

Science, Service, Stewardship



Issues and Alternatives for the Future Management of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

**Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP
Predraft**

Highly Migratory Species Management Division

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**

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This Presentation

- Purpose & Need for Amendment 7
- Objectives
- Scoping: What we've heard
- Predraft highlights



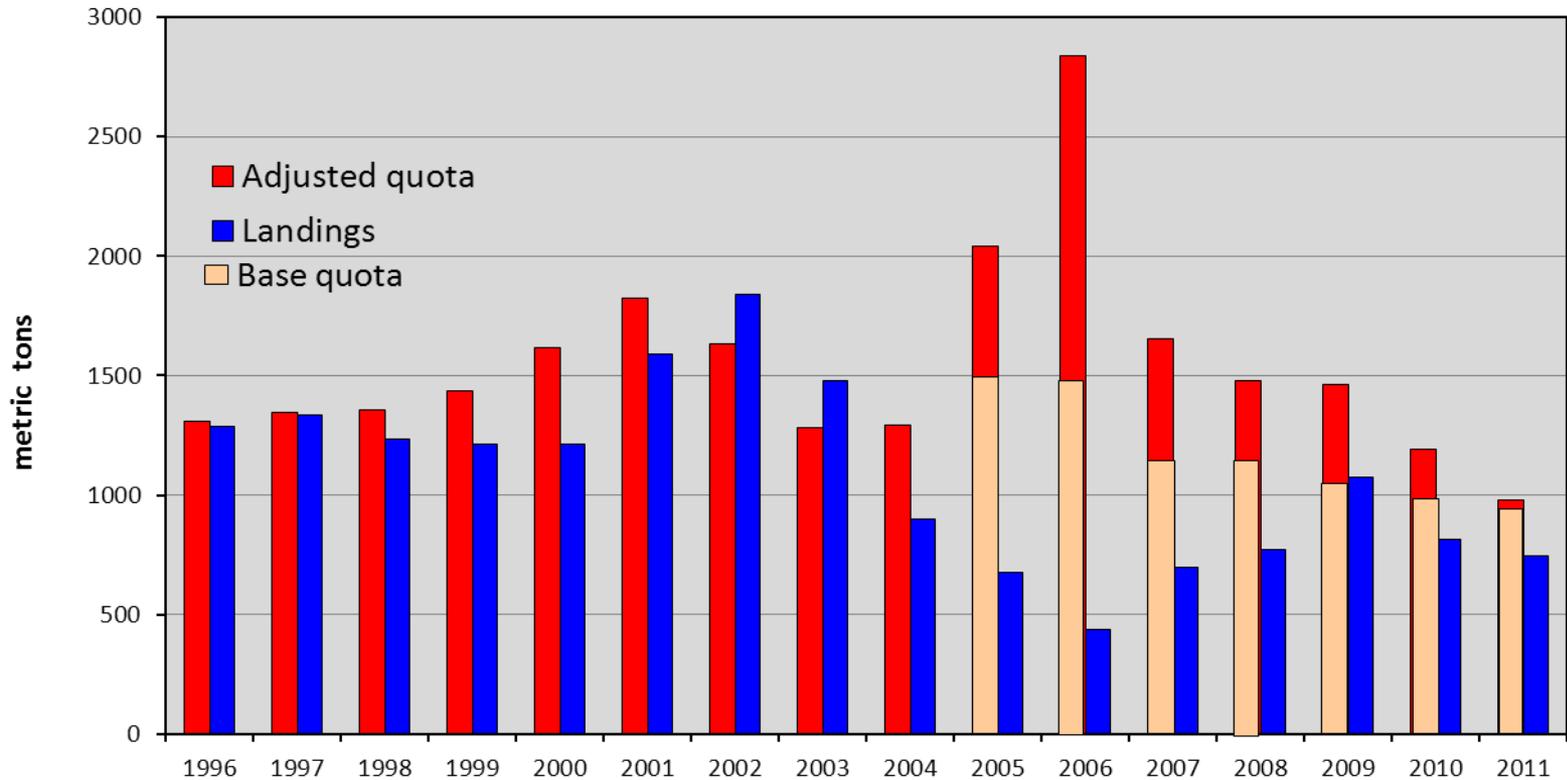
Why Consider Amending the Fishery Management Plan?

Atlantic bluefin tuna: a changing fishery:

- Landings/interactions increasing (overall trend);
- Lower quotas;
- Dead discards must be accounted for;
- Carry-forward limited



U.S. BFT Landings vs. Base & Adjusted Quotas (mt)



U.S. base quotas for 2005 - 2011 shown as beige bars to illustrate relation of recent landings to base quotas.



Amendment 7 - Objectives

- **Broad Objectives:** Rebuild the stock, end overfishing, meet conservation, management and other objectives of the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP as well as the international legal obligations
- **Optimize Fishing Opportunity and Account for Dead Discards**
- **Enhance Reporting**
- **Reduce BFT Dead Discards**
- **Other**



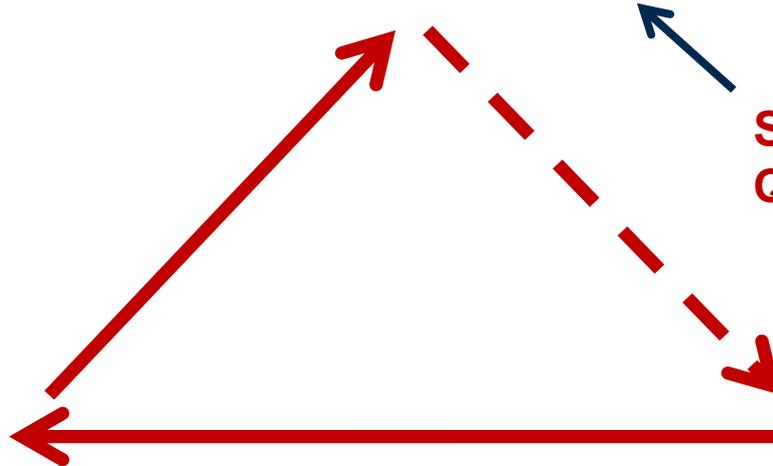
Discards

Account for Dead Discards
(Landings + Discards \leq Quota)

Stay within the
Quota

Reduce Dead
Discards

Report and
Monitor Dead
Discards





Scoping – What we heard

- Promote transition from pelagic longline gear to more selective gear; use oil spill funds
- Close the Gulf of Mexico to the use of pelagic longline gear year-round
- Support catch cap for the Atlantic, with landings and discards limited to 8.1%
- Increase level of observer coverage (industry-funded)
- Improve reporting: VMS transmission of information to achieve real-time reporting
- Mandatory retention of legal-sized fish



Scoping – What we heard

- Eliminate pelagic longline target catch requirements
- Support Atlantic closures for pelagic longline gear
- Don't reduce minimum sizes
- Don't revise allocation percentages
- Don't limit catch of Angling category
- Don't use weak hooks in the Atlantic until tested
- Maintain a year-round pelagic longline fishery
- Adjust allocations to reflect catch
 - (current catch or at 68 mt set-aside level)



Predraft Highlights

- Wide range of management measures, including new measures not in scoping document:
 - a) First tier measures

At this time, NMFS is considers these the most likely measures for inclusion and additional analysis in a future proposed rule
 - b) Second Tier measures

At this time, NMFS is considering whether or not to include these measures



First Tier Measures

- **Pelagic longline incidental bluefin catch cap and other potential measures that may be combined with catch cap**
 - Regional, individual, hybrid catch cap
 - Establish control date
 - Amend gear/permit types authorized to target swordfish
 - Fish under General category rules
 - Reduce/eliminate target catch requirements
 - Require mandatory retention of legal-sized bluefin
 - Reduce bluefin minimum size



First Tier Measures

- **Closed areas (revised or new)**
 - Closed area adjustment authority
 - Closed area data collection
 - Northeastern U.S. Closed Area
 - Charleston Bump Closed Area
 - Cape Hatteras Closed Area
 - Any potential Closed Areas in Shark Amendment 5
 - Gulf of Mexico Seasonal Closure
 - Gulf of Mexico Year-Round Closure



First Tier Measures

- Deduct bluefin dead discards from each category during annual quota specification rulemaking
(modify regulations accordingly)

- Revise bluefin allocations
 - Incorporate recent catch
 - Landings allocations
 - Redistribution of quota
 - Allocation of 68 mt to pelagic longline quota



First Tier Measures

- **Enhance reporting of bluefin**
 - Pelagic Longline Vessel Monitoring System reporting of catch
 - Automated Landings Reporting System for commercial categories
 - Expand Large Pelagic Survey (recreational info.)



First Tier Measures

- Use bluefin revenue to fund observers or research
- Modify Angling category sub-quota distribution
- Establish inseason adjustment of Harpoon category
Large Medium bluefin retention limit
- Modify rules regarding permit category changes
- Codify North Atlantic albacore quota and develop specifications and adjustment rules
- Modify General category sub-period quota allocations



Second Tier Measures

- Angling category – maximum bluefin catch limit
- Tolerance rules for Purse Seine category
- Stowage of unauthorized gear
- Authorization of bait nets
- NMFS real-time monitoring and closure of “hot-spots”
- NMFS facilitation of an industry-based bluefin avoidance system
- Decrease in minimum size for Purse Seine category



Predraft Highlights - Data

- **Background information**
- Landings by category
- Pelagic Longline Logbook data: 2006 to 2011
 - effort (hooks), bluefin interactions by area, interactions in relation to effort, number of vessels interacting with bluefin by year, etc.

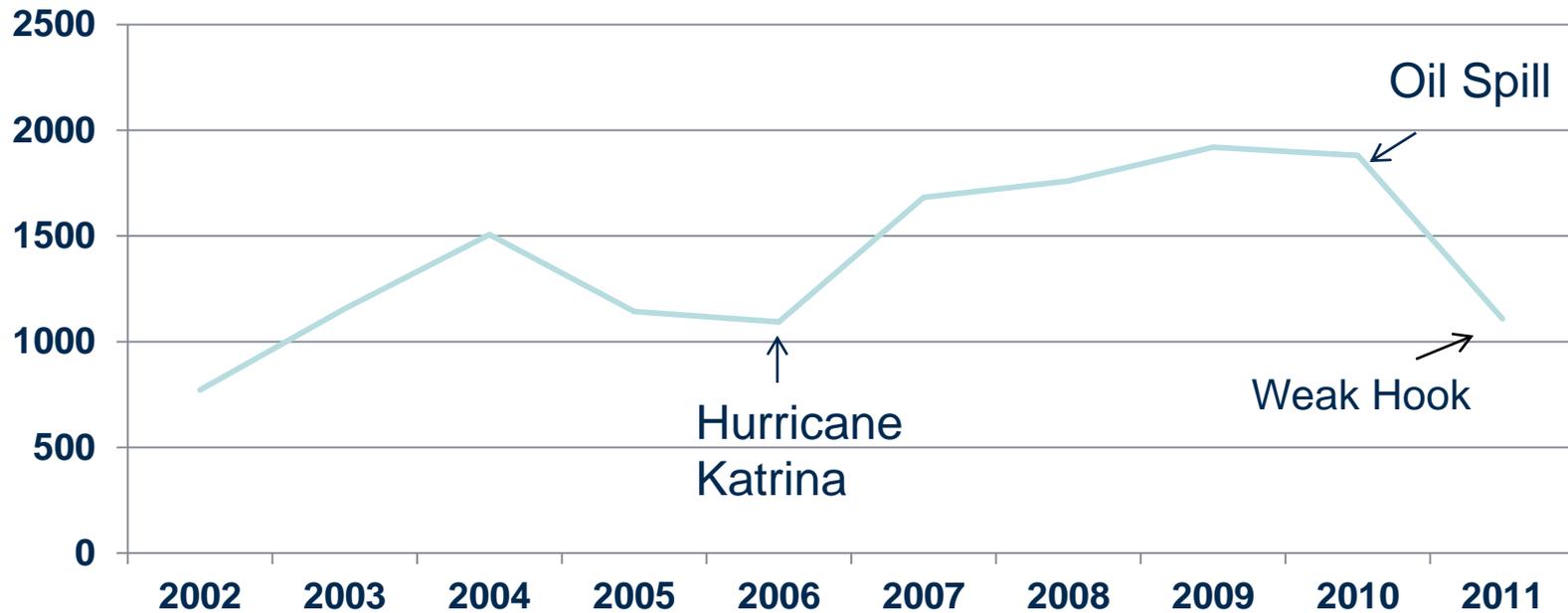


Predraft Highlights - Data

- Evaluation of Management Measures
- Recreational data on released bluefin
- Recreational trophy landings by area
- Pelagic longline data
 - target species by area
 - bluefin interactions by area and month
 - bluefin discard data by amount of target species
- Catch cap examples
- Pelagic longline vessel fishing locations analysis



Number of Bluefin Interactions with PLL Gear; 2002 - 2011



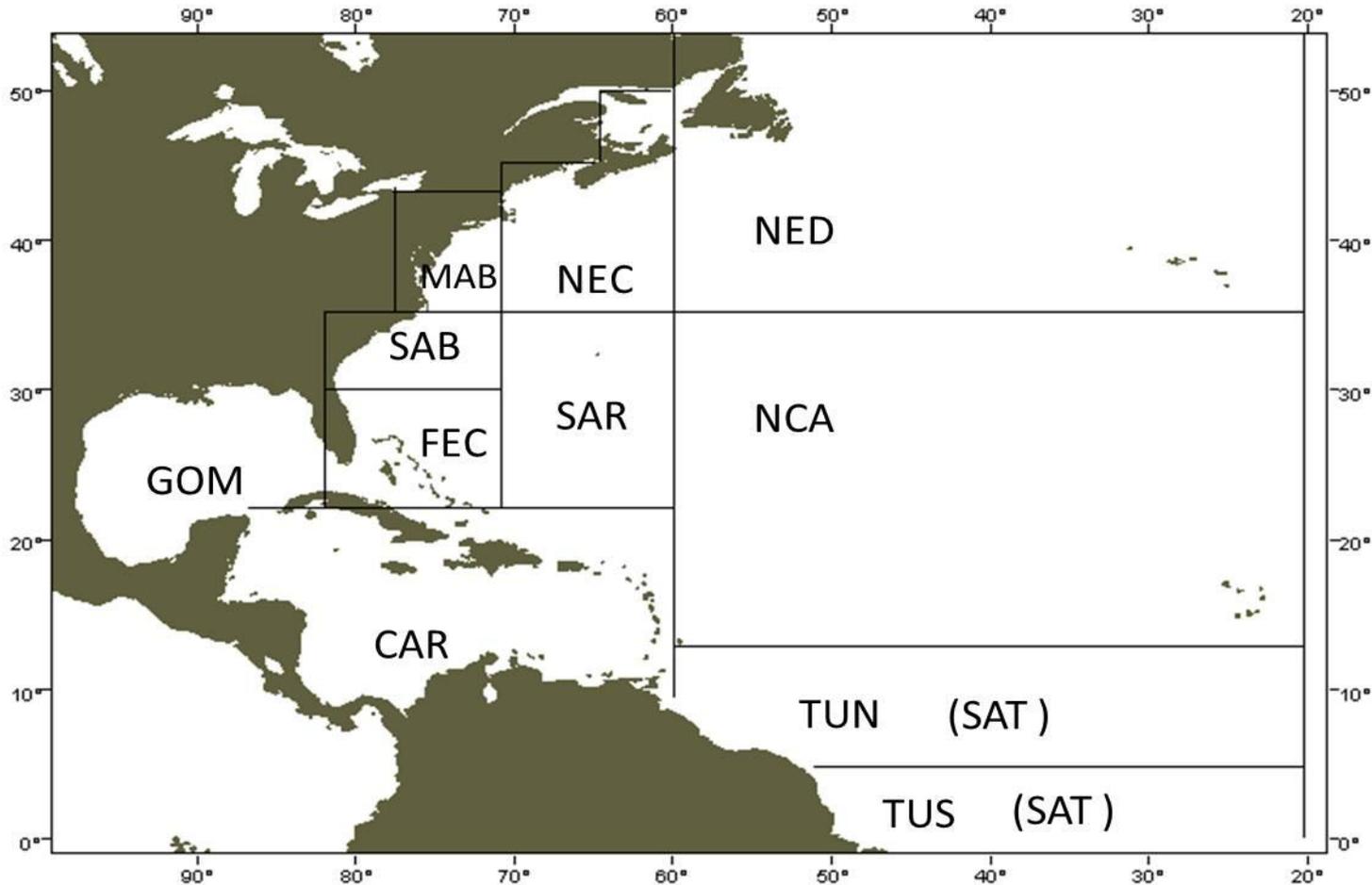
(Predraft; Figure 12)



Average Percentage of Total Bluefin Interactions by PLL Gear 2007-2011

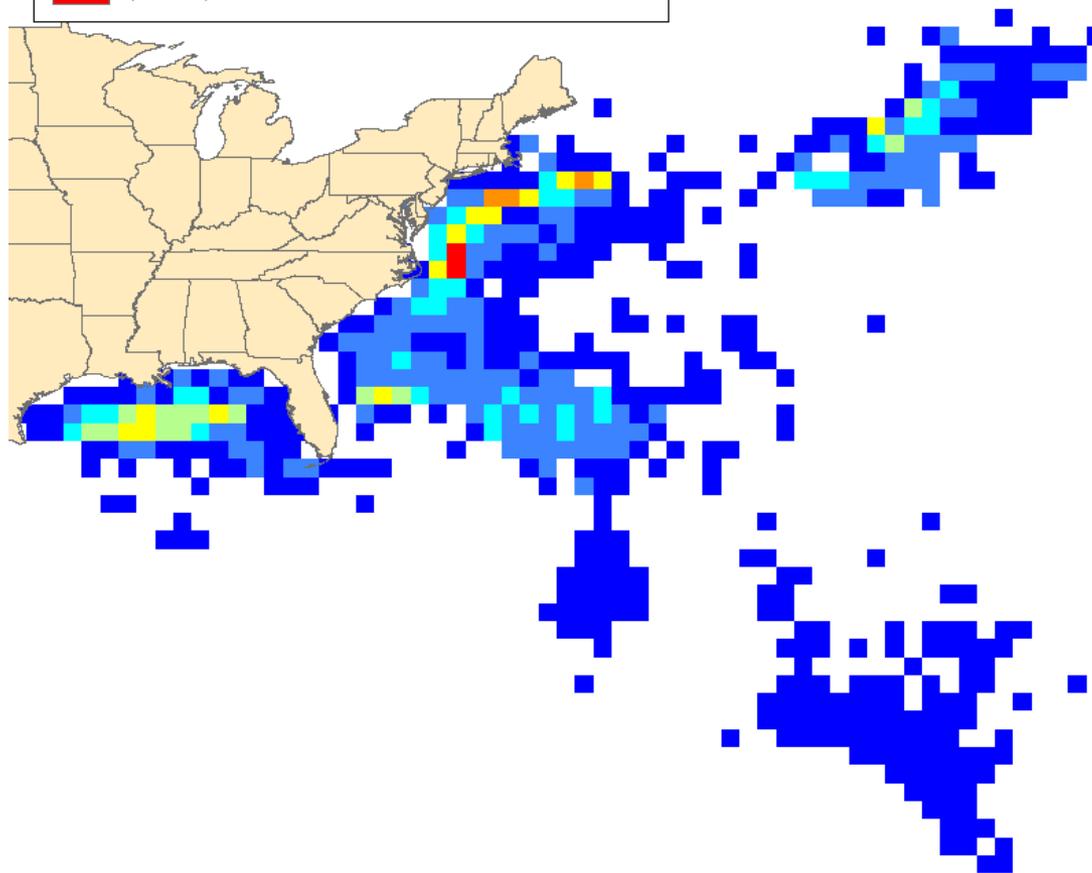
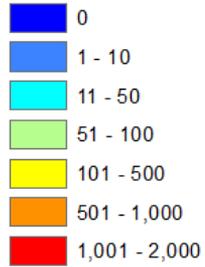
Area	Average Percentage of Total Interactions
MAB	53 %
NEC	18 %
GOM	14 %
NED	6 %
FEC	5 %
SAB	2.3%
SAR	1.8%
SAT	0.1%

MAB: Mid-Atlantic Bight; NEC: Northeast Coastal; GOM: Gulf of Mexico; NED: Northeast Distant; FEC: Florida East Coast; SAB: South Atlantic Bight; SAR: Sargasso; SAT: South Atlantic (Predraft Table 11)

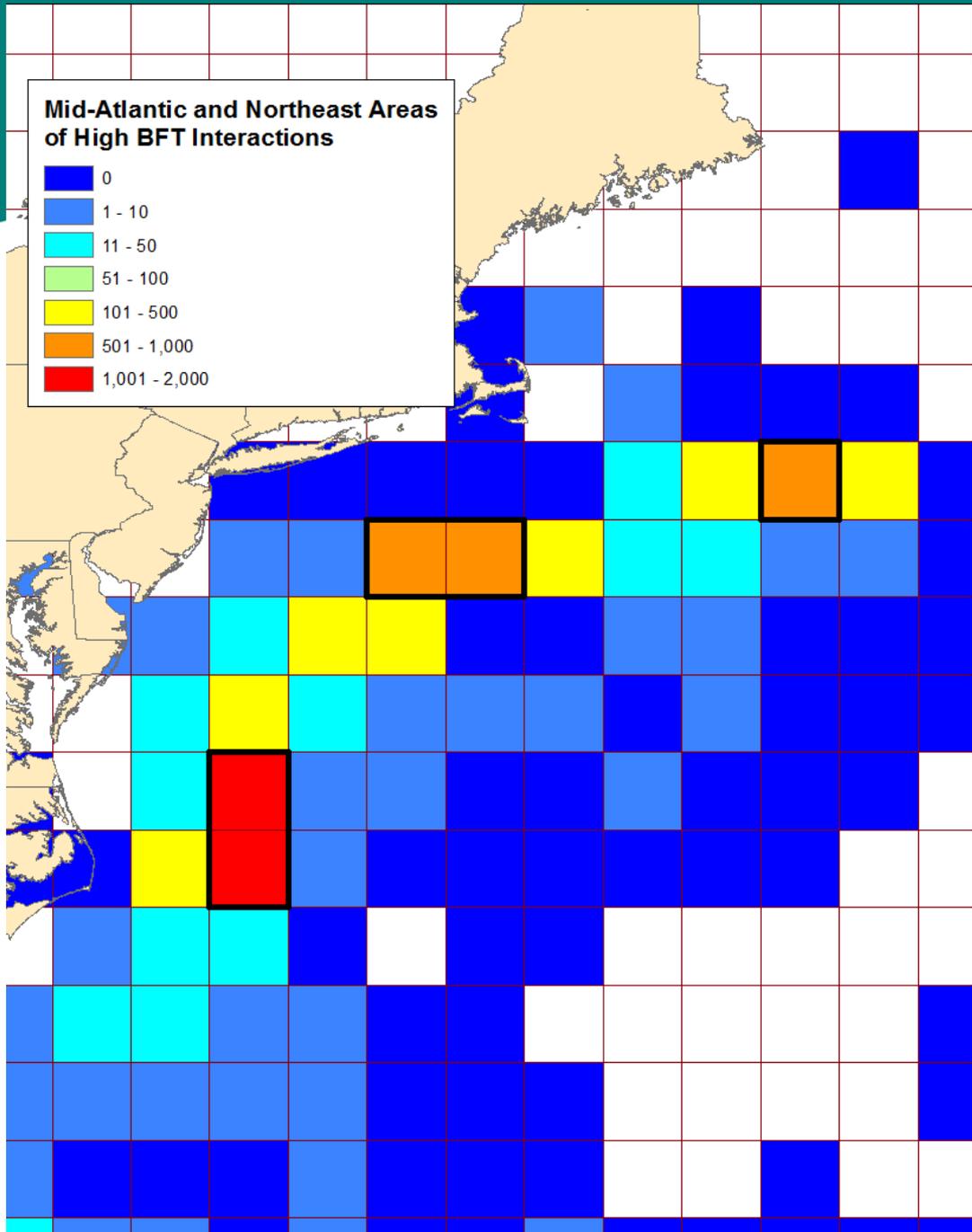




BFT Interactions 2006-2011 (HMS Logbook)



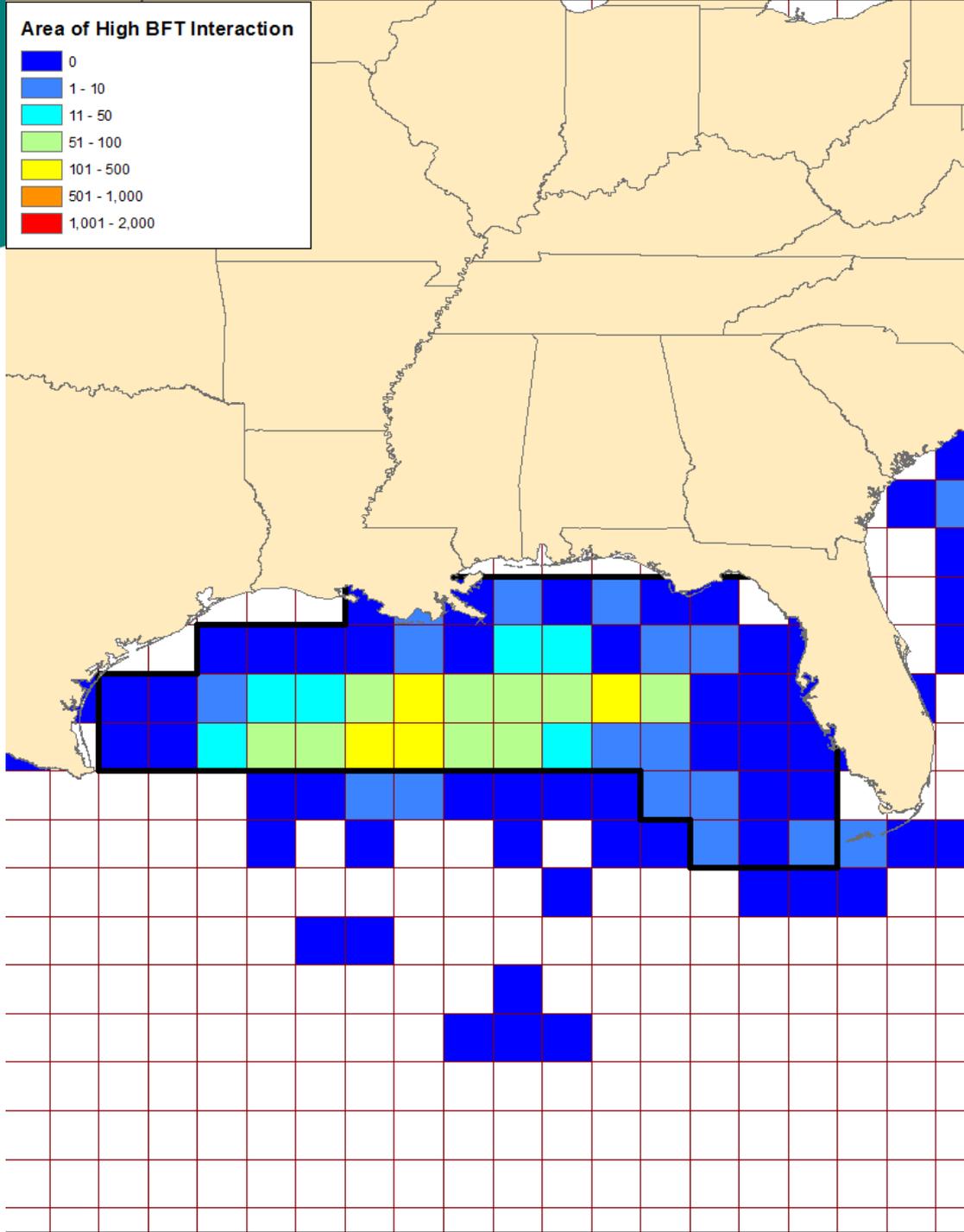
(Predraft
Figure 20)





Area of High BFT Interaction

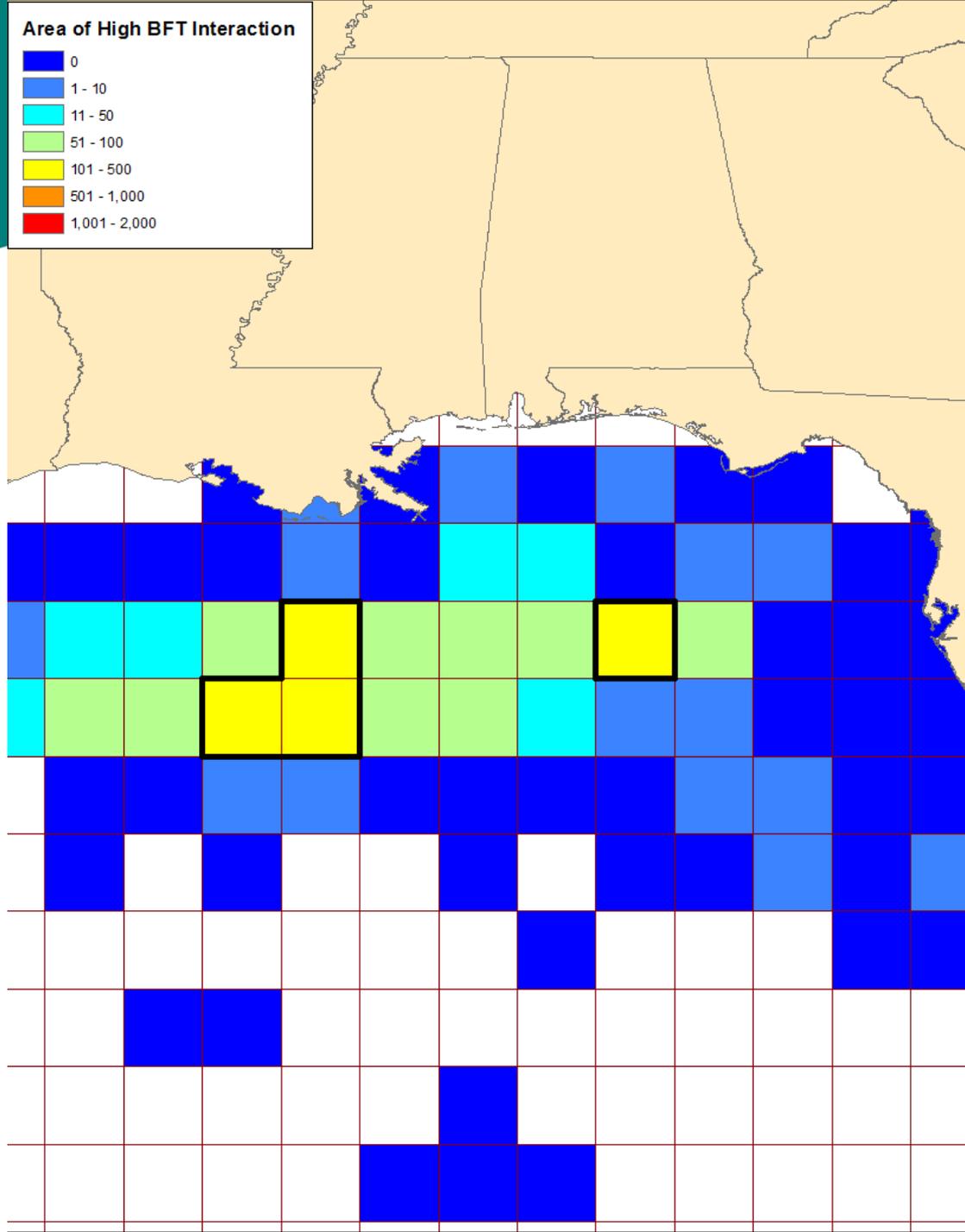
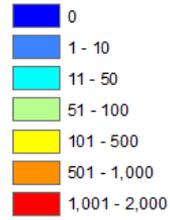
- 0
- 1 - 10
- 11 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 2,000



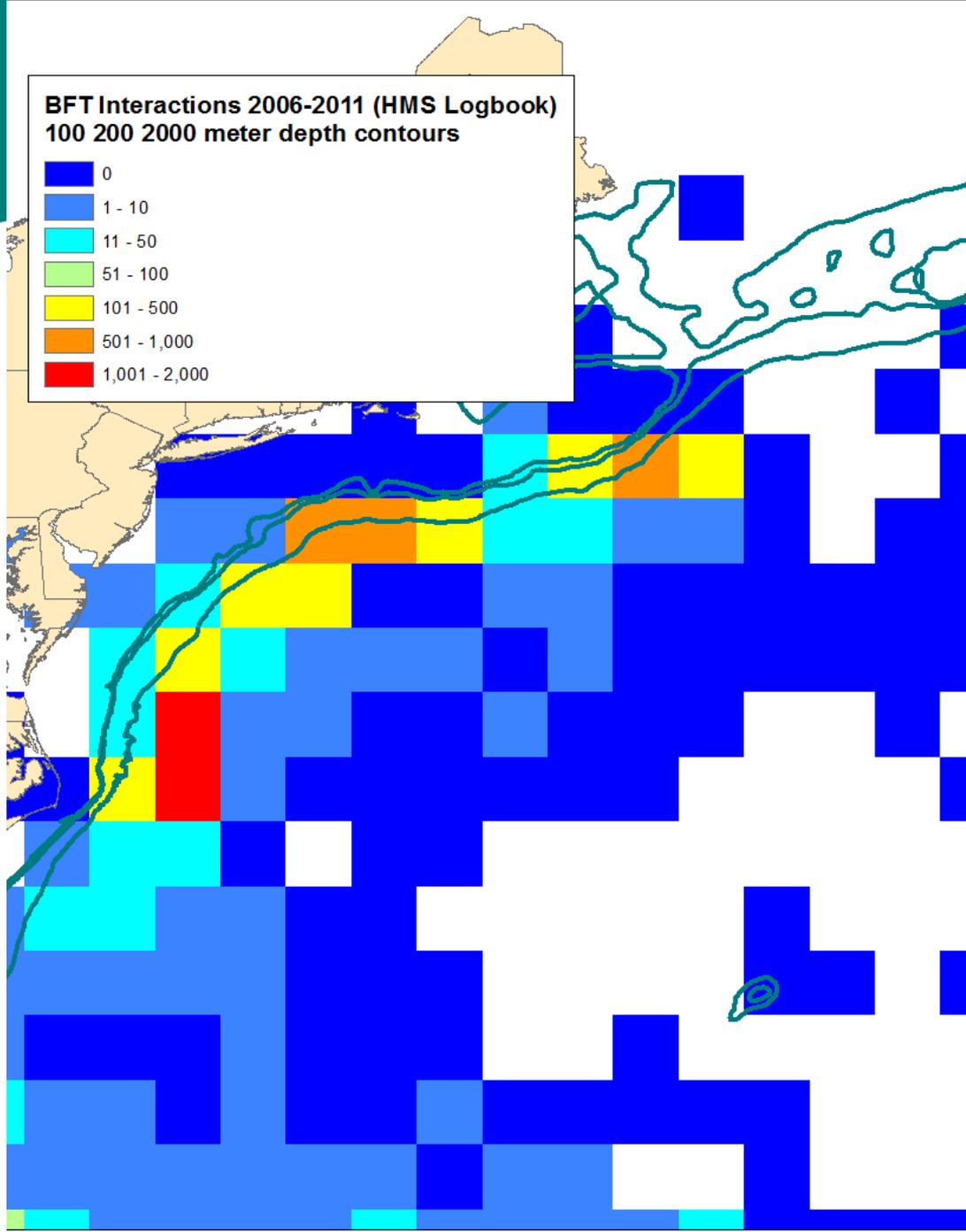
(Predraft
Figure 24)



Area of High BFT Interaction



(Predraft
Figure 23)

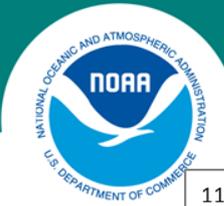




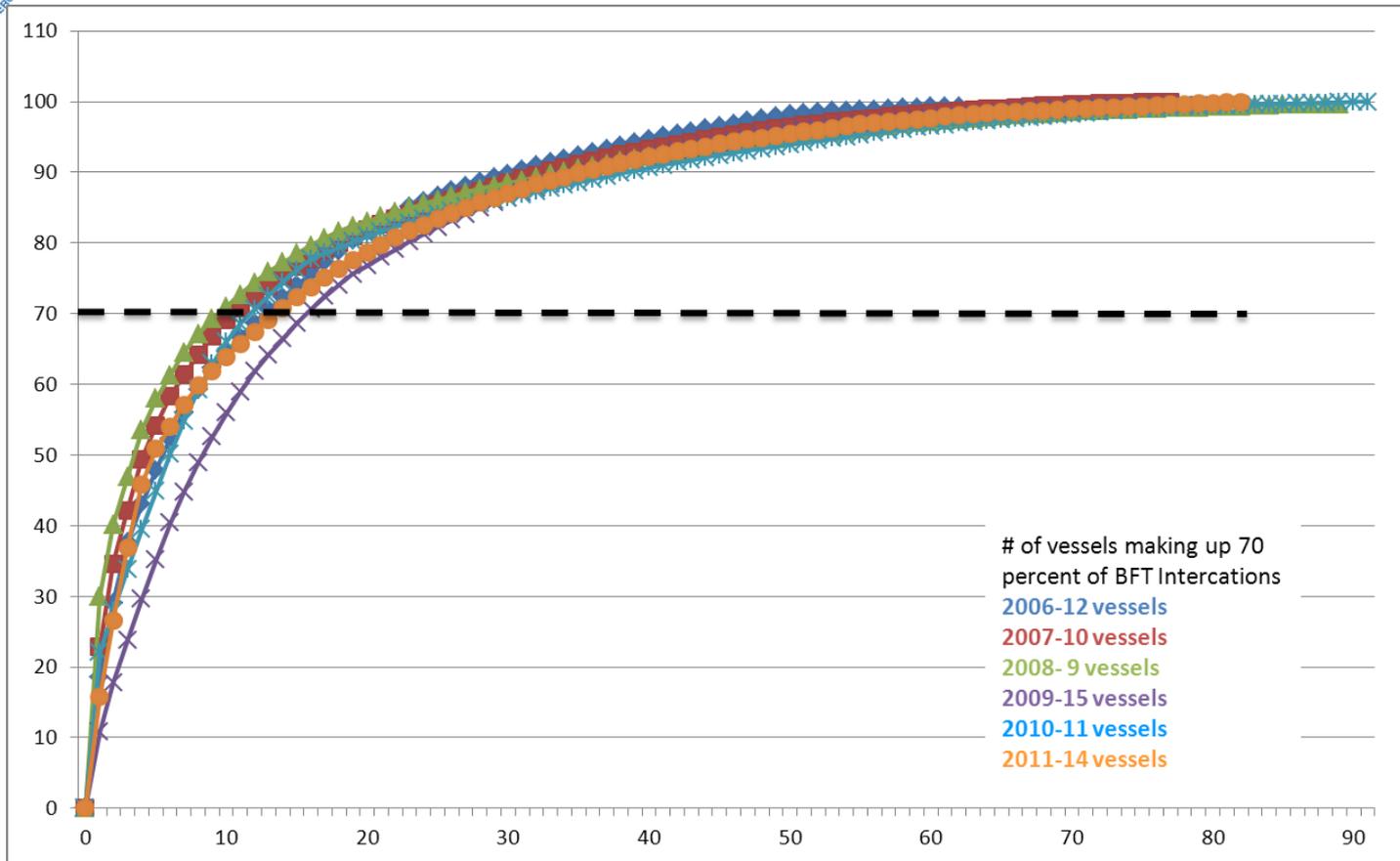
Percentage of Annual Bluefin Interactions by Month in the MAB, 2006-2011; (shaded cells are those with at least 10% of annual interactions)

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Avg
Jan	1	0	7	13	16	10	5
Feb	17	8	8	20	22	11	9
Mar	29	33	0	12	24	0	19
Apr	24	20	24	11	1	42	13
May	1	1	1	2	3	5	3
Jun	3	2	3	1	1	12	7
Jul	2	1	3	4	2	2	2
Aug	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sep	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Oct	3	4	1	2	2	1	7
Nov	17	10	4	15	27	9	21
Dec	4	21	49	20	1	7	13

(Predraft
Table 34)



Cumulative Number of Interactions (%; y-axis) and the Number of Vessels (x-axis)



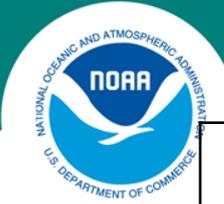
Predraft
Figure 18)



Number of Trips on Which Bluefin Were Kept by Amount of Allowed Bluefin per Trip (based on target catch amount); 2011

Allowed BFT	# BFT Kept						Total Trips
	0 (BFT kept)	1	2	3	4	10	
0	242 (trips)	21	1	1			265
1	459	88	10		1	1	559
2	322	54	66	6			448
3	3			1			4
Total Trips	1026	163	77	8	1	1	1276

(Predraft Table 29)



Number of PLL Trips on Which Bluefin were Discarded (2011)

	BFT Retained	BFT Discards	
		0	>0
1 BFT allowed to be retained	0	449 trips	10 trips
	1	75	13
	2	9	1
	4	0	1
	10	1	0
	Total	534	25
2 BFT allowed to be retained	0	312 trips	10 trips
	1	46	8
	2	46	20
	3	1	5
	Total	405	43

(Predraft
Table 31)



Large Pelagic Survey – Recreational Bluefin Disposition

Year	# BFT Landed	# BFT Released Alive	# BFT Released Dead
2006	5,347	13,538	171
2007	14,938	12,297	109
2008	11,418	10,932	86
2009	11,381	7,798	0
2010	7,035	9,127	43
2011	8,975	7,450	0

(Predraft Table 49)



So, where does that leave us?

- Plenty of good feedback as result of scoping, no substantial course corrections identified
- Data presented here in the predraft is the leading edge of the data that will be analyzed in more depth in draft amendment and EIS
- No surprises goal - the more input we have going into the draft amendment, the better informed it will be
- There is not one cure-all that will meet the objectives of the amendment. Need to consider how different measures complement one another and overall goals



Thoughts/Discussion

- Have we missed anything? If so, what?
- Examples of how we might use some of the measures together to meet the objectives:
 - Catch caps with time/area closures/modifications
 - Enhanced reporting of catch by all categories (inclusive of dead discards) and accounting within quota categories
 - Mandatory retention of legal-sized bluefin by PLL vessels, and use of bluefin revenue to fund observers and research (i.e., research set-aside)



Request for Comments by Consulting Parties

➤ **Please submit comments by **October 20, 2012****

E-mail: Thomas.Warren@NOAA.gov

Fax: 978-281-9340, Attn: Tom Warren

Mail:

Tom Warren

Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS
55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930



Next Steps; Potential Timing

- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Rule – Early 2013**
- **Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Rule – Late 2013**
- **Implementation – January 2014**

