



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)  
REMINDS TOURNAMENT OPERATORS TO REGISTER HIGHLY MIGRATORY  
SPECIES (HMS) TOURNAMENTS FOR 2008**

HMS tournament registration is necessary to collect important recreational catch and effort data. Information obtained from HMS tournaments is used to analyze the impacts of potential fishery management actions, assess the status of Atlantic HMS, and to assist the United States in complying with international fishery management obligations. As of October 29, 2007, NMFS had registered 294 HMS tournaments for the year. As always, your cooperation in complying with this mandatory requirement is greatly appreciated. **If you have not already done so, please register your 2008 HMS tournament(s) with NMFS' HMS Management Division in St. Petersburg, FL.**

Federal regulations require that all tournaments awarding points or prizes for Atlantic HMS, including tunas, sharks, swordfish, and/or billfish, register with NMFS at least **four weeks prior to the start of the fishing tournament.** Completed registration forms should either be faxed or mailed to the HMS Management Division in St. Petersburg, FL. The return fax number and address are printed on the enclosed registration form. The registration form may also be obtained via the Internet from either of the following websites: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms) or [www.hmspermits.gov](http://www.hmspermits.gov) or by calling the HMS Management Division's St. Petersburg office at (727) 824-5399. When completing the registration form, please write legibly and specify the name of the person who is designated as the tournament operator.

Upon receipt of a completed registration form, the HMS Management Division will provide the operator with a tournament identification number, which should be retained for the remainder of the fishing year. If selected for reporting tournament results, operators will be contacted by NMFS' Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

As a reminder, beginning January 1, 2008, anglers fishing from HMS-permitted vessels and participating in a tournament which bestows points, prizes, or awards for Atlantic billfish (blue & white marlin, sailfish, or spearfish) must deploy only non-offset circle hooks when using natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. Anglers in these tournaments may use J-hooks only on artificial lures. This measure is expected to substantially improve the survivability of released billfish. Instructional DVDs have been mailed to all 2007 registered billfish tournaments, and additional copies are now available upon request by calling the number above.

Finally, NMFS also urges tournament operators to remind tournament participants of HMS permit requirements. For more information on HMS Angling or Charter/Headboat category permits, please log on to [www.hmspermits.gov](http://www.hmspermits.gov) or call the HMS Management Division's St. Petersburg office at (727) 824-5399. Thank you, in advance, for registering your 2008 HMS tournament(s). Good luck and happy fishing!

*for Emily Menashes*  
Alan Risenhoover  
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

11/14/2007  
Date

