

## 9.0 HMS PERMITS AND TOURNAMENTS

This section provides updates for the number of permits that were issued in conjunction with HMS fishing activities as of May 2008. Dealer permit numbers listed in this section for shark and swordfish are as of August 2008. Section 9.7, Atlantic HMS Tournaments, provides a comprehensive synthesis of recreational fishing tournaments and their role in the context of HMS management.

NMFS' HMS Management Division continues to monitor capacity in HMS fisheries. Updated permit numbers for HMS fisheries as of May (fishing permits) and August (dealer permits) 2008, are included in

Table 9.1 through Table 9.6. These tables have been updated since the 2007 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report, which listed numbers of permits as of October 2007. The overall number of commercial limited access permits for Atlantic swordfish, tunas, and sharks decreased from 1,086 to 1,079 (

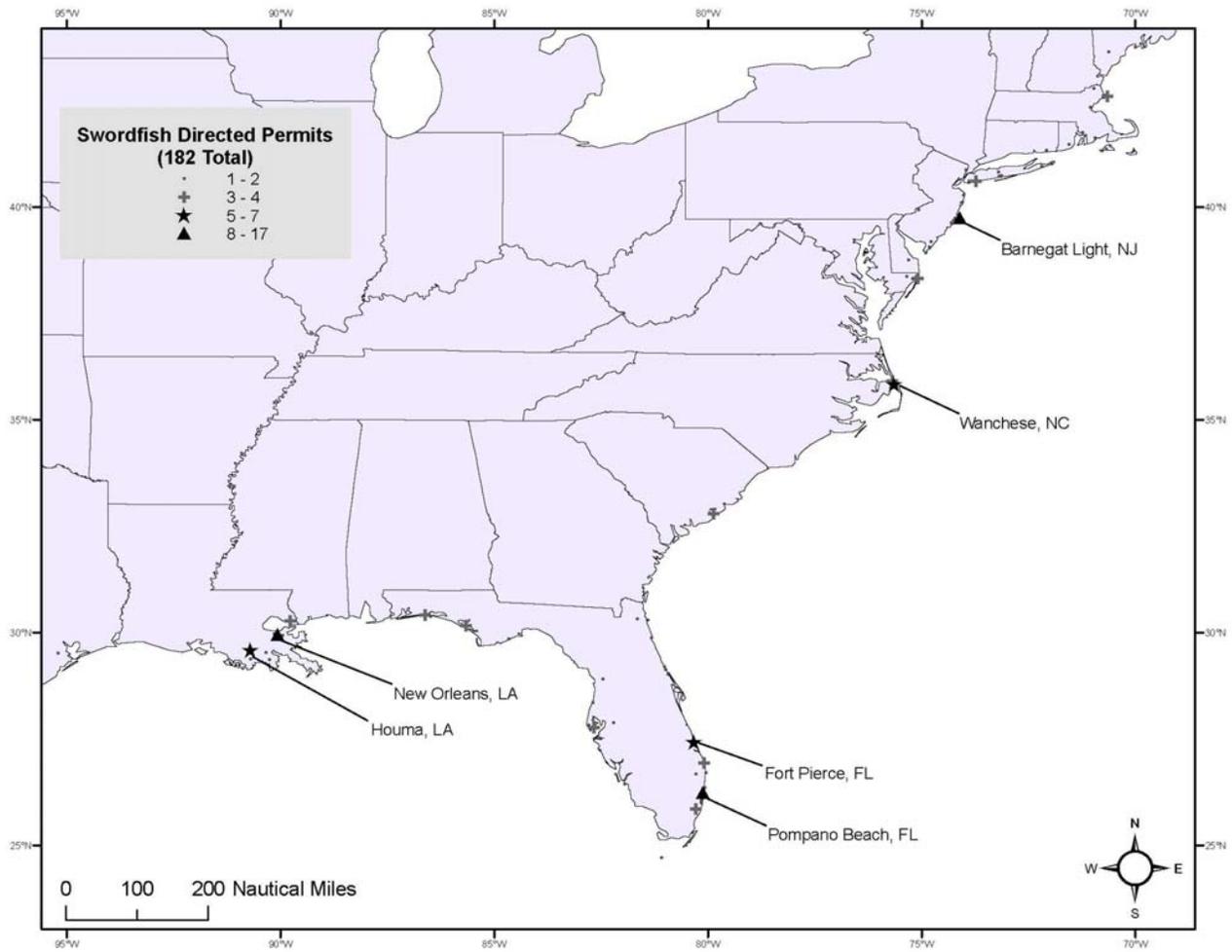
Table 9.1) between October 2007 and May 2008; however, the numbers of permits are subject to change based upon ongoing permit renewal or expiration. Figure 9.1-9.6 show the distribution of limited access permits. The overall number of tuna permits increased in some categories between October 2007 and May 2008 (Table 9.2). The HMS Angling Permit category went into effect on March 1, 2003 (67 FR 77434, December 18, 2003), and there has been a significant increase in Angling category permits over the past few years (Table 9.2). The number of tuna dealer permits increased from 286 (October 2007) to 395 (August 2008) (

Table 9.5) (Figure 9.12).

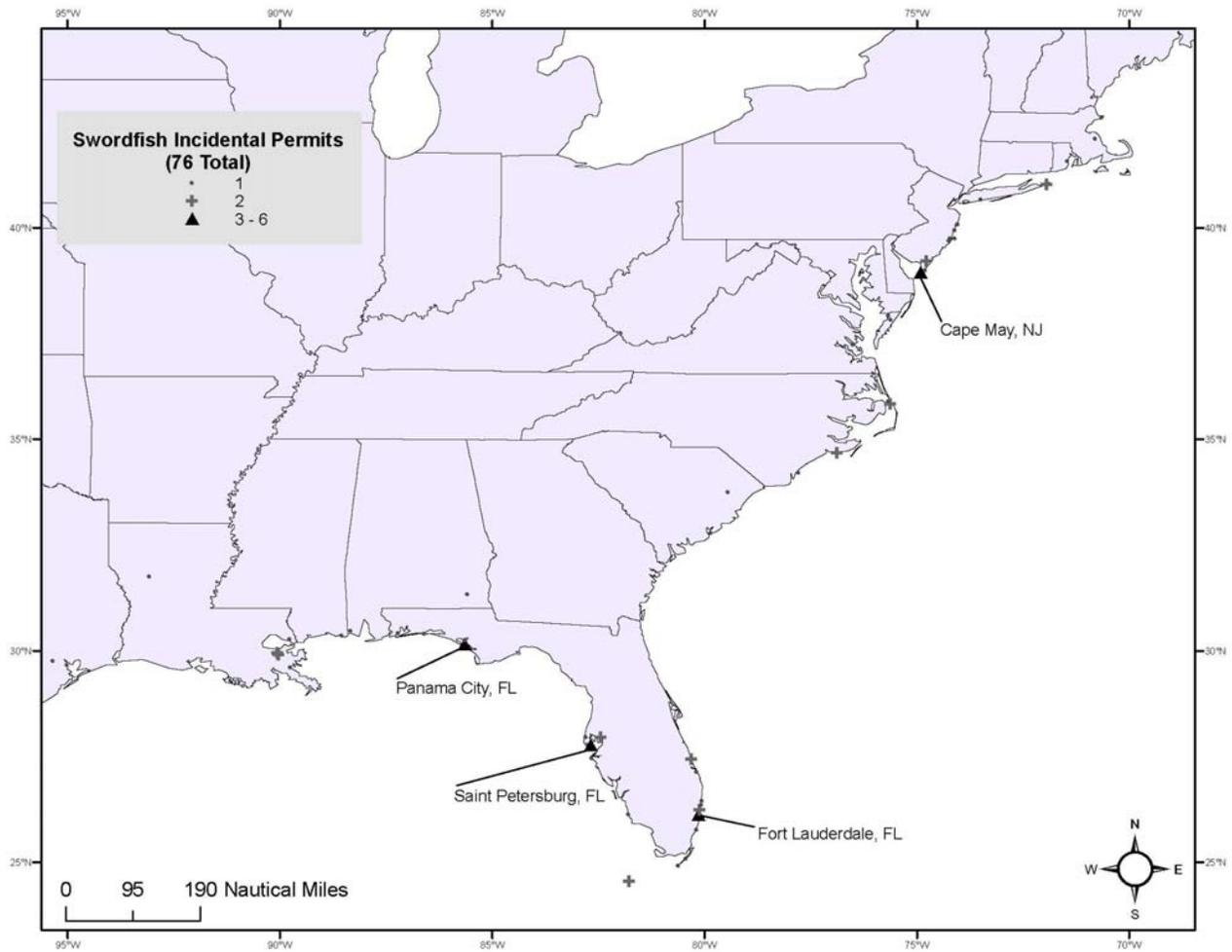
**Table 9.1 Distribution of Shark, Swordfish, and Tuna longline Limited Access Permits Between 2001 and 2008. Permit number are as of May 2008.**

State	# Directed Swordfish	# Incidental Swordfish	# Swordfish Handgear	# Directed Shark	# Incidental Shark	# Tuna Longline	# Permit Holders/# Permits
ME	2	-	1	2	1	2	4/9
NH	-	-	1	-	2	-	3/3
MA	11	2	12	4	13	11	32/53
RI	1	1	16	-	7	1	19/26
CT	1	-	2	1	2	1	5/7
NY	9	3	5	7	8	17	24/49
NJ	32	13	5	28	26	37	61/141
DE	1	-	-	-	1	1	1/3
MD	6	-	-	3	3	8	8/20
VA	1	3	-	1	4	2	5/11
NC	10	6	-	16	14	14	33/60
SC	4	2	-	7	13	5	22/31
GA	-	-	-	2	1	-	3/3
FL	71	34	39	134	143	98	341/519
AL	-	2	-	4	1	1	8/8
MS	-	1	-	1	5		6/7
LA	31	6	-	3	36	37	44/113
TX	1	3	-	1	5	5	8/15
CA	-	-	-	-	-	1	1/1
<b>*Totals 2008</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>628/1079</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>613/1086</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>604/1131</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>639/1128</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>657/1201</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>696/1245</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>713/1262</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>752/1275</b>

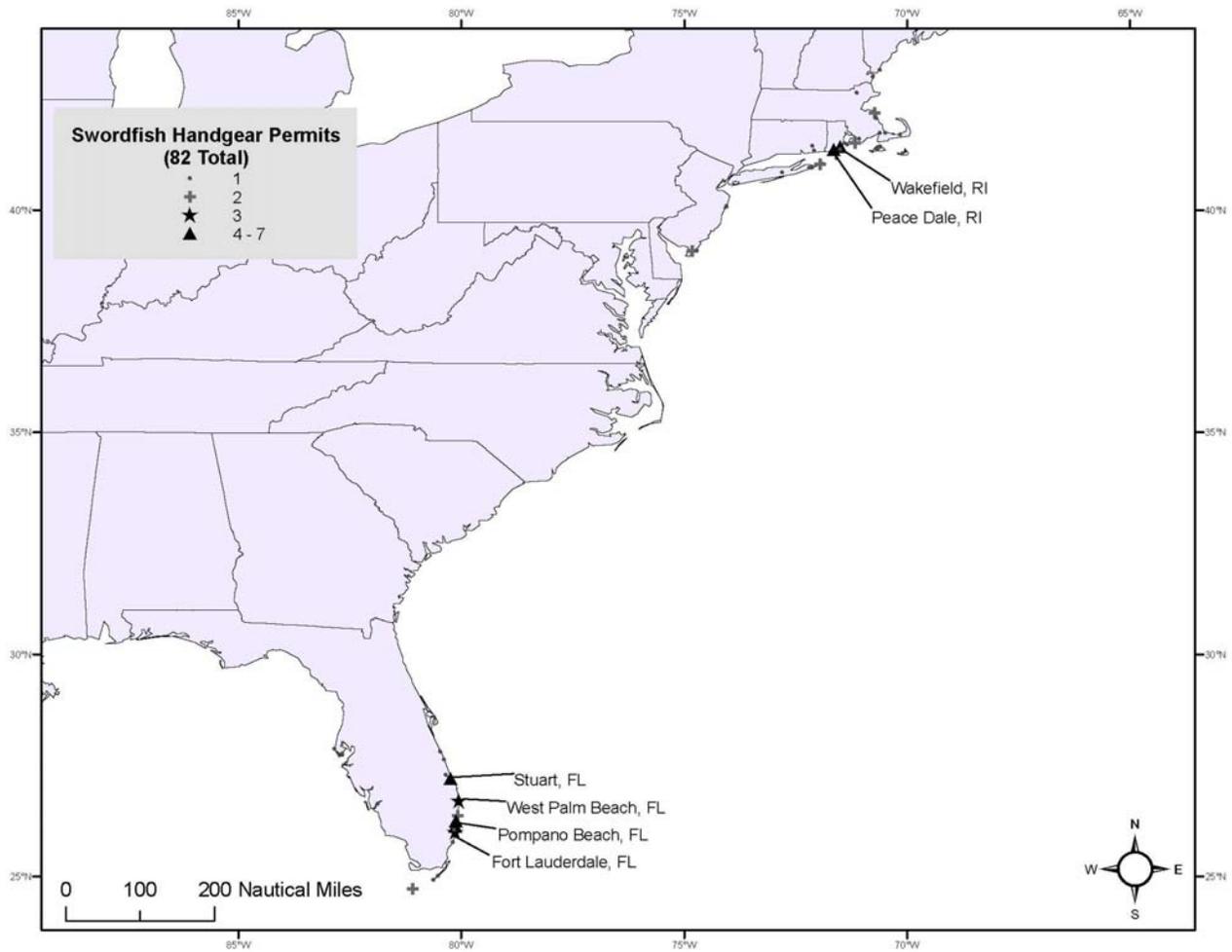
\* Number of permit holders in each category, and state, is subject to change as permits are renewed or expire.



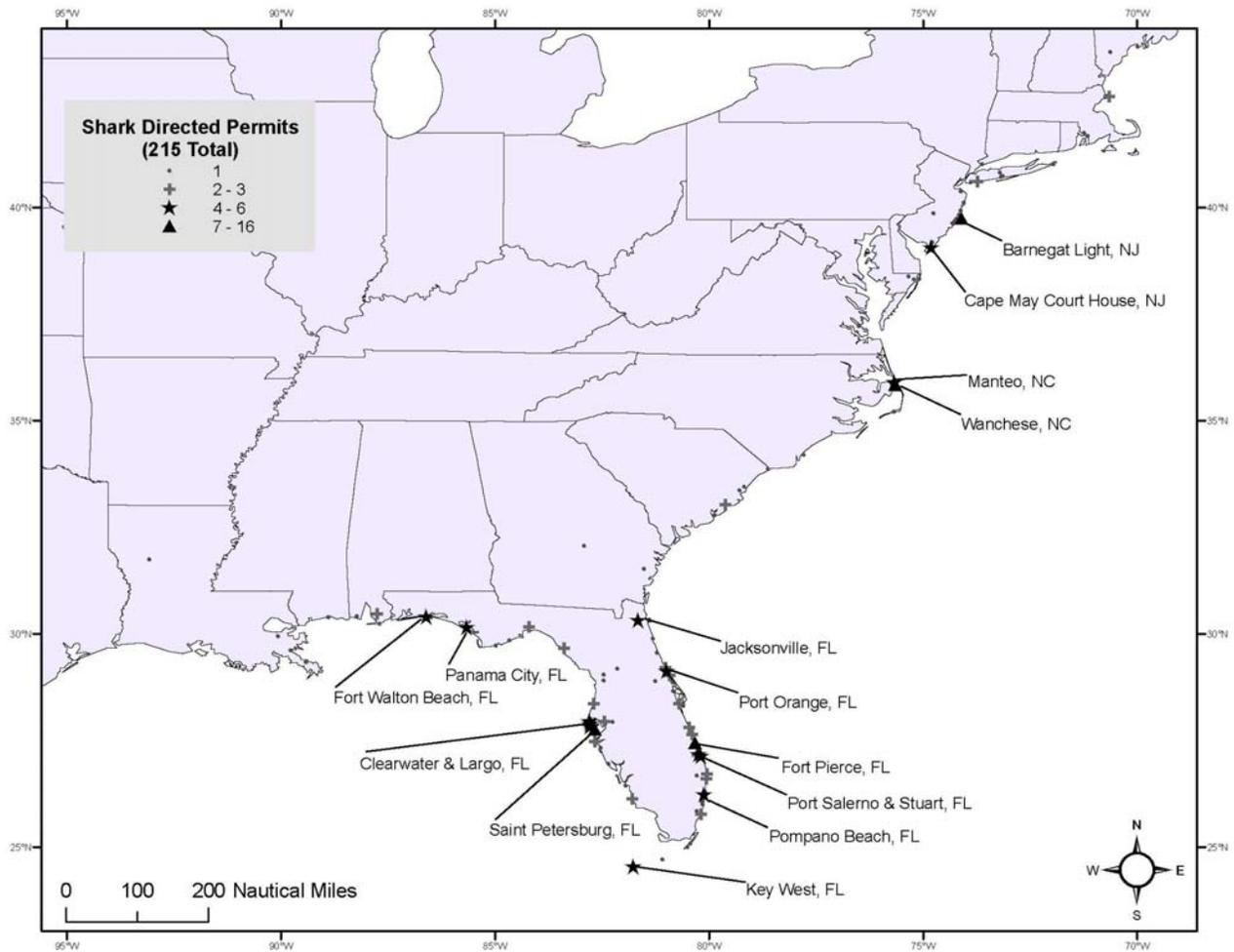
**Figure 9.1**      **Distribution of Swordfish Directed permit holders as of May 2008**



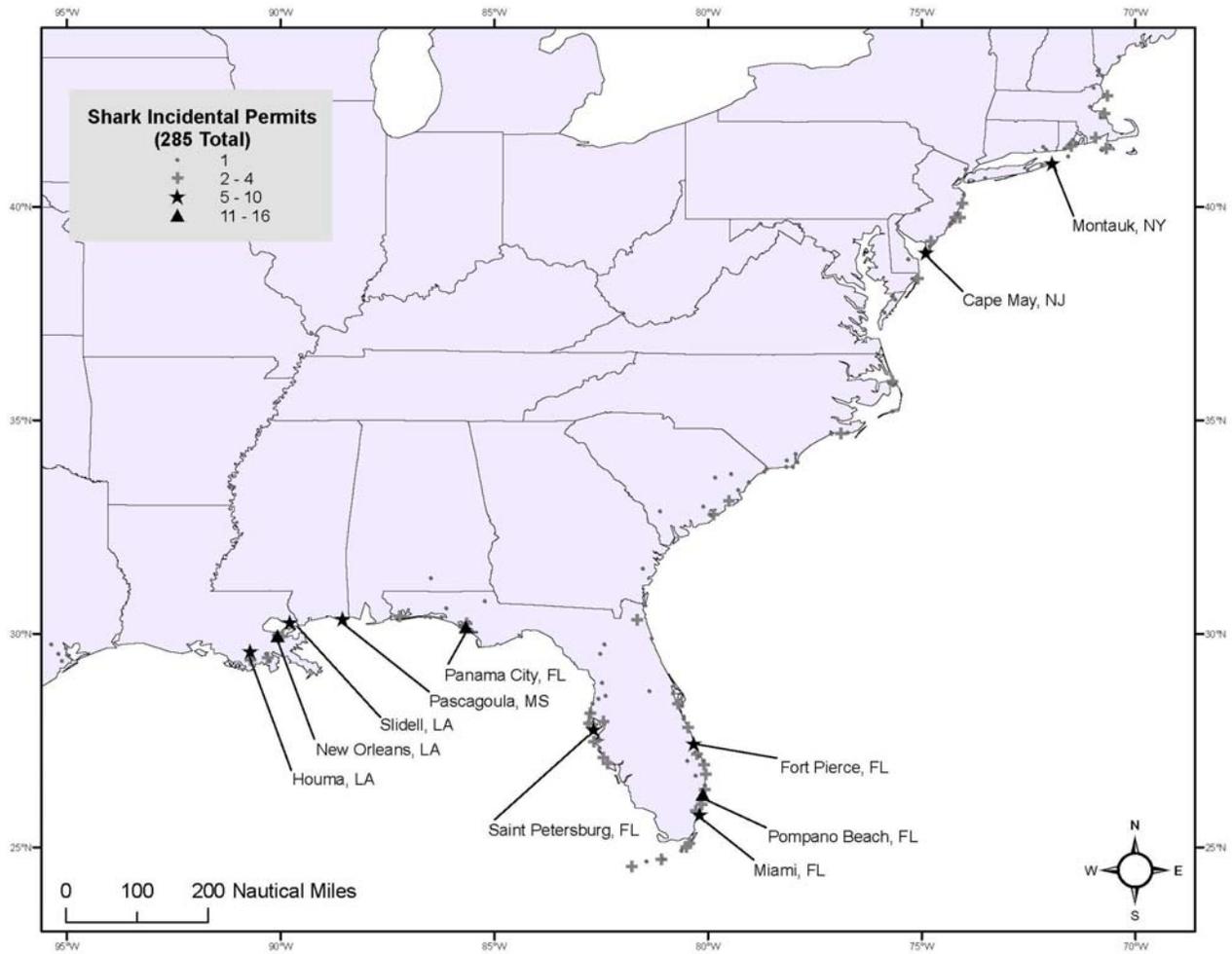
**Figure 9.2** Distribution of Swordfish Incidental permit holders as of May 2008



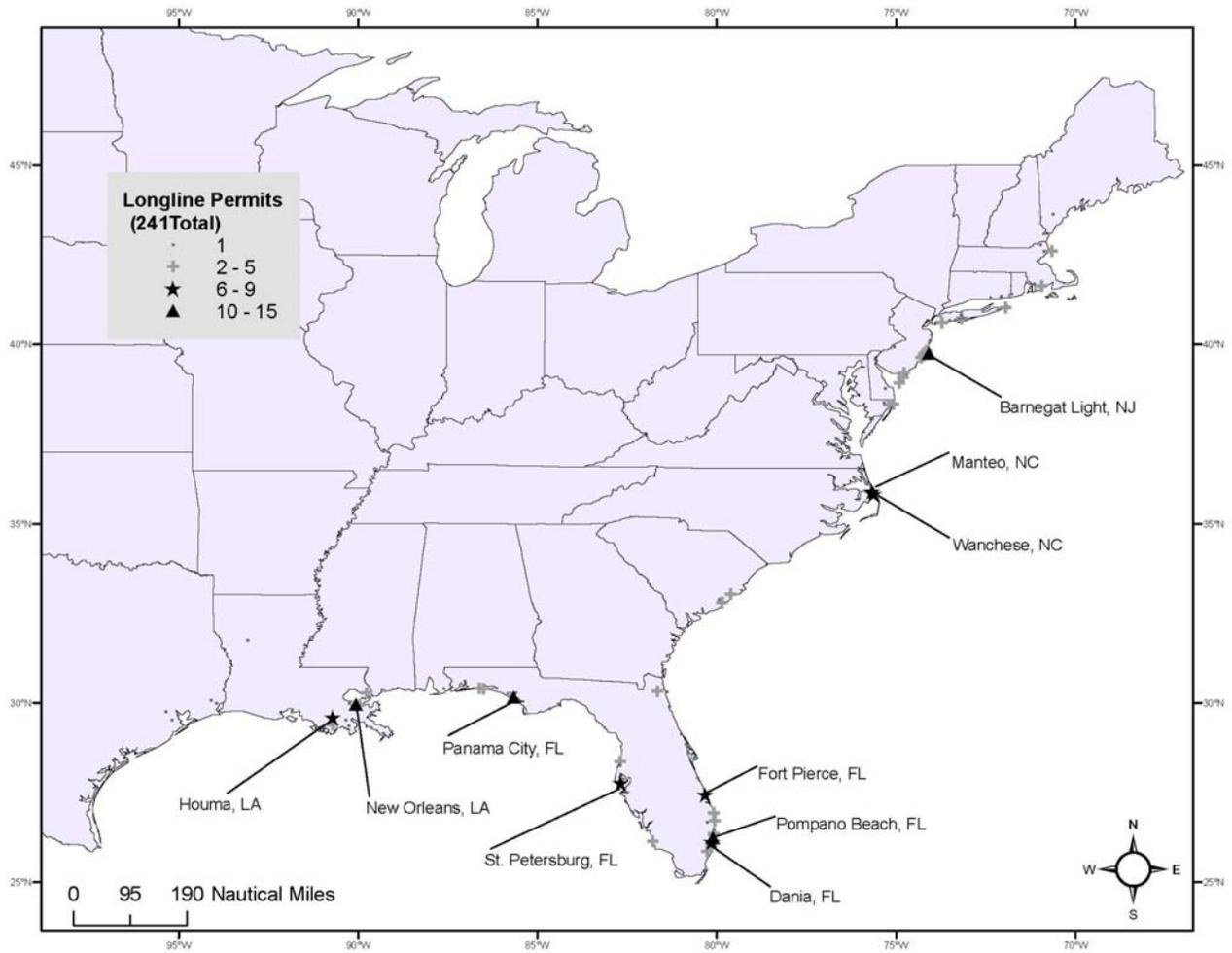
**Figure 9.3** Distribution of Swordfish Handgear permit holders as of May 2008



**Figure 9.4**      **Distribution of Shark Directed permit holders as of May 2008**



**Figure 9.5** Distribution of Shark Incidental permit holders as of May 2008



**Figure 9.6** Distribution of Tuna Longline Category permit holders as of May 2008

## **9.1 Vessel Upgrading Requirements and Safety Issues**

When the limited access program was implemented in 1999, NMFS included vessel upgrading restrictions that were the same as those implemented by the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) in order to minimize the number of regulations with which fishermen had to comply with. The upgrading restrictions prohibited vessels from increasing overall length and gross or net tonnage by more than ten percent and prohibited an increase in horsepower by more than 20 percent. However, as of August 6, 2007 (72 FR 31688), vessels holding a particular combination of permits, to increase vessel length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage by up to 35 percent relative to the vessel's baseline specifications. Increase in horsepower on these vessels is unlimited.

Since the regulations were implemented NMFS has received comments that remaining vessel upgrading restrictions are not appropriate for longline vessels, may inhibit full utilization of the domestic swordfish quota, are not the preferred vessel characteristics to limit overcapitalization, and have caused safety at sea concerns. NMFS is considering these issues and whether additional rulemakings would be appropriate. In developing the current upgrading restrictions, hold capacity was identified by constituents as a vessel characteristic that would not impact safety at sea and would meet the objective of addressing overcapitalization in HMS commercial fisheries. NMFS did not implement hold capacity as a measure to limit vessel upgrading in 1999 due to the lack of standard measurements of vessel hold capacity as well as the lack of consistent collection of this information for HMS commercial vessels as part of existing vessel registration systems. NMFS has considered other possible options including: eliminating upgrading restrictions; limiting hold capacity instead of, or in addition to, the current restrictions; allowing a greater percentage increase in overall length; and creating vessel categories. NMFS is considering these options, and, as with any potential changes in the permitting system, will allow for adequate public comment during the rulemaking process before making any changes to the regulations.

## **9.2 Atlantic Tunas Permits**

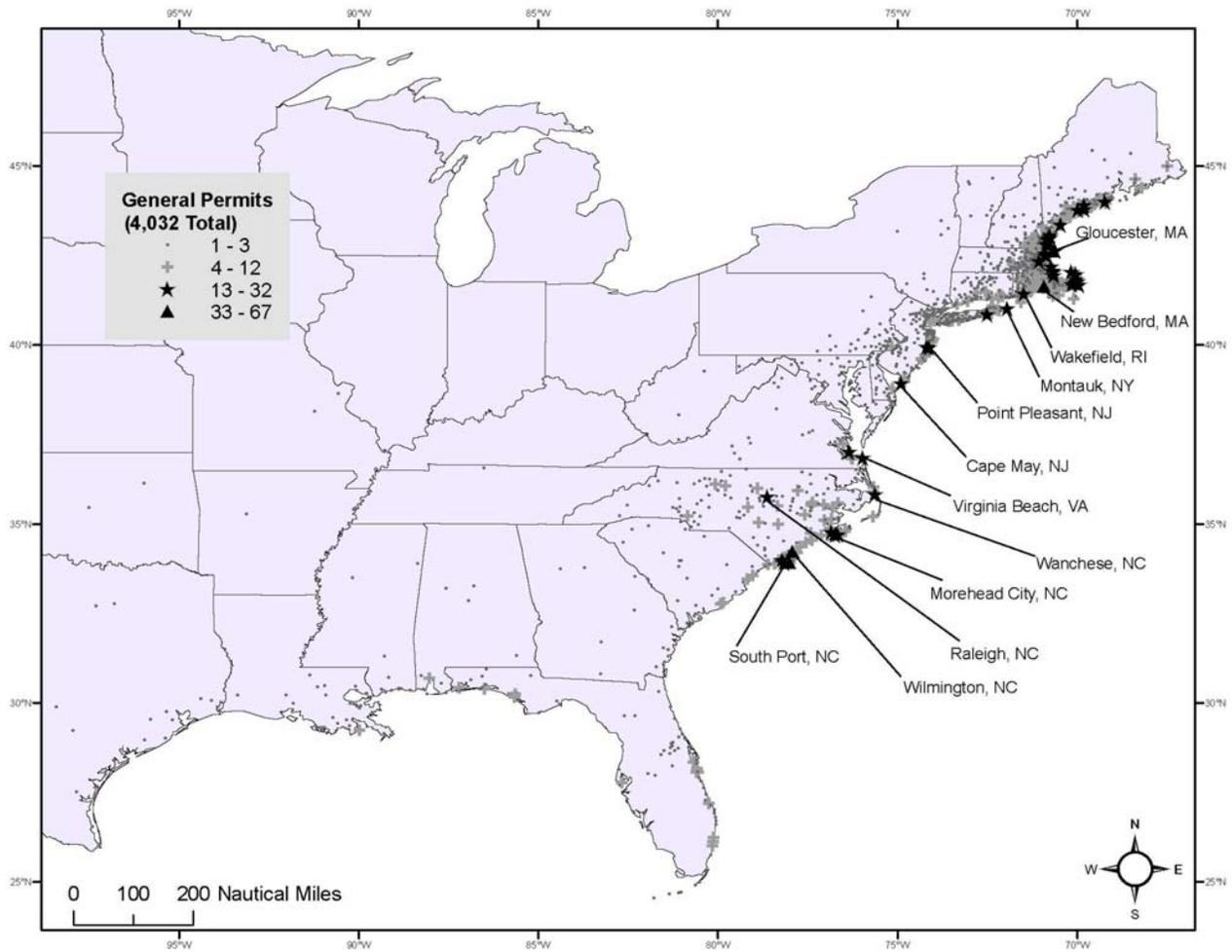
The number of Atlantic Tunas permit holders by category is listed in Table 9.2. The number of permits in the Longline, General, Angling, and Charter/Headboat (CHB) Categories increased between 2007 and 2008. The increase in Longline Category permits could be attributed to the elimination of the "sunset" provision for these permits as of August 4, 2008 (73 FR 38144, July 3, 2008). This rule allows the most recent shark and swordfish limited access permit holders on record to renew previously expired Longline permits as long as other requirements for renewal were met. Distributions for General Category permits can be found in Figure 9.7. Trap Category permits (9 total) occur from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Harpoon Category permits (26 total) occur from mainly from Rhode Island north to Maine with the exception of one permit holder in North Carolina. Currently there are five entities eligible to participate in the purse seine tuna fishery but recently one vessel was sold. Therefore, there were only four Purse Seine Category permits issued in 2007 and 2008.

**Table 9.2 The number of Atlantic tuna permit holders in each category are listed for 2001 through 2008. Permit numbers for 2008 are as of May 2008. The actual number of 2008 permit holders in each category is subject to change as individuals renew or allow their permits to expire.**

Category	2001	2002	2003**	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Longline	213	226	235	222	200	214	218	241
Angling *	12,685	13,263	18,804	20,245	24,127	25,238	24,220	26,933
Harpoon	53	56	47	49	40	40	26	26
Trap	1	6	2	2	7	7	9	9
General	6,072	6,431	5,526	5,057	4,494	4,824	3,616	4,031
Purse Seine	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
CHB*	3,260	3,659	4,167	3,881	3,963	4,173	3,899	4,297
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,289</b>	<b>23,646</b>	<b>28,789</b>	<b>29,461</b>	<b>32,836</b>	<b>34,501</b>	<b>31,992</b>	<b>35,568</b>

\* HMS Angling and CHB permit became effective March 1, 2003 (67 FR 77434, December 18, 2003) and includes all HMS, not just tunas.

In December 2002, NMFS published a final rule (67 FR 77434, December 18, 2002) that required the owner of each vessel used to fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS or on which Atlantic HMS are retained or possessed, to obtain an HMS Angling permit. This rule also established a requirement that owners of charter boats or headboats that are used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, or billfish must obtain a HMS CHB permit. Effective March 1, 2003, this permit replaced the Atlantic Tunas Angling and CHB category permit. It is discussed in greater detail in the Section 0 HMS Angling Permit.



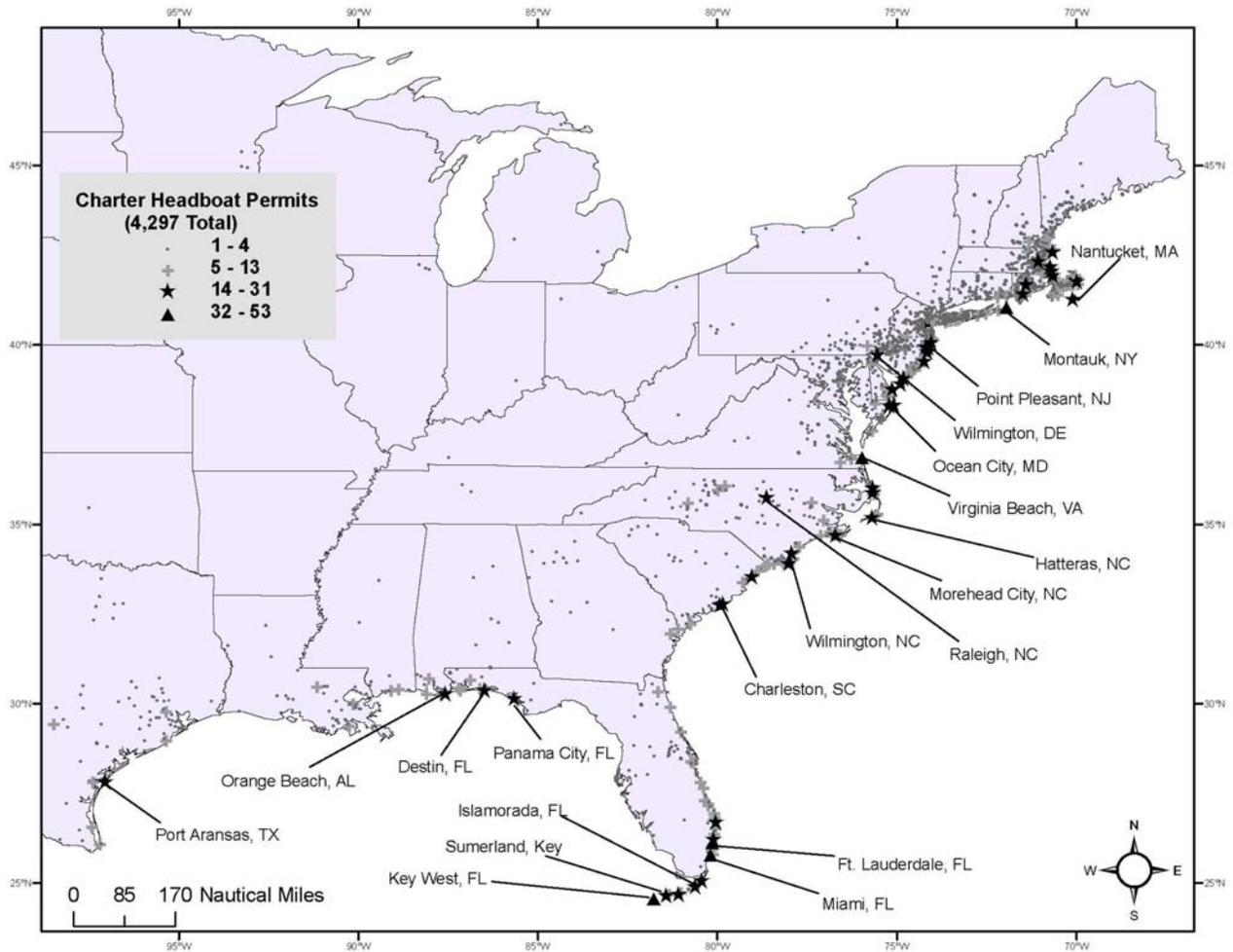
**Figure 9.7** Distribution of General Category tuna permit holders as of May 2008

### 9.3 HMS CHB Permits

In 2002, NMFS published a final rule (67 FR 77434, Dec. 18, 2002) expanding the HMS recreational permit from tuna only to include all HMS and defining CHB operations. This established a requirement that owners of charter boats or headboats that are used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, or billfish must obtain a HMS CHB permit. This permit replaced the Atlantic Tunas CHB permit. A vessel issued a HMS CHB permit for a fishing year will not be issued an HMS Angling permit or any Atlantic Tunas permit in any category for that same fishing year, even if there is a change in the vessel's ownership. The total number of CHB permits increased between 2007 and 2008. The distribution of HMS CHB permits can be seen in Figure 9.8.

**Table 9.3 CHB Permits by State as of May 2008.**

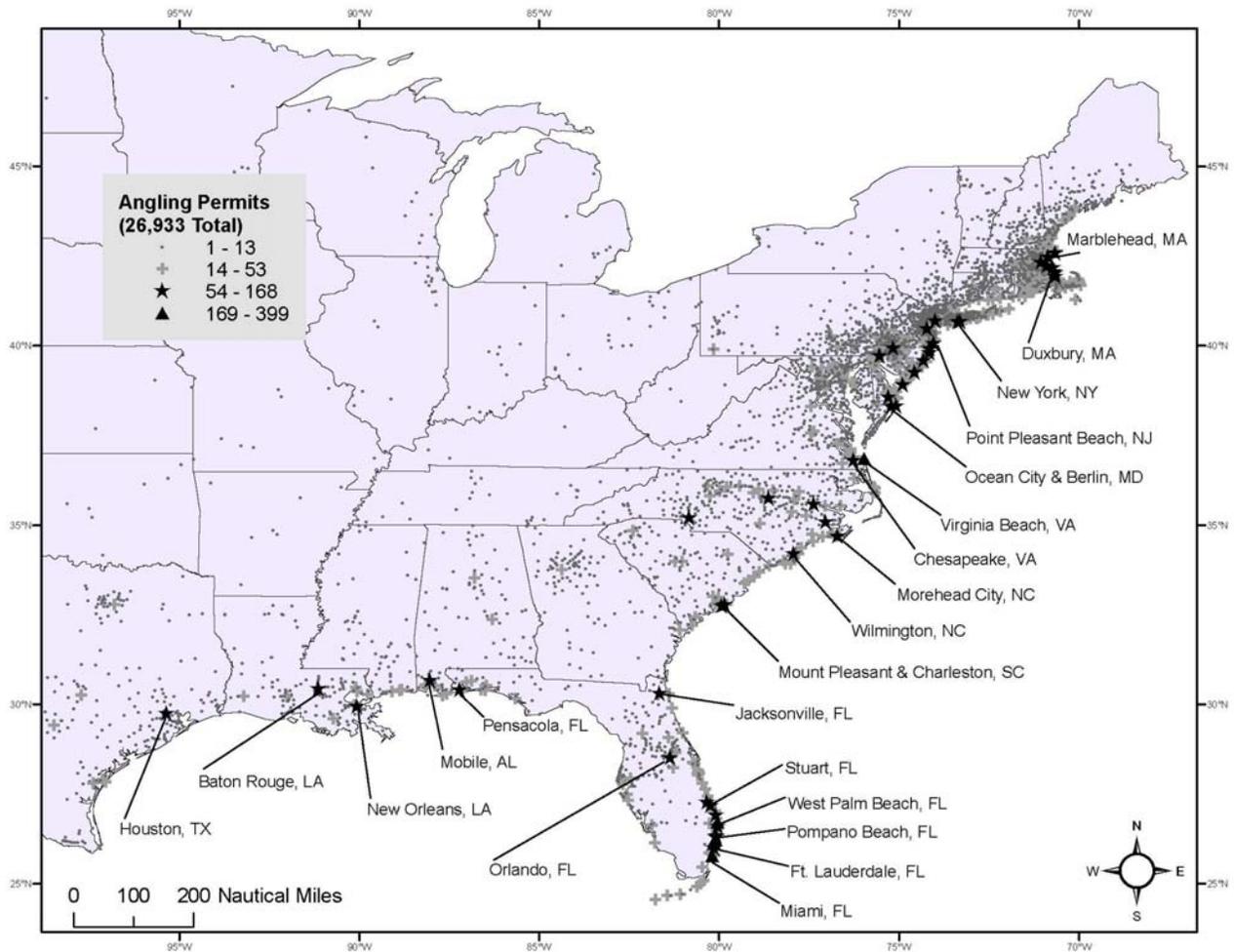
State	CHB permits	State	CHB Permits
AL	66	NJ	553
CT	114	NY	369
DE	121	NV	1
FL	699	OH	2
GA	35	PA	134
LA	78	PR	22
MA	649	RI	142
MD	162	SC	159
ME	88	TN	5
MI	7	TX	172
MS	27	VA	148
NC	431	VI	21
NH	67	Other	25
<b>Total</b>			<b>4,297</b>



**Figure 9.8** Distribution of HMS CHB Category permit holders as of May 2008

#### **9.4 HMS Angling Permit**

Effective March 2003 (67 FR 77434, Dec. 18, 2002), the HMS Angling Category permit is required to fish for, retain, or possess, including catch and release fishing, any federally regulated HMS. Current permit numbers for the HMS Angling category are listed in Table 9.2, and the distribution of HMS Angling Category permits is shown in Figure 9.9. Species authorized for harvested with an HMS Angling permit include: sharks, swordfish, white and blue marlin, sailfish, spearfish, and federally regulated Atlantic tunas (bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, and albacore). Atlantic HMS caught, retained, possessed, or landed by persons on board vessels with an HMS Angling Category permit may not be sold or transferred to any person for a commercial purpose. By definition, recreational landings of Atlantic HMS are those that cannot be marketed through commercial channels, therefore it is not possible to monitor anglers' catches through ex-vessel transactions as in the commercial fishery. Instead, NMFS conducts statistical sampling surveys of the recreational fisheries. These survey programs have been used for over a decade and include the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) and the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS). A vessel issued an HMS Angling Category permit for a fishing year will not be issued an HMS Charter/ Headboat permit or an Atlantic Tunas permit in any category for that same fishing year, regardless of any change in the vessel's ownership.



**Figure 9.9** Distribution of HMS Angling Category permit holders as of May 2008

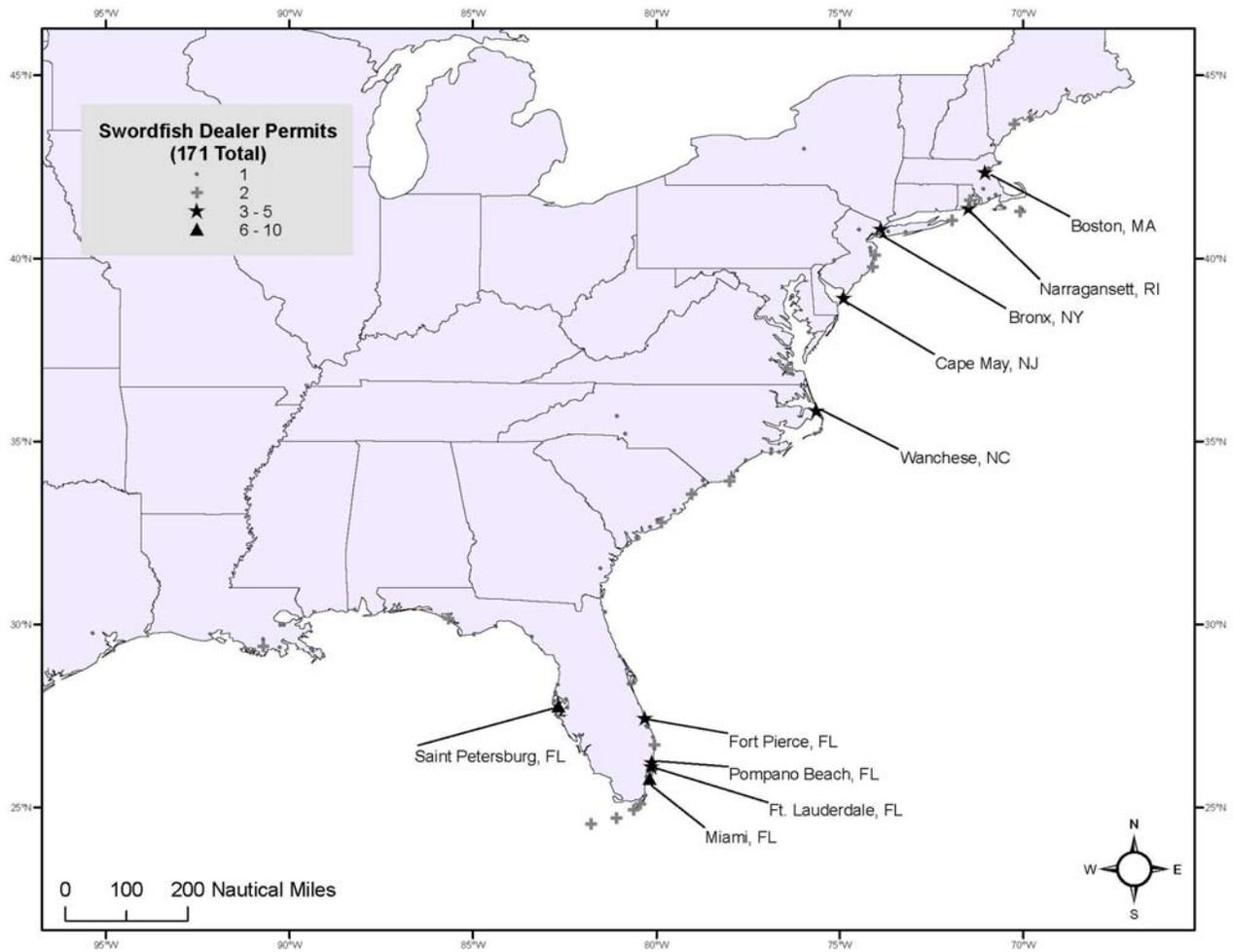
## 9.5 Dealer Permits

Dealer permits are required for commercial receipt of Atlantic tuna, swordfish, and sharks, and are described in further detail in the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. Dealer permits are open access. An Atlantic shark dealer permit is required for any entity, person, or company that is the “first receiver” of any Atlantic shark or part of an Atlantic shark. A first receiver is any entity, person, or company that takes, for commercial purposes (other than solely for transport), immediate possession of the fish, or any part of the fish, as the fish are offloaded from a fishing vessel of the United States. Shark dealers or a proxy for each location that first receives sharks must attend and successfully complete an Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop, and be issued a certificate in order to obtain or renew their shark dealer permit. Also, trucks or other conveyances which are extensions of a shark dealer’s place of business must possess a copy of a valid Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop Certificate. All permitted dealers are required to submit reports detailing the nature of their business. Swordfish and shark dealer permit holders must submit bi-weekly dealer reports on all HMS they purchase. Swordfish and shark dealer permit numbers are listed in Table 9.4, and distributions of those permits are shown in Figure 9.10 and 9.11 respectively. Tuna dealers must submit, within 24 hours of the receipt of a bluefin tuna, a landing report for each bluefin purchased from U.S. fishermen. Dealers must also submit bi-weekly reports that include additional information on tunas that they purchase. To facilitate quota monitoring “negative reports” for shark and swordfish are also required from dealers when no purchases are made (*i.e.*, NMFS can determine who has not purchased fish versus who has neglected to report). NMFS continues to automate and improve its permitting and dealer reporting systems and plans to make additional permit applications and renewals available online in the near future.

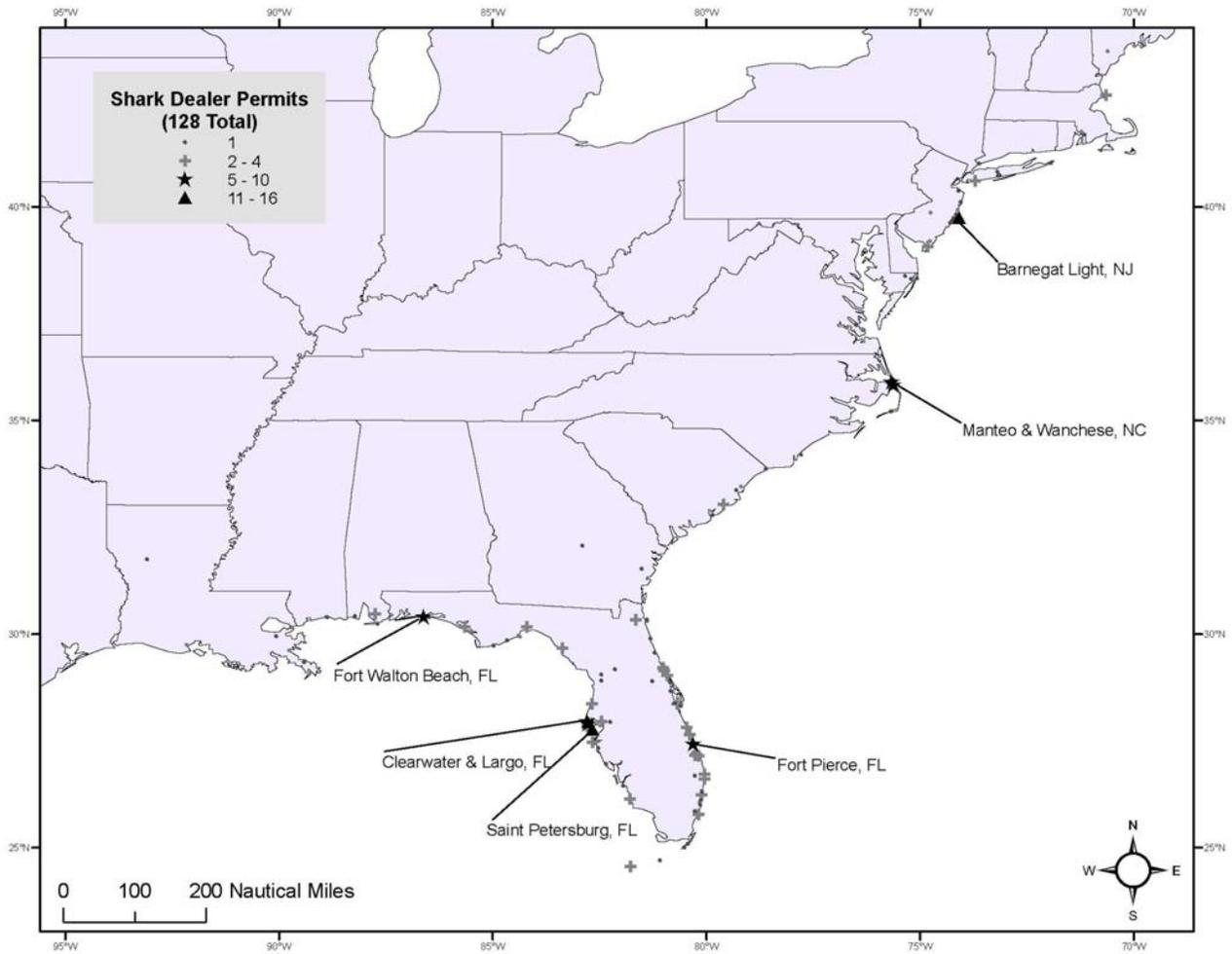
Starting July 1, 2005, dealers who import and/or export certain HMS species are required to obtain the NMFS HMS International Trade Permit (ITP) (69 FR 67268, November 17, 2004) (Table 9.6). The permit was established to coordinate U.S. implementation of International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and Inter-America Tropical Tuna Commission trade tracking recommendations. The HMS ITP is required for trade of bluefin tuna, southern bluefin tuna, swordfish, frozen bigeye tuna, and shark fins. Reporting associated with the HMS ITP includes biweekly reports and submission of swordfish, southern bluefin tuna, and bigeye tuna statistical documents. For Atlantic and Pacific bluefin tuna, NMFS implemented a final rule that requires the use of the ICCAT bluefin catch document to fulfill reporting requirement of ITP holders (73 FR 31380 June 2, 2008). Importers and exporters of shark fins are exempt from reporting requirements at this time, but are required to hold a valid ITP.

**Table 9.4** Number of domestic shark and swordfish dealer permits issued in each between 2001 and 2008. Permits for 2008 are as of August 2008. The actual number of permits per state may change as permit holders move or sell their businesses.

State/Country	Atlantic swordfish	Atlantic sharks	# of permits
AL	1	3	4
CA	9	3	12
FL	68	48	116
GA	1	1	2
HI	3	1	4
LA	8	7	15
MA	13	5	18
MD	2	2	4
ME	2	2	4
MS	--	--	--
NC	17	11	28
NJ	10	9	19
NY	9	6	15
PA	1	--	1
PR	1		1
RI	8	5	13
SC	10	15	25
TX	4	6	10
VA	3	4	7
VI	--	--	--
WA	1	--	1
<b>Totals 2008</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>475</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>621</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>522</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>573</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>588</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>551</b>



**Figure 9.10**     **Distribution of swordfish dealer permit holders as of August 2008**

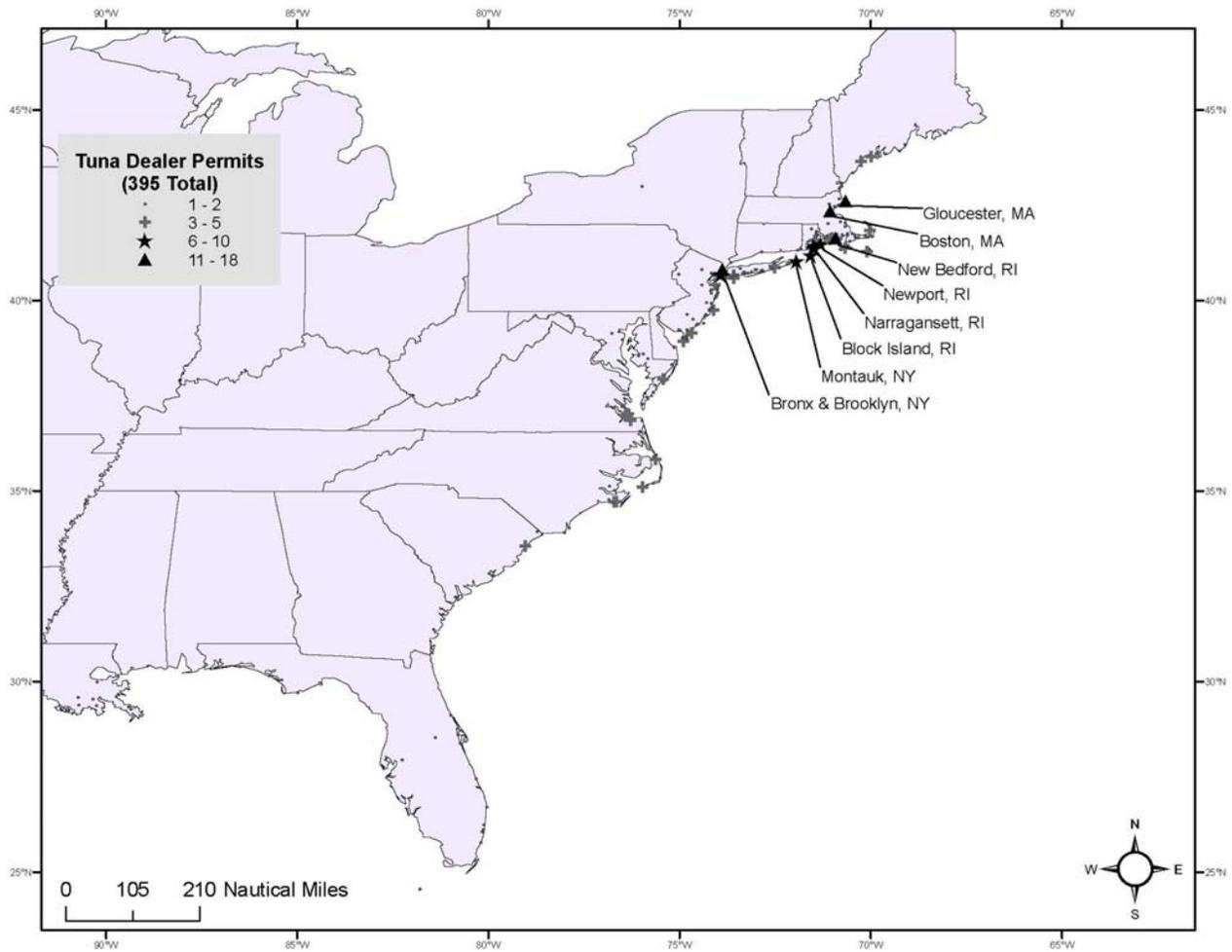


**Figure 9.11** Distribution of shark dealer permit holders as of August 2008

**Table 9.5** Number of Atlantic tuna dealer permits by state as of August 2008. Dealers may obtain a permit to sell and purchase only bluefin tuna, only BAYS tunas, or both bluefin and BAYS tunas.

State	Bluefin Only *	BAYS Only	Bluefin and BAYS	Total Atlantic Tunas Dealer Permits
AL	--	--	--	--
CA	3	--	2	5
CT	--	1	2	3
DE	--	--	2	2
FL	1	3	14	18
GA	--	--	1	1
IL	--	--	--	--
HI	--	--	4	4
LA	--	--	8	8
MA	10	6	80	96
MD	--	1	8	9
ME	6	--	9	15
NC	5	2	23	30
NH	--	--	5	5
NJ	--	9	47	56
NY	2	18	47	67
PA	1	--	--	1
PR	--	5	2	7
RI	1	6	27	34
SC	--	1	6	7
TX	--	2	--	2
VA	1	5	14	20
VI	--	3	1	4
WA	--	--	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>395</b>

\*Does not include Pacific bluefin tuna dealer permits which were eliminated July 1, 2005.



**Figure 9.12** Distribution of tuna dealer permit holders as of August 2008

**Table 9.6 Number of International Trade Permits (ITP) by state (province) as of August 2008.**

State/Province	Number of ITPs
CA	63
CT	1
FL	42
HI	10
IL	1
KS	1
LA	2
MA	24
MD	2
ME	5
NC	3
NH	1
NJ	10
NY	19
OR	1
PA	2
RI	5
TX	3
VA	3
WA	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

**9.6 Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, Letters of Acknowledgement (LOAs) Chartering Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs)**

EFPs, display permits, LOAs and SRPs are issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and/or ATCA (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*). EFPs are issued to individuals for the purpose of conducting research or other fishing activities using private (non-NOAA) vessels, whereas an SRP would be issued to agency scientists who are using NOAA vessels as their research platform. Similar to SRPs, LOAs are issued to individuals conducting research from “bona fide” research vessels on species that are only regulated by MSA and not ATCA. NMFS does request research plans for these activities and indicates concurrence by issuing an LOA. Display permits are issued to individuals who are fishing for, catching, and then transporting HMS to certified aquariums for public display. Regulations at 50 CFR 600.745 and 50 CFR 635.32 govern scientific research activity, exempted fishing, and exempted educational activity with respect to Atlantic HMS. The 2003 Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks FMP implemented and created a separate display permitting system, which operates apart from the exempted fishing activities that are focusing on scientific research. The application process for display permits is similar to that required for EFPs and SRPs. When NMFS implemented Amendment 2 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP (73 FR 35788 June, 24 2008), the shark quota for EFPs, display permits, and SRPs remained the same. However, the quota for sandbar shark was reduced to 1.39 mt. authorized for display and 1.39 mt authorized for research under EFPs and SRPs.

Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP also implemented a shark research fishery. This research fishery is conducted under the auspices of the exempted fishing program. Research fishery permit holders assist NMFS in collecting valuable shark life history data and data for future shark stock assessments. Fishermen must fill out an application for a shark research permit under the exempted fishing program to participate in the shark research fishery. In 2008, NMFS received 25 applications from 17 applicants. Of the 15 qualified applicants, 11 were chosen to participate in the shark research fishery. Shark research fishery participants are subject to 100 percent observer coverage in addition to other terms and conditions.

Issuance of EFPs, display permits, and SRPs may be necessary because possession of certain shark and billfish species are otherwise prohibited, possession of billfishes on board commercial fishing vessels is prohibited, the commercial fisheries for bluefin tuna, swordfish and large coastal sharks may be closed for extended periods during which collection of live animals and/or biological samples would otherwise be prohibited, or for other reasons. These EFPs, SRPs, and display permits would authorize collections of tunas, swordfish, billfishes, and sharks from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico for the purposes of scientific data collection and public display. In addition, NMFS regulations at 50 CFR 635.32 regarding implantation or attachment of pop-up satellite archival tags in Atlantic HMS require prior authorization and a report on implantation activities.

In order to implement the chartering recommendations of ICCAT, NMFS published a rule on (69 FR 70396 December 6, 2004), requiring U.S. vessel owners with HMS permits to apply for and obtain a chartering permit before fishing under a chartering arrangement outside U.S. waters. These permits are issued in a similar manner as other EFPs. Under this final rule and consistent with the ICCAT recommendations, vessels issued a chartering permit are not authorized to use the quota or entitlement of the United States until the chartering permit expires or is terminated. This is because of the fact that under a chartering arrangement that U.S. vessels have attained authorization to harvest another ICCAT Contracting Parties' quota. Having a chartering permit does not obviate the need to obtain a fishing license, permits, or other authorizations issued by the chartering nation in order to fish in foreign waters, or obtain other authorizations such as a High Seas Fishing Compliance Act Permit, 50 CFR 300.10 *et seq.* A U.S. vessel shall not be authorized to fish under more than one chartering arrangement at the same time. NMFS will issue chartering permits only if it determines that the chartering arrangement is in conformance with ICCAT's conservation and management programs. Due to interest from the commercial industry, NMFS is currently considering changes to the vessel chartering regulations to potentially allow catches taken under a chartering arrangement to count against the Atlantic HMS quota.

The number of EFPs, display permits, and SRPs issued from 2004 – 2008 by category and species are listed in Table 9.7. Year-end reports for permits issued for 2008 are required, and are expected to be submitted to NMFS in early 2009.

**Table 9.7 Number of Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs) issued between 2002 and 2008.**

Permit type		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
Exempted Fishing Permit	Sharks for display	8	6	7	6	5
	HMS for display	1	1	1	3	1
	Tunas for display	1	0	0	0	0
	Shark research on a non-scientific vessel	6	5	7	4	4
	Tuna research on a non-scientific vessel	11	7	5	4	4
	HMS research on a non-scientific vessel	5	3	4	9	7
	Billfish research on a non-scientific vessel	1	2	3	3	3
	Shark Fishing	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS Chartering	1	0	0	0	0
	Tuna Fishing	2	0	5	0	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>
	Scientific Research Permit	Shark research	3	4	2	2
Tuna research		0	0	0	1	0
Billfish research		0	0	1	0	0
HMS (multi-species) research		1	4	4	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
Letters of Acknowledgement	Shark research	2	4	5	8	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>

Permit numbers for 2008 are as of September 1, 2008.

## 9.7 Atlantic HMS Tournaments

Fishing tournaments are an important component of HMS recreational fisheries. A tournament is defined in the HMS regulations as any fishing competition involving Atlantic HMS in which participants must register or otherwise enter or in which a prize or award is offered for catching or landing such fish. Since 1999, Federal regulations have required that each HMS tournament operator register their tournament with NMFS at least four weeks prior to the commencement of tournament fishing activities. Tournament operators may be selected for reporting and must submit tournament results to NMFS within seven days of the conclusion of the tournament.

Tournament registration and reporting is necessary because it provides an important source of information used to assess HMS fish stocks and to estimate the annual catch of Atlantic HMS. The information may be used by NMFS to plan for the assignment of tournament

observers to assist in catch/effort data compilation and to obtain biological data and samples from landed fish (length/weight, stomach contents, injuries, parasites, hard and soft tissue samples for age determination, genetic and microconstituent analysis, spawning condition, fecundity, etc.). Additionally, with an accurate tournament database, NMFS may better assess the practicality of using tournaments for angler educational outreach efforts including distribution of written informational materials, notification of public hearings, and explanation of HMS regulations. HMS tournament registration and reporting information further allows NMFS, in the course of developing fishery management plans, to evaluate the social and economic impact of tournament angling in relation to other types of angling (*e.g.*, commercial, non-tournament recreational) and the relative effect of tournament angling on populations of various regulated HMS. Finally, the information is essential for the United States to meet its reporting obligations to ICCAT.

When registering an HMS tournament, the following information is required to be submitted to the HMS Management Division in St. Petersburg, FL: (1) Tournament name; (2) tournament location; (3) name, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of tournament operator; (4) fishing dates; and (5) HMS species for which points or prizes are awarded. If selected for reporting, operators must submit the following information to the SEFSC: (1) Tournament name; (2) tournament dates; (3) tournament location; (4) number of boats fishing; (5) hours fished; (6) recorder's name, phone number, and e-mail address; (7) the number of each species kept; (8) the number of each species lost; (9) the number of each species tagged and released; (10) the number of each species released without a tag; (11) the number of each species released dead; and, (12) the weight and length of all fish boated. This information is routinely collected during the fishing tournament and is used for awarding prizes. Generally, 100 percent of all billfish tournaments are selected for reporting to the Recreational Billfish Survey (RBS), because the information is critical to determine U.S. billfish landings for ICCAT compliance purposes. In 2007, the Marine Recreational Information Program selected approximately 35 to 40 shark and tuna tournaments from Maine through Virginia to report catch data from the tournaments. This data will be compared with LPS data that was collected in 2007. Tournament registration forms are available at: [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/linkpages/reporting\\_forms.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/linkpages/reporting_forms.htm).

In 2007, approximately 300 tournaments registered with the HMS Management Division, and occurred along the U.S. Atlantic coast, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. These tournaments may range from smaller club “member-only” events with as few as ten participating boats (40 – 60 anglers) to larger, statewide tournaments with 250 or more participating vessels (1,000 – 1,500 anglers). For the larger tournaments, corporate sponsorship from tackle manufacturers, marinas, boat dealers, marine suppliers, beverage distributors, resorts, radio stations, publications, chambers of commerce, restaurants, and other local businesses is often involved.

Many HMS fishing tournaments, particularly those that target billfish, promote strict conservation principles in their rules. For example, significant numbers of blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish tournaments are “release-only,” utilizing observers, angler affidavits, polygraph tests, photographs, or digital video camcorders to document the live release of billfish. Minimum sizes for fish that are allowed to be landed in many tournaments are often larger than

state and Federal requirements. Also, since January, 2008, NMFS has required that anglers fishing in any tournament awarding points or prizes for Atlantic billfish must use circle hooks when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. Because fishing tournament participants are often well-respected anglers (*i.e.* highliners), these conservation trends likely influence the general angling population in a positive manner.

Table 9.8 presents the number of registered HMS tournaments, by state, between 2002 and 2007. This table indicates that, in 2007, HMS fishing tournaments were conducted most frequently in Florida, Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Alabama. By far, the largest number of registered HMS tournaments has consistently occurred in the state of Florida.

**Table 9.8** Number of Registered HMS Tournaments by State between 2002 and 2007. Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database

STATE	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 <sup>2</sup>
ME	3	3	5	3	5	5	4
NH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MA	1	7	10	4	7	10	10
RI	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
CT	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
NY	4	14	14	10	12	13	13
NJ	5	18	17	16	19	17	20
DE	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
MD	2	14	14	14	13	11	13
VA	1	5	4	5	4	6	5
NC	5	15	16	18	17	17	16
SC	3	13	9	9	12	13	16
GA	1	12	3	13	11	11	10
FL	26	66	57	74	83	97	71
AL	7	9	8	7	8	10	8
MS	2	7	2	2	1	1	1
LA	0	20	22	26	20	24	24
TX	1	17	10	17	17	33	21
PR	4	13	17	22	19	20	18
USVI	0	6	1	10	7	7	2
Bahamas <sup>1</sup>	2	1	2	2	1	1	1
Bermuda <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Turks/Caicos <sup>1</sup>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>257</b>

<sup>1</sup>Some foreign tournaments voluntarily registered because the participants were mostly U.S. citizens.

<sup>2</sup>2008 are through October 30, 2008

Table 9.9 shows the number and percentage of HMS tournaments awarding points or awards for a particular HMS, based upon 2007 tournament registrations. Blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, and yellowfin tuna are the predominant target species in HMS fishing tournaments.

**Table 9.9**      **Number and Percent of All 2007 HMS Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for an HMS.**  
Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database

Species	Number of Tournaments	Percent of tournaments
Blue Marlin	201	67.2%
White Marlin	186	62.2%
Sailfish	184	61.5%
Yellowfin Tuna	168	56.2%
Bluefin Tuna	93	31.1%
Swordfish	83	27.7%
Pelagic Sharks	59	19.7%
Bigeye Tuna	53	17.7%
Albacore Tuna	29	9.7%
Skipjack Tuna	21	7.0%
Small Coastal Sharks	21	7.0%
Ridgeback Sharks	11	3.7%
Non-Ridgeback Sharks	10	3.3%

Table 9.10-9.12 indicate the percentage and number of 2007 HMS registered tournaments, by state (or country), for blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish, respectively. These tables indicate that Florida is the leading state in terms of numbers of registered billfish tournaments, especially for sailfish.

**Table 9.10**      **Registered Blue Marlin Tournaments, 2007.** Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

State	Number of 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Blue Marlin	Percent of Total 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Blue Marlin
Florida	48	23.8%
Texas	33	16.4%
Louisiana	22	10.9%
Puerto Rico	16	8.0%
North Carolina	16	8.0%
Georgia	11	5.5%

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Blue Marlin</b>	<b>Percent of Total 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Blue Marlin</b>
New Jersey	10	5.0%
Maryland	9	4.5%
South Carolina	8	4.0%
U.S. Virgin Islands	7	3.5%
Alabama	7	3.5%
Virginia	5	2.5%
Massachusetts	3	1.5%
New York	2	1.0%
Bahamas <sup>1</sup>	1	0.5%
Rhode Island	1	0.5%
Delaware	1	0.5%
Mississippi	1	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9.11 Registered White Marlin Tournaments, 2007.** Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for White Marlin</b>	<b>% of Total 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for White Marlin</b>
Florida	47	25.3%
Texas	31	16.7%
Louisiana	22	11.8%
North Carolina	16	8.6%
Georgia	11	5.9%
New Jersey	10	5.4%
Maryland	9	4.8%
South Carolina	8	4.3%
Alabama	7	3.8%
U.S. Virgin Islands	6	3.2%
Puerto Rico	5	2.7%
Virginia	5	2.7%
Massachusetts	3	1.6%
New York	2	1.1%
Bahamas <sup>1</sup>	1	0.5%
Rhode Island	1	0.5%
Mississippi	1	0.5%
Delaware	1	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9.12 Registered Sailfish Tournaments, 2007.** Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Sailfish</b>	<b>% of Total 2007 Tournaments Awarding Points or Prizes for Sailfish</b>
Florida	72	39.1%
Texas	32	17.4%
Louisiana	22	11.9%
North Carolina	12	6.5%
Georgia	11	6.0%
Puerto Rico	8	4.3%
South Carolina	8	4.3%
Alabama	7	3.8%
Virginia	5	2.7%
Maryland	2	1.1%
U.S. Virgin Islands	2	1.1%
Bahamas <sup>1</sup>	1	0.5%
Massachusetts	1	0.5%
Mississippi	1	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>