

False Killer Whale Interaction and Serious Injury Determination

Interaction details

Date: 1/29/2013

Location: 24° 44.2 N, 156° 37.4 W (inside the EEZ)

Injury: Hooked – observer could not see the hook but saw branch line coming from the mouth

Details: The 11-15 ft false killer whale was calm as it surfaced once within 5 ft of the vessel and dove. As the crew reeled in mainline, 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 (vessel had sizes 14, 15, and very few 18 offset circle hooks) still attached. No photos, video, or DNA sample were obtained.

Injury determination process

- Steps and timeline
 - o Debriefing began 2/4, observer program determined the interaction should follow the “fast track” (false killer whale in the deep-set fishery inside the EEZ)
 - o Approved observer data sent to Injury Determination Staff on 2/8
 - o PIFSC, SWFSC, and SEFSC injury determination staff issued joint preliminary determination on 2/15
 - o PIRO and SRG provided review/comments to PIFSC by 2/22
 - o PIFSC, SWFSC, and SEFSC injury determination staff considered comments, issued final injury determination on 3/1
- Involved review of data by 17 individuals (including 8 of 11 SRG members)
- Total elapsed time from beginning of debriefing to final determination: 19 business days

Injury determination

- Serious injury based on criteria **S2 or S5a**, and **S6**
- Case-specific factors and notes:
 - o S2 or S5a: Hooked in head (mouth), but ingestion could not be ruled out
 - o S6: Observer estimated that 6-10m of branchline, 45g weight, circle hook (14/0, 15/0 or 18/0) and 0.25m wire leader remained attached. The minimum amount of estimated gear has potential to be ingested; the maximum estimated amount of gear could also wrap around appendages or body and become constricting.