

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OPERATION OF HOPPER DREDGES

IN THE MATAGORDA SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT

OCTOBER 2001

On October 21, 2001 the contract hopper dredge *Padre Island* began work on the Entrance Channel of the Matagorda Ship Channel Project. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 371,000 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 October 21, 2001, and was completed on October 29, 2001. A total of 105 loads of dredged material were collected and deposited into Placement Area No. 1. Dredging was performed between Stations -4+500 to -5+500, and -10+000 to -19+000. A total of 285,594 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, NATCO Limited Partnership.

During the performance of this dredging, no lethal turtle takes were experienced. Water temperature measurements were not made during this dredging because the thermometer was lost on the first day. A copy of the daily and weekly observer reports is enclosed.