



Proposed 2014 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quota Specifications

Highly Migratory Species Management Division
April 2014

Need for Action

- The baseline quota has remained unchanged from 2013, and the 2014 BFT quota specifications are necessary to adjust the annual U.S. baseline BFT quota to account for any underharvest or overharvest of the adjusted 2013 U.S. BFT quota.
 - Preliminary information indicates an underharvest of the 2013 adjusted BFT quota
- Through the annual specifications, NMFS would proactively account for anticipated 2014 dead discards to ensure that landings and dead discards do not exceed the adjusted 2014 U.S. quota.



2013 WBFT Recommendation

- One-year rollover of 1,750-mt TAC, including dead discards
 - Expected to allow for continued stock growth under both the low and high stock recruitment scenarios, considering results of 2013 assessment update
 - U.S. baseline quota continues to be 923.7 mt
 - Total U.S. quota, including 25 mt to account for bycatch related to pelagic longline fisheries in the Northeast Distant gear restricted area, continues to be 948.7 mt.
- Maintains school BFT tolerance of no more than 10%
U.S. 2011-2012 average was 6.3%; preliminary 2013 est.: 3.3%
- Maintains 10% cap on underharvest carried forward (94.9 mt)



Accounting for Dead Discards

- WBFT TAC & U.S. BFT quota include dead discards
- BFT landings and dead discard data must be reported to ICCAT annually
- Best available estimate of anticipated 2014 dead discards is 219.5 mt
 - i.e., the 2012 estimate of 205.8 mt for the pelagic longline fishery plus the observed 2013 dead discards of 13.7 mt for the purse seine fishery
- When the 2013 BFT pelagic longline dead discard estimate is available (late spring 2014), NMFS will use that estimate along with other available information about discards in the final specifications and will report it to ICCAT along with total 2013 BFT landings.



Category	2013					
	Base Quota	Dead Discard Deduction (1/2 of 2012 proxy of 239.5 mt)	2012 Underharvest Carried Forward to 2013	Adjusted Quota	Landings & LL dead discards	% of Adjusted Quota
<i>General</i>	435.1			435.1	277.6	64
<i>Harpoon</i>	36.0			36.0	17.2	48
<i>Longline</i>	99.8	119.75	+90.9	71	62.9 ¹	89
North	29.9			18.4	24.9	135
NED	25			25	4.3	17
South	44.9			27.6	33.7	122
<i>Trap</i>	0.9			0.9	0	0
<i>Purse Seine</i>	171.8			171.8	28.8	17
<i>Angling</i>	182.0			182.0	131.4	72
School	94.9			94.9	31.6	33
Large school/Small medium	82.9			82.9	91.5	110
Large Medium/Giant ("trophy")	4.2			4.2	8.3 ²	198
<i>Reserve</i>	23.1			23.1	0.1	<0.5
TOTAL	948.7	119.75	90.9	919.9³	518.0	56
				1,043.6		50
<i>TOTAL (incl. 219.5-mt dead discard estimate⁴)</i>	<i>948.7</i>			<i>919.9³</i>	<i>737.5</i>	<i>80</i>
				<i>1,043.6</i>		<i>71</i>

Data for the 2013 fishing year are as of February 10, 2014.

1 The Longline category southern and northern areas were closed to retention of BFT effective June 25, 2013.

2 The Angling category southern area trophy fishery was closed effective April 4, 2013.

3 2013 Adjusted Quota published in June 2013) = 919.9 mt, reflecting NMFS' accounting for half of the estimated dead discards (239.5 mt at that time) at the beginning of the fishing year, with the remainder to be accounted for at year-end; U.S. Adjusted Quota for ICCAT accounting purposes=1,043.6 mt. Final 2012 dead discard estimate (Mar 2014): 205.8 mt.

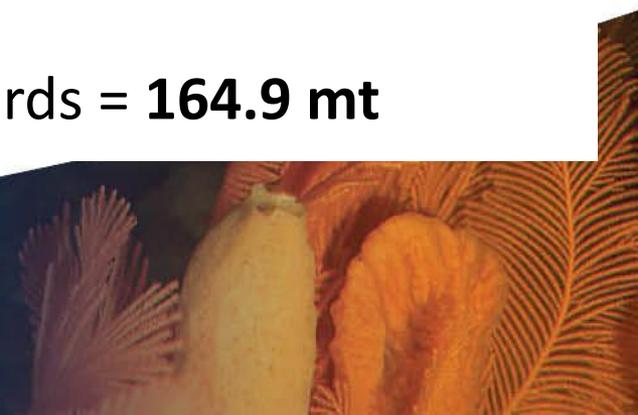
4 Currently, the best available annual estimate of U.S. dead discards that could be expected in 2014 is the 2012 estimate of 205.8 mt for the pelagic longline fishery and the 2013 observed dead discards of 13.7 mt for the purse seine fishery), totaling 219.5 mt.

Unharvested 2012 Quota

- Based on the best currently available landings data and estimate of dead discards, NMFS anticipates an underharvest of the 2013 U.S. adjusted BFT quota of approximately 306 mt (1,043.6 mt – 737.5 mt).
- Per the ICCAT WBFT recommendation, the maximum amount of unharvested 2013 quota that the United States may carry forward to 2014 is 10-percent of the U.S. base quota, or 94.9 mt.

Proposed Rule Overview

- Account for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the dead discard estimate of 219.5 mt up front in the specifications process
(102.9 mt from Longline; 6.9 mt from Purse Seine)
- Apply full amount of underharvest that is allowed to be carried forward (94.9 mt) to the Longline category
- **Proposed Longline category subquota:**
74.8 mt baseline quota – 102.9 mt dead discards + 94.9 mt underharvest = **66.8 mt** *(not including 25 mt for NED)*
- **Proposed Purse Seine category subquota:**
171.8 mt baseline quota – 6.9 mt dead discards = **164.9 mt**



Considerations

- Over the last few years, in contemplating how to account for dead discards within the quota and allocate the underharvest carried forward (while Amendment 7 is being developed), NMFS has balanced the need of the pelagic longline fishery to continue fishing for swordfish and Atlantic tunas with the need of directed BFT fisheries participants to receive their base quota.
- Without an allocation of the available underharvest, deducting one half of the PLL dead discards from the baseline Longline category subquota would result in no Longline category quota for 2014.
i.e., $74.8 \text{ mt} - 102.9 \text{ mt} = -28.1 \text{ mt}$ *(not including 25 mt for NED)*



Considerations, continued

- Another consideration is the possibility that, due to timing, NMFS may need to close the Longline category to BFT retention based on codified quotas, prior to or concurrent with final quota rule.
- In 2012, NMFS closed the southern area May 29 and the northern area June 30, both through December 31. NMFS accounted fully for the landings made prior to the closures in the final rule by applying 76.2 of the available 94.9-mt underharvest to the Longline category.
Final 2012 Longline category subquota was 49.7 mt (+NED quota)
- In 2013, NMFS closed both areas June 25 and applied all of the available 90.9-mt underharvest to the Longline category.
Final 2013 Longline category subquota was 46 mt (+NED quota)

Proposed Rule Overview, continued

The proposed subquotas for the General, Harpoon, Angling, Trap, and Reserve categories reflect application of the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP allocation scheme to the baseline U.S. BFT quota.

i.e., no adjustments are proposed to the baseline quotas for these categories

Proposed 2014 Atlantic bluefin tuna quotas and quota specifications (in metric tons)

Category (% Share of Baseline Quota)	Baseline Allocation (per Current ICCAT Recommendation and the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP Allocations)	2014 Quota Specifications		
		Dead Discard Deduction	2013 Underharvest to Carry Forward to 2014 (94.9 mt Total)	Adjusted 2014 Fishing Year Quota
Total (100)	923.7 ¹			908.8
Angling (19.7)	182.0 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 94.9 Reserve 17.6 North 36.5 South 40.8 LS/SM 82.9 North 39.1 South 43.8 Trophy 4.2 North 1.4 South 2.8			182.0 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 94.9 Reserve 17.6 North 36.5 South 40.8 LS/SM 82.9 North 39.1 South 43.8 Trophy 4.2 North 1.4 South 2.8
General (47.1)	435.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 23.1 Jun-Aug 217.6 Sept 115.3 Oct-Nov 56.6 Dec 22.6			435.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 23.1 Jun-Aug 217.6 Sept 115.3 Oct-Nov 56.6 Dec 22.6
Harpoon (3.9)	36.0			36.0
Purse Seine (18.6)	171.8	-6.9 ²		164.9
Longline (8.1)	74.8 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 29.9 NED 25.0 [*] South 44.9	-102.9 ³	+94.9	66.8 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 26.7 NED 25.0 [*] South 40.1
Trap (0.1)	0.9			0.9
Reserve (2.5)	23.1			23.1

¹ 25-mt ICCAT set-aside to account for bycatch of BFT in pelagic longline fisheries in the NED.

² Not included in totals at top of table.

³ (1/2 of 2013 observed purse seine dead discards of 13.7 mt as estimate for 2014)

³ (1/2 of 2012 pelagic longline dead discard estimate of 205.8 mt)

Transitional Approach/Amendment 7

- NMFS considers the specifications approaches taken in 2011 through 2013 transitional and appropriate for 2014 during the continued development of Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP.
- Amendment 7 is intended to address several BFT fishery management issues consistent with the need to end overfishing and rebuild the stock.

Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP

- In the proposed rule for Amendment 7, NMFS has proposed reallocation of BFT quota among categories to more accurately reflect annual fishery operations and needs while decreasing bycatch in the non-directed fisheries.
- The proposed rule published August 21, 2013.
- The comment period ended January 10, 2014.



Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP

- The proposed Amendment 7 measures would address several of the long-standing challenges facing the fishery and will examine, among other things:
 - Revisiting quota allocations
 - Reducing and accounting for dead discards
 - Adding/modifying time/area closures or gear-restricted areas; and
 - Improving the reporting and monitoring of dead discards and landings in all categories
- NMFS anticipates publishing the final rule mid-2014, with varying implementation dates.



Transitional Approach, continued

- In the meantime, BFT fishery management continues under the current FMP, implementing regulations, and ICCAT Recommendations.
- In November 2014, ICCAT will renegotiate the WBFT recommendation for 2015.



Public Comment Requested

- NMFS invites comment on the allocation of the anticipated 94.9-mt underharvest, as well as possible allocation approaches should the amount that can be carried forward need to be reduced.
- If the total 2013 BFT catch (landings + dead discards) > 948.7 mt, NMFS would need to modify allocation approaches as the amount of underharvest that can be carried forward would be reduced.
- Given the recent amount of annual dead discards (ranging from 122 to 206 mt), NMFS considers this potential situation to be unlikely, as the dead discard estimate would need to be ~ 430 mt.
- At this point, NMFS does not envision needing to adjust the baseline subquotas for the directed handgear fishing categories and Trap category.

Public Comment Requested, continued

- If the complete 2013 landings and dead discard estimate exceeds 1,043.6 mt, NMFS may need to take further action, consistent with the BFT quota adjustment regulations and ICCAT recommendations, and the United States may be subject to adjustment of the U.S. BFT quota.
- NMFS considers this potential situation to be very unlikely, as the dead discard estimate would need to be approximately 525 mt.
- Please focus comments on the 2014 quota specifications.



General and Angling Category Limits

As in past years, NMFS will make daily retention limit adjustments for the 2014 fishing year via Federal Register notices separate from the final specifications.

NMFS has received a request for increased Angling category retention of school BFT by private and/or charter vessels in 2014.



Timeline for Rulemaking

- Proposed rule publishes April 4, 2014
- 30-day comment period ends May 5, 2014
- NMFS will hold a public hearing conference call and webinar on April 16, 2014, from 2-4 p.m. EDT, to allow for an additional opportunity for interested members of the public from all geographic areas to submit verbal comments on the proposed quota specifications. See details on ListServ.
- Intend to publish final rule by June 2014

Submitting Comments

Please send comments by May 5, 2014 to:

www.regulations.gov

Keyword: “NOAA-NMFS-2014-0008”

or

Mail:

NMFS – HMS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

Identify comments with: “NOAA-NMFS-2014-0008”

Please do not submit electronic comments directly to NMFS staff



Comments? Questions?

- For further information on this rulemaking or Atlantic tunas management, contact Brad McHale or Sarah McLaughlin at (978) 281-9260
- For information on other HMS issues, contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503



2011-2013 Angling Category

		2011		2012		2013	
	Quota and subquotas	Landings					
	mt	mt	%	mt	%	mt	%
Angling category	182	173.4	95	148.5	82	131.4	72
School	94.9	56	59	63.2	67	31.6	33
Large School/Small Medium	82.9	111.6	135	79.1	95	91.5	110
Large Medium/Giant (Trophy)	4.2	5.8	138	6.2	148	8.3	198
Daily Retention Limits							
Default for private and CHB vessels	1/1-4/1: 1 S, LS, <u>or</u> SM		1/1-4/6: 1 S, LS, <u>or</u> SM		1/1-4/3: 1 S, LS, <u>or</u> SM		
Adjusted limit for private vessels	4/2-12/31: 1 S <u>or</u> LS		4/7-12/31: 1 S, LS, <u>or</u> SM (same as default)		4/4-12/31: 1 S, LS, <u>or</u> SM (same as default)		
Adjusted limit for CHB vessels	4/2-12/31: 1 S <u>and</u> 1 LS		4/7-12/31: 1 S <u>and</u> 1 LS/SM		4/4-12/31: 1 S <u>and</u> 1 LS/SM		
Status of Trophy Fishery							
Trophy North (north of Great Egg Inlet, NJ)	Open all year		Open all year		Open all year		
Trophy South fishery (south of Great Egg Inlet, NJ)	Open all year		Closed April 7		Closed April 4		