UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Announces the Availability of a Revised List of Approved Equipment Models for the Careful Release of Sea Turtles Caught in Hook and Line Fisheries

NMFS announces the availability of a revised list of equipment models that NMFS has approved as meeting the minimum design specifications for the careful release of sea turtles caught in hook and line fisheries. The revised list may be found in Table 1 below and at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Protected%20Resources/Required_Gear.pdf. This list has been revised by adding the newly required sea turtle control device (73 FR 54721; September 23, 2008) and two NMFS-approved models to meet this requirement. The two NMFS-approved models are the Turtle Tether (ARC Model TT08, Model TT12) and T&G Ninja Sticks. These revisions are underlined in Table 1. Other sea turtle bycatch mitigation gears previously approved remain approved for use in the fishery.

Table 1 references (in the left column) the required gears for mandatory sea turtle handling and release that are to be carried and used onboard vessels participating in Atlantic pelagic and bottom longline fisheries (50 CFR §635.21 (c)(5)(i) and (d)(3)(i)). NMFS-approved models of equipment that may be used as options to meet the requirements are listed in the right column. Equipment may also be fabricated and used by individuals according to the minimum design specifications found at 50 CFR §635.21 (c)(5)(i). The benefit of using these gears is to maximize safe and efficient gear removal from incidentally captured sea turtles thereby minimizing the potential for serious injury or mortality.

Table 1. NMFS-Approved Models For Equipment Needed For The Careful Release of Sea Turtles Caught In Hook And Line Fisheries.

Required Item	NMFS-Approved Models
(A) Long-handled line cutter, with one set of replacement blades*	LaForce Line Cutter; or Arceneaux Line Clipper
(B) Long-handled dehooker for ingested hooks*	ARC Pole Model Deep-Hooked Dehooker (Model BP11)[1]; or NOAA/Bergmann Dehooker[2] on long-handle
(C) Long-handled dehooker for external hooks[3]*	ARC Model LJ6P (6 ft (1.83 m)); or ARC Model LJ36; or ARC Pole Model Deep-Hooked Dehooker (Model BP11)[1]; or ARC 6 ft. (1.83 m) Pole Big Game Dehooker (Model P610); or Robey Dehooker on long-handle; or NOAA/Bergmann Dehooker on long-handle
(D) Long-handled device to pull an "inverted V"[4]*	ARC Model LJ6P (6 ft.)(1.83 m); or Davis Telescoping Boat Hook to 96 in. (2.44 m) (Model 85002A); or West Marine # F6H5 Hook and # F6-006 Handle

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(E) Dipnet**	ARC 12-ft. (3.66-m) Breakdown Lightweight Dip Net Model DN6P (6 ft. (1.83 m)); or ARC Model DN08 (8 ft.(2.44 m)); or ARC Model DN 14 (12 ft. (3.66 m)); or ARC Net Assembly & Handle (Model DNIN); or Lindgren-Pitman, Inc. Model NMFS Turtle Net
(F) Standard automobile tire**	Any standard automobile tire free of exposed steel belts
(G) Short-handled dehooker for ingested hooks**	ARC 17-inch (43.18-cm) Hand-Held Bite Block Deep-Hooked Turtle Dehooking Device (Model ST08)[1]; or NOAA/Bergmann Dehooker[2] on short-handle
(H) Short-handled dehooker for external hooks[5]**	ARC Hand-Held Large J-Style Dehooker (Model LJ07); or ARC Hand-Held Large J-Style Dehooker (Model LJ24); or ARC 17-inch (43.18-cm) Hand-Held Bite Block Deep-Hooked Turtle Dehooking Device (Model ST08)[1]; or Scotty's Dehooker; or Robey Dehooker on short-handle; or NOAA/Bergmann Dehooker on short-handle
(I) Long-nose or needle-nose pliers**	12-in. (30.48-cm) S.S. NuMark Model #030281109871; or any 12-inch (30.48-cm) stainless steel long-nose or needle-nose pliers
(J) Bolt cutter**	H.K. Porter Model 1490 AC
(K) Monofilament line cutter**	Jinkai Model MC-T
(L) Two of the following mouth openers and mouth gags**	
(L1) Block of hard wood	Any block of hard wood meeting design standards (e.g., Olympia Tools Long-Handled Wire Brush and Scraper (Model 974174))
(L2) Set of (3) canine mouth gags	Jorvet Model #4160, 4162, and 4164
(L3) Set of (2) sturdy dog chew bones	Nylabone® (a trademark owned by T.F.H. Publications, Inc.); or Gumabone® (a trademark owned by T.F.H. Publications, Inc.); or Galileo® (a trademark owned by T.F.H. Publications, Inc.)
(L4) Set of (2) rope loops covered with hose	Any set of (2) rope loops covered with hose meeting design standards

(L5) Hank of rope	Any size soft braided nylon rope is acceptable, provided it creates a hank of rope approximately 2 - 4 inches (5.08 cm - 10.16 cm) in thickness
(L6) Set of (4) PVC splice couplings	A set of (4) Standard Schedule 40 PVC splice couplings (1-inch (2.54-cm), 1 1/4-inch 3.175-cm), 1 ½- inch (3.81-cm), and 2-inch (5.08-cm)
(L7) Large avian oral speculum	Webster Vet Supply (Model 85408); or Veterinary Specialty Products (Model VSP 216-08); or Jorvet (Model J-51z); or Krusse (Model 273117)
(M) Turtle control device***	Turtle Tether and extended reach handle; or T&G Ninja Sticks and extended reach handles

*Items (A) - (D), and (M) are required for turtles not boated.
**Items (E) - (L) are required for boated turtles.
***Only one turtle control device is required, but NMFS recommends the use of two devices to secure both front flippers.
[1]The pigtail portion of the ARC dehooker may be modified by creating a notch in the pigtail curl where the shank of the hook comes into contact with the dehooker when the line is tightly pulled parallel to the handle.
[2]The NOAA/Bergman dehooker should not be used to remove ingested J-hooks.
[3]The long-handled dehooker for Item B would meet the requirement for Item C.
[4]If a 6-ft (1.83 m) J-Style dehooker is used to satisfy the requirement for Item C, it would also satisfy the requirement for Item D.
[5]The short-handled dehooker for Item G would meet the requirement for Item H.

For more information on sea turtle dehooking requirements, please see the HMS Management Division website at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms or call Randy Blankinship, Rick Pearson, Greg Fairclough, or Russ Dunn at 727-824-5399.

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Date