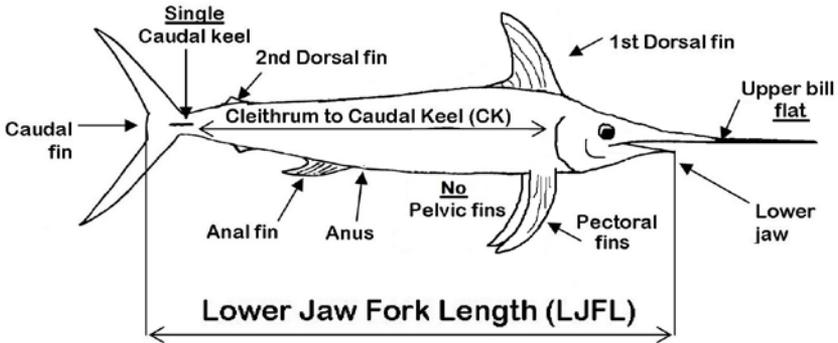


V. SWORDFISH

ANATOMY, MEASUREMENT, AND IDENTIFICATION OF SWORDFISH

Differences between swordfish and billfish are underlined>.



LJFL measurement - use if the head is naturally attached; **CK measurement** - use if the head is removed/not naturally attached.³⁴ “Naturally attached” means the whole head is still fully attached to the carcass; the bill may be removed up to the tip of the lower jaw³⁵.

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

North Atlantic Swordfish (North of 5° N. lat.)

PERMITS AND GEARS

Permits	Gear ³⁶
1. HMS Angling, ³⁷ OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, ³⁸ OR 3. Swordfish General Commercial ³⁹ OR Atlantic Tunas General ⁴⁰ ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.	Handline and Rod and reel

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permits	Minimum Size ⁴¹	Bag Limit ⁴²	Season
HMS Angling OR Atlantic Tunas General category (in a registered HMS tournament)	47" LJFL or 25" CK	1 per person, up to 4 per vessel per trip	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
HMS Charter/Headboat*		1 per paying passenger, up to 6 per vessel per trip	
		1 per paying passenger, up to 15 per vessel per trip	



LANDING RESTRICTIONS

Swordfish may be headed and gutted, but may not be cut into pieces at sea.⁴³

If a swordfish carcass has been bitten by a shark, the remainder of the fish must still meet the minimum LJFL or CK measurement.⁴⁴

A vessel that has been issued a Swordfish General Commercial permit may fish recreationally for swordfish during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament; however, Swordfish General Commercial regulations, including regional retention limits and other requirements apply (see the HMS Commercial Compliance Guide).⁴⁵

A swordfish that is caught but not kept must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.⁴⁶

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS⁴⁷

- Anglers must report all recreational swordfish landings.
 - Anglers in Maryland and North Carolina must report at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).
 - All other anglers must report to NMFS within 24 hours either online at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>, or by calling (800) 894-5528.
 - If the angler enters (reports) a swordfish in a registered HMS tournament, the tournament operator must report that fish. A list of registered tournaments is available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/tournaments/index.html>
- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) may survey anglers at the dock or by phone.⁴⁸ If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys; however, participation does not fulfill reporting obligations and vessel owners/operators must still report all swordfish as described above.

RESTRICTED AREAS⁴⁹

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (closed year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (closed year-round except for surface trolling allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)
- South of 5° N latitude (closed year-round)⁵⁰

