



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

NMFS Proposes Adjustments to Atlantic Bluefin Tuna General and Harpoon Category Regulations

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes adjustments to Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fishery regulations to increase opportunities within the existing U.S. BFT quota and specifically the General and Harpoon category subquotas, which have been underharvested for several years. Specifically, NMFS would increase the General category maximum daily retention limit, allow the full January General category subquota to be reached, and increase the Harpoon category daily incidental retention limit. The purpose of this proposed action is to enable more thorough utilization of the available U.S. quota, while ending BFT overfishing by 2010, rebuilding the BFT stock by 2019, and minimizing bycatch and bycatch mortality to the extent practicable.

This action follows consideration of public comment collected via an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) (74 FR 26174, June 1, 2009) on several issues regarding Atlantic highly migratory species fisheries, and contains measures raised during the rulemaking to establish the 2009 BFT quota specifications and effort controls and at recent meetings of the HMS Advisory Panel.

Please go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/breaking_news.htm to view the proposed rule and supporting documents. You may submit comments (identified by "0648-AV58") by any one of the following methods:

- Submit electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>
- Fax: 978-281-9340, Attn: Sarah McLaughlin
- Mail: Sarah McLaughlin, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

NMFS will hold two public hearings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public regarding the proposed action, as follows:

1. December 14, 2009, 3 p.m.-5 p.m., NOAA, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910
2. December 15, 2009, 3 p.m.-5 p.m., NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery participants to help keep you informed about the 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.

NOV 04 2009

for Emily Menashes
for Alan D. Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

Date

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