

IV. GEAR TYPES AND AUTHORIZATIONS

The gear type authorized for an activity depends upon three things: (1) the type of fishing being conducted (commercial or recreational), (2) the species being targeted, and (3) the type of permit which is being used for that activity. Please see the tables below and the appropriate sections in this guide to determine which gear types may be used. NOTE: Except for the use of secondary gears and vessels with an HMS Caribbean Small Boat permit, a vessel using or having onboard any unauthorized gear may not possess any Atlantic HMS.⁸³

Gear Type⁸⁴	Sharks⁸⁵	Bluefin tuna⁸⁶	BAYS tunas⁸⁷	Swordfish⁸⁸
Bandit	X	X	X	X
Bottom Longline	X	X	X	X
Buoy Gear*			X**	X
Gillnet	X			
Green-stick		X	X	X
Handline	X	X	X	X
Harpoon***		X	X	X
Pelagic Longline	X	X	X	X
Purse Seine		X	X	
Rod and Reel	X	X	X	X
Speargun****			X	
Trap		X		

* Must have Swordfish Directed limited access, Swordfish Handgear limited access, or HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit.⁸⁹

** HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit holders only.⁹⁰

*** Not authorized for Charter/Headboat permit holders.⁹¹

**** For use by Charter/Headboat permit holders for recreational fishing only (speared BAYS tunas may not be sold).^{92, 93}

Circle hook – a hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point is turned perpendicularly back toward the shank of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape.⁹⁴

Offset circle hook – a circle hook originally designed and manufactured so that the barbed end of the hook is displaced relative to the parallel plane of the eyed-end, or shank, of the hook when laid on its side.⁹⁵

Fish weir – a large catching arrangement with a collecting chamber that is made of non-textile material (wood, wicker) instead of netting as in a pound net.⁹⁶

Gillnet – a panel of netting suspended vertically in the water with floats along the top and weights along the bottom, to entangle fish that attempt to pass through it.⁹⁷ Shark gillnets must remain attached to the vessel at one end except when conducting net checks. Net checks must be done at least once every two hours. Gillnets may not be longer than 1.5 miles (2.5 km).⁹⁸

Green-stick gear – an actively trolled mainline attached to a vessel and elevated or suspended above the surface of the water with no more than 10 hooks or gangions attached to the mainline. The suspended

line, attached gangions and/or hooks, and catch may be retrieved collectively by hand or mechanical means. Green-stick does not constitute a pelagic longline or a bottom longline.⁹⁹

Handgear – includes handline, harpoon, rod and reel, buoy gear, bandit gear, or speargun gear.¹⁰⁰

Handline – fishing gear that is attached to, or in contact with, a vessel; that consists of a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks may be attached. A handline is released and retrieved by hand (not mechanical means).¹⁰¹

Buoy gear – one or more floatation devices supporting a single mainline to which no more than two hooks or gangions are attached.¹⁰² This gear may be free-floating and is not required to be attached to, or in contact with, a vessel; however, it must be released and retrieved by hand. Vessels utilizing buoy gear are limited to possessing or deploying no more than 35 floatation devices. Fishermen must mark each floatation device with the vessel's name, registration number, or HMS permit number.¹⁰³ Monitoring equipment such as radar reflectors, beeper devices, lights, or reflective tape must be attached. If only reflective tape is used, the vessel deploying buoy gear must possess on board an operable spotlight capable of illuminating the deployed gear. Individual buoy gears must not be attached to one another.¹⁰⁴

Floatation device – any positively buoyant object rigged to be attached to a fishing gear.¹⁰⁵

Harpoon – a pointed dart or iron attached to the end of a line several hundred feet in length, the other end of which is attached to a floatation device. Harpoon gear is attached to a pole that is propelled only by hand and not by mechanical means.

Rod and reel – a handheld fishing rod, including rod holder, with a manually or electronically operated reel attached.

Downrigger – a piece of equipment attached to a vessel with a weight on a cable that is in turn attached to hook-and-line gear to maintain lures or bait at depth while trolling. The downrigger has a release system to retrieve the weight by rod and reel or by manual, electric, or hydraulic winch after a fish strike on the hook and line gear.

Hook and line – one or more hooks attached to one or more lines (can include a troll).¹⁰⁶

Bandit gear – a vertical hook and line with rods that are attached to the vessel when in use. Lines are payed out from and retrieved on the reel manually, electrically, or hydraulically.¹⁰⁷

Longline gear – Longline gear is set horizontally, either anchored, floating, or attached to a vessel, and consists of a mainline or groundline with three or more leaders (gangions) or hooks. This gear can be retrieved by hand or by mechanical means.¹⁰⁸

Pelagic longline gear – A longline that is suspended by floats in the water column and that is not fixed to or in contact with the ocean bottom.¹⁰⁹ A vessel is considered to have pelagic longline gear on board when the following equipment is on board:

1. A power-operated longline hauler,
2. A mainline,
3. Floats capable of supporting the mainline, and
4. Leaders (gangions) with hooks.

Removing any one of these four elements from the vessel constitutes removal of pelagic longline gear.¹¹⁰

Bottom longline gear – A longline that is deployed with enough weights and/or anchors to maintain contact with the ocean bottom.¹¹¹ A vessel is considered to have bottom longline gear on board when the following equipment is on board:

1. A power-operated longline hauler,
2. A mainline,
3. Weight and/or anchor capable of maintaining contact between mainline and ocean bottom, and
4. Leaders (gangions) with hooks.

Removing any one of these four elements from the vessel constitutes removal of bottom longline gear. Bottom longline vessels may have a limited number of floats and/or high-flyers onboard for the purposes of marking the location of the gear but removal of these floats does not constitute removal of bottom longline gear.¹¹²

Purse seine – a floated and weighted encircling net that is closed (“pursed”) by means of a drawstring threaded through rings attached to the bottom of the net.¹¹³

Speargun—a muscle-powered speargun equipped with a trigger mechanism, a spear with a tip designed to penetrate and retain fish, and terminal gear. Terminal gear may include, but is not limited to, trailing lines, reels, and floats. The term “muscle-powered speargun” means a speargun that stores potential energy provided from the operator's muscles, and that releases only the amount of energy that the operator has provided to it from his or her own muscles. Common energy storing methods for muscle-powered spearguns include compressing air and springs, and the stretching of rubber bands.¹¹⁴

Trap – (a.k.a. “pot”) a portable, enclosed device with one or more gates or entrances and one or more lines attached to surface floats.¹¹⁵