

- Catch reports: Vessels must submit through VMS, a “Highly Migratory Species Bluefin Tuna Catch Report,” for each set. Specifically, such vessels must: o report the number of all bluefin discarded dead or retained (by standardized size ranges) within 12 hours of completion of each set (including reporting of zero bluefin on a set).
- Hail in: At least three hours and no more than 12 hours in advance of landing , the vessel operator must provide advanced notice of landing, by submitted the “Highly Migratory Species Pre-Landing Notification Form” with information on the time and location of landing.
- Declare out: If a vessel operator decides not to fish for or retain HMS for two or more trips, the operator may choose to “declare out” of the fishery, according to instructions provided by NMFS, and would not be subject to the HMS hail in / hail out requirements during trips for which they are declared out of the HMS fishery.
- NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) will provide vessel owners with instructions regarding the detailed methods of reporting such information using their VMS units.
- For questions regarding VMS, please contact OLE Southeast Division at 1-800-758-4833 or 727-824-5334.

IX. BOTTOM LONGLINE RESTRICTIONS

Vessels fishing with bottom longline gear must possess valid Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop certificates onboard for both the owner and operator.¹⁸⁰

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR

Generally, in HMS fisheries, only commercial shark fishermen use bottom longline gear because tunas and swordfish are found in the water column while many species of sharks are found on the bottom.

- Shark fishermen need a commercial shark (**Directed** or **Incidental**) limited access permit or, as of March 15, 2016, a **Smoothhound Shark** open access permit to harvest sharks.¹⁸¹ Fishermen holding all three limited access permits listed in the pelagic longline section (VII) may also use bottom longline gear.¹⁸²

Prior to renewing or obtaining a shark limited access permit, both the owner and operator must attend a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and obtain a certificate. A copy of the workshop certificate must be included in the permit application package.¹⁸³ For more information on workshops, see Section XIX.

TIME/AREA CLOSURES FOR USE OF BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR

To reduce bycatch, NOAA Fisheries has closed a number of areas to fishermen with HMS permits who have bottom longline gear onboard.

To determine compliance with the closed area restrictions, NMFS Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard use the definitions for pelagic and bottom longline gear (see Section 0) to determine if a vessel is fishing with pelagic or bottom longline gear.

Stowing Longline Gear

If a vessel is in an area closed to bottom longline gear and has bottom longline gear onboard, it is a rebuttable presumption that fish on board that vessel were taken with bottom longline gear in the closed area unless the vessel is transiting a closed or gear restricted area with all fishing gear stowed appropriately. Longline gear is stowed appropriately if:

- All gangions and hooks are removed from the mainline and are stowed on or below deck;

- Hooks are not baited; and
- All buoys and weights are disconnected from the mainline and drum (buoys may remain on deck).¹⁸⁴

Indicator Species for Longline Fishing

The species composition of the catch onboard the vessel or landed can also be used to differentiate between longline gear types. Bottom longline vessels fishing in areas closed to pelagic longline gear may not possess or land pelagic species in a quantity that exceeds 5 percent of the total weight of all indicator species (demersal and pelagic) possessed or landed (see Section VI Pelagic Longline Restrictions for closed areas and list of pelagic species).¹⁸⁵ Conversely, pelagic longline vessels fishing in areas closed to bottom longline fishing may not possess or land demersal species in a quantity that exceeds 5 percent of the total weight of all indicator species (demersal and pelagic) possessed or landed.¹⁸⁶ The species that qualify as demersal indicator species are:

DEMERSAL INDICATOR SPECIES ¹⁸⁷		
GROUPER, BLACK	SHARK, BLACKNOSE	SNAPPER, MANGROVE
GROUPER, GAG	SHARK, BLACKTIP	SNAPPER, LANE
GROUPER, MARBLED	SHARK, BONNETHEAD	SNAPPER, MUTTON
GROUPER, MISTY	SHARK, BULL	SNAPPER, QUEEN
GROUPER, RED	SHARK, FINETOOTH	SNAPPER, RED
GROUPER, SNOWY	SHARK, LEMON	SNAPPER, SCHOOLMASTER
GROUPER, WARSAW	SHARK, NURSE	SNAPPER, SILK
GROUPER, YELLOWEDGE	SHARK, SANDBAR	SNAPPER, VERMILION
GROUPER, YELLOWFIN	SHARK, SPINNER	SNAPPER, YELLOWTAIL
HIND, RED	SHARK, TIGER	TILEFISH
HIND, ROCK	SNAPPER, BLACKFIN	TILEFISH, BLUELINE
HIND, SPECKLED	SNAPPER, CUBERA	TILEFISH, SAND
SHARK, ATL. SHARPNOSE	SNAPPER, DOG	

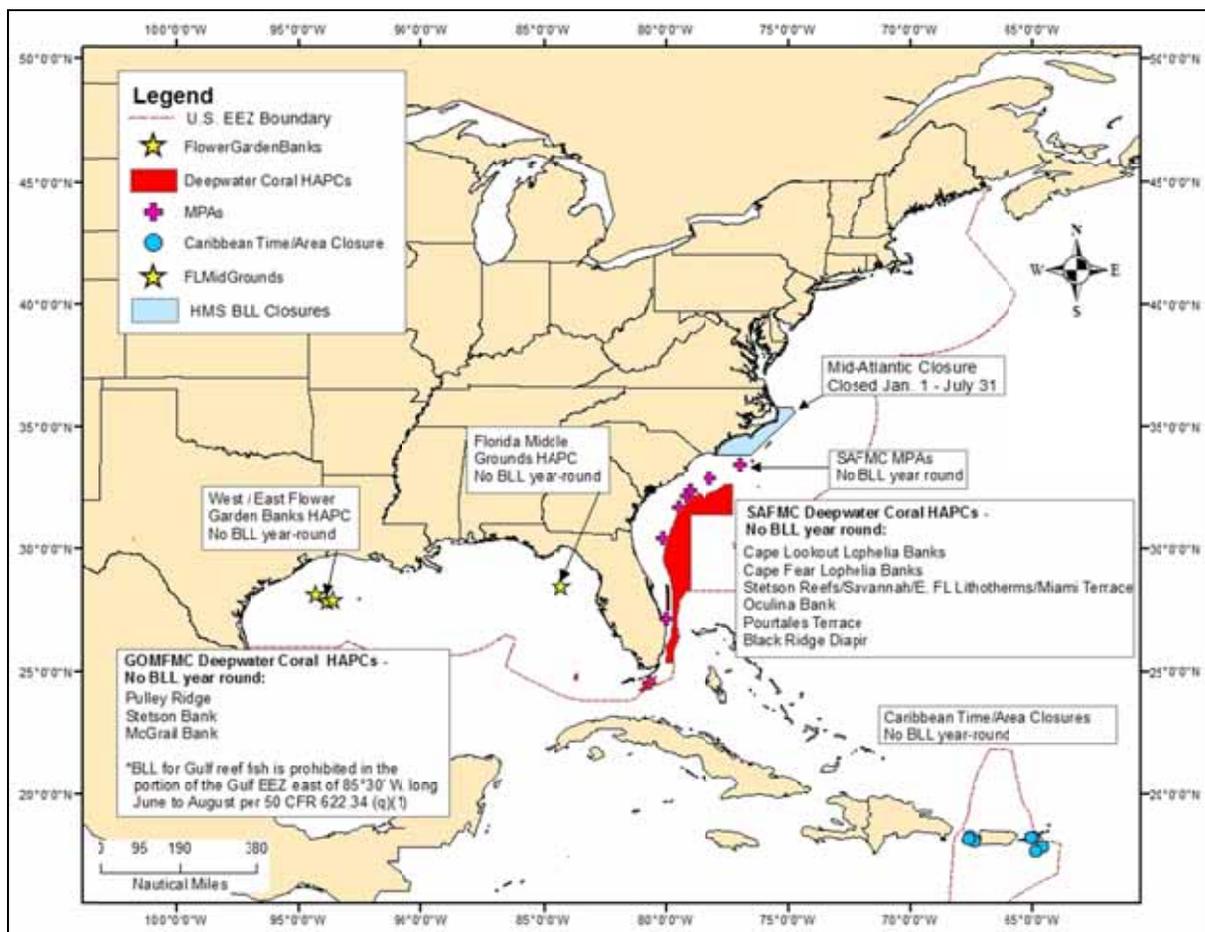


Figure 4 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs), and time/area closures that restrict use of bottom longline (BLL) gear in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. Additional closures for all gears are presented in Figure 2.

The bottom longline closures shown in Figure 4 and described in the following paragraphs were implemented to reduce bycatch by longline gear. See also: [Tortugas Marine Reserves](#), [Madison-Swanson closed area](#), [Steamboat Lumps closed area](#), and [Edges 40 Fathom closed area](#) descriptions in Section 0, which pertain to all HMS gears, including bottom longline.

The Mid-Atlantic Shark Area: This area includes Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern for sandbar and dusky sharks, serving as nursery and pupping areas for these species. The area is closed to vessels using bottom longline gear from January 1 through July 31.¹⁸⁸ “Mid-Atlantic shark closed area” means the Atlantic Ocean area seaward of the inner boundary of the U.S. EEZ at 35°41' N. lat. just south of Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, and connecting by straight lines the following coordinates in the order stated: 35°41' N. lat., 75°25' W. long. proceeding due east to 35°41' N. lat., 74°51' W. long.; then proceeding southeast to 35°30' N. lat., 74°46' W. long.; then proceeding southwest, roughly following the 55 fathom mark, to 33°51' N. lat., 76°24' W. long.; then proceeding due west to intersect the inner boundary of the U.S. EEZ at 33°51' N. lat., 77°53' W. long. near Cape Fear, North Carolina.¹⁸⁹

Caribbean closed areas: Fishing for HMS with bottom longline gear is prohibited year-round in several distinct areas off the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.¹⁹⁰

(A) Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation Area

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	17°37.8'	64°53.0'
B	17°39.0'	64°53.0'
C	17°39.0'	64°50.5'
D	17°38.1'	64°50.5'
E	17°37.8'	64°52.5'
A	17°37.8'	64°53.0'

(B) Red Hind Spawning Aggregation Areas(i) East of St. Croix

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
A	17°50.2'	64°27.9'
B	17°50.1'	64°26.1'
C	17°49.2'	64°25.8'
D	17°48.6'	64°25.8'
E	17°48.1'	64°26.1'
F	17°47.5'	64°26.9'
A	17°50.2'	64°27.9'

(ii) Tourmaline Bank

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
A	18°11.2'	67°22.4'
B	18°11.2'	67°19.2'
C	18°08.2'	67°19.2'
D	18°08.2'	67°50.5'
E	18°08.2'	64°52.5'

(iii) Abrir La Sierra Bank

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
A	18°06.5'	67°26.9'
B	18°06.5'	67°23.9'
C	18°03.5'	67°23.9'
D	18°03.5'	67°26.9'
E	18°06.5'	64°26.9'

(C) Grammanik Bank

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	18°11.898'	64°56.328'
B	18°11.645'	64°56.225'
C	18°11.058'	64°57.810'
D	18°11.311'	64°57.913'
E	18°11.898'	64°56.328'

South Atlantic Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): Fishing with bottom longline gear is prohibited in the following areas:¹⁹¹

(A) Snowy Grouper Wreck. Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	33°25'	77°04.75'
B	33°34.75'	76°51.3'
C	33°25.5'	76°46.5'
D	33°15.75'	77°00.0'
A	33°25'	77°04.75'

(B) Northern South Carolina: Bounded on the north by 32° 53.5' N. lat.; on the south by 32° 48.5' N. lat.; on the east by 78° 04.75' W. long.; and on the west by 78° 16.75' W. long.

(C) Edisto: Bounded on the north by 32° 24' N. lat.; on the south by 32° 18.5' N. lat.; on the east by 78° 54.0' W. long.; and on the west by 79° 06.0' W. long.

- (D) Charleston Deep Artificial Reef: Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	32°04'	79°12'
B	32°08.5'	79°07.5'
C	32°06'	79°05'
D	32°01.5'	79°09.3'
A	32°04'	79°12'

- (E) Georgia: Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	31°43'	79°31'
B	31°43'	79°21'
C	31°34'	79°29'
D	31°34'	79°39'
A	31°43'	79°31'

- (F) North Florida: Bounded on the north by 30° 29' N. lat.; on the south by 30° 19' N. lat.; on the east by 80° 02' W. long.; and on the west by 80° 14' W. long.

- (G) St. Lucie Hump: Bounded on the north by 27° 08' N. lat.; on the south by 27° 04' N. lat.; on the east by 79° 58' W. long.; and on the west by 80° 00' W. long.

- (H) East Hump: Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	24°36.5'	80°45.5'
B	24°32'	80°36'
C	24°27.5'	80°38.5'
D	24°32.5'	80°48'
A	24°36.5'	80°45.5'

Florida Middle Grounds HAPC: Fishing with a bottom longline is prohibited year round in the area bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:¹⁹²

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	28°42.5'	84°24.8'
B	28°42.5'	84°16.3'
C	28°11.0'	84°00.0'
D	28°11.0'	84°07.0'
E	28°26.6'	84°24.8'
A	28°42.5'	84°24.8'

West and East Flower Garden Banks HAPC: The following activities are prohibited year-round in the HAPC: Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, dredge, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.¹⁹³

(A) West Flower Garden Bank:
Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	N lat.	W long.
A	27°55'22.8"	93°53'09.6"
B	27°55'22.8"	93°46'46.0"
C	27°49'03.0"	93°46'46.0"
D	27°49'03.0"	93°53'09.6"
A	27°55'22.8"	93°53'09.6"

(B) East Flower Garden Bank:
Bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	N lat.	W long.
A	27°59'14.4"	93°38'58.2"
B	27°59'14.4"	93°34'03.5"
C	27°52'36.5"	93°34'03.5"
D	27°52'36.5"	93°38'58.2"
A	27°59'14.4"	93°38'58.2"

OTHER RESTRICTIONS FOR BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR

Vessels fishing with bottom longline gear:

- Must deploy or possess only corrodible (i.e., non-stainless steel) hooks.¹⁹⁴ At this time, there are no hook size or bait restrictions.
- May not possess any billfish.¹⁹⁵
- Must possess and use sea turtle handling and release gear in compliance with NOAA Fisheries' careful release protocols. The required handling and release gears are fully described in the document titled "NMFS Approved Models for Equipment needed for the Careful Release of Sea Turtles Caught in Hook and Line Fisheries." The list of approved models is available on the HMS Management Division website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/> and upon request from the HMS St. Petersburg Office. Also, a Technical Memorandum (NMFS-SEFSC-580) titled "Careful Release Protocols for Sea Turtle Release with Minimal Injury," and a placard titled "Handling/Release Guidelines," must be posted inside the wheelhouse.¹⁹⁶ These materials are available on the HMS Management Division website, or you can call (301) 427-8503 to request a waterproof copy.
- Must use the sea turtle handling and release gear to handle, release, and disentangle hooked or entangled sea turtles, prohibited sharks, or smalltooth sawfish.¹⁹⁷
- If a smalltooth sawfish is caught, the fish should be kept in the water while maintaining water flow over the gills and the fish should be examined for research tags. All smalltooth sawfish must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water or any research tags from the fish.¹⁹⁸
- Must immediately release any marine mammal, sea turtle, or smalltooth sawfish that is hooked or entangled, retrieve the bottom longline gear, and move at least 1 nmi from the location of the incident before resuming fishing. Reports of marine mammal entanglements must be submitted to NOAA Fisheries consistent with the marine mammal regulations.¹⁹⁹ The marine mammal mortality/injury reporting form is available at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf or by calling (301) 713-2322.
- Must install and use a NOAA Fisheries-approved enhanced mobile transmitting unit (E-MTU) vessel monitoring system (VMS) as instructed, including whenever the vessel is away from port, if the vessel is between 33° 00' N. lat. and 36° 30' N. lat., and the Mid-Atlantic shark closed area is closed. Additional information on the VMS requirements is provided in Section 0.²⁰⁰