

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OPERATION OF HOPPER DREDGES
IN THE CORPUS CHRISTI SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT

JUNE – JULY 1999

On June 11, 1999 the contract hopper dredge *B.E. Lindholm* (formerly the *Ouachita*) began work on the Entrance Channel of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Project. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 1,637,000 cubic yards (CY) of shoal material. The required depth of dredging was 49 feet below Mean Low Tide (MLT, Corps of Engineers Datum), with 2 feet of allowable overdepth dredging.

Dredging began on June 11, 1999, and was completed on July 11, 1999. A total of 601 loads of dredged material were collected and placed into Placement Area No. 1. Dredging was performed between Stations 34+00 and 50+00 along the Jetty Channel, and from Station 80+00 to 210+00 along the Outer Bar Channel. A total of 1,417,492 CY of material was excavated 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. under a subcontract to the dredging contractor, Weeks Marine, Inc.

During the performance of this dredging, three lethal loggerhead takes were experienced. The first take occurred on June 18, in load No. 176. This turtle was taken from the Outer Bar Channel between Stations 80+00 and 120+00. The second take occurred in the same vicinity as the first, on June 19, in load No. 193. The third take occurred on June 30, in load No. 421. This turtle was taken from the Outer Bar Channel between Stations 120+00 and 210+00. The water temperature for all three instances was about 28°C. A copy of the daily and weekly observer reports is enclosed.