

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OPERATION OF HOPPER DREDGES  
IN THE FREEPORT HARBOR CHANNEL PROJECT

JULY 2002 – AUGUST 2002

On July 13, 2002 the contract hopper dredge *Eagle I* began work on the Entrance and Jetty Channels of the Freeport Harbor Project. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 2,117,000 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 along the Entrance Channel and 47 feet MLT with 2 feet of overdepth along the Jetty Channel.

Dredging began on July 13, 2002, and was completed on August 24, 2002. A total of 894 loads of dredged material were collected and deposited into Placement Area No. 1-A. Dredging was performed between Stations 71+52 along the Jetty Channel and (-)210+00 along the Outer Bar Channel. A total of 1,996,354 CY of material were 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, Bean Horizon Corp./Stuyvesant Dredging Co. (Joint Venture).

Pre-dredging risk assessment trawling was conducted during the period from July 8 – July 12, 2002. Relocation trawling was also conducted on a 24-hour daily basis during dredging operations. On July 15, one loggerhead was captured, tagged and relocated. Additionally, one bottlenose dolphin was captured and released unharmed on July 14. A copy of the trawling final report is enclosed.

During the performance of this dredging, no lethal turtle takes were experienced. The water temperature ranged from 27.8°C – 30.0°C at the surface, and 26.7°C – 28.9°C below mid-depth. The water temperature was typically about 2°C cooler at mid-depth during each observation period. A copy of the observer reports is enclosed.