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For Immediate Release
TRUMP ADMINISTRATION REJECTS NEW RULE TO
PROTECT WHALES
FROM DYING IN CALIFORNIA DRIFT NETS

(Olema, CA) June 12, 2017 - - The Trump administration just cancelled a proposed new rule that would have set annual limits or “hard caps” on the number of whales, dolphins and sea turtles that the California driftnet fishery could kill each year in the course of catching swordfish (see <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/12/2017-12070/fisheries-off-west-coast-states-highly-migratory-fisheries-california-drift-gillnet-fishery>).

“The Trump administration has just declared war on whales, dolphins and sea turtles off the California coast,” said Todd Steiner, biologist and executive director of Turtle Island Restoration Network.

The withdrawn proposed rule would have established two-year rolling hard caps on observed mortality and injury to fin, humpback, and sperm whales; leatherback, loggerhead, olive ridley, and green sea turtles; short-fin pilot whales; and bottlenose dolphins in the DGN fishery.

“These rules were hammered out and approved to reduce growing pressure to ban the fishery completely, after legislation was introduced in the California Senate (SB 1114) introduced by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica),” said Steiner.

According to the Associated Press, the National Marine Fisheries Service said it was cancelling the rules to limit West Coast marine life entanglement, even though the fishing industry proposed the new limits itself.

Steiner, and other environmental groups say this action is one of the Trump administration’s first rollbacks of West Coast endangered-species protections.

Resources

Turtle Island has produced numerous reports outlining the issues facing West Coast marine mammals. You can read and download them here:

<https://seaturtles.org/california-driftnet-fishery-reports/>

Marine wildlife entanglement images through the FOIA can be found here:

<https://seaturtles.org/bycatch-from-the-california-driftnet-fishery/>)

and

<https://seaturtles.org/newssection/16341/>

Download Infographics here:

<https://seaturtles.org/newssection/infographic-the-impact-of-californias-driftnet-fishery-on-marine-mammals/>

and here:

<https://seaturtles.org/resources/infographic-the-economic-argument-against-the-california-driftnet-fishery/>

And Seaturtles.org news here:

<https://seaturtles.org/newssection/15910/>

About Turtle Island Restoration Network

Turtle Island Restoration Network (SeaTurtles.org) is an international marine conservation organization headquartered in California whose 200,000+ members and online activists work to protect sea turtles, salmon and marine biodiversity in the United States and around the world. For 25 years, Turtle Island Restoration Network has mobilized people to preserve oceans, restore rivers and streams, and protect the marine wildlife – from sea turtles to sharks – that call these blue-green waters home.

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