

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY GUIDANCE 02-303

May 31, 1990

Protected Resources Management

REMOVAL OF BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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RIN 0648-AD39

Interim Policy on Taking of Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service.

ACTION: Notice of interim policy.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces an interim policy, which has been in effect since February 1990, on the taking of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) from the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Florida east coast under scientific research and public display permits issued pursuant to 50 CFR part 216. A temporary voluntary moratorium is in effect on the removal of bottlenose dolphins from Gulf of Mexico collection areas pending a review of circumstances surrounding the deaths of over 250 (as of April 1) bottlenose dolphins since January 1, 1990 along the coasts of five Gulf states. This interim policy is in use for the Florida East Coast areas and will be used in other areas if collections are resumed before new quotas are set by regulation. Depending on the outcome of the review of the stranding data, this interim policy may need to be revised. NMFS anticipates that the interim policy will be in effect until the conclusion of a comprehensive review of the status of stocks, the live capture and incidental take of bottlenose dolphins in the southeast region, and the current procedure which allows an annual take of 2% of the minimum population level from each quota area. Formal implementation will include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For a document relating to the formal setting and revision of quotas see the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published elsewhere in this issue.