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

NMFS Proposes Initial Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quotas and Effort Controls for 2007 Fishing Year

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a proposed rule to set initial 2007 fishing year quotas for the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fishery and effort controls. Based on the 2006 quota recommended for the United States by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic tunas (ICCAT), 2006 fishing year underharvests, and other considerations (including accounting for dead discards and a new ICCAT cap on carryover of underharvest), NMFS proposes for the 2007 fishing year (June 1 through December 31, 2007) the quotas shown in the attached table, which also shows the proposed time-period subquotas for the General category. This compressed timeframe is due to the shift from a fishing year of June through May to a calendar year as required by the final rule implementing the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. NMFS proposes to provide permit holders an extended window of opportunity to change their permit category for the 2008 fishing year, i.e., once during the period of January 1, 2008, through May 31, 2008.

NMFS proposes restricted fishing days for: all Saturdays and Sundays from November 17, 2007 through December 31, 2007, plus November 22, 2007, and December 25, 2007. These days are intended to extend the General category BFT fishery into the late season for the southern Atlantic region. NMFS also proposes the following initial General category retention limits and a schedule of Angling category retention limits for the 2007 fishing year:

Category	Retention Limit (per vessel per day/trip)	Duration
General	3 large medium/giant BFT (measuring 73" or greater)	01 June 2007 – 31 August 2007
Angling	1 school BFT (measuring 27-<47") AND 2 large school/small medium BFT (measuring 47-<73")	01 June 2007 – 31 December 2007

Comments on the proposed action should be sent to: E-mail: 07BFTSPECS@noaa.gov; Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: http:www.regulations.gov; Mail: Sarah McLaughlin, HMS Management Division, Office of Sustainable Fisheries (F/SF1), NMFS, One Blackburn Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930; Fax: 978-281-9340. Comments must be received on or before May 4, 2007. NMFS will hold three public hearings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public regarding these proposed initial quota specifications and effort controls, as follows:

1. April 24, 2007, 7-9 p.m., Carteret Community College, Joselyn Hall, H.J. McGee, Jr. Building, 3505 Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557;
2. April 26, 2007, 6:30-8:30 p.m., West Islip Public Library, 3 Higbie Lane, West Islip, NY, 11795; and
3. April 27, 2007, 3:30-5:30 p.m., NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information contact the HMS Management Division at (978) 281-9260.

Alan Risenhoover, Director
Office of Sustainable Fisheries

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Date

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Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Proposed Initial Quota Specifications (in metric tons) for the 2007 Fishing Year (June 1-December 31, 2007)

Category (% share of baseline quota)	Baseline Allocation	Adjustments to Baseline Quota[1]	Proposed Initial 2007 Fishing Year Quota
Angling (19.7)	229.5	39.7	269.2
	SUBQUOTAS:		SUBQUOTAS:
	School 119.0		School 119.0
	Reserve 22.0		Reserve 22.0
	North 45.8		North 45.8
	South 51.2		South 51.2
	Lg. Sch/Sm. Med 105.2		Lg. Sch/Sm. Med 144.0
	North 49.6		North 68.0
	South 55.6		South 76.0
	Trophy 5.3		Trophy 6.2
	North 1.8		North 2.1
	South 3.5		South 4.1
General (47.1)	Total: 548.8	94.8	Total: 643.6
	SUBQUOTAS:		SUBQUOTAS:
	Jun-Aug 289.8		Jun-Aug 339.8
	Sept 153.6		Sept 180.1
	Oct-Nov 75.3		Oct-Nov 88.4
	Dec 30.1		Dec 35.3
Harpoon (3.0)	45.4	7.9	53.3
Purse Seine (18.6)	216.7	37.4	254.1
Longline (8.1)	94.4	105.6	200.0
	SUBQUOTAS:		SUBQUOTAS:
	North (-NED) 37.8		North (-NED) 80.0
	NED 25.0		NED 25.0
	South 56.6		South 120.0
Trap (0.1)	1.2	0.2	1.4
Reserve (2.5)	29.1	178.5	207.6
Total (100)	1,165.1	464.1	1,629.2

[1] The Adjustments to Baseline Quota total (464.1 mt) reflects the ICCAT-recommended cap on carryover of underharvest from 2006 (i.e., 595.1 mt), minus the 131-mt estimate of dead discards.

For detailed explanation of the application of underharvest, ICCAT recommendations, and FMP requirements, see the Bluefin Tuna Initial Quota Specifications files at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/breaking_news.htm.