

2/3/2014 False Killer Whale Interaction Details and Injury Determination

Interaction details

Date/time of interaction: 2/3/2014, 06:21

Location: 21° 51.4 N, 163° 37.2 W (inside the EEZ – see map on page 2)

Injury: Hooked in the mouth with 15/0 offset circle hook (4.3 mm wire diameter). Observer could not see the hook but saw the entire leader emerging from the mouth, suggesting the hook was not ingested.

Details: Heavy marine mammal depredation was observed on the catch preceding a large tangle of gear in the final four floats. The 4 m whale surfaced, and the observer saw that it was hooked and not entangled. To prevent the whale from becoming entangled, the crew hauled the remaining gear before attempting to bring the animal close. During this time, the animal surfaced calmly 10-15 times. Once the tangled branchlines were on deck, the captain then tried to pull the whale close to the boat ~~to attempt dehooking~~ so he could cut the line as close to the whale as possible. The observer asked the captain if he could get a biopsy sample, and the captain told him to wait until he (the captain) had the animal close to the vessel and was ready to cut the line, so that the biopsy attempt would not scare the animal and cause it to pull away from the boat. The captain handled the branchline, pulling on it and bending it over the rail to put more tension on it. After ~25 minutes of attempting to bring the animal close, the branchline broke near the snap. The whale was released with the hook, ~0.5 m wire leader, 45 g weight, and ~10 m monofilament branchline (2.0 mm diameter) still attached. The interaction lasted ~40 minutes from the time the whale was first detected until it was released.

Photos/video obtained: Observer obtained video that was used to confirm the species identification.

Biopsy obtained: No.

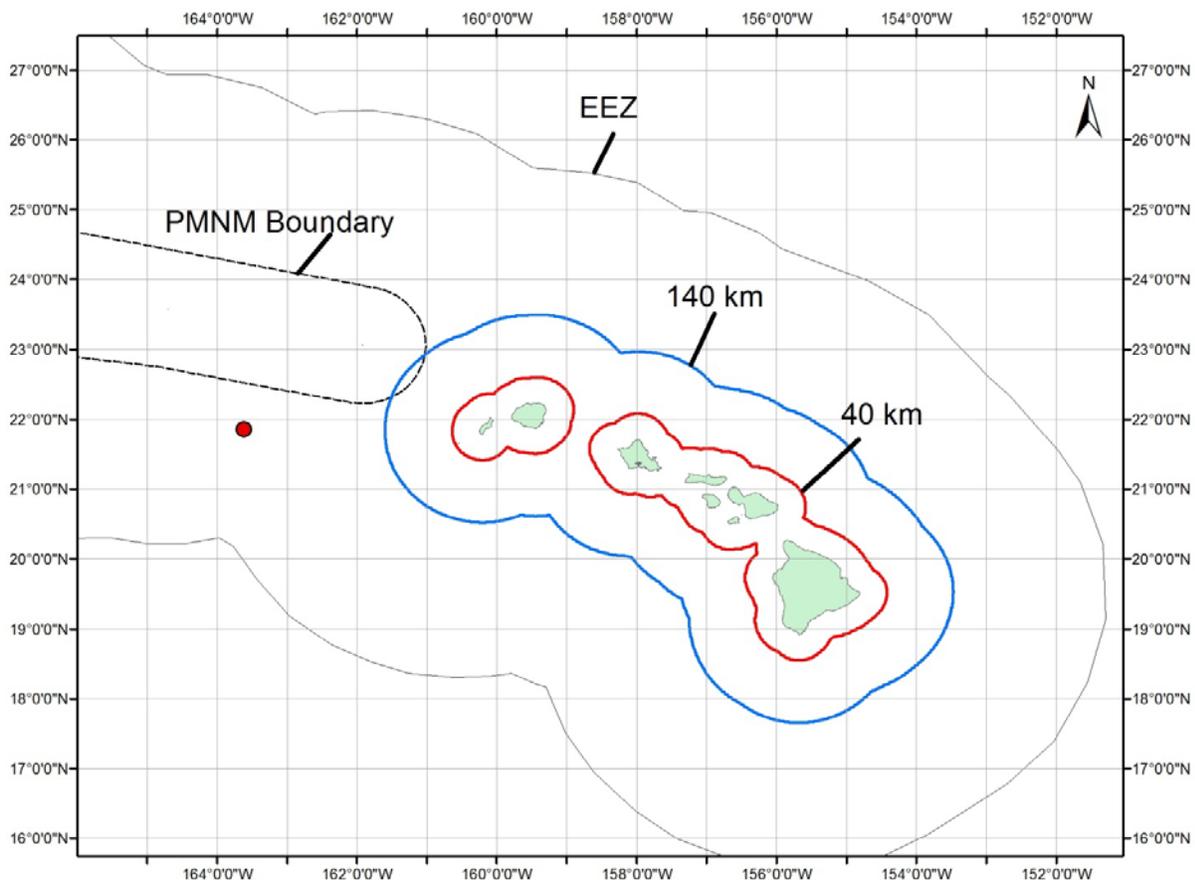
Injury determination: **Serious injury** ~~Not yet available. We have initiated the expedited injury determination process and expect to have a final determination not later than March 28 (25 business days after the species identification was confirmed on February 21 and the “fast track” determination protocol was initiated).~~

Injury determination process

- Steps and timeline
 - o Debriefing began 2/21, 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 2/28
 - o PIFSC, SWFSC, and SEFSC injury determination staff issued joint preliminary determination on 3/4
 - o PIRO and SRG provided review/comments to PIFSC by 3/12
 - o PIFSC, SWFSC, and SEFSC injury determination staff considered comments, issued final injury determination on 3/13
- Involved review of data by 15 individuals (including 6 of 11 SRG members)
- Total elapsed time from beginning of debriefing to final determination: 14 business days
- MMAP Mortality/Injury Report form received 3/11; form was reviewed and its details support the injury determination

Injury determination

- Serious injury based on small cetacean injury criteria **S5a** and **S6**
 - o S5a = Hook(s) in head (excluding criterion S5b, which is hook(s) confirmed in lip only, external tissue outside of teeth, no trailing gear), regardless of the presence of gear. Serious injury.
 - o S6 = Gear attached to free-swimming animal with potential to: 1) become a constricting wrap on animal; 2) be ingested; 3) accumulate drag; or 4) become snagged on something in the environment, anchoring the animals. Serious injury.
- Case-specific factors and notes:
 - o Two separate criteria indicate this is a serious injury. The observer noted the position of the hook and confirmed it was not in the "lip" only, so this case clearly falls into S5a. The amount of line remaining with the animal (10m) following the interaction would also classify this as a serious injury under S6.
 - o Given that two criteria for serious injury are met, the (unknown) potential stress/capture myopathy effects of the long duration of the interaction (40 min) were not further considered.



Location of the 2/3/2014 observed false killer whale interaction (red dot).