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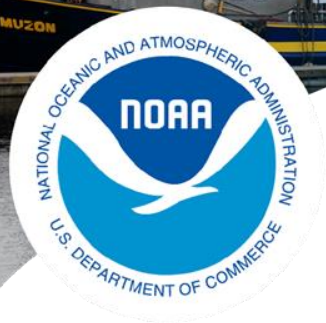


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Report to Congress on Shark and Dolphin Depredation

Presented to the HMS Advisory Panel and the South Atlantic
and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils

September 2021



What is this Report to Congress?

The 2021 Appropriations Act Joint Explanatory Statement (JES) directs NOAA Fisheries to undertake a review to assess and better understand the occurrence of conflicts between dolphins and sharks and commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishing vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.



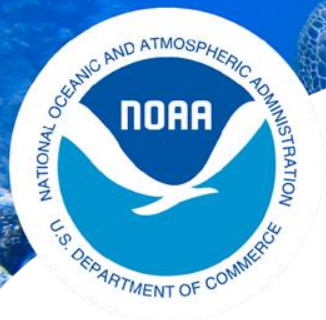
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Details about the JES Directive

The review should provide:

- (1) a quantification, to the extent practicable within existing resources, of the degree to which dolphins and sharks interfere with commercial, charter, and recreational fishing; and
- (2) recommendations for non-lethal methods to deter dolphins and sharks from interfering with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishing, in accordance with existing laws.

NOAA Fisheries shall consult with the Marine Mammal Commission, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel, and conduct outreach to commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen.



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Expected Scope of the Report

- One Report to Congress on the joint assessment for both shark and dolphin interference issues
- For sharks, focus on commercial (e.g., longline, gillnet, and trawl), recreational (e.g., handgears), and for-hire (e.g., handgears) fisheries
- For dolphins, focus on rod & reel gear fisheries across all sectors - commercial, recreational, and for-hire



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Major Topics Being Considered

- Types of Known Interactions
 - Depredation
 - Scavenging
- Consequences of Interactions: Fisheries
 - Economic losses (lost/damaged gear or catch)
 - Impacts to fishery populations
 - Degraded fishing experience
- Consequences of Interactions: Sharks and dolphins
 - Population-level impacts
 - Entanglement/injury risk to animal
 - Increased retaliation



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Major Topics Continued

- Quantification of Shark and Dolphin Interactions
 - Review of fishery and observer data
 - Review of literature
- Recommendations for Non-lethal Deterrents
 - A [proposed rule](#) on NOAA Fisheries guidelines for safely deterring marine mammals under NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction published on 8/31/2020
(85 FR 53763)
- Research Needs



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Discussion Questions

Please provide input on the topics. For example:

- Are there other types of interactions not captured here?
- Have we overlooked any consequences of interactions to fisheries?
- Are there other data or information sources quantifying shark or dolphin interactions that you would like to provide?
- Are there any studies on non-lethal deterrents that we should review?
- Do you have suggested research needs?



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Timeline

- September: Consult with Councils, HMS AP, and Marine Mammal Commission. Public comments accepted with these consultations.
- Final Report submitted March 2022

Any questions or additional information

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