

III. QUICK REFERENCE: ATLANTIC SWORDFISH REGULATIONS

PERMITS
<p>Commercial fishermen must possess a valid swordfish limited access permit for the vessel they are operating in order to fish for, take, or retain Atlantic swordfish. All commercial swordfish permits are issued under a limited access system. To enter the fishery, fishermen must obtain a permit from a permit holder who is leaving the fishery. Limited access permits are transferred between vessels and are subject to upgrading restrictions. Atlantic Directed and Incidental swordfish permits are valid only when held in conjunction with both a shark limited access and tuna longline permit. Prior to renewing or obtaining an Atlantic Directed or Incidental swordfish limited access permit, fishermen must become certified at a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release and Identification workshop if fishing with longline or gillnet gear. Contact the Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5326 for information on commercial swordfish permits.</p>
RETENTION LIMITS
<p>North Atlantic Swordfish (north of 5° N latitude): <u>Directed</u>: No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, fishermen may retain 15 swordfish per pelagic longline trip, two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) <u>Incidental</u>: 30 swordfish per trip, or no more than 15 if fishing with squid trawl <u>Handgear</u>: No trip limit (when the directed fishery is closed, fishermen may retain two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) South Atlantic Swordfish (south of 5° N latitude): <u>Directed</u>: No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, no swordfish may be retained) <u>Incidental</u>: No retention allowed</p>
AUTHORIZED GEARS
<p><u>North Atlantic Swordfish</u> can only be taken with handgear (bandit gear, handline, harpoon, rod and reel), buoy gear (directed or handgear permit holders only), or longline, except that a limited number of swordfish may be taken incidentally on a vessel with squid trawl. <u>South Atlantic Swordfish</u> can only be taken with longline. All commercial longline vessels must have handling and release gear and corrodible hooks on board. Circle hooks are required for pelagic longline gear. Bait restrictions also apply.</p>
MINIMUM SIZES
<p>North and South Atlantic swordfish must be larger than 29 inches (73 cm) cleithrum to caudal keel, or 47 inches (119 cm) lower jaw fork length, or 33 lb (15 kg) dressed weight. A swordfish that is damaged by shark bites may be retained only if the remainder of the carcass meets the minimum size. The swordfish may be dressed (gutted and head and fins removed), but the dressed weight of the swordfish must be greater than 33 lbs.</p>

<p>CK - Cleithrum to Caudal Keel LJFL - Lower Jaw Fork Length</p>
LANDING RESTRICTIONS
<p>Swordfish must be kept in whole or dressed form through landing (“dressed” indicates a headed/gutted fish with some or all fins removed). Swordfish harvested from the management unit cannot be filleted or cut into pieces at sea. There are several closed areas. See the appropriate section of this guide, the HMS webpage, or 50 CFR part 635 for more details and locations of area closures.</p>

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. October 2008