

Science, Service, Stewardship



Atlantic bluefin tuna Working Group Discussion Materials

September 28, 2010

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Review of 2010 Recreational BFT Fishery Management

Best available data:

In 2009, Angling category landings totaled 2x the quota, and large school/small medium landings were over 3x the subquota, and vast majority of those were small mediums.

Size Class	2009 Quota (mt)	2009 Landings (mt)	% of Quota
School (27-<47")	103.5	54.4	53%
Large School (47-<59")/ Small Medium (59-<73")	151.1	510.9 $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 89.7 \text{ LS} \\ 421.2 \text{ SM} \end{array} \right.$	338%
Large Medium (73-<81")/ Giant (81"+)	6	0.6	10%
Total	260.6	565.9	217%



Review of 2010 Recreational BFT Fishery Management

Management Objectives for 2010:

- Keep BFT landings within U.S. quota and domestic quotas, including Angling category quota
- Provide advance notice of fishing opportunities
- Clear, enforceable limits
- Reasonable fishing opportunities across time and geographic distribution



Review of 2010 Recreational BFT Fishery Management

AP discussion:

- At meeting (May 11-13) – several suggestions including measures that would:
 - Eliminate landings of small medium BFT (59-73")
 - 1 school or large school BFT (27-59") for all
 - 1 school BFT (27-47") plus 1 large school BFT (47-59") for all
 - Incorporate seasonal or other time restriction elements (days of week) for areas north and south (of Great Egg Inlet, NJ)
 - Apply different limits for private and charter vessels

Several noted that many of the above could be incorporated into longer-term monitoring systems, and could be enhanced by fish tag/landing card system.



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Narrowing of Options: NMFS prepared “BFT Angling Category 2010 – Considerations, Reasonable Assumptions, and Management Options” document.

NMFS noted that several of the options would be extremely difficult to implement under existing recreational monitoring systems, but could be considered for future years. NMFS concluded that, for 2010, allowing landings of small medium BFT would risk exceeding available quotas.

The three viable options identified were:

- A. 1 school or large school BFT (27-59”) per day for all vessels
- B. 1 school BFT (27-47”) plus 1 large school BFT (47-59”) for all vessels
- C. Option A for private vessels and Option B for charter vessels



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AP discussion on Options Paper: AP members expressed support and rationale for each of the 3 options, but the *general* preference of those who participated was for Option C in order to balance quota concerns with opportunities, particularly important to charters in attracting customers.

Management Decision: (Option C)

1 school or large school BFT (27-59") per day for private vessels and
1 school BFT (27-47") plus 1 large school BFT (47-59") for charter vessels

Also, southern trophy landings reached the available 2010 trophy subquota, so NMFS closed the southern trophy fishery and transferred 1.7 mt from the Reserve to the northern trophy fishery to allow opportunities to attain the specified 2010 northern trophy subquota. (75 FR 33531, June 14, 2010)

Effective July 19, NMFS closed northern trophy fishery. (75 FR 41995, July 20, 2010)



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Initial Feedback:

NMFS has received mixed comment on the retention limit since June including:

- concerns about survival of discarded small medium BFT
- concerns about compliance and enforcement (no retention of BFT 59-<73")
- concerns regarding scheduled tuna tournaments, most of which reward biggest fish, particularly those in areas where BFT under 59" not readily available
- support for taking action to limit landings to the U.S. quota
- support for taking action intended to limit domestic landings to FMP-based subquotas

Data availability:

Complete 2010 landings data will be available to HMS in January 2011.



Review of 2010 Recreational BFT Fishery Management

Comments?

- What worked well?
- What could we improve?

Questions?



Convergence of factors – current issues regarding PLL BFT interactions

- As swordfish effort and landings increase, potential for increase in PLL BFT catch
- Deepwater Horizon/BP Oil Spill in Gulf of Mexico
- Petition to list BFT as threatened or endangered under the ESA
- Weak hook research promising
- Availability of commercial-sized BFT expected to increase (marching cohort)
- Must account for PLL dead discards annually (in quota specifications)
- Available quota for 2011 is uncertain at this time
- Ability to carry forward unharvested quota diminishing
- Accounting for all PLL landings and dead discards while keeping within U.S. TAC could result in decreased quotas for directed fishing categories
- Continued requests to prohibit PLL in the Gulf of Mexico



2009 Longline Landings and Discards

	Metric tons (rounded)				
2009	Base Quota ¹	Adjusted Quota ¹	Landings ²	Dead Discards ²	Total Catch
Longline	107	99	131	160	291
U.S. Total	1,035	1,462	1,068	160	1,228

1 Quotas include the ICCAT-recommended 25-mt set aside for PLL bycatch in the NED

2 Landings and dead discards as reported in 2010 U.S. Report to ICCAT

- Longline allocation in FMP is 8.1% of the landings quota (not incl. NED).
- Discards not included in FMP allocation; separate allowance through 2006
- In 2009, Longline landings represented 12% of U.S. landings.
- In 2009, Longline landings and dead discards represented 23% of U.S. reported catch.



Longline Quotas, Landings, Dead Discards and Catch, 2008-2009

		Metric tons (rounded)			
	Area	Adjusted Quota ¹	Landings ²	Dead Discards ²	Total Catch
2009	NED ³	25	51	5	56
	East Coast ~ "North"	30	46	77	123
	GoM ~ "South"	45	33	78	111
	Total	100	131	160	291
2008	NED	25	9	5	14
	East Coast ~ "North"	23	40	67	107
	GoM ~ "South"	34	26	86	112
	Total	82	75	158	233

1 Adjusted quota as published for LLN and LLS in annual quota specifications (N & S of 31°N. lat.)

2 Landings and dead discards as reported by ICCAT Statistical Area in 2010 U.S. Report to ICCAT

3 NMFS applied target catch requirements when 2009 NED set-aside met, effective Oct. 20-Dec. 31.



Summary

As we move into 2011, some options for reducing and addressing PLL BFT interactions:

- Changing how we set the annual quota specifications
- Re-establishing target catch requirements in the NED
- Expanding weak hook use

Annual BFT Quota Specification – A Look Back and Details to Consider for 2011

All units mt	2008	2009	2010	2011	
WBFT TAC	2,100	1,900	1,800	1,800?	
U.S. TAC	1,190.1	1,034.9	977.4	977?	A
Available BFT Underharvest (from prior year)	595.1 (max. possible)	517.5 (max. possible)	388.6	Max.97.7?	B
→ Longline category	53.6	82.5	170.7	160? (‘09 proxy)	
→ Reserve	178.5 (15% of U.S. TAC)	155.2 (15% of U.S. TAC)	46.5*	?	
→ Directed fishing categories per FMP %s	363	279.8	171.4	?	
Dead discard estimate used (source year)	91.3 (2006)	90 (2007)	172.8** (2008)	160 (2009)	C
Final Adjusted U.S. TAC	1,693.9	1,462.3	1,193.2	917?	A+B-C

* Reduced from proposed amount to maintain proposed amount of underharvest allocated to directed fishing categories

**Latest information: 158 mt, from U.S. Report to ICCAT, 2010