

Science, Service, Stewardship



NOAA

Swordfish Commercial Rod & Reel/Handline/Harpoon Permit Concept

Atlantic HMS Advisory Panel
Meeting – September 20-22, 2011

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**



SWO Commercial Rod & Reel/Handline/Harpoon Permit Concept

CURRENTLY

Limited access permits are issued to commercially harvest SWO:

SWO Handgear

- Unlimited SWO retention; buoy gear authorized among other gears; ~ 80 permits

HMS “permit triple-pack” w/SWO directed permit

- Unlimited SWO retention; buoy gear authorized among other gears; ~ 180 Permits

HMS “permit triple-pack” w/SWO incidental permit

- 30 SWO allowed; buoy gear not authorized; ~ 72 permits



Potential Need for Additional SWO Permit

- SWO stock fully rebuilt
- U.S. SWO quota underharvests
- Difficult to obtain existing SWO Handgear permit
- NMFS continues to receive requests (including from HMS AP) to provide more opportunities to commercially harvest SWO with rod & reel/handline/harpoon
 - NMFS considered these requests in 2009 ANPR (74 FR 26174)
 - Requests both for & against permit from South Florida



Issues for Consideration

How to increase SWO fishing opportunities while addressing the following considerations:

- Minimize bycatch & bycatch mortality

- Constituent concerns (recreational & commercial) about additional fishing effort in Florida Straits
 - Number of fishermen and amount of fishing gear
 - Market concerns

- Constituent concerns from current SWO LAP holders about impacts on SWO LAP values, SWO prices, product quality, and food safety



Potential Options for Discussion

- Add SWO to Atlantic Tunas General Category permit
- Create new “Atlantic SWO General Commercial” permit



Add SWO to Atlantic Tunas General Category Permit

Potential implementation details

- Maintain open access
- Low initial retention limit (1-3 SWO/trip?)
- Count landings against SWO directed quota
 - Possibly establish SWO General directed sub-quota with in-season retention adjustments similar to BFT
- Consider regional retention/landing/sale restrictions
 - South Florida, Northeast, Gulf of Mexico
- Continued tournament participation for permit holders
- Sales only to HMS permitted dealers



Create New “Atlantic SWO General Commercial” Permit

Potential implementation details

- Maintain open access
- Separate permit purchase required
- Low initial retention limit (1-3 SWO/trip?)
- Count landings against SWO directed quota
 - Possibly establish SWO General directed sub-quota with in-season retention adjustments similar to BFT
- Consider regional retention/landing/sale restrictions
 - South Florida, Northeast, Gulf of Mexico
- Tournament participation for permit holders?
- Sales only to HMS permitted dealers



We Need Your Input

- Should NMFS develop such a proposed rule?
- If NMFS were to develop a proposed rule to issue a new type of commercial SWO permit for rod & reel/handline/harpoon, what are your thoughts about the implementation methods described?
 - Open access and potential number of permits issued
 - Retention limit
 - Potential amount of SWO landed
 - Regional retention/landings/sale
- What other approaches should NMFS consider?