



**NMFS Adjusts Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Angling Category
 Daily Retention Limit and
 Closes Southern Trophy BFT Fishery**

NMFS is taking the following two actions regarding the BFT Angling category fishery:

- (1) Adjustment of the retention limit effective April 2 through December 31, 2011, as follows:

Permit category	Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip
HMS Angling category	1 school <i>or</i> large school BFT (27 to <59")
HMS Charter/Headboat category (while fishing recreationally)	1 school BFT (27 to <47") <i>and</i> 1 large school BFT (47 to <59")

Retention of small medium BFT (59 to <73") is prohibited through Dec. 31, 2011.

These limits are effective for all areas except the Gulf of Mexico, the designated spawning grounds for BFT and where NMFS prohibits targeted fishing. Regardless of the duration of a fishing trip, the daily retention limit applies upon landing.

- (2) Closure of the large medium/giant "trophy" BFT (73" or greater) fishery south of 39°18'N (off Great Egg Inlet, NJ) through December 31, 2011 (based on North Carolina Tagging Program data)

Information from the North Carolina Tagging Program and from fishery participants indicates that the vast majority of BFT landed recreationally this year have been 59 inches or greater. As in 2010, it is reasonable to assume that the codified large school/small medium subquota (and potentially the Angling category quota overall) would be exceeded under the default daily retention limit, particularly due to the expected continued high availability of small medium BFT coastwide. Therefore, NMFS has determined that the Angling category retention limit should be adjusted to prohibit the retention of small medium BFT. Additionally, North Carolina Tagging Program data indicate that the codified southern trophy quota (2.9 mt) has been taken.

The annual Angling category trophy limit of one large medium or giant BFT per vessel (73" or greater) remains in effect for vessels fishing in the northern area.

NMFS takes these actions to be consistent with the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan and to prevent overharvest of the 2011 Angling category quota. In taking this action, NMFS considered the regulatory determination criteria regarding inseason adjustments, including available quota, fishery performance in recent years, and the availability of BFT (particularly small medium BFT) on the fishing grounds.

Anglers may catch and release or tag and release BFT of all sizes, subject to the requirements of the HMS catch-and-release and tag-and-release programs. NMFS regulations at 50 CFR



635.21(a)(1) require that all released BFT be released in a manner that will maximize survivability, and without removing the fish from the water. For further information on safe handling see: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/PartnershipsCommunications/recfish/ethics.htm>

NMFS may make further Angling category adjustments via inseason action, if warranted. This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For additional information, call (888) 872-8862 or (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.


Emily H. Menashes
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3/31/2011
Date

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