

Project Report
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

Calcasieu River and Pass, LA.
Maintenance Dredging
Fiscal Year 1996

Operations Technical Support Branch
USCOE-New Orleans District
504-862-2318

Introduction

This report is submitted to fulfill requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Incidental Take Statement (ITS) "for sea turtle takes resulting from Hopper Dredging activities" dated September 22, 1995. The New Orleans District submits this preliminary report summarizing the results of Fiscal Year 1996 maintenance dredging of the Calcasieu River and Pass, Louisiana, bar channel. In an effort to implement the reasonable and prudent measures included in the ITS, maintenance dredging of the Calcasieu River and Pass, Louisiana, bar channel was completed during a period when sea turtle abundance is predicted to be lowest throughout Gulf of Mexico coastal waters.

Scope of Work

Maintenance dredging was conducted by the contract hopper dredge MANHATTAN ISLAND. Dredging commenced January 7, 1996, and was completed February 27, 1996. Dredging was conducted between approximate channel Mile -1.0 (Station 0+00) and Mile -15.0 (Station 700+00) (Attachment).

Since maintenance dredging activities were conducted during the time period when sea turtle monitoring is not required, no sea ^{turtle} monitoring was conducted during these dredging activities. This work was conducted under Contract DACW96C0019. The contract specifications required dredging operations during the dredging window be conducted following the items listed in reasonable and prudent measures 4. and 6. This included advising the Contractor of potential presence of sea turtles, and reporting, and operating requirements. In 1995, and previous years the National Marine Fisheries Service determined that listed whales are unlikely to be adversely affected by hopper dredging in the Gulf of Mexico, consequently, endangered species monitors for whales, bridge observers, were not required.

Methodology

The dredge worked in both an agitation and dredge and haul mode. The agitation mode allows the effluent to overflow the hopper, as opposed to being bottom dumped, when fine grained shoal material is being excavated. Fine grained material is commonly excavated during maintenance of this channel.

RESULTS

The dredge MANHATTAN ISLAND commenced maintenance activities in the bar channel on January 7, 1996, and completed dredging on February 27, 1996. A total of 4,959,761 cubic yards of shoal material was removed by both agitation and dredge and haul operations. The majority of the shoal material, 4,759,209 cubic yards, was removed by agitation mode. The remaining 200,552 cubic yards were removed by the dredge and haul mode. During this dredging activity there were no documented incidents or sightings of sea turtles.