

## 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 and Permit Holders by State (2007-2014)**

State	Directed Swordfish	Incidental Swordfish	Swordfish Handgear	Directed Shark	Incidental Shark	Tuna Longline	Permit Holders/ Permits
ME	4	1	1	2	5	5	8 / 18
MA	6	1	8	3	8	7	18 / 33
RI	1	-	11	1	3	1	12 / 17
CT	1	-	-	-	1	1	1 / 3
NY	16	3	-	10	12	19	25 / 60
PA	2	-	-	1	2	2	3 / 7
NJ	26	11	3	21	26	38	49 / 125
DE	1	-	1	1	2	1	4 / 6
MD	4	-	-	2	2	4	4 / 12
VA	1	1	-	-	2	2	2 / 6
NC	11	7	-	16	11	18	27 / 63
SC	3	1	-	8	8	4	16 / 24
GA	-	-	-	2	2	-	4 / 4
FL	77	29	49	115	125	105	287 / 500
AL	-	-	-	4	2	-	6 / 6
MS	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
LA	27	5	-	17	32	31	50 / 112
TX	3	7	1	3	13	8	18 / 35
<b>Annual Totals</b>							
2014*	183	66	77	206	258	246	536 / 1,036
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

\* As of October 2014. Number of permits and 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 2014)**

State	Incidental HMS Squid Trawl Permits
ME	4
NH	1
MA	11
RI	10
CT	3
NY	5
NJ	26
VA	5
NC	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

*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 tunas, swordfish, and sharks for boats fishing in the Caribbean region. Currently, the shark retention limit with this permit is zero; however, if the retention limit were increased, permit holders could be allowed to retain and sell non-prohibited species of sharks. As of October 2014, 15 permits have been issued with the majority (10) in Florida. Texas, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico each have one permit. There are two permits in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

*General Commercial Swordfish Permit*

The General Commercial Swordfish permit was established pursuant to the final rule (August 21, 2013, 78 FR 52012) that implemented Amendment 8 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. This permit is open access and can be held in conjunction with the Harpoon and General category Atlantic tunas permits. The distribution of General Commercial Swordfish permits is compiled in Table 8.3.

**Table 8.3 Number of General Commercial Swordfish Permits by State as of (October 2014)**

State	General Commercial Swordfish Permits	State	General Commercial Swordfish Permits
AL	8	MS	2
CA	1	NC	43
CT	23	NH	18
DE	1	NJ	38
FI	21	NY	52
FL	88	PA	3
GA	3	PR	9
KY	1	RI	43
LA	4	SC	7
MA	158	TX	6
MD	3	VA	6
ME	112	VI	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>651</b>

*Atlantic Tunas Permits*

Commercial Atlantic tunas permits are categorized by gear type (longline, harpoon, trap, purse seine, and General category) (Table 8.4). 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 8.5. HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (Table 8.6) may also participate in the commercial tuna fishery.

**Table 8.4 Number of Commercial Atlantic Tunas Permits by Category (2006-2014)**

Category	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Longline	218	241	259	248	242	253	252	246
Harpoon	26	26	23	29	24	13	14	14***
Trap	9	9	4	6	6	8	7	3
General	3,616	4,031	3,824	3,849	3,764	4,084	3,783	3,396***
Purse seine**	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	5
Total	3,873	4,311	4,113	4,135	4,039	4,361	4,059	3,041

\* As of October 2014. The actual number of 2014 permit holders in each category is subject to change as individuals renew their permits or allow them to expire. \*\* Represents the number of entities eligible to receive Atlantic bluefin tuna purse seine category quota. \*\*\* The General and Harpoon categories listed include those held in conjunction with a Swordfish General Commercial permit.

Of the 14 Atlantic Tunas Harpoon category permit issued in 2014, 9 were issued to vessels whose homeport state was Maine and 5 were issued to vessels whose homeport state was Massachusetts.

**Table 8.5 Number of Tunas General Category Permits by State or Territory (as of October 2014)**

State	Tunas General Category Permits	State	Tunas General Category Permits
AL	31	NC	246
CT	51	NH	201
DE	21	NJ	149
FL	132	NY	139
GA	3	PA	3
GR	1	PR	68
LA	32	RI	107
MA	908	SC	19
MD	28	TX	15
ME	529	VA	65
MI	2	VI	8
MN	1	VT	3
MS	20	Total	2,782

### *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 2014 Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permits is presented in Table 8.6.

**Table 8.6** Number of Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits by State (as of October 2014)

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>HMS Charter/Headboat Permits</b>	<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>HMS Charter/Headboat Permits</b>
AL	75	NJ	517
CT	72	NY	296
DE	101	OH	1
FL	616	OK	1
GA	22	PA	28
ID	1	PR	23
LA	76	RI	143
MA	718	SC	120
MD	113	TX	108
ME	131	VA	113
MS	33	VI	24
NC	350	WV	3
NH	101	Total	3,742

### 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 8.7.

**Table 8.7 Number of Atlantic HMS Angling Permits (as of October 2014)**

State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**	State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**
AK	2	1	NC	1306	1,184
AL	417	364	ND	1	1
AR	6	13	NE	-	3
AZ	1	3	NH	230	297
BV	1	1	NJ	2911	2,476
CA	2	10	NV	6	7
CO	4	6	NY	1679	1,762
CT	577	652	OH	13	27
DC	-	5	OK	11	22
DE	745	451	OR	1	-
FL	3,897	3,607	PA	179	1,017
GA	120	207	PR	524	536
IA	-	3	RI	532	381
IL	12	30	SC	536	524
IN	4	11	SD	1	2
KS	1	2	TN	25	54
KY	7	15	TX	665	711
LA	706	711	UT	1	3
MA	2,367	2,339	VA	1,062	1,140
MD	991	968	VI	41	20
ME	391	325	VT	17	28
MI	18	27	WA	6	8
MN	1	7	WI	7	10
MO	6	14	WV	5	10
MS	193	232	WY	-	1
MT	5	3	Canada	6	8
<b>Total</b>				<b>20,239</b>	<b>20,239</b>

\* 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 8.8.

**Table 8.8 Number of Domestic Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Dealer Permits (2013 by State; 2006-2014 Totals by Permit)**

State/Territory	Bluefin Only	BAYS Only	Bluefin and BAYS	Atlantic Swordfish	Atlantic Sharks	Total
AL	-	1	3	4	3	11
CA	2	-	-	2	-	4
CT	-	1	3	1	-	5
DE	-	1	2	-	-	3
FL	3	9	16	88	29	145
GA	-	-	1	2	1	4
HI	-	-	2	-	-	2
LA	-	1	7	11	8	27
MA	7	12	77	18	7	121
MD	-	1	7	3	3	14
ME	11	-	17	4	1	33
NC	4	6	26	19	17	72
NH	-	-	6	-	-	6
NJ	1	10	38	10	8	67
NY	3	19	52	12	5	91
PA	-	-	2	1	-	3
PR	-	4	1	1	-	6
RI	-	4	28	8	2	42
SC	-	1	2	7	9	19
TX	-	2	1	2	-	5
VA	1	4	13	1	3	22
VI	-	3	1	1	-	5
VT	-	-	1	-	-	1
<b>Annual Totals</b>						
2014*	32	79	308	195	96	710
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

\* As of October 2014. 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 2010 – 2014 by category and species are listed in Table 8.9. Amendment 2 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP implemented the shark research fishery. In 2014, NMFS received 11 applications for entrance into the shark research fishery. Based on the qualification criteria, 5 were chosen to participate.

**Table 8.9** Number of Atlantic HMS Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs) (2010-2014)

Permit Type		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Exempted Fishing Permit	Sharks for display	2	3	4	4	3
	HMS** for display	2	2	2	2	3
	Tunas for display	0	0	0	0	0
	Shark research on a non-scientific vessel	9	8	10	10	10
	Tuna research on a non-scientific vessel	5	5	5	4	3
	HMS** research on a non-scientific vessel	2	2	3	3	3
	Billfish research on a non-scientific vessel	2	2	1	1	0
	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>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>
Scientific Research Permit	Shark research	1	3	4	3	2
	Tuna research	1	1	3	2	2
	Billfish research	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS** research	4	6	4	3	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
Letters of Acknowledgement	Shark research	8	7	7	6	8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

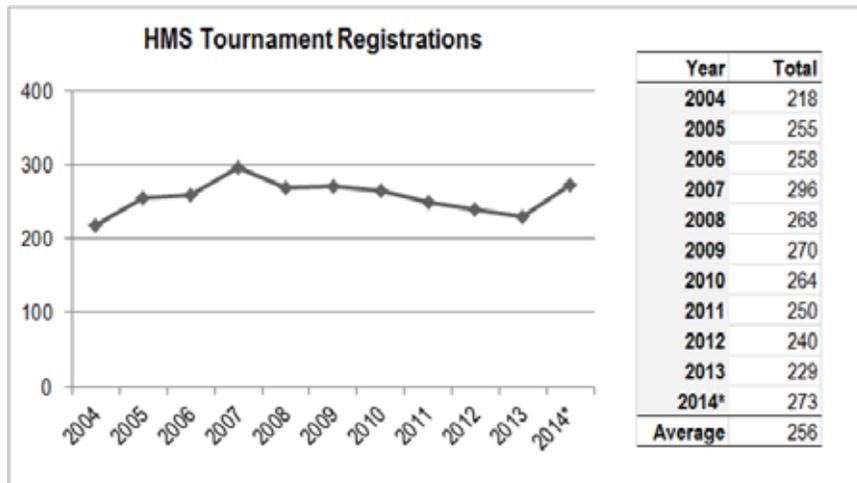
\*As of October 31, 2014. \*\*Multiple species.

## 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 U.S. Caribbean. 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. Tournament landings are presented in Section 4.4.2.

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.

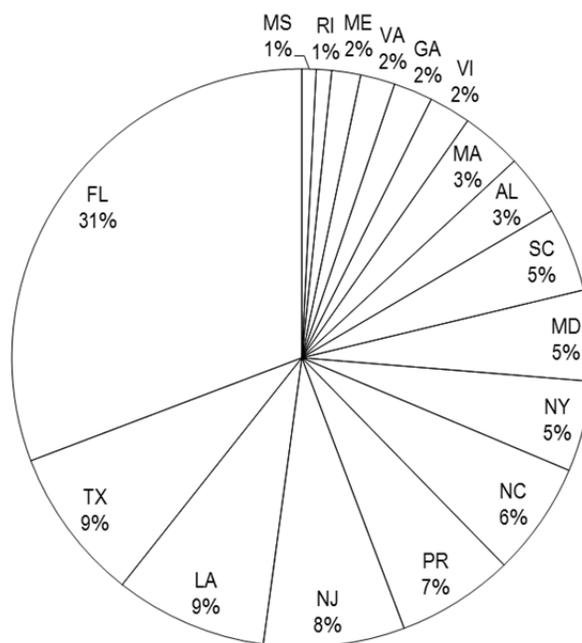
Tournament registration and reporting forms are available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/tournaments/>. Tournament operators may also request HMS regulation booklets and other outreach materials (e.g., shark identification guides and careful catch and release brochures) to distribute to tournament participants. In 2013, more than 125 tournaments requested and received more than 10,400 copies of these materials from the HMS Management Division. The number of HMS tournaments that registered each year from 2004 to 2014 is reported in Figure 8.1. Since 2004, an average of 256 HMS tournaments have registered each year. The highest number of HMS tournament registrations occurred in 2007. In 2013, there were 16 inaugural HMS tournaments. The number of registered tournaments in 2014 is the highest since 2007, possibly due to increased outreach and compliance monitoring, and may also be influenced by an improving U.S. economy and lower fuel prices.



**Figure 8.1** Number of Registered Atlantic HMS Tournaments by Year (2004-2014)

\*As of November 2014. 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 8.2.



**Figure 8.2** Percentage of Atlantic HMS Tournaments Held in each State (2004-2014)

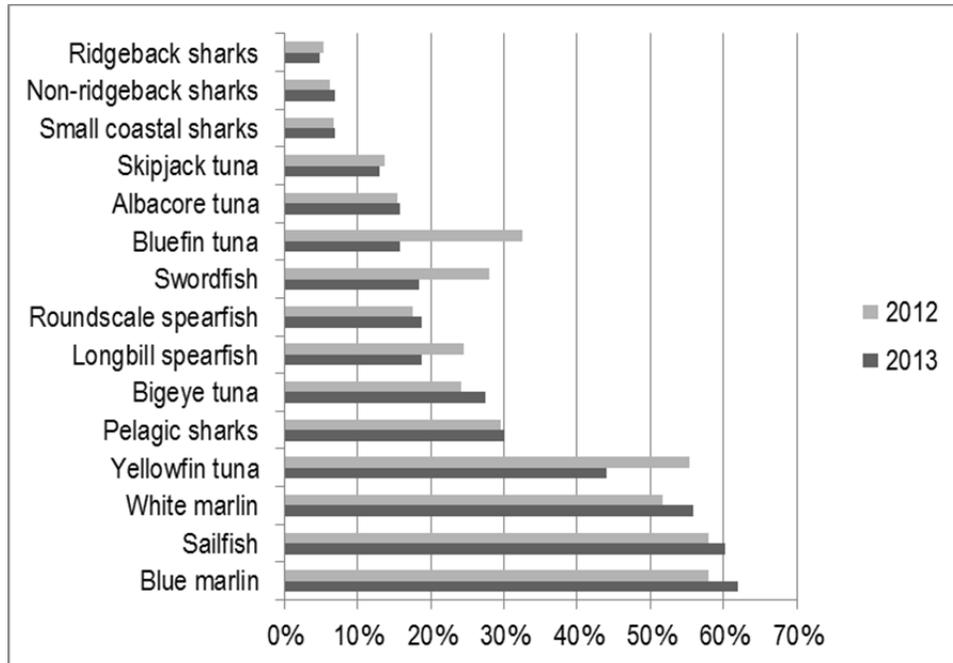
Areas excluded (< 1%) are Bermuda (0.03%), Connecticut (0.1%), Delaware (0.2%), and the Bahamas (0.4%). Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Table 8.10 indicates the number of HMS tournaments in 2012 and 2013 that registered to award points or prizes for the catch or landing of each HMS. Figure 8.3 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 (2012 & 2013)**

Species	2012	2013
Blue marlin	139	142
White marlin	124	128
Longbill spearfish	59	43
Roundscale spearfish	42	43
Sailfish	139	138
Swordfish	67	42
Bluefin tuna	78	36
Bigeye tuna	58	63
Albacore tuna	37	36
Yellowfin tuna	133	101
Skipjack tuna	33	30
Pelagic sharks	71	69
Small coastal sharks	16	16
Non-ridgeback sharks	15	16
Ridgeback sharks	13	11

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.



**Figure 8.3 Percent of HMS Tournaments by Species (2012 & 2013)**

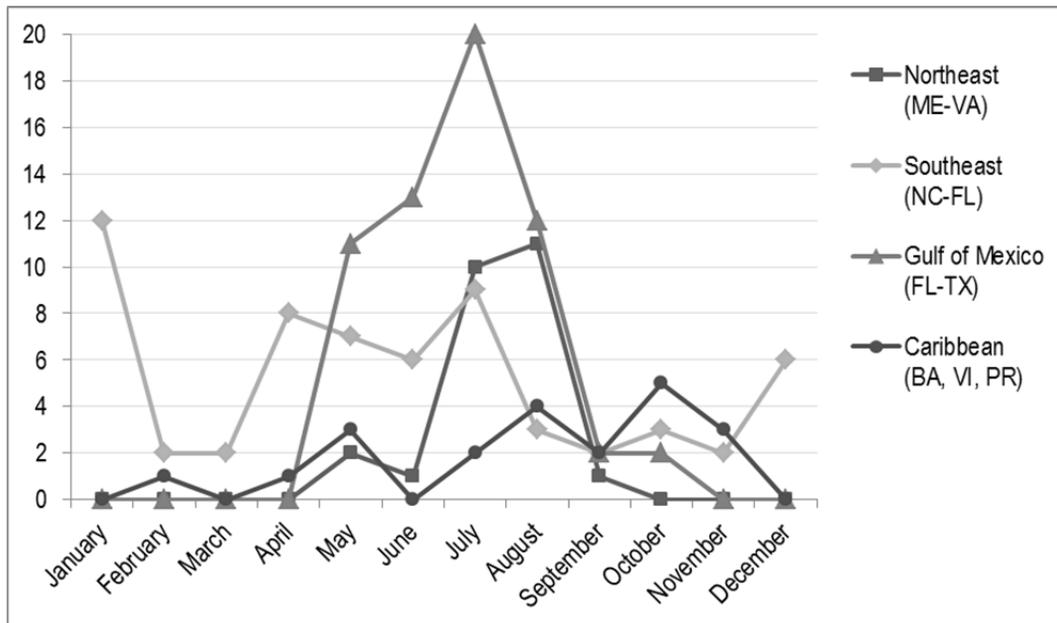
Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

### 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.

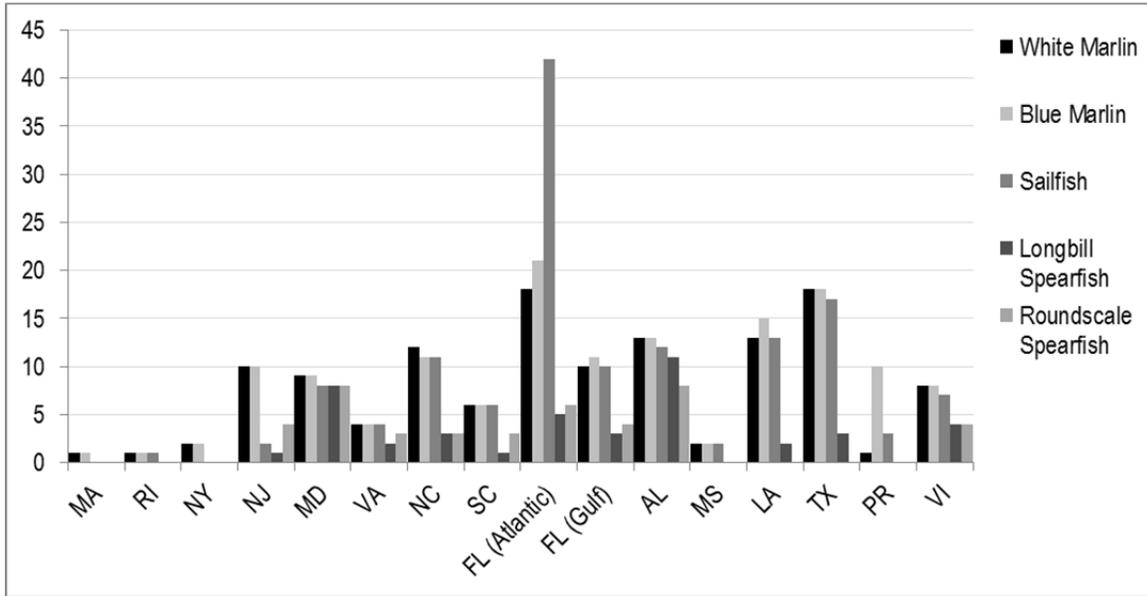
Figure 8.4 depicts the time of year that billfish tournaments are most prevalent in regions of the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. The majority of the billfish tournaments occurring in January are sailfish tournaments along the Atlantic coast of Florida.



**Figure 8.4** Number of Billfish Tournaments by Region and Month (2013)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Figure 8.5 shows the number of tournaments in 2013 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 8.5** Number of White Marlin, Blue Marlin, Sailfish, Longbill Spearfish, and Roundscale Spearfish Tournaments by Species and State (2013)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.