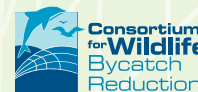


International Gillnet-Marine Mammal Bycatch Mitigation Workshops



Organizers

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Tim Werner, Director, Consortium for Wildlife Bycatch Reduction, New England Aquarium

Background



Franciscana, *Pontoporia blainvillei* (Photo: Yagua Pacha)

Fisheries bycatch is the principal threat to many marine mammals. In some cases, bycatch reduction devices have been shown to mitigate the bycatch of non-target species, but the scale of the problem outpaces progress in finding solutions. In particular, bycatch in coastal gillnet fisheries is one of the most immediate threats facing many marine mammal species worldwide, including the Gulf of California porpoise (or *vaquita*, *Phocoena sinus*), dugong (*Dugong dugon*) and Australian sea lion (*Neophoca cinerea*). While most of the research and development of bycatch reduction methods is focused in developed nations and commercial fisheries, some of the most severe coastal gillnet bycatch challenges are likely to be found in artisanal gillnet fisheries in developing nations. Efforts to address challenges in these coastal regions are stymied by a lack of information on the extent of the bycatch problem and the status of the species affected, as well as by social, cultural and economic factors that can cause artisanal fishing communities to resist implementing mitigation measures.

Workshops

Together with collaborators, we will convene two international workshops to review the state of research in coastal gillnet bycatch mitigation and develop recommendations for research, capacity building, outreach and other actions to promote effective mitigation of coastal gillnet bycatch, particularly in developing nations.



(Photo: NOAA)

Workshop 1

*Date: October 17-20, 2011
(Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA)*

The first workshop will focus on assessing the state of the art in gillnet bycatch mitigation techniques and developing recommendations regarding best practices, including an identification of research priorities for the future.

Workshop 2

Date: 2012 (Location TBD)

The second workshop will focus on overcoming the challenges associated with mitigating gillnet bycatch in developing nations, including assessment of bycatch rates and species status as well as engagement with local communities and fishermen to develop locally appropriate mitigation solutions.

Outcomes

- A series of scientific manuscripts on bycatch mitigation experiments and results
- Recommendations regarding best practices and critical steps in bycatch assessment, gear research, capacity building and technology transfer
- Enhanced collaborative mitigation research, gear experiments and implementation efforts between marine mammalogists, gear researchers, students and scientists/managers in developing nations
- An action plan for addressing marine mammal bycatch in gillnets in developing nations

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