

Circle hooks boost live catches

LIVE catches can be increased and sea turtle by-catch reduced by using circle hooks, says US monofilament longline gear company Lindgren-Pitman of Florida.

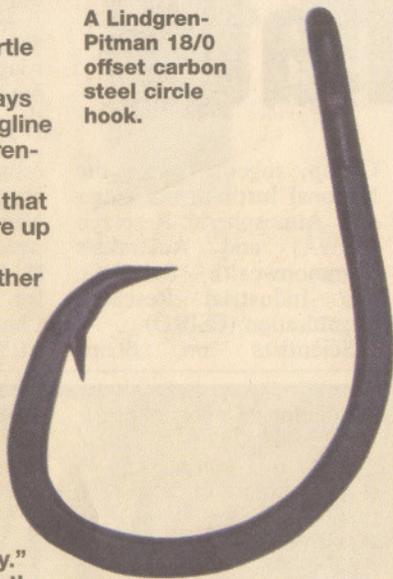
The company says that catches of live fish are up to 40% higher when using circle hooks rather than the traditional J-style hooks.

Don Nehls of Lindgren-Pitman tells *FNI*: "This turns into a huge financial return to vessel owners. The higher number of live fish generally equates to higher product quality."

The company recently ran a test off Ecuador using a 19 metre longliner setting circle hooks from a Lindgren-Pitman 28 x 48 Super Spool longline reel.

He tells *FNI*: "The spool holds 24 nautical miles of

A Lindgren-Pitman 18/0 offset carbon steel circle hook.



3.2 mm main line. We fished 600 baits per night with great results.

"Sixty-eight bigeye tuna and 39 swordfish were caught in four days of fishing. The average size of the tunas where

approximately 80 kg., headed and gutted per piece.

"During the offload you could not wipe the smile off the owner's face. Using the circle hooks and the Lindgren-Pitman longline system dramatically increased targeted catch and reduced by-catch to near zero."

Don Nehls says that tuna fishermen in the Central Atlantic and Eastern Pacific are now seeing the benefits of circle hooks.

"Not only are we seeing higher catch rates of tuna, but the number of live fish brought on board has increased dramatically.

"In a market sometimes flooded with average grade tuna, tuna longline producers are looking for every edge possible to increase their product value."



Lindgren-Pitman technician Christian Manriques with a tuna caught during a recent test of the company's circle hooks set off Ecuador.