

## **8. HMS PERMITS AND TOURNAMENTS**

This section provides updates for the number of permits issued in conjunction with HMS fishing and dealer activities in 2013. The number of permits for Atlantic HMS fisheries and the number of dealer permits for sharks, swordfish, and tunas are updated through October 2013 and presented in Tables 8.1 - 8.8. Section 8.2 reports the historical number, locations, and target species of HMS tournament registrations with final numbers from the 2012 tournaments season.

### **8.1 HMS Permits**

Detailed information about HMS permits and regulations associated with those permits are available in the most recent HMS Recreational, Commercial, and Dealer Compliance Guides on the internet at [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance\\_Guide/index.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance_Guide/index.htm).

### Limited Access Permits

The LAP program includes six different permit types: Swordfish Directed, Swordfish Incidental, Swordfish Handgear, Shark Directed, Shark Incidental, and Atlantic Tuna Longline. The Swordfish Directed and Incidental permits are valid only if the permit holder also holds both an Atlantic Tuna Longline and a shark permit. Similarly, the Atlantic Tuna Longline permit is valid only if the permit holder also holds both a swordfish (Directed or Incidental, not Handgear) and a shark permit. No additional LAPs are required to make a Swordfish Handgear or any of the shark permits valid.

**Table 8.1 Number of Shark, Swordfish, and Atlantic Tuna Longline Limited Access Permits by State (2006-2013)**

State	Directed Swordfish	Incidental Swordfish	Swordfish Handgear	Directed Shark	Incidental Shark	Tuna Longline	Permit Holders/Permits
ME	5	-	1	2	6	5	9 / 19
MA	6	2	8	3	9	7	19 / 35
RI	1	-	11	1	3	1	12 / 17
CT	2	-	1	-	2	2	3 / 7
NY	16	3	4	10	10	19	24 / 62
PA	2	-	-	-	2	2	2 / 6
NJ	27	12	4	22	28	39	52 / 132
DE	-	-	1	-	-	-	1 / 1
MD	4	-	-	2	3	4	5 / 13
VA	1	1	-	-	2	2	2 / 6
NC	11	7	-	18	10	18	28 / 64
SC	4	1	-	7	10	5	17 / 27
GA	-	-	-	2	2	-	4 / 4
FL	73	34	50	128	126	106	299 / 517
AL	-	-	-	5	2	-	7 / 7
MS	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
LA	30	5	-	15	35	34	51 / 119
TX	3	6	1	5	13	8	19 / 36
CA	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
<b>Annual Totals</b>							
2013*	185	71	81	220	265	252	556 / 1,074
2012	184	73	77	215	271	253	555 / 1,073
2011	178	67	78	217	262	242	555 / 1,044
2010	177	72	75	215	265	248	566 / 1,052
2009	187	72	81	223	285	259	636 / 1,107
2008	181	76	81	214	285	241	628 / 1,079
2007	180	79	82	231	296	218	613 / 1,086
2006	191	86	88	240	312	214	604 / 1,131

\* As of October 2013. Number of permit holders in each category and state is subject to change as permits are renewed or expire.

### *Incidental HMS Squid Trawl Permit*

On August 10, 2011 NMFS published a final rule (76 FR 49368) that established a new Incidental HMS Squid Trawl Permit, available to all valid Illex squid moratorium permit holders. The permit authorizes the retention of up to 15 swordfish North Atlantic swordfish to be retained per trip, provided that squid constitute not less than 75 percent, by weight, of the total catch on board. The distribution of squid trawl permits by state can be found in Table 8.2.

**Table 8.2 Number of Incidental HMS Squid Trawl Permits by State (as of October 2013)**

State	Incidental HMS Squid Trawl Permits
ME	4
NH	1
MA	10
RI	10
CT	3
NY	6
NJ	27
VA	3
NC	9
Total	73

### *Caribbean Small Boat Permit*

The final rule (October 1, 2012; 77 FR 59842) to Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP established the Caribbean Small Boat Permit. This permit allows the commercial retention of all HMS for boats fishing in the Caribbean region. Although sharks are authorized for retention the current retention limit with this permit is zero. As of October 2013, 16 permits have been issued with the majority (13) in Florida. Alabama, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands each have one permit holder.

### *Atlantic Tunas Permits*

Commercial Atlantic tunas permits are categorized by gear type (longline, harpoon, trap, purse seine, and General category) (Table 8.3). The Atlantic Tunas General category permit authorizes the use of rod and reel, handline, harpoon, green-stick, and bandit gear, and distribution of the permit by state can be found in Table 8.4. HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (Table 8.5) may also participate in the commercial tuna fishery.

**Table 8.3 Number of Commercial Atlantic Tunas Permit Holders by Category (2006-2013)**

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
Longline	214	218	241	259	248	242	253	252
Harpoon	40	26	26	23	29	24	13	14
Trap	7	9	9	4	6	6	8	7
General	4,824	3,616	4,031	3,824	3,849	3,764	4,084	3,783
Purse seine	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Total	5,090	3,873	4,311	4,113	4,135	4,039	4,361	4,059

\* As of October 2013. The actual number of 2013 permit holders in each category is subject to change as individuals renew their permits or allow them to expire.

**Table 8.4 Number of General Category Permits by State or Territory (as of October 2013)**

State	General Category Permits	State	General Category Permits
AL	36	NC	363
AZ	1	NH	233
CA	1	NJ	195
CO	1	NY	197
CT	73	OH	1
DE	26	OR	1
FL	220	PA	7
GA	4	PR	83
IN	1	RI	156
LA	50	SC	35
MA	1,150	TX	25
MD	39	VA	141
ME	704	VI	12
MI	1	VT	4
MS	22	WV	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>3,783</b>

*HMS Charter/Headboat Permit*

Owners of charterboats or headboats that are used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, or billfish must obtain an Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit. The distribution of 2013 Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permits is presented in Table 8.5.

**Table 8.5 Number of Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits by State (as of October 2013)**

State/Territory	Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits	State/Territory	Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits
AL	78	NJ	501
CA	1	NY	311
CT	82	OH	1
DE	105	OK	1
FL	585	PA	22
GA	23	PR	18
ID	1	RI	146
LA	89	SC	119
MA	794	TX	138
MD	128	VA	136
ME	142	VI	22
MS	26	VT	1
NC	350	WV	4
NH	102	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,968</b>

*HMS Angling Permit*

The HMS Angling Permit is required to recreationally fish for, retain, or possess (including catch-and-release fishing) any federally-regulated HMS, including sharks, swordfish,

white and blue marlin, sailfish, spearfish, bluefin tuna, and BAYS (bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack) tunas. It does not authorize the sale or transfer of HMS to any person for a commercial purpose. Atlantic HMS Angling permit distribution is reported in Table 8.6.

**Table 8.6 Number of Atlantic HMS Angling Permits (as of October 2013)**

State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**	State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**
AK	4	1	NC	1,531	1,416
AL	414	372	ND	1	1
AR	6	12	NE	-	4
AZ	-	3	NH	303	378
BVI	2	1	NJ	2,800	2,378
CA	5	7	NV	2	4
CO	4	8	NY	1,627	1,710
CT	556	640	OH	17	27
DC	1	6	OK	8	18
DE	770	471	OR	1	-
FL	4,058	3,760	PA	194	1,031
GA	117	207	PR	593	604
HI	1	-	RI	573	404
IA	1	3	SC	583	562
IL	12	28	SD	1	2
IN	4	13	TN	27	49
KS	1	2	TX	733	778
KY	5	13	UT	1	3
LA	731	731	VA	1,513	1,574
MA	2,749	2,727	USVI	47	23
MD	1,014	1,008	VT	21	36
ME	397	332	WA	2	4
MI	23	37	WI	9	12
MN	2	8	WV	6	10
MO	6	15	WY	-	1
MS	198	236	Canada	10	14
MT	2	2	Total	21,686	21,686

\* The vessel port or other storage location. \*\* The permit holder's billing address.

*Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Dealer Permits*

HMS Dealer permits are open-access and required for the “first receiver” of Atlantic tunas, swordfish, and sharks. A first receiver is any entity, person, or company that takes, for commercial purposes (other than solely for transport), immediate possession of the fish, or any part of the fish, as the fish are offloaded from a fishing vessel. Atlantic tunas, swordfish and sharks dealer permits (by state) are reported in Table 8.7.

**Table 8.7 Number of Domestic Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Dealer Permits (2013 by State; 2006-2013 Totals by Permit)**

State/Territory	Bluefin Only	BAYS Only	Bluefin and BAYS	Atlantic Swordfish	Atlantic Sharks	Total
AL	-	1	2	4	3	1
CA	2	-	1	2	-	5
CT	-	1	2	1	-	4
DE	-	1	1	-	-	2
FL	3	4	16	78	29	130
GA	-	-	2	1	1	4
HI	-	-	2	-	-	2
LA	-	1	6	9	8	24
MA	9	9	87	16	7	128
MD	-	2	8	4	3	17
ME	11	-	14	4	1	30
NC	5	4	25	21	16	71
NH	-	-	6	1	-	7
NJ	-	9	37	10	8	64
NY	2	22	57	11	5	97
PA	-	-	2	1	-	3
PR	-	4	1	-	-	5
RI	1	6	31	9	1	48
SC	-	1	2	6	11	20
TX	-	1	-	3	1	5
VA	2	4	13	2	3	24
VI	-	2	1	-	-	3
VT	-	-	1	-	-	1
WV	-	-	1	-	-	1
<b>Annual Totals</b>						
2013*	35	72	318	183	97	705
2012	30	67	313	179	92	681
2011	33	67	316	191	117	724
2010	32	58	323	181	108	702
2009	32	55	289	177	106	659
2008	30	62	303	171	128	694
2007	9	22	255	269	206	761
2006	43	60	313	285	336	1,037

\* As of October 2013. The actual number of permits per state may change as permit holders move or sell their businesses.

*Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, Letters of Acknowledgement (LOAs) Chartering Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs)*

EFPs, SRPs, and display permits authorize collections of tunas, swordfish, billfishes, and sharks from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico for the purposes of scientific data collection and public display. EFPs are issued to individuals for the purpose of conducting research or other fishing activities aboard private (non-NOAA) vessels, whereas SRPs are issued to agency scientists who are conducting research aboard NOAA vessels. Similar to SRPs, LOAs are issued to individuals conducting research from “bona fide” research vessels on species that are only regulated by Magnuson-Stevens Act and not ATCA. Display permits are issued to individuals who are fishing for, catching, and then transporting HMS to certified aquariums for public display. Chartering permits are issued to HMS-permitted vessel owners that wish to fish under a chartering arrangement outside U.S. waters. The number of EFPs, display permits, and SRPs issued from 2009 – 2013 by category and species are listed in Table 8.8. Amendment 2 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP implemented the shark research fishery. In 2013, NMFS received 13 applications for entrance into the shark research fishery. Based on the qualification criteria, 6 were chosen to participate.

**Table 8.8** Number of Atlantic HMS Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs) (2009-2013)

Permit Type		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
Exempted Fishing Permit	Sharks for display	4	2	3	4	4
	HMS** for display	2	2	2	2	2
	Tunas for display	0	0	0	0	0
	Shark research on a non-scientific	4	9	8	10	10
	Tuna research on a non-scientific	4	5	5	5	4
	HMS** research on a non-scientific	5	2	2	3	3
	Billfish research on a non-scientific	1	2	2	1	1
	Shark fishing	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS** chartering	0	0	0	0	0
	Tuna fishing	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>
Scientific Research Permit	Shark research	4	1	3	4	3
	Tuna research	0	1	1	3	2
	Billfish research	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS** research	0	4	6	4	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
Letters of Acknowledgement	Shark research	5	8	7	7	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

\*As of October 31, 2013. \*\*Multiple species.

## 8.2 Atlantic HMS Tournaments

An Atlantic HMS tournament is any fishing competition involving Atlantic HMS in which participants must register or otherwise enter or in which a prize or award is offered for catching or landing such fish. Atlantic HMS tournaments are conducted from ports along the U.S. Atlantic coast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean (i.e., the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico). Some foreign tournaments (e.g., those held in the Bahamas, Bermuda, and the Turks and Caicos) may voluntarily register because their participants are mostly U.S. citizens. Since 1999, Federal regulations have required that tournament registration with NMFS take place at least four weeks prior to the commencement of tournament fishing activities. Tournament operators may be selected by NMFS for reporting, in which case a record of tournament catch and effort must be submitted to NMFS within seven days of the conclusion of the tournament.

Atlantic HMS tournaments vary in size. They may range from relatively small, “members-only” club events with as few as ten participating boats (40 – 60 anglers) to larger, statewide tournaments with 250 or more participating vessels (1,000 – 1,500 anglers). Larger tournaments often involve corporate sponsorship from tackle manufacturers, marinas, boat dealers, marine suppliers, beverage distributors, resorts, radio stations, publications, chambers of commerce, restaurants, and other local businesses.

Tournament registration and reporting forms are available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Tournaments>. The Atlantic HMS tournament registration form includes an option for tournament operators to request HMS regulation booklets and other outreach materials. In 2012, over 100 tournaments requested and received outreach materials from the HMS Management Division through the tournament registration process. In 2013, more than 120 tournaments had requested and received outreach materials for the 2013 tournament season.

The number of HMS tournaments that registered each year from 2003 to 2012 is reported in Table 8.9. Over the past ten years (2003-2012), an average of 257 HMS tournaments register each year. In 2012, a final count of 238 tournaments registered with the HMS Management Division. This is the lowest registration count since 2005. The highest number of HMS tournament registrations occurred in 2007. In 2012, there were 20 inaugural HMS tournaments.

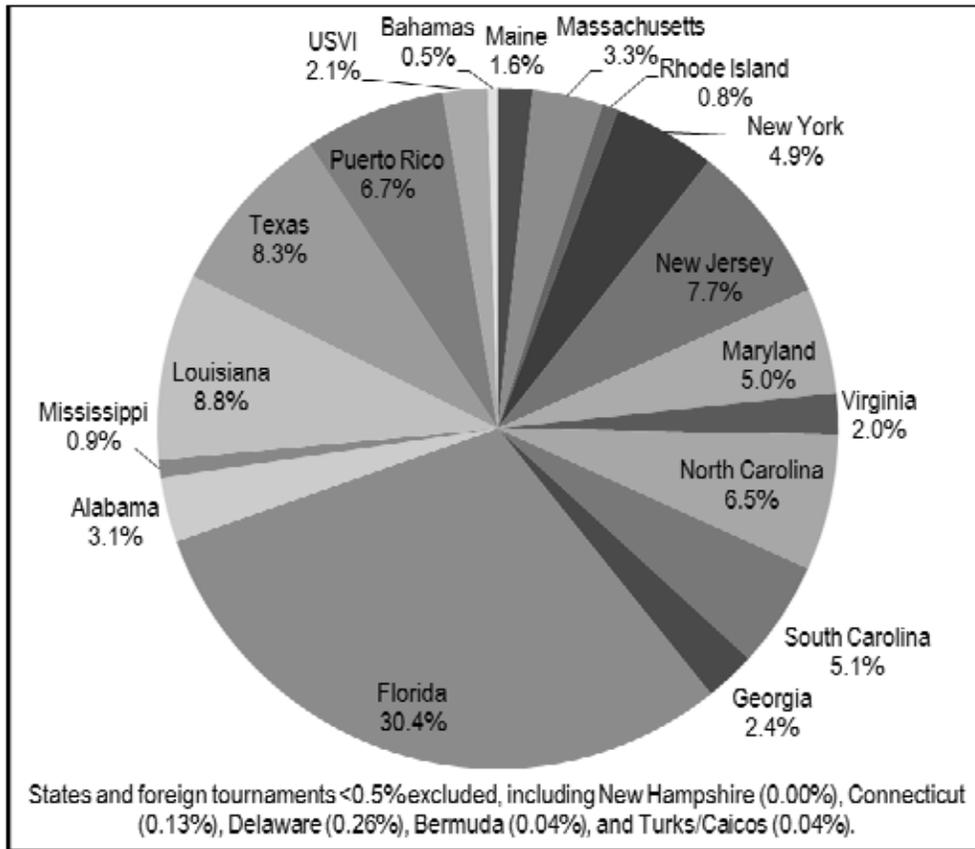
**Table 8.9 Number of Registered Atlantic HMS Tournaments by Year (2003-2012)**

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*	Average**
Total	244	215	256	259	299	267	270	270	249	238	226	257

\*As of November 2013. \*\*Averages only final numbers (2003-2012); excludes preliminary 2013 number.

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

The distribution of HMS fishing tournaments along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal states and the Caribbean is represented in Figure 8.1.



**Figure 8.1 Percentage of Atlantic HMS Tournaments Held in each State (Average, 2003-2012)**

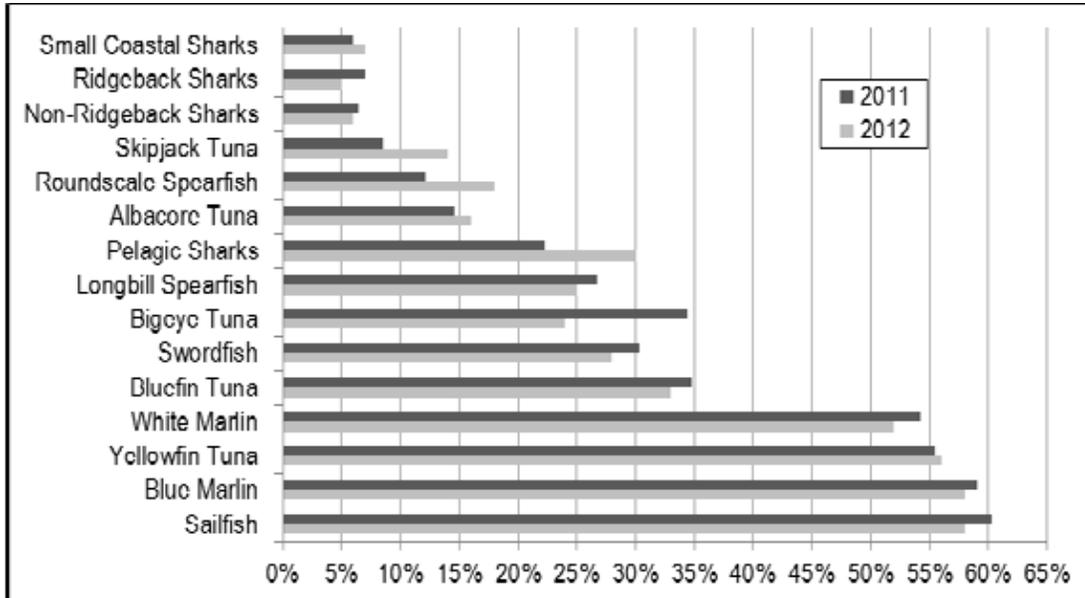
Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Table 8.10 indicates the number of HMS tournaments in 2011 and 2012 that registered to award points or prizes for the catch or landing of each HMS. Figure 8.2 shows that sailfish, blue marlin, yellowfin tuna, and white marlin are the predominant target species in HMS fishing tournaments.

**Table 8.10 Number of Atlantic HMS Tournaments per Species (2011 & 2012)**

Species	2011	2012
Blue marlin	146	139
White marlin	134	124
Longbill spearfish	66	59
Roundscale spearfish	30	42
Sailfish	151	139
Swordfish	75	67
Bluefin tuna	86	78
Bigeye tuna	85	58
Albacore tuna	36	37
Yellowfin tuna	137	133
Skipjack tuna	21	33
Pelagic sharks	55	71
Small coastal sharks	15	16
Non-ridgeback sharks	16	15
Ridgeback sharks	17	13

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.



**Figure 8.2 Species Composition of HMS Tournaments (2011 & 2012)**

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

### Billfish Tournaments

A significant number of blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish tournaments are “release-only,” utilizing observers, angler affidavits, polygraph tests, photographs, or digital video camcorders to document the live release of billfish. All billfish tournaments are selected for reporting to the Recreational Billfish Survey (RBS), including numbers of released fish.

Anglers fishing from an HMS-permitted vessel in any tournament awarding points or prizes for Atlantic billfish are required to deploy only non-offset circle hooks when using natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. The use of non-offset circle hooks increases the likelihood of post-release survival for billfish.

Figure 8.3 depicts the time of year that billfish tournaments are most prevalent in regions of the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. The majority of the billfish tournaments occurring in January are sailfish tournaments along the Atlantic coast of Florida.

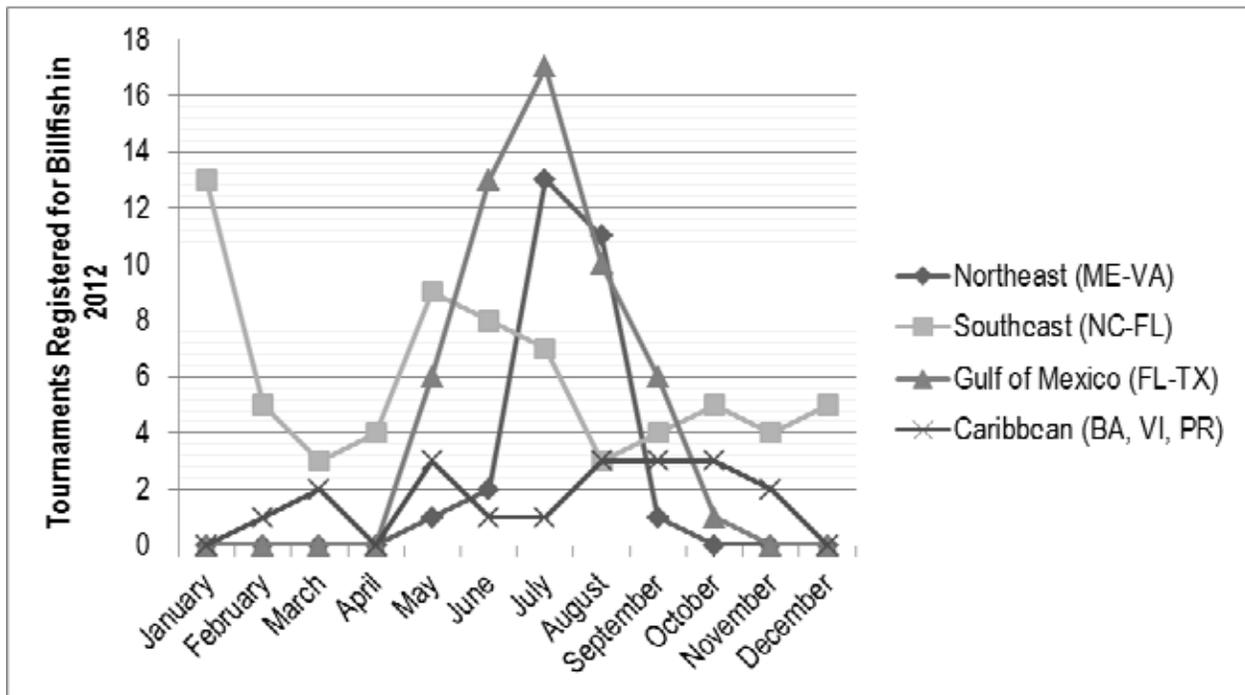
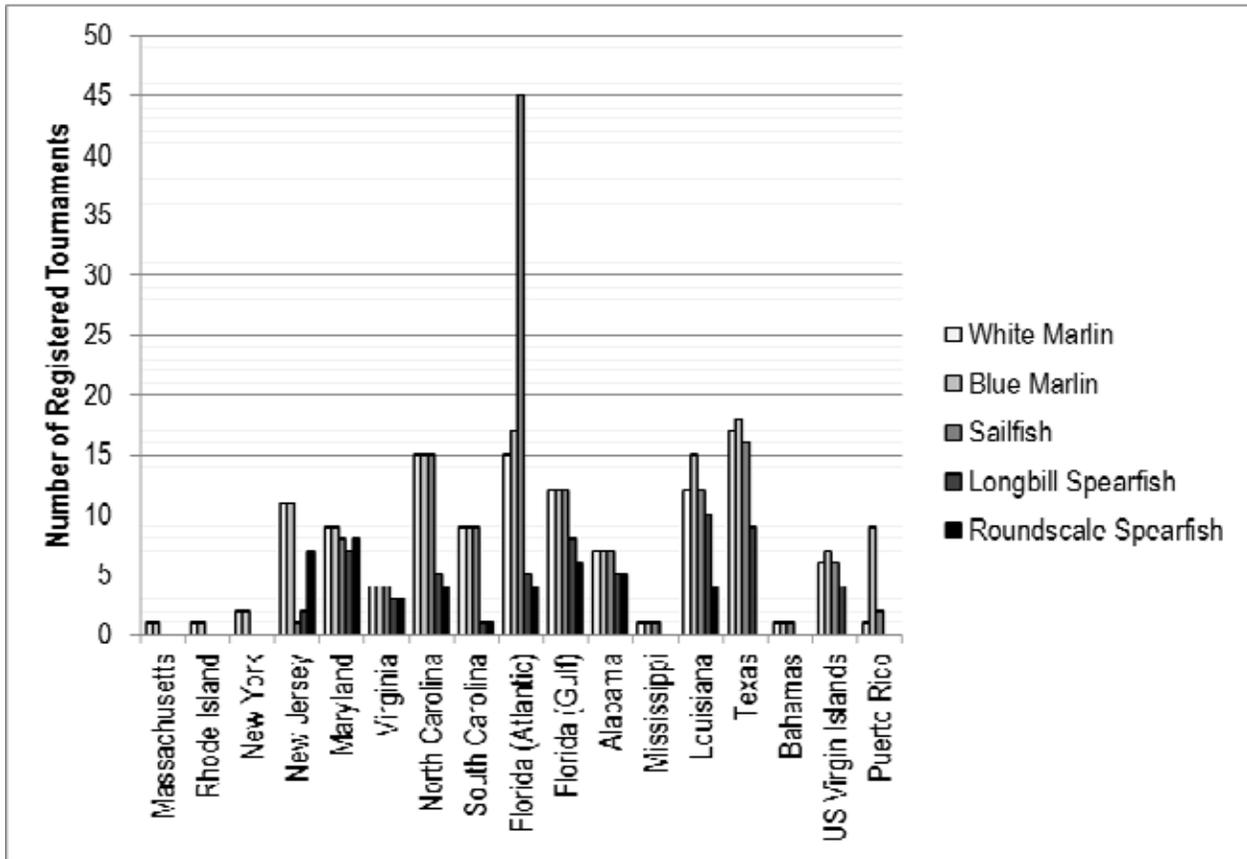


Figure 8.3 Number of Billfish Tournaments by Region and Month (2012)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Figure 8.4 shows the number of tournaments in 2012 that selected white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish, longbill spearfish, or roundscale spearfish as categories on the HMS tournament registration form. The figure illustrates that the Atlantic coast of Florida is the leading location for sailfish tournaments, and that white marlin and blue marlin tournaments occur in states all along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, including the Caribbean.



**Figure 8.4** Number of White Marlin, Blue Marlin, Sailfish, Longbill Spearfish, and Roundscale Spearfish Tournaments by Species and State (2012)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.