

Project Report
ENDANGERED SPECIES MONITORING
Calcasieu River and Pass, LA.
Bar Channel
Maintenance Dredging
Fiscal Year 1997

Operations Technical Support Branch
USCOE-New Orleans District
504-862-2504

Introduction

This report is submitted to fulfil 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 1997 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 scheduled during a period when sea turtle abundance is predicted to be the lowest throughout Gulf of Mexico coastal waters.

Scope of Work

Maintenance dredging was conducted by the contract hopper dredges MERMENTAU and STUYVESANT. Dredging commenced December 18, 1996, and was completed March 10, 1997. Dredging was conducted between approximate channel mile -1.0 (Station 0+00) and Mile -15.0 (Station 700+00) (Attachment). The MERMENTAU worked throughout the contract. The STUYVESANT worked from February 10, 1997, to February 25, 1997.

Since maintenance dredging activities were conducted during the time period when, according to the ITS, sea turtle monitoring is not required, no sea turtle observers were on board and no screen monitoring occurred. This work was conducted under contract DACW29-97-C-0017. The contract specification advised the Contractor of the potential presence of sea turtles, and required the dredging Contractor follow reporting, and operating requirements outlined in the ITS. 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 monitors, were not required.

Methodology

The dredges worked in both 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 the Calcasieu River and Pass, Louisiana, bar channel.

Results

The dredge MERMENTAU commenced maintenance activities in the bar channel on December 18, 1996. The STUYVESANT joined the MERMENTAU on February 10, 1997, and worked until February 25, 1997. The MERMENTAU completed work on March 10, 1997. The dredges removed a combined total of 7,057,616 cubic yards of shoal material by agitation and dredge-and-haul operations. The majority of the shoal material, 6,892,332 cubic yards, was removed by agitation. The remaining 165,284 cubic yards were removed by dredge-and-haul mode.

No documented incidents or sightings of sea turtles occurred during this work.