

## Marine Mammal Take Reduction Program

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<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/teams.htm>

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The **Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team** was established to develop a plan to reduce the incidental serious injury and mortality of right, humpback, fin, and minke whales in the South Atlantic shark gillnet fishery, the Gulf of Maine and Mid-Atlantic lobster trap/pot fishery, the Mid-Atlantic gillnet fishery, and the Gulf of Maine sink gillnet fishery. The team submitted a report to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on February 1, 1997; however, the TRT did not reach consensus on all aspects of the plan. NMFS developed a final TRP and implementing regulations after considerable public input. An interim final rule was published in July 1997 and a final rule was published February 16, 1999 (64 FR 7529), with an April 1, 1999, effective date. Since the initial TRP was implemented, NMFS has made numerous changes to the plan. The ALWTRP proposed rule (73 FR 32278) published on June 6, 2008. For more about the Atlantic Large Whale TRT, please visit <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>.

The **Atlantic Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team** was convened in May 1996 to reduce the incidental serious injury and mortality of right whales, humpback whales, sperm whales, beaked whales, pilot whales, common dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, and spotted dolphins in the Atlantic pelagic driftnet, pelagic longline and pair trawl fisheries. The TRT reached consensus on several strategies to reduce serious injuries and mortalities in each fishery and prepared a draft plan in November 1996. Each of the three fisheries in the plan has had a major change since the team was originally convened. Two of the three fisheries covered by the draft TRP no longer exist. The pair trawl fishery, which was inactive when the TRT was convened, was included in the TRP so that conservation measures would be in place if the fishery was reauthorized. The pelagic driftnet fishery for swordfish was closed by a final rule published on January 27, 1999 (64 FR 4055). Also, on May 28, 1999, a Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (64 FR 29089) prohibited the use of driftnet gear for targeting tuna in pelagic waters. Subsequently, the longline fishery has been substantially modified to reduce bycatch of other species (e.g., billfish and sea turtles). Since the nature of the fisheries that were included in the TRP has changed tremendously since 1996 when the TRT was convened, NMFS disbanded the Team in August 2001.

The **Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Team** was established by NMFS to address incidental mortality and serious injury of long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*), short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*), and white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) in the Northeast bottom trawl, Northeast mid-water trawl (including pair trawl), mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl (including pair trawl), and mid-Atlantic bottom trawl fisheries. Under section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the ATGTRT is charged with developing a take reduction plan (TRP) to reduce bycatch of these species to a level approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 5 years of implementation of the plan. (For more information, please see the [Federal Register](#) notice announcing the ATGTRT (71 FR 54273, September 14, 2006). For more about the Atlantic Trawl Gear TRT, please visit [http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/atgtrp/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/atgtrp/).

The **Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team (BDTRT)** was formed to reduce serious injuries and deaths of coastal bottlenose dolphins incidental to several east coast fisheries including: the North Carolina inshore gillnet, Southeast Atlantic gillnet, Southeastern U.S. shark gillnet, U.S. Mid-Atlantic coastal gillnet, Atlantic blue crab trap/pot, Mid-Atlantic haul/beach seine, North Carolina long haul seine, North Carolina roe mullet stop net, and Virginia pound net. In May 2002, the BDTRT submitted a report to NMFS with consensus regulatory and non-regulatory recommendations based on management units of the coastal bottlenose dolphin stock. Throughout 2002, NMFS conducted additional field studies to gather data on bottlenose dolphin abundance, following the recommendation of the BDTRT, the agency chose to await the results of those studies before finalizing the TRP. The BDTRT met in April 2003 to consider the new abundance estimates, new PBR levels for each management unit, and refine their management recommendations. They submitted a second consensus report to NMFS in May 2003. NMFS published a [draft BDTRP \[pdf\]](#) on November 10, 2004 (69 FR 65127). The final BDTRP published on April 26, 2006 (71 FR 24776). The BDTRT met again in June 2007 to discuss amendments to the plan. The team recommended amending the BDTRP to extend the seasonal night fishing restrictions for medium mesh gillnets in two management areas within North Carolina state waters. The proposed rule to amend the BDTRP published on August 22, 2008 (73 FR 49634). For more about the Bottlenose Dolphin TRT, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/bdtrp.htm>.

The **False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team** was established to address the incidental mortality and serious injury of the Hawaii Pelagic, Hawaii Insular, and Palmyra Atoll stocks of false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*) in the Hawaii-based deep-set and shallow-set longline fisheries. The TRT will develop a Take Reduction Plan (TRP) as required in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). NMFS will charge the TRT with developing a plan to reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of these stocks in the Hawaii-based longline fisheries to a level less than the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level for each stock within 6 months of implementation of the plan and to a level approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 5 years of implementation of the plan. For more about the False Killer Whale TRT, please see <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/falsekillerwhale.htm>.

The **Gulf of Maine Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team** was formed to reduce the incidental serious injury and mortality of harbor porpoise in the Gulf of Maine groundfish

sink gillnet fishery. The TRT's draft plan, submitted to NMFS in August 1996, included closures that expand on those outlined in Amendment 7 of the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and the use of acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) to further reduce harbor porpoise bycatch. NMFS published the draft TRP and implementing regulations on August 13, 1997 (62 FR 43302); the public comment period was extended to January 14, 1998 to allow the team to reconvene before publishing a final rule. The TRT reconvened in December of 1997 and expressed concerns about the ability of the proposed TRP to sufficiently reduce bycatch. A revised draft TRP was published on September 11, 1998 (63 FR 48670) (along with a draft TRP for reducing harbor bycatch in the mid-Atlantic, see below). The final TRP and implementing regulations were published December 2, 1998 (63 FR 66464) and became effective January 1, 1999. The final TRP relies primarily upon time-area closures and pingers to reduce serious injury and mortality of harbor porpoise below PBR. In July 2009, NMFS proposed to amend the regulations implementing the HPTRP (74 FR 36058) to address the increased incidental mortality and serious injury of the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoises in gillnet fisheries throughout the stock's U.S. range. For more about the Harbor Porpoise TRT, please visit [http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/porptrp/](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/porptrp/).

The **Mid-Atlantic Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team** was formed to reduce incidental serious injury and mortality of harbor porpoise in ocean gillnet fisheries of the Mid-Atlantic. Although the TRT did not reach consensus at their final meeting, they did agree on several key elements, including gear modifications and net caps for the monkfish and dogfish fisheries, short-term closures for the monkfish fishery, and research recommendations for bottlenose dolphins. The TRT submitted their report to NMFS in August 1997. NMFS published a proposed rule to implement the plan on September 11, 1998 (63 FR 48670) and a final rule on December 2, 1998 (63 FR 66464), which was effective January 1, 1999. The plan for the mid-Atlantic was published in conjunction with the revised final rule for the Gulf of Maine Harbor Porpoise TRP on December 2, 1998 (63 FR 66464). In July 2009, NMFS proposed to amend the regulations implementing the HPTRP (74 FR 36058) to address the increased incidental mortality and serious injury of the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoises in gillnet fisheries throughout the stock's U.S. range.

The **Mid-Atlantic Take Reduction Team** was originally convened to develop a take reduction plan for harbor porpoises and coastal bottlenose dolphins. However, a plan to reduce fisheries interactions with harbor porpoise was given the highest priority because this stock was considered particularly vulnerable. Also, additional data needed to be collected and analyzed with respect to bottlenose dolphins. Therefore, the Mid-Atlantic TRT became the Mid-Atlantic Harbor Porpoise TRT. Since that time, NMFS has dedicated significant funding time to research Atlantic bottlenose dolphin stocks. Since 1995, NMFS has worked to develop better abundance estimates, identify and distinguish different stocks, and monitor interactions with commercial fisheries, including at-sea observer programs and stranding response efforts.

The **Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team** prepared a draft TRP in August 1996 to address incidental serious injury and mortality of beaked, pilot, pygmy sperm, sperm, and humpback whales in the California/Oregon swordfish drift gillnet fishery. The draft TRP required that the top of the nets be set at a minimum depth of 36 feet below the

water surface, using pingers on all nets, the states of California and Oregon to reduce the number of "inactive" permittees, and vessel operators be required to attend educational workshops on marine mammals and the TRP. NMFS finalized the TRP on October 3, 1997 (62 FR 51805). In June 1998, the TRT determined that data regarding marine mammal bycatch in the 1997/1998 fishing season suggested the fishery had achieved its 6-month goal of reducing bycatch to below PBR. An interim final rule was published on January 22, 1999 (64 FR 3431) modifying specifications for deploying pingers that allow for safer deployment (i.e., longer attachment lanyards.) For more about the Pacific Offshore Cetacean TRT, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/poctrp.htm>.

The **Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team** was established by NMFS to address the incidental mortality and serious injury of long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*) and short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) in the mid-Atlantic region of the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery. Under section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the PLTRT is charged with developing a take reduction plan (TRP) to reduce bycatch of pilot whales in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery to a level approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 5 years of implementation of the plan. For more about the Pelagic Longline TRT, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/pl-trt.htm>