

## **Data Collection Priorities**

As an observer in the Hawaii Longline Fishery your primary duty is to obtain reliable information about sea turtle and other protected species interactions. All protected species data and sample collection has higher priority than any fish data. In instances where there is a protected species interaction collect all data and samples and just make a note if you are not able to collect lower priority fish data. Keep in mind that while you are collecting protected species data and samples, you still need to watch what is coming up on the line so additional protected species are not missed.

## **Sample Collection General Comments**

Make sample collections only if you have the proper storage medium and storage space. *An important note to remember is that it is easier to discard a specimen or sample after it is collected and confirmed you do not need it, than to assume that you do not need to collect it and find out later that the sample was highly valuable for research.*

## **Sample and Data Collection Priorities Samples**

- Sea turtles: Positive ID, skin biopsies or whole dead animals.
- Marine mammals: Positive ID, skin biopsies, or small whole dead animals if possible.
- Seabirds: Positive ID, refer to circular update for current protocol.
- Fishes: selected biological samples as directed - see Circular Updates.

## **Data**

- Collect and document data from all incidental catches and interactions of protected species. Sea turtles and marine mammals have a higher priority over seabirds.
- Record species composition and disposition of the catch.
- Record fishing locations and gear characteristics.
- Collect fish and shark measurements.
- Describe all incidents where tags are applied, observed, or removed on any caught animal.

If you are unable to complete all of your duties due to illness, dangerous conditions, etc.; use this list of priorities to help determine what tasks might have to be discontinued. These situations are rare and require detailed comments. Try to be creative and find alternative methods to help you perform your duties when needed. For example; if you are vomiting off the starboard side of the vessel while gear is being retrieved from port, video the hauling operation while you are unable to monitor it. This is not preferred, but it's better than missing a possible interaction.