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**FISHERIES**

# Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated  
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery  
Management Plan



March 2015

# Summary of Situation Prior to Amendment 7

- Too many bluefin interactions resulting in dead discards (~21% of 2012 catch)
- Weaknesses in reporting requirements for directed fishery
- Difficult to account for all bluefin mortality
- Longline category vessels may continue to fish when the category's incidental bluefin quota is attained (but may no longer retain bluefin), resulting in continuing discards
- Reliance upon unused quota (from Purse Seine fishery to account for dead discards by pelagic longline fishery)

## Amendment 7 Objectives – (abridged version)

- Prevent **overfishing and rebuild** bluefin tuna, **operate within the overall TAC** set by ICCAT
- **Optimize** the ability for all permit categories to **harvest** bluefin quota allocations; **account for** all sources of **mortality**
- **Reduce dead discards** of bluefin
- Improve the **timeliness and quality of catch data**
- Adjust **other** aspects of the FMP

# Overview of Management Measures

- **Reallocate quota** among categories, adjusting quotas based on historical dead discard allowance
- Reduce pelagic longline bluefin interactions with **gear restricted areas**
- Increase accountability and create strong incentives to avoid bluefin with **individual bluefin quotas** for pelagic longline fishermen
- Improve quality and timeliness of catch data with enhanced **reporting requirements** for commercial quota categories
- Optimize fishing opportunity with adjustments to **General and Harpoon** category quota rules
- Implement **other** measures (e.g., northern albacore quota)

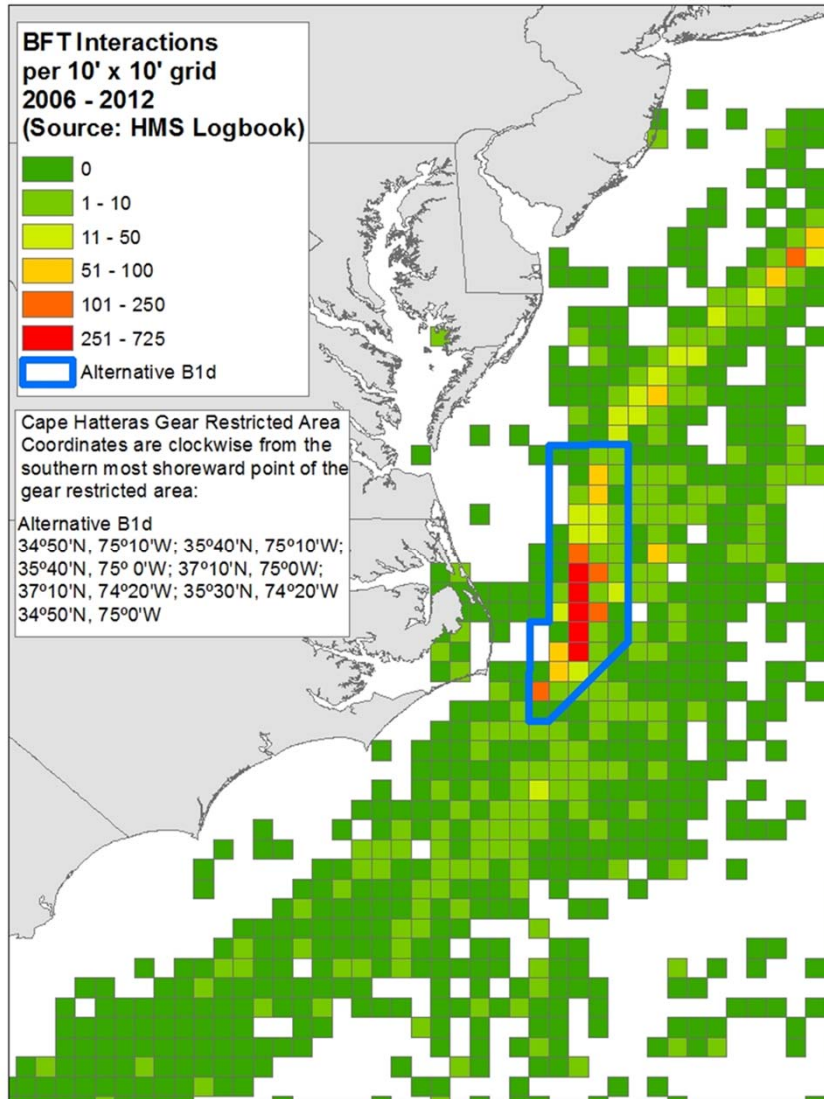
## Codified Reallocation of Quota (to Longline category)

- **Reallocate quota** among bluefin quota categories
- All quota categories are reduced by a specific amount (mt) of quota in proportion to the size of the category quota, which goes to the Longline category (from General, Harpoon, Purse Seine, Trap, Angling, Reserve categories to Longline category)
- The total addition to the Longline category is 62.5 mt
- To facilitate **accounting for dead discards**

## Annual Reallocation of Quota from Purse Seine Category Participants

- Purse Seine category **guaranteed a minimum** of 25% of their portion of the overall quota (i.e, 25% of 18.6%)
- Annual allocation of quota to Purse Seine category **depends on the amount of bluefin catch during the previous year**
- For example, if they catch 30% of their quota in year A, in year B they would be allocated 50% of their base quota
- Provides a **predictable way to redistribute quota from the Purse Seine category** (to the Reserve category)

# Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

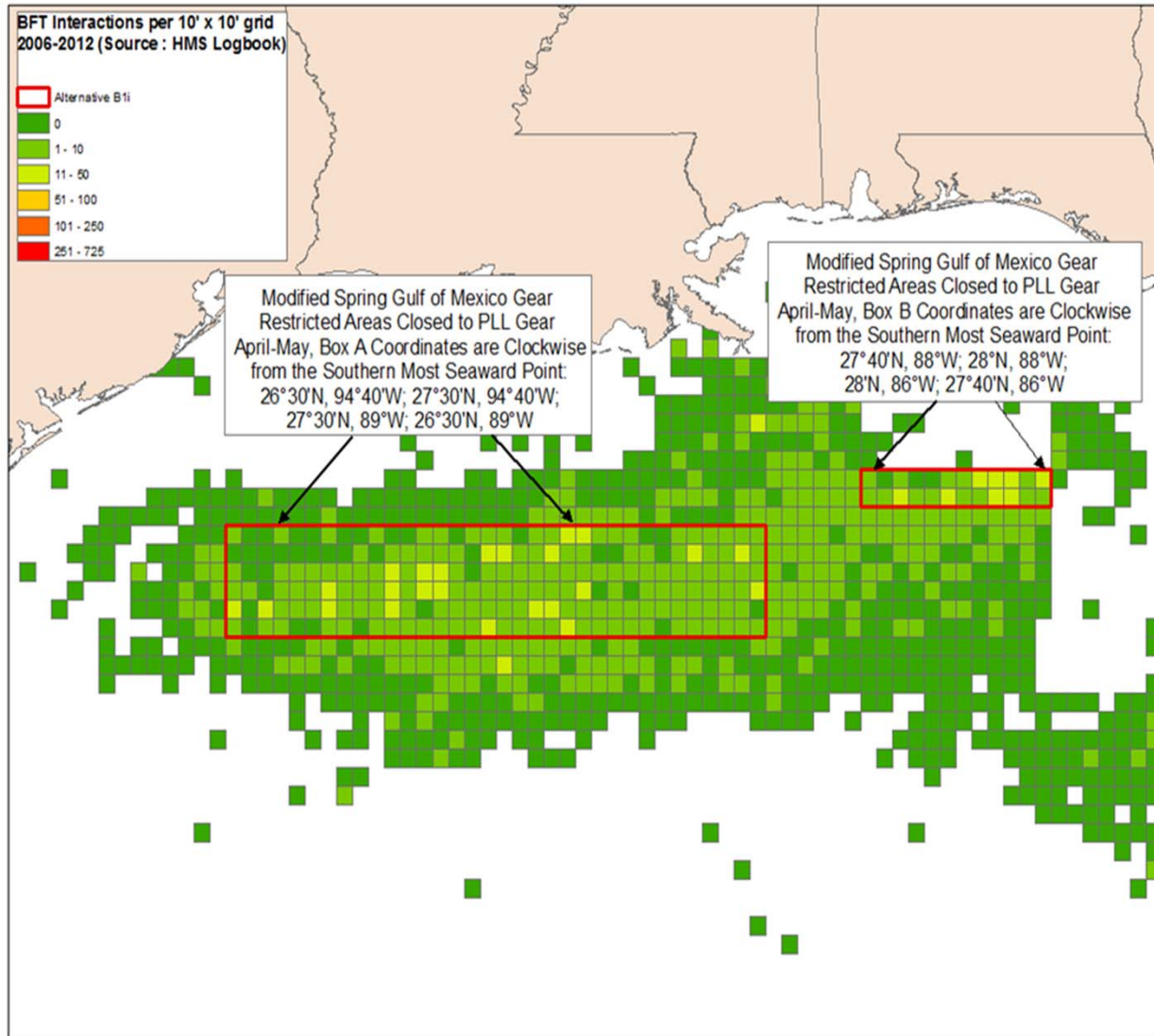


- In place December-April each year\*
- Allow **conditional access for PLL vessels** based on past vessel performance:
  - Ratio of bluefin interactions to designated species landings
  - Observer program compliance
  - Logbook program compliance
- Access evaluated each year, based on previous 3 years of available data
  - **14 vessels excluded in 2015**

\*effective Jan 2015



## Spring Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Area (GRA)



- Closed to pelagic longline gear
- In place April-May each year
- No conditional access
- Transiting of all closed areas and GRAs is allowed if gear stowed



# Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) Program –Pelagic Longline

- Who needs to know about the IBQ rules? Pelagic longline permit holders, but also purse seine category participants, as well as dealers that purchase bluefin from such individuals, should become familiar with these rules
- Quota shares for PLL vessels with eligible permits, based on historical catch of target species and bluefin. Each share represents a set percentage of the Longline category quota. Based on that percentage, the permitted vessel also receives an annual Quota allocation (amount of quota in mt or lb)
- 3 standardized share percentages; Regional designations of quota shares and related allocation (Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic). Atlantic shares may not be used in the Gulf of Mexico
- Landings and dead discards count toward the IBQ
  - Target catch requirement eliminated
  - Mandatory retention of all legal sized bluefin dead at haulback

## IBQ Program - continued

- **IBQ Allocation Leasing:**
  - Permitted Longline category vessels and Purse Seine fishery participants may lease IBQ allocation from each other
  - Leasing of quota allocation is temporary and leases expire at the end of a calendar year
- **Sale of shares not permitted** at this time
- IBQ allocation will not carry over from one year to the next (at level of individual vessel)
- SERO ITQ **web-based system** is being adapted for IBQ program for tracking and accounting of shares, allocations, and catch, and leasing. All **participants will need to activate accounts in the system** (i.e., **pelagic longline vessels, purse seine vessels, dealers**)

# IBQ Program - continued

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Home | View Dealers | View IFQ Landing Locations | Additional Information | Forgot PIN | Log In

### Welcome to the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Catch Share Programs - Public Home

This page is home to the Commercial Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) programs, the Headboat Collaborative pilot (HBC) program, and the Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Individual Bycatch Quota (IBQ) program. The IFQ and HBC programs are intended to reduce the race to catch quotas by allocating individual fishermen or groups of fishermen quotas that can be harvested throughout the fishing year. The BFT program is intended to limit bluefin tuna landings and discards and provide fishermen with incentives to avoid bluefin tuna interactions. Each of the programs is intended to achieve both conservation and economic goals through more efficient and more profitable harvesting and marketing practices.

Important Messages | IFQ Landings | HBC Landings | BFT Catch | About

#### Important Messages - Please Read Before Logging Into Your Account

- ALL As of 12/16/2014, the current version of the Catch Shares Online System is 4.2.0. If you do not have this version, please close your web browser and reopen the application.
- ALL NOAA Fisheries Announces the Final Rule for Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news\\_list/2014/12/120114\\_a7\\_final\\_rule.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news_list/2014/12/120114_a7_final_rule.html)

OMB Control Nos. 0648-0551 Exp. Date 11/30/14; 0648-0677 Exp. Date 11/30/17; 0648-0040 Exp. Date 7/31/15; 0648-0372 Exp. Date 11/30/16

WARNING: Using the browser's refresh or back button will log you out of the application. All unsaved transactions will be lost.

# IBQ Program - continued

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Home | Vessels | Allocation | Hail Outs | Shares | Landings | Notifications | Messages | My Account | Log Out

**Update Account**

Select an account from the list below to view or update the account information.

UserID	Type	User Name	DBA
	BFT SHAREHOLDER		
	BFT VESSEL		

UserID:

Account Holder Name(s):

Email Address:

Email Flag:  Check in order to receive email copies of Catch Shares messages.

First Secret Question:

First Secret Answer:

Second Secret Question:

Second Secret Answer:

\* PIN must be at least 12 characters long.  
 PIN must contain no spaces.  
 PIN must contain 3 of these:

- lowercase letter
- uppercase letter
- number
- special character

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## IBQ Program – Important timing aspects: in effect 1/1/15

- In 2015: Bluefin tuna catch (dead discards and landings) will be accounted for through the electronic IBQ system and deducted from the vessel's IBQ allocation
- If catch > allocation, the permitted vessel is considered to have a "quota debt"
- If a vessel has quota debt, it may continue to fish, and depart on subsequent trips, but
- Quota debt will accrue throughout the 2015 fishing year, and a vessel will be responsible for accounting for all bluefin catch at the end of the year

## IBQ Program – Important timing aspects: in effect 1/1/16

- If, at start of 2016, a permit holder has outstanding quota debt (i.e., did not settle their vessel's quota debt through leasing during 2015), the vessel's 2016 allocation will be reduced to satisfy the quota debt
- Vessels will need a minimum amount of quota allocation to depart on a fishing trip with pelagic longline gear
  - Atlantic minimum required: 0.125 mt whole weight (~275 lb)
  - Gulf of Mexico minimum required: 0.25 mt whole weight (~550 lb)
- If the vessel retains legal-sized bluefin in excess of its IBQ allocation, it may land and sell the fish, but the permit holder must acquire additional IBQ allocation to account for the excess, and cannot depart on another trip until the quota debt is resolved (and the vessel will need the minimum share amount)

## IBQ Program – Related Measures for Pelagic Longline Vessels

- **VMS Reporting** of bluefin catch and fishing effort:
- Report **within 12 hours** of the completion of the retrieval of each set:
  - **Date and location** of set and **number of hooks**
  - **Length** of all bluefin discarded **dead or retained**



## IBQ Program – Related Measures for Pelagic Longline Vessels

- **Electronic Monitoring:** Objective: verify the accuracy of counts and identification of bluefin tuna reported by the vessel operator
- As of **June 1, 2015**, vessels must have a certified EM system in order to fish with pelagic longline gear
- Vessel operators must coordinate with NMFS-contractor to install and test EM equipment. There is Federal funding for eligible vessels, but such funding is uncertain after June 1 (and for non-eligible vessels)
- Installation dates at numerous ports will be scheduled and announced in January
- Summary of components: At least 2 cameras, sensors, monitor, control box

## IBQ Program – What to Remember to Fish

Before you (a vessel) Depart on a Trip:

- Make sure you have an active IBQ account in the online IBQ system
- Check your balance of IBQ allocation using the online IBQ system (during 2015, there is flexibility to fish with “quota debt”, but in 2016, you will need the minimum amount of IBQ allocation in order to depart the dock); Lease additional IBQ allocation if necessary
- Make sure your VMS software is up to date, and hail in using VMS
- For pelagic longline vessels, check your Electronic Monitoring System to make sure it has hard drives installed, has power, and is functioning properly (*required as of June 1, 2015*)

# IBQ Program – What to Remember to Fish

## During the Trip:

- Report bluefin tuna catch and fishing effort through VMS within 12 hours of completing haulback
- For pelagic longline vessels, ensure that all fish caught are handled in a manner that enables the video system to record such fish; make sure the electronic monitoring system remains powered on for the duration of each fishing trip; make sure cameras are recording haulback; and clean cameras

## IBQ Program – What to Remember to Fish

### End of Trip:

- Hail out of the trip using VMS
- As instructed by NMFS, enter information into the online IBQ system (e.g., bluefin landings and/or dead discards), and perform other online tasks as instructed by NMFS (e.g.,; check your balance of IBQ allocation to determine if you are in “quota debt,” and obtain more IBQ allocation if necessary)
- For pelagic longline vessels, within 48 hours of completing a fishing trip, mail the removable electronic monitoring system hard drive(s) containing all data to NMFS or NMFS-approved contractor (*required as of June 1, 2015*)
- Submit your written Logbook/Vessel Trip Report, just as required prior to the IBQ program

## IBQ Program – Related Measures for Purse Seine Vessels

- **VMS unit required** (Enhanced Mobile Transmitting Unit (E-MTU) (hourly position reports, hail out and in, etc.)
  
- **VMS Reporting** of bluefin catch and fishing effort:
  - Report **within 12 hours** of the completion of the retrieval of each set:
    - **Date, location and number** of sets
    - **Length** of all bluefin discarded **dead or retained**

## IBQ Program – Related Measures for Dealers

- Federal dealers who intend to purchase landings from vessel catching bluefin tuna with pelagic longline or purse seine gear will be subject to new reporting requirements that are effective January 1, 2015
- Create an account in the electronic IBQ system
- Use the electronic IBQ dealer account to complete landings transactions
- Coordinate with the vessel owner or operator, or their designee, to enter dead discard information as well as landings, into the IBQ system

## IBQ Program – Related Measures for Dealers - continued

- Information required includes: shareholder's account number, name and permit number of vessel, vessel account number, individual tag number, weights for landed bluefin tuna, and the number of dead discarded bluefin tuna by appropriate length bin
- The vessel owner or operator, or designee, must validate the information before the transaction is processed. Landings reports must be entered no later than 24 hours after receipt of the bluefin
- This new reporting requirement for bluefin tuna landings (and dead discards) does not replace your current bluefin tuna reporting requirement. Dealers will be required to also continue the current method of submitting landings reports via fax for purse seine and pelagic longline vessels, in addition to the reporting information into the IBQ account



## Enhanced Reporting Requirements – General, Harpoon, Charter/Headboat categories

Automated  
catch reporting  
system  
requirement

internet

Bluefin: Approximate  
length of bluefin  
retained or discarded  
dead

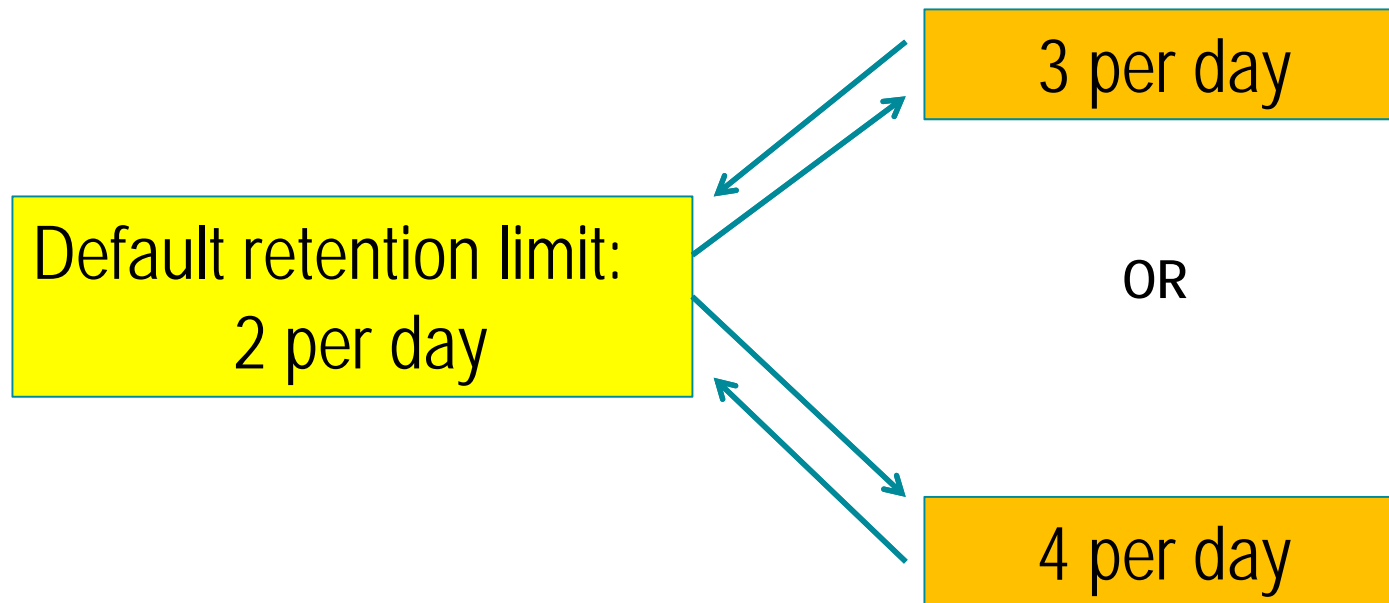


## Flexibility for General Category Quota Adjustment

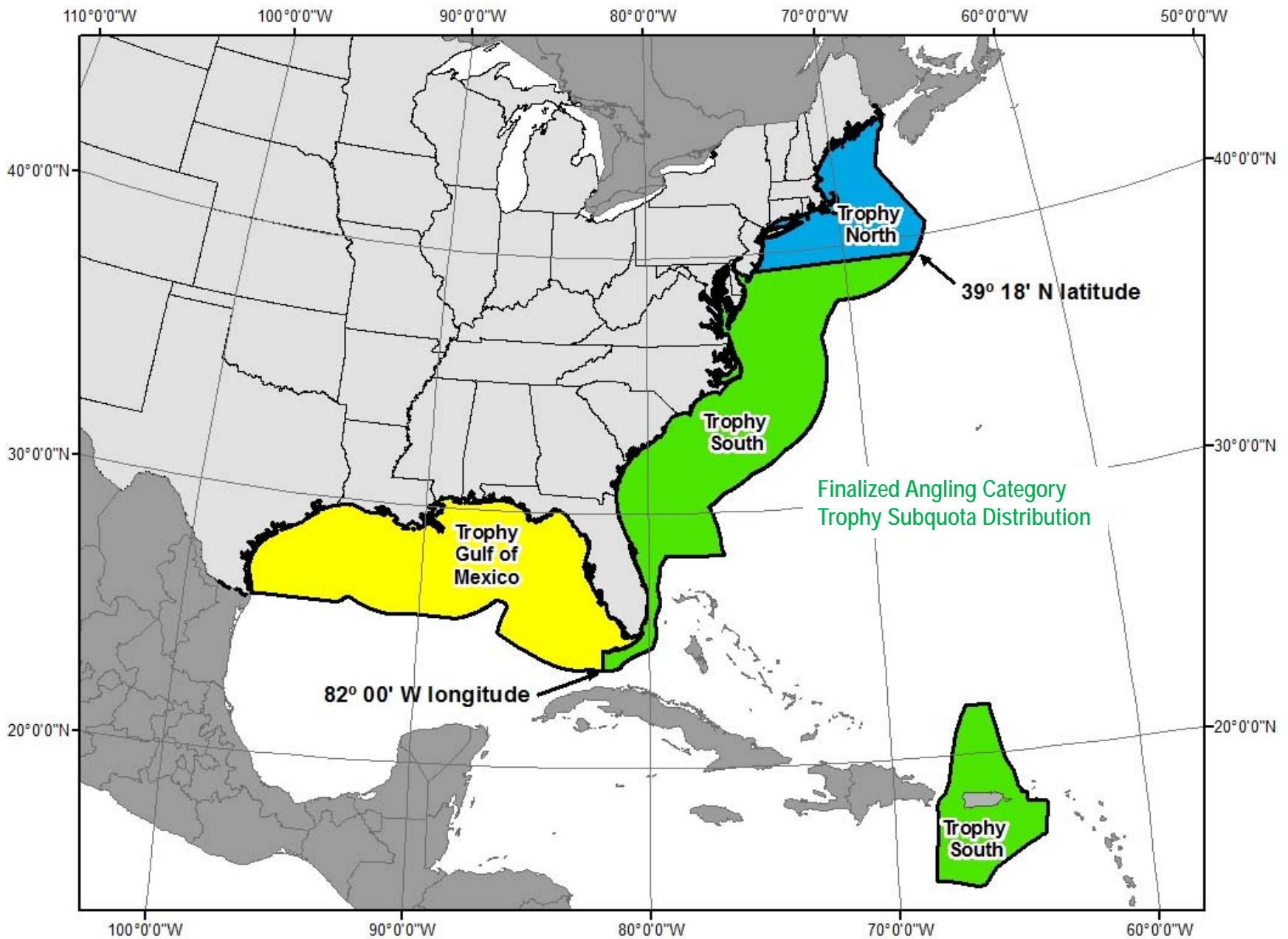


- Proactively transfer General category quota to January subperiod per regulatory determination criteria

# Authority to Adjust Harpoon Category Retention Limits of Large Medium Bluefin (73" to < 81")



Limit on Giants ( $\geq 81''$ ) would remain the same



# Start Date of the Purse Seine Category

- Current: July 15 (or NMFS may delay until Aug 15)
- Finalized Under Amendment 7: No default start date. Annually, NMFS will determine the start date, between June 1 and August 15

# North Atlantic Albacore Tuna Quota

- Implements the U.S. annual quota of northern albacore tuna recommended by ICCAT
- Carry-forward of unused quota from one year to the next is limited to 25 percent of the initial quota
- Accounts for overharvest and underharvest of the quota adjusted as appropriate for prior year catch, including delayed adjustment (that would skip a year) or adjustments over several years

## Modification Regarding Permit Category Changes

- Allows a permit holder to modify the category of an Atlantic Tunas or HMS permit issued for up to 45 days from date of issuance, provided the vessel has not landed bluefin tuna as verified via landings data





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Questions?



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