



National Marine Fisheries Service

Clarification Notice: Use of Green-stick gear



This notice is intended to clarify the authorized use of “green-stick” gear in Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fisheries. Green-stick gear, although not specifically defined in the HMS regulations, may be used to target Atlantic tunas or other HMS, provided it is configured in such a way that it does not violate existing HMS gear and permit constraints.

Traditionally, green-stick gear is used in either a commercial (Figure 1) or recreational configuration (Figure 2). Either configuration is allowed in the HMS fisheries however how the gear is defined depends on the number of hooks per line:

- 1. If no more than 2 hooks (leaders/gangions/downlines)** are used per line, the gear is considered handgear, regardless of configuration type, and may be used by Atlantic Tunas General, HMS Angling, or HMS Charter/Headboat permitted vessels. Note: All other restrictions pertaining to these vessels apply and must be followed by, *e.g.*, size limits, retention limits, reporting requirements, etc.
- 2. If 3 or more hooks (leaders/gangions/downlines)** are used per line, the gear is considered longline gear, and may only be used in the HMS longline fishery. Vessels using 3 or more hooks per line need to possess the appropriate longline category permits for tuna, shark and swordfish. Note: All other restrictions pertaining to the longline fishery apply and must be followed, *e.g.*
 - 1 -target catch requirements, circle hooks, closed areas, etc.

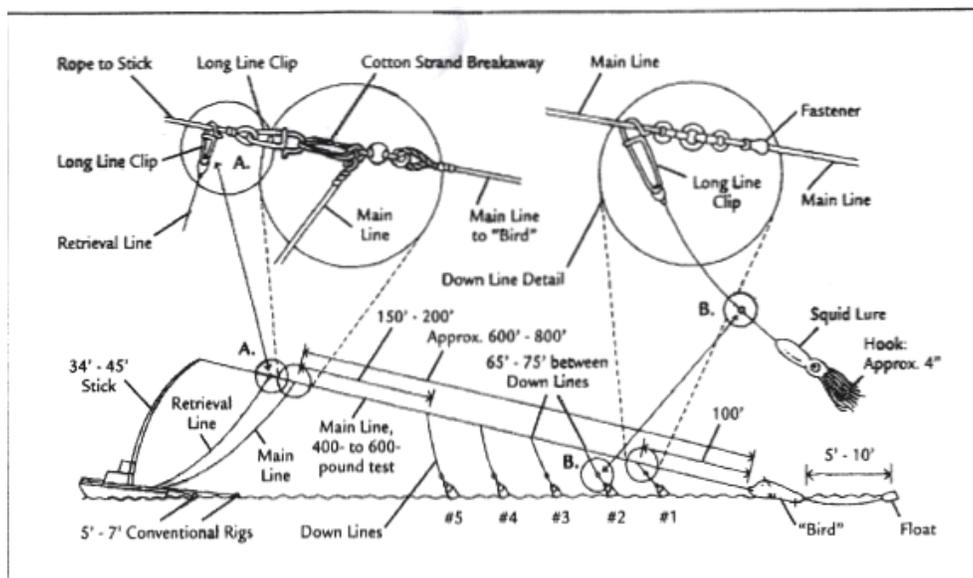


Figure 1: “Commercial” Configuration of Green-stick Gear. In this figure, because there are five downlines attached to the mainline the gear is defined as “longline”.

Recreational anglers should note that they must fight their own fish if they want to be considered for International Game Fish Association citations. As shown in Figure 2, “green-stick” gear can be configured with a special break-away design allowing each hook to be attached to its own leader, which is linked to the main line with a snap swivel and rubber band. When a fish strikes, the rubber band breaks off the main line, leaving the leader attached only to the rod and reel. Then, anglers can fight each fish individually and land it using the rod and reel.

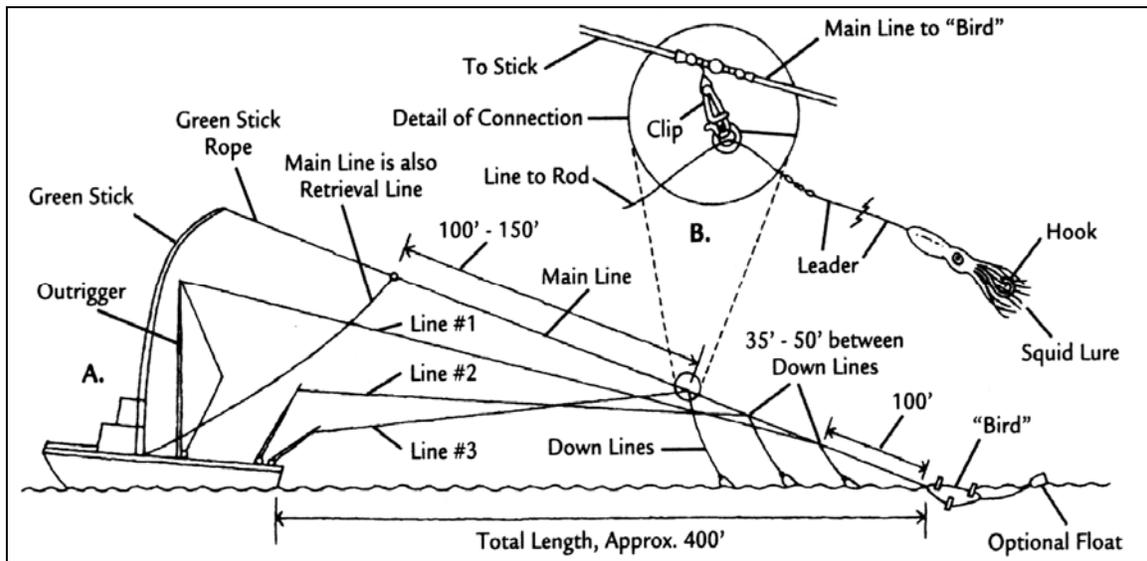


Figure 2: “Recreational” Configuration of Green-stick Gear. In this figure, because each downline is attached to a break away line, provided the downline does not have more than 2 hooks, this configuration would be defined as “rod and reel”.