UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Closes Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Incidental Longline Category Southern Area Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closes the incidental Longline category southern area fishery for large medium and giant bluefin tuna (measuring 73 inches curved fork length or greater), effective 11:30 p.m. on May 29, 2012. **Fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing bluefin tuna by Longline category vessels south of 31°00' N. lat. (near the Georgia/Florida border), is prohibited for the remainder of 2012.** This action is being taken to prevent any further overharvest of the Longline category southern area bluefin tuna subquota.

NMFS is required to file a closure notice with the Office of the Federal Register when a bluefin tuna quota is reached or is projected to be reached. On and after the effective date and time of such action, for the remainder of the fishing year, or for a specified period as indicated in the notice, fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing bluefin tuna under that quota is prohibited until the opening of the subsequent quota period or until a date a specified in the notice.

Based on the best available bluefin tuna landings information for the incidental Longline category southern area bluefin tuna fishery (i.e., 46.9 mt of the available 44.9 mt landed as of May 16, 2012), NMFS has determined that the Longline category southern area bluefin tuna subquota has been reached. Therefore, through December 31, 2012, fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing bluefin tuna south of 31°00' N. lat. by vessels permitted in the Atlantic tunas Longline category must cease at 11:30 p.m. local time on May 29, 2012. The intent of this closure is to prevent any further overharvest of the Longline category southern area subquota.

NMFS will continue to monitor incidental Longline category bluefin tuna landings north of 31°00' N. lat. against the available Longline category northern area BFT subquota for the 2012 fishing year and may take further action, if necessary. This notice is a courtesy to bluefin tuna fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For additional information, call (978) 281-9260, or go to www.hmspermits.gov. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.

MAY 23 2012

Emily H. Menashes
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

Date

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