

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON HOPPER DREDGE OPERATIONS

IN THE HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT

JANUARY 2010

On January 22, 2010 the contract hopper dredge *Glenn Edwards* began work on the segment of the Houston Ship Channel from Station 80+000 to Station 94+000. This work was added via a modification to the on-going Galveston Harbor and Channel contract. Contract specifications required dredging an estimated 318,000 cubic yards (CY) of shoal material. The required depth of dredging was 47 feet below Mean Low Tide (MLT, Corps of Engineers Datum) with 2.0 feet of allowable overdepth.

Hopper dredging began on January 22, 2010 and was completed on January 29, 2010. Dredging operations were continuous during this time period. A total of 31 loads containing 260,974 CY of material was collected and deposited into Placement Area No. 1.

The dredge was equipped with rigid draghead turtle deflectors, and 100% inflow screening with 4-inch 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 subcontract to the dredging contractor, Manson Construction Co.

No risk assessment trawling or relocation trawling was conducted during dredging operations.

During the performance of this dredging, no turtle takes were experienced. The water temperature during this project ranged from about 14° to 16°C.

Observer reports can be accessed at the USACE Sea Turtle Data Warehouse. The link is: <http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/seaturtles/project.cfm?Id=642&Code=Project>.

Coordination was conducted with the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN). There were no reports of stranded turtles that bore injuries consistent with a potential encounter with a hopper dredge.

Material dredged was reported as sand, silt, and mud. There were no indications that dredged material or debris caused any unacceptable fouling of the screens.