



Improvement of Methods to Approve New Technologies and Protocols for Sea Turtle Safe Handling and Release

August 4, 2017

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Current Practices

- Currently new technologies and methods for sea turtle safe handling and release can only be incorporated into existing regulations through the FMP process
- This process typically takes 2-3 years
- This results in a delay in implementation of new technologies in both advancement and practice



History of Techniques and Requirements for Safe Handling of Threatened and Endangered Sea Turtles

- Technological Memorandum 524 June 2004
- Biological Opinion for GOM Reef Fish February 2005
- Technological Memorandum 580 December 2008
- Biological Opinion for GOM Reef Fish October 2009
- Technological Memorandum 580 revised October 2010
- Biological Opinion for GOM Reef Fish September 2011
- Draft Technological Memorandum 580 October 2015



Technological Memorandum 524 June 2004

- Established protocols for the HMS PLL Fisheries
- 2005 Biological Opinion for Reef Fish
- SERO presented these protocols to GMFMC for Amendment 18A



Technology Memorandum 580 December 2008

- Adds new gear and protocols to support Reef Fish 18A
- Supports 2009 Biological Opinion for Reef Fish in compliance of outreach and point of contact
- “New release tools may be certified by submitting them to the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center for testing.
- Gear specialists/researchers will assess item's usefulness and safety in removing gear from animals during laboratory and/or field trials. [Takes 6-9 months]
- When new items are certified by NOAA Fisheries, a notice will be published in the Federal Register.”
- **However, before being published they must first be incorporated into an FMP Amendment [Takes 2-3 years]**



Technological Memorandum 508 October 2010

- Supports Biological Opinion for GOM Reef Fish
September 2009
- Adds new dehooker (NOAA Chain Link) and net
(small Hoop net)
- Incorporates joint GOM Reef Fish and SAFMC
Snapper/Grouper protocols and requirements



DRAFT Technological Memorandum 580 October 2015

- Adds new equipment (collapsible hoop net and hookout dehooker)
 - **approved for use by SEFSC in Jan 2015**
- Places more emphasis on fishing line removal as a significant reduction of post hooking mortality
- Reduces overall size of TM 580 from 130 pages to 77 pages
- Supports Biological Opinion 2011



Biological Opinion Mandates

- NMFS must update its careful release protocols and modify release gears as new information becomes available. If necessary, NMFS, in cooperation with the GMFMC, must revise associated regulatory requirements.
- Explore potential fishing gear and fishing behavior modifications that reduce adverse impacts from the fishery.



Biological Opinion Mandates

- NMFS must update its careful release protocols and modify release gears as new information becomes available.
- If necessary, NMFS, in cooperation with the GMFMC, must revise associated regulatory requirements.



Conclusion

- Development of new gears and technologies will continue
- NMFS and the GMFMC are mandated through Biological Opinions to promote gear development and update protocols
- A procedure must be in place to allow new available technologies to be incorporated into regulations in a timely fashion

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Questions?