

II. GEAR DEFINITIONS

Each HMS permit allows the use of certain fishing gears, depending on: 1) the type of permit, and 2) the HMS that is being fished for. Certain gears may only be fished certain ways, while others may be fished using multiple techniques or approaches. Please see each species section for specific fishing gear information and definitions.

Bandit gear – Consists of a vertical hook and line gear with rods that are attached to the vessel when in use. Lines can be retrieved by manual, electric, or hydraulic reels.

Circle hook – With regard to Atlantic HMS, a circle hook is a hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook is turned perpendicularly back toward the shank of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape.

Rod and reel – Consists of a handheld fishing rod with a manually or electronically operated reel attached.

Handline – Consists of a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks are attached. A handline is retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means, and must be attached to, or in contact with, a vessel.

Speargun – Consists of a muscle-powered speargun equipped with a trigger mechanism, a spear with a tip designed to penetrate and retain fish, and terminal gear. Terminal gear may include, but is not limited to, trailing lines, reels, and floats. The term “muscle-powered speargun” means a speargun that stores potential energy provided by the operator’s muscles, and that releases only the amount of energy that the operator has provided to it from his or her own muscles. The operator must be physically in the water when using this gear.

Greenstick – An actively trolled mainline attached to a vessel and elevated or suspended above the surface of the water with no more than 10 hooks or gangions attached to the mainline. The suspended line, attached gangions and/or hooks, and catch may be retrieved collectively by hand or mechanical means. Greenstick does not constitute a pelagic longline or a bottom longline as described at § 635.21(c) or § 635.21(d), respectively.

Secondary gears – Secondary, or “cockpit,” gears may only be used at boatside to aid and assist in subduing, or bringing onboard a vessel, Atlantic HMS that have first been caught or captured using primary gears authorized for recreational HMS fishing. Secondary gears include, but are not limited to, dart harpoons, gaffs, and tail ropes. Secondary gears may not be used to capture, or attempt to capture, free-swimming or undersized HMS.

FISHING TECHNIQUES

Surface trolling – A fishing technique where the lines trail behind a vessel which is in constant motion at speeds in excess of four knots with a visible wake. Such trolling may not involve the use of down riggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices.

Down rigger – A piece of equipment attached to a vessel that has a weight on a cable that is in turn attached to hook-and-line gear to maintain lures or bait at depth while trolling. Downriggers are to be used with the authorized recreational hook and line gears including bandit, rod and reel, handline, and greenstick gear.

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