

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

MARCH 2002

On March 10, 2002 the contract hopper dredge *B.E. Lindholm* began work on the Entrance Channel of the Brazos Island Harbor Project. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 257,000 cubic yards (CY) of shoal material. The required depth of dredging was 41 to 43 feet below Mean Low Tide (MLT, Corps of Engineers Datum), with 2 feet of allowable overdepth dredging.

Dredging began on March 10, 2002, and was suspended on March 20, 2002. A total of 59 loads of dredged material were collected and deposited into Placement Area No. 1. Dredging was performed between Stations -6+000 and -12+500. A total of 207,338 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 REMSA, Inc. under a subcontract to the dredging contractor, Weeks Marine, Inc..

During the performance of this dredging, two green sea turtle takes were documented. The first take occurred on March 18th in load No. 44. The second take occurred on March 19th, in load No. 48. The water temperature during these takes was 18°C. A copy of the observer reports is enclosed.

Dredging was suspended prior to completion of work, due to green turtle takes both here and at the Port Mansfield Channel Project. Work on this project will resume later this calendar year, when the water temperature cools.