

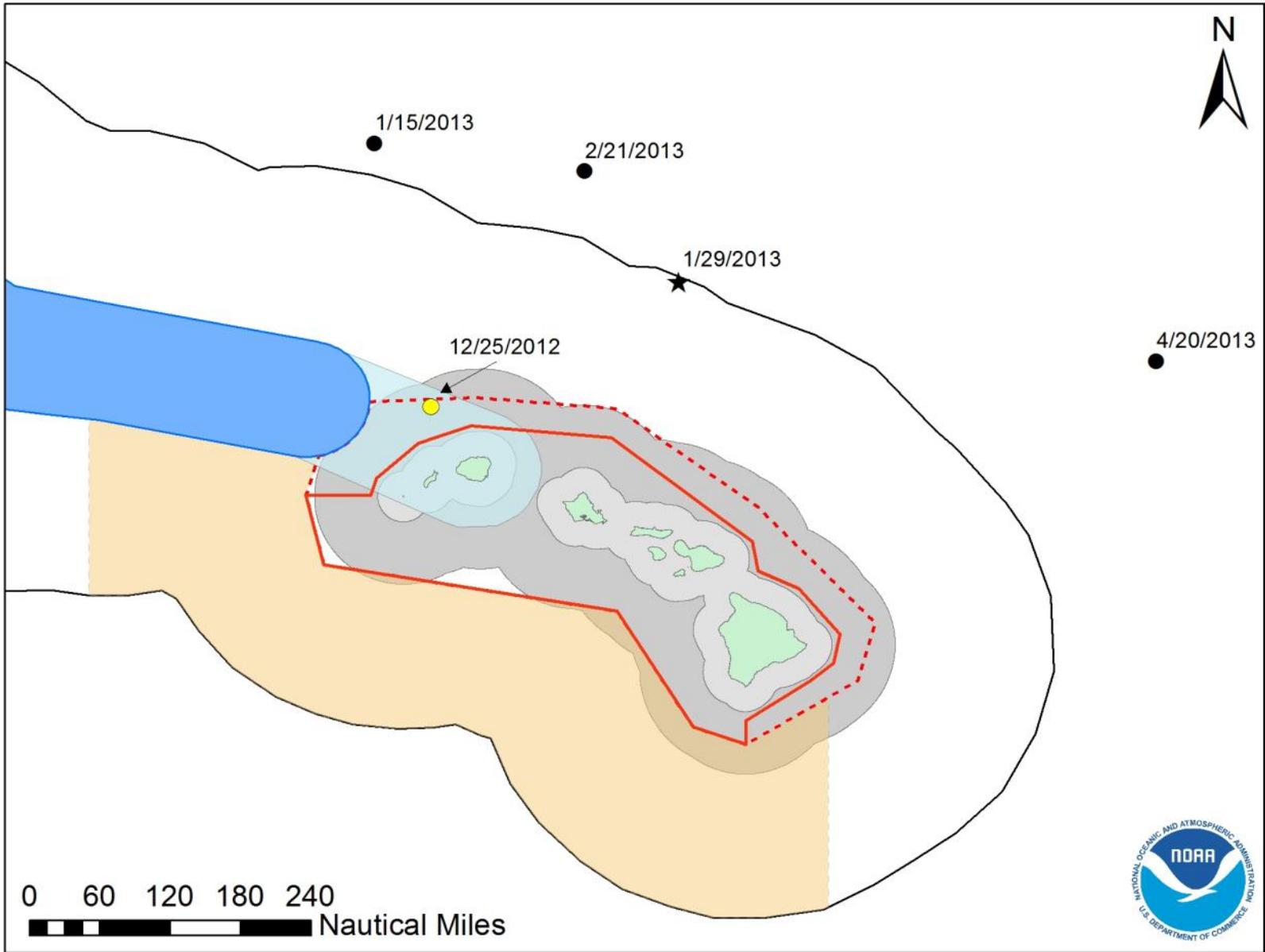
NOAA
FISHERIES

Pacific Islands
Regional Office

Overview of Recently Observed False Killer Whale Interactions

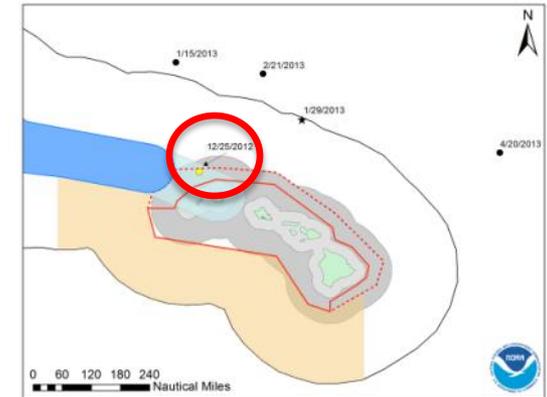
Nancy Young and Jamie Marchetti

May 29, 2013



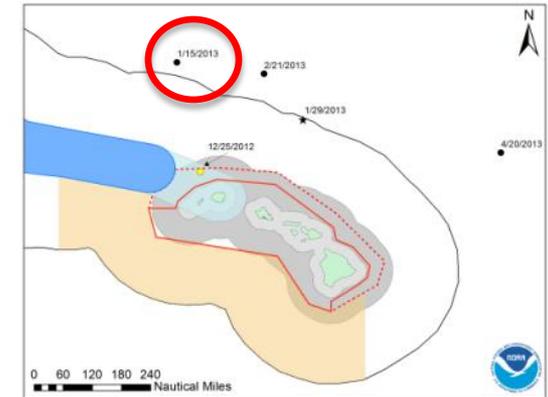
False Killer Whale – Dec. 25, 2012

- **Fishery:** Deep-set longline
- **Date/time:** 12/25/2012, 01:42
- **Location:** 22° 56.4 N, 160° 08.5 W (NWHI / MHI Insular/ Pelagic overlap zone)
- **Injury:** Hooked in the mouth behind the teeth
- **Details:** Interaction was not reported from sea. Tangles of empty lines came up before the interaction. As the crew hauled in the branch line, the whale surfaced. The crew brought the animal beside the boat, but it dove each time they brought it to the surface (4-5 times). The observer attempted to de-hook, but due to the struggle, could not get the hook out. The line was eventually cut as close to the hook as possible, releasing the animal with only the hook attached. The estimated size of the animal (~7 ft) suggests it was a dependant. Two false killer whales were observed during the soak, and animals were heard vocalizing before the interaction (but not seen during the haul or the interaction). Heavy marine mammal damage (depredation) to catch was observed on the set.
- **Total observed interaction time:** 5-6 minutes
- **Hook and line specifications:** 14/0 circle hook, wire leader (1.2 mm diameter), monofilament branch line (1.8 mm diameter)
- **Photo/Video/Biopsy:** Video
- **Preliminary injury determination:** Serious injury



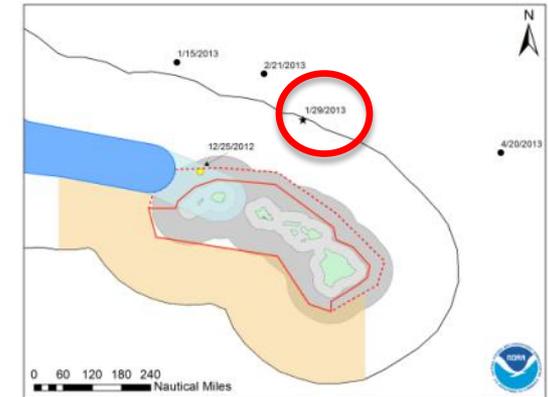
False Killer Whale – January 15, 2013

- **Fishery:** Deep-set longline
- **Date/time:** 1/15/2013, 00:35
- **Location:** 26° 44.9 N, 160° 56.7 W (outside the EEZ)
- **Injury:** Hooked in unknown location
- **Details:** Interaction was not reported from sea. The line was under tension, and came up with many branch lines in a tangled bunch. As the mainline continued to be brought in slowly, the crew shouted that there was a whale. The crew told the observer that it jumped twice while the observer was getting the marine mammal sampling gear and video camera ready. The whale was on the branch line after the tangle, and it kept pulling the clip down the mainline. About 15 meters from the boat, the whale breached in an arc fully out of the water, and then it was gone. All gear appeared to come back (none remaining on the whale), and no hooks were bent. The estimated size of the animal (~8 ft) suggests it was a dependant. Observer did not see any other marine mammals during the set, but the crew said they saw “lots” of whales during the set, identifying them as false killer whales from the picture in the observer manual. No depredation was observed on the set.
- **Total observed interaction time:** 3-5 minutes
- **Hook and line specifications:** Unknown size circle hook (vessel had 75% 16/0 and 25% 15/0 hooks), wire leader (1.5 mm diameter), monofilament branch line (2.1 mm diameter)
- **Photo/video/biopsy:** Video (splash only)
- **Preliminary injury determination:** Non-serious injury



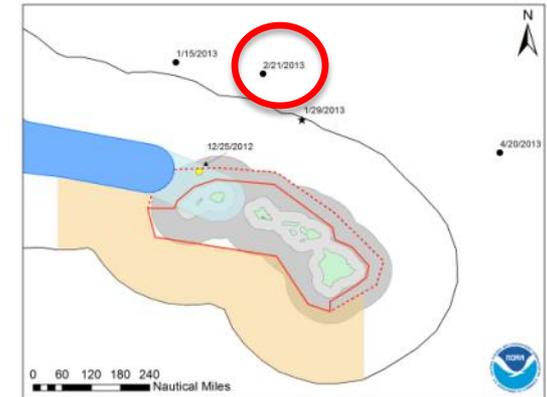
False Killer Whale – January 29, 2013

- **Fishery:** Deep-set longline
- **Date/time:** 1/29/2013, 03:32
- **Location:** 24° 44.2 N, 156° 37.4 W (inside the EEZ)
- **Injury:** Hooked (location not observed), branch line coming from mouth
- **Details:** Crew told the observer there was a whale on the line, and turned the mainline spool hydraulics off. The 11-15 ft false killer whale was calm as it surfaced once within 5 ft of the vessel and dove. Crew tried to handle the branch line (still clipped to the mainline) but struggled and let go. Crew turned on the hydraulics and began to slowly reel in mainline, putting the mainline and branch line under tension. The branch line broke, releasing the whale with an estimated 6-10 m of the branch line (remaining line not measured), 45 g weight, all of the wire leader (0.25 m), and the hook still attached. No marine mammal damage reported on the set, but little catch and hooks were coming up without bait.
- **Total observed interaction time:** 1-2 minutes
- **Hook and line specifications:** Unknown size circle hook (vessel had 14/0, 15/0, and 5% 18/0 hooks), wire leader (1.1 mm diameter), monofilament branch line (1.6 mm diameter)
- **Photo/video/biopsy:** None
- **Final injury determination:** Serious injury



False Killer Whale – February 21, 2013

- **Fishery:** Deep-set longline
- **Date/time:** 2/21/2013, 20:46
- **Location:** 26° 20.9 N, 157° 57.7 W (outside the EEZ)
- **Injury:** Hooked (location not observed), branchline coming from head/mouth
- **Details:** Crew and observer could tell something was on the line, so the observer went to the rail. Animal surfaced once ~10-15m from the vessel, moving slowly and did not appear to be struggling. Approximately 7 ft of the body was above the surface, including dorsal fin, but no head or tail. A single line was seen coming out of the water where the head was, so likely hooked at the mouth and not entangled. Three snaps were tangled on the mainline. Observer said "sample" and one crew member went to get the sample pole. While animal was underwater, the branch line broke at or near the weight. Gear remaining included the hook, wire leader, and 45-g weight. Marine mammal damage was observed on bait and catch.
- **Total observed interaction time:** 15-20 seconds
- **Hook and line specifications:** Unknown size circle hook (vessel had 85% 14/0 circle, 10% 16/0 circle, and 5% 3.6 tuna), wire leader (1.9 mm diameter), monofilament branch line (2.0 mm diameter)
- **Photo/video/biopsy:** None
- **Preliminary injury determination:** Serious injury



False Killer Whale – April 20, 2013

- **Fishery:** Deep-set longline
- **Date/time:** 04/20/2013, 04:45
- **Location:** 23° 36.4 N, 149° 50.2 W (outside the EEZ)
- **Injury:** Hooked in the mouth
- **Details:** 12-14 foot whale was calm, surfacing and diving at least 6 times. Crew initially asked the observer whether they should cut the line, but the observer said no, and asked them to pull the animal close to get a video and sample. Captain came out on deck while the crew handled the gear. Crew maintained tension on the branch line. Animal was not able to be brought close enough to obtain a biopsy sample. Crew said the animal was too strong and prepared to cut the line, but then the branch line slackened. The crew pulled in the branch line and found the hook had bent. The observer retained the bent hook. Marine mammal damage to catch was observed.
- **Total observed interaction time:** 4-6 minutes
- **Hook and line specifications:** 15/0 offset circle hook with 4.3 mm wire diameter; wire leader with 1.5 mm diameter; monofilament branch line with 2.0 mm diameter
- **Photo/video/biopsy :** Video
- **Preliminary injury determination:** Non-serious injury

