

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OPERATION OF HOPPER DREDGES  
IN THE BRAZOS ISLAND HARBOR PROJECT

On January 31, 1999, a contract hopper dredge began work on the Brownsville Entrance Channel of the Brazos Island Harbor Project. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 604,000 cubic yards (CY) of shoal material. However, only about 196,000 CY were to be removed by hopper dredge. The remainder of the material was to be excavated by pipeline dredge and used for beach nourishment. The required depth of dredging was 46 feet below Mean Low Tide (MLT, Corps of Engineers Datum), with 2 feet of allowable overdepth dredging.

Dredging began on January 31, 1999, and was completed on March 3, 1999. The *Northerly Island* was employed under this contract. A total of 131 loads of dredged material were collected and placed into the nearshore berm in Placement Area No. 1-A. Hopper dredging was performed between Stations -6+000 and -12+000 along the Entrance Channel. A total of 186,571 CY of material was excavated by hopper dredges from this project.

The dredge was equipped with rigid draghead turtle deflectors, and 100% inflow screening with a 4-inch square mesh. NMFS-approved turtle observers provided 24-hour/day monitoring of dragheads and screens for each load cycle. The observers were employed by Coastwise Consulting, Inc.

During the performance of this dredging, a total of two green sea turtle takes were documented. The first occurred on February 18 in load No. 69. The second was taken on March 2, in load No. 130. A copy of the daily and weekly observer reports is enclosed.