, establish new gear modification & marking requirements (e.g. sinking groundline, weak links, gillnet anchoring, buoy and buoy line marking), and implement a number of other regulatory changes NMFS and the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) are currently discussing a strategy to further reduce risk associated with vertical lines. For more information, contact the ALWTRP Coordinator, Kate Swails, at (978-282-8481) or visit the ALWTRP website at www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/. If you have questions about specific gear modifications, please contact the industry liaison for your area: John Higgins (207- 677-2316) in New England or Glenn Salvador (757-414-0128) in the Mid-Atlantic.

Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan (HPTRP)

HPTRP regulations are intended to reduce the serious injury and mortality of the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoises in Northeast sink gillnet and Mid-Atlantic gillnet fisheries from Maine through North Carolina. In 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule implementing a number of modifications to the HPTRP. In New England, new measures include the expansion of seasonal and temporal requirements within HPTRP management areas, incorporation of additional management areas, and establishment of a consequence closure area strategy to increase compliance and reduce bycatch levels within select management areas with historically high levels of harbor porpoise bycatch. Included in these changes to the HPTRP was the establishment of two new management areas, the Stellwagen Bank Management Area (pingers required November 1- May 31) and the Southern New England Management Area (pingers required December 1- May 31). In the Mid-Atlantic, new measures include the establishment of an additional management area, and modifications to the current tie-down requirement for large mesh gillnet gear. In the Mid-Atlantic, new measures include the establishment of the Mudhole South Management Area, modification to the current tie-down requirement for large mesh gillnet gear, and modification to management area boundaries (75 FR 7383, February 19, 2010). For more information, contact the HPTRP Coordinator, Kate Swails (978-282-8481) or visit the HPTRP website at: www.nero.noaa.gov/porptrp/. You may also contact the industry liaison for your area (listed above under ALWTRP) with specific questions about gear requirements.

Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Strategy (ATGTRS)

NMFS convened the Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Team (ATGTRT) to develop consensus recommendations for a take reduction strategy to reduce the serious injury and mortality of pilot whales, common dolphins, and Atlantic white-sided dolphins from interactions with various Atlantic trawl fisheries. In December 2008, the ATGTRT developed the ATGTRS that identifies research needed to address these marine mammal interactions in trawl fisheries, as well as related education and outreach activities. The ATGTRS includes a monitoring component to track the status of the various marine mammal stocks of concern and the implementation of the Strategy. NMFS, in cooperation with industry, developed a guide, which includes voluntary measures to reduce marine mammal interactions in Atlantic trawl fisheries. For more information, including a copy of the guide, contact the ATGTRT Coordinator, Kate Swails, at (978-282-8481) or visit the ATGTRT website at: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/atgtrp/. You may also contact the industry liaison for your area (listed under ALWTRP) with specific questions about the voluntary measures.

Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan (BDTRP)

NMFS convened a the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team (BDTRT) in 2001 to address the serious injury and mortality of the Western North Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphin stock in nine Category I and II fisheries from New Jersey through the east coast of Florida. The final BDTRP was published on April 26, 2006 (71 FR 24776), with an effective date of May 26, 2006. On December 19, 2008, a final rule was published (73 FR 77531) amending the BDTRP by continuing nighttime medium mesh fishing restrictions in North Carolina state waters during the winter until May 26, 2012. For more information, contact the BDTRP Coordinator, Stacey Horstman at (727- 824-5312); Southeast Region Fishery Liaison, David Hilton (252-928-9092), or visit the BDTRP website at: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/bdtrp.htm.

Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP)

The MMAP is a mandatory commercial fishermen's registration program that provides exemptions from the Marine Mammal Protection Act's prohibition on the taking of non-endangered/threatened marine mammals during commercial fishing activities. It applies to all fishermen who have a valid state or federal commercial fishing license permitting the use of gillnet, longline, trap/pots, mid water or bottom trawl (including pair trawl and flynets), menhaden purse seine (mid-Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico), long haul seine (NC), roe mullet stop net (NC), pound net (VA), or any high seas Atlantic highly migratory species (outside 200 nautical miles). **MMAP Requirements:** (1) carry Authorization Certificate during fishing activities (Certificate is valid January 1- December 31 of each calendar year), (2) carry observer when requested, (3) comply with applicable Take Reduction Plans (see above), and (4) report any marine mammal serious injury/mortality caused by fishing operation within 48 hours of the interaction using the Marine Mammal Mortality/Injury Reporting form (available on the

MMAP website or by calling 978-281-9328). In the Northeast Region, fishermen are automatically registered for the year if they have a valid state/federal permit license as of January 1 each year. **If you are new to a fishery and have not received information on the MMAP, call (978) 281-9328 to register and request a Certificate.** Additional information is available on the MMAP website: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/mmap/certificate.html.

NMFS Northeast Region Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding and Disentanglement Program

NMFS coordinates a large network of organizations that respond to stranded and entangled animals. Please immediately report sightings of dead, injured, or entangled marine animals to the Hotline number below. Please take photos, and when possible remain on scene until you have spoken to a responder.

Hotline Number for Reporting:

- Dead, Injured, Stranded or Entangled whales, seals, dolphins, sea turtles **1-866-755-NOAA (6622) or USCG via Ch. 16.** For more information, visit the Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding and Disentanglement Program website at: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding.
- To report marine law violations call NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement 1-800- 853-1964.

NMFS Northeast Region Sea Turtle Program

The NMFS Northeast Region's Sea Turtle Program works to manage, conserve, and rebuild populations of sea turtles in Northeast and Mid-Atlantic waters. Within these waters, there are a number of regulations in place to help protect sea turtles. Vessels fishing with Atlantic sea scallop dredge gear south of 41° 9' N latitude are required to use chain-mat modified gear seasonally. Turtle Excluder Device (TED) requirements are in place for summer flounder trawlers in the Summer Flounder-Sea Turtle Protection Area. Vessels fishing with large mesh (≥ 7 inches stretched) gillnets are subject to seasonal area closures in the Mid-Atlantic. In addition, there are handling/resuscitation requirements that must be followed if a sea turtle is taken incidentally while fishing and the take must be reported on the Fishing Vessel Trip Report. Please note that there are also requirements related to pound nets, longlines, and shrimp trawls. For more information, contact the NER Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator, Carrie Upite at (978) 282-8475 or visit the sea turtle website at: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/seaturtles.

Protected Fish Species

Atlantic and Shortnose Sturgeon

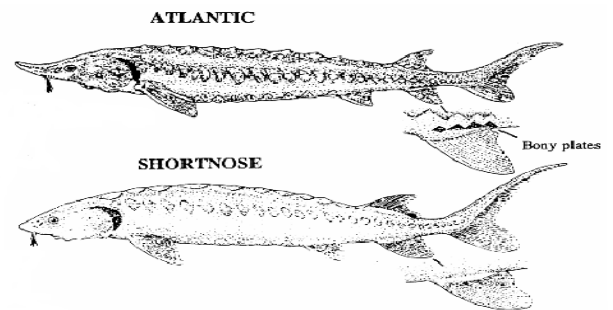
Sturgeon are distinguished from other fish by five rows of bony plates, called "scutes," that extend from the head to the base of the tail. They also have whisker-like "barbels" near the mouth that they use to find prey.

Atlantic Sturgeon

- **Coast wide moratorium on harvest and possession.**
- Currently a NMFS Species of Concern and proposed for listing under the ESA on October 6, 2010.
- Found in coastal waters, estuaries and major rivers along the U.S. East Coast.

Shortnose Sturgeon

- **Endangered and illegal to harvest or possess.**
- Primarily found in major rivers and estuaries along the U.S. East Coast with some migrations into coastal waters.



Additional species information is available at: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/esp

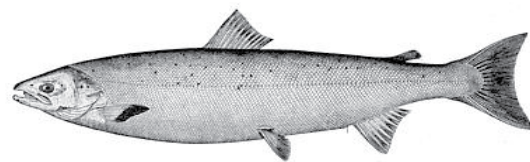
If you catch a sturgeon, return it to the water immediately and report the catch to Lynn Lankshear at (978) 282-8473 or Jessica Pruden at (978) 282-8482.

Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic salmon have a spindle-like body shape – rounded, broad in the middle, and tapered at each end. The shape is somewhat flattened toward the sides, which is typical of salmonids in general. The head is relatively small, about one-fifth of the body length. Ventral (underside) paired fins are prominent, especially on juveniles.

Atlantic Salmon

- **The Gulf of Maine (GOM) distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic salmon is endangered. It is illegal to harvest or possess an Atlantic salmon from the GOM DPS.**
- Atlantic salmon are present in coastal rivers from the Connecticut River north into Canada. The GOM DPS is proposed to include all anadromous Atlantic salmon from the Androscoggin watershed north to the Denny's River, the extent of their marine range, and all associated conservation hatchery populations.



Additional species information is available at: www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/altsalmon

If you catch an Atlantic salmon, within the GOM DPS which includes the marine extent of their range return it to the water immediately and report the catch to Dan Kircheis at (207) 866-7320.