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Proposed 2013 Atlantic bluefin tuna quota specifications

Highly Migratory Species Management Division
April 2013

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Need for action

- The baseline quota has remained unchanged from 2012, and the 2013 BFT quota specifications are necessary to adjust the annual U.S. baseline BFT quota to account for any underharvest or overharvest of the adjusted 2012 U.S. BFT quota
 - Preliminary information indicates an underharvest of the 2012 adjusted BFT quota
- Through the annual specifications, NMFS would proactively account for anticipated 2013 dead discards to ensure that landings and dead discards do not exceed the adjusted 2013 U.S. quota

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2012 WBFT Recommendation

- One-year 1,750-mt TAC, including dead discards
 - Expected to allow for continued stock growth under both the low and high stock recruitment scenarios
 - U.S. baseline quota continues to be 923.7 mt
 - Total U.S. quota, including 25 mt to account for bycatch related to pelagic longline fisheries in the Northeast Distant gear restricted area, continues to be 948.7 mt.
- Maintains school BFT tolerance of no more than 10%
(U.S. 2011-2012 total was ~ 121 mt out of 189.7-mt limit)
- Maintains 10% cap on underharvest carried forward (94.9 mt)

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2013 Domestic Implications – Accounting for Dead Discards

- WBFT TAC & U.S. BFT quota include dead discards
- BFT landings data and BFT dead discard estimates must be reported to ICCAT annually
- Best available estimate is the 2011 estimate of 145.2 mt from the Longline category
- When the 2012 BFT dead discard estimate is available (late spring 2013), it will be used for preparation of the final specifications and reported to ICCAT along with total 2012 BFT landings

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Category	Base Quota	Dead Discard Deduction (1/2 of 2011 proxy of 145.2 mt)	2011 Underharvest Carried Forward to 2012	2012		% of Adjusted Quota
				Adjusted Quota	Landings & LL dead discards	
General	435.1			475.1 ¹	456.2	96
Harpoon	36.0			36.0	17.2	48
Longline	99.8	-72.6	+76.2	103.4	89.6 ²	87
North	29.9		26.7	27.6	30.4	110
NED	25			25	8.4	34
South	44.9		39.5	50.8	50.8	100
Trap	0.9			0.9	0	0
Purse Seine	171.8			171.8	1.7	1
Angling	182.0			182.0	148.5	82
School	94.9			94.9	63.2	67
Large school	82.9			82.9	79.1	95
Small medium						
Large Medium-Giant ("trophy")	4.2			4.2	6.2 ³	148
Reserve	23.1		+18.7	1.8 ⁴	0	0
TOTAL	948.7		95	971.0⁴	713.2	73
				1,043.6		68
<i>TOTAL (incl. 145.2-mt dead discard estimate as proxy)</i>	<i>948.7</i>			<i>971.0⁴</i>	<i>858.4</i>	<i>88</i>
				<i>1,043.6</i>		<i>82</i>

Data for the 2012 fishing year are as of February 26, 2013

1 Includes 40-mt transfer from the Reserve category to the General category effective December 15, 2012

2 The Longline category southern and northern areas closed to BFT retention effective May 29 and June 30, 2012, respectively

3 The Angling category southern area trophy fishery closed effective April 7, 2012

4 The 2012 Adjusted Quota published in 77 FR 44161 (July 27, 2012) = 971 mt, reflecting NMFS' accounting for half of the estimated dead discards at the beginning of the fishing year, with the remainder to be accounted for at year-end; the 2012 U.S. Adjusted Quota for ICCAT accounting purposes is 1,043.6 mt

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Unharvested 2012 quota

- Based on the best currently available landings data and estimate of dead discards (2011 proxy), NMFS anticipates an underharvest of the 2012 U.S. adjusted BFT quota of approximately 185 mt (1,043.6 mt – 858.4 mt)
- Per the ICCAT WBFT recommendation, the maximum amount of unharvested 2012 quota that the United States may carry forward to 2013 is 94.9 mt

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Proposed Rule Overview

- Account for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the dead discard estimate of 145.2 mt up front, from the Longline category subquota
- Apply $\frac{1}{2}$ of the amount of underharvest that is allowed to be carried forward ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 94.9=47.5 mt) to the Longline category and maintain the other $\frac{1}{2}$ in the Reserve category, for an adjusted Reserve category quota of 70.5 mt
- Proposed Longline category subquota:
74.8 mt baseline quota – 72.6 mt dead discards + 47.5 mt underharvest
= 49.7 mt adjusted quota

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Proposed Rule Overview

- Would not change the baseline quotas for all directed categories
- Would provide maximum flexibility in accounting for 2013 landings and dead discards
- May provide further incentive for pelagic longline fishermen to reduce those interactions that may result in dead discards

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Proposed 2013 Atlantic bluefin tuna quotas and quota specifications (in metric tons)

Category (% share of baseline quota)	Baseline Allocation (per current ICCAT Recommendation and Consolidated HMS FMP allocations)	2013 Quota Specifications		
		Dead Discard Deduction (1/2 of 2011 proxy of 145.2 mt)	2012 Underharvest to Carry Forward to 2013 (94.9 mt total)	Adjusted 2013 Fishing Year Quota
Total (100)	923.7*			946.0
Angling (19.7)	182.0			182.0
	SUBQUOTAS:			SUBQUOTAS:
	School 94.9			School 94.9
	Reserve 17.6			Reserve 17.6
	North 36.5			North 36.5
	South 40.8			South 40.8
	LS/SM 82.9			LS/SM 82.9
	North 39.1			North 39.1
	South 43.8			South 43.8
	Trophy 4.2			Trophy 4.2
	North 1.4			North 1.4
	South 2.8			South 2.8
General (47.1)	435.1			435.1
	SUBQUOTAS:			SUBQUOTAS:
	Jan 23.1			Jan 23.1
	Jan-Aug 217.6			Jan-Aug 217.6
	Sept 115.3			Sept 115.3
	Oct-Nov 56.6			Oct-Nov 56.6
	Dec 22.6			Dec 22.6
Harpoon (3.9)	36.0			36.0
Purse Seine (18.6)	171.8			171.8
Longline (8.1)	74.8	-72.6	+47.5	49.7
	SUBQUOTAS:			SUBQUOTAS:
	North (-NED) 29.9			North (-NED) 19.9
	NED 25.0 [†]			NED 25.0 [†]
	South 44.9			South 29.8
Trap (0.1)	0.9			0.9
Reserve (2.5)	23.1		+47.4	70.5

*25-mt ICCAT set-aside to account for bycatch of BFT in pelagic longline fisheries in the NED.
Not included in totals at top of table.



Transitional approach

- NMFS continues to consider this approach as a transition from the method used in 2007-2010 in which the **full** dead discard estimate was deducted at the beginning of the year
- Appropriate again for 2013 pending development of longer-term management measures through Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP



Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP

- Draft Amendment 7 will examine, among other things:
 - revisiting quota allocations
 - reducing and accounting for dead discards
 - adding or modifying time/area closures or gear-restricted areas; and
 - improving the reporting and monitoring of dead discards and landings in all categories
- NMFS anticipates publication in mid-2013.

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Transitional approach, continued

- In the meantime, BFT fishery management continues under the current FMP, implementing regulations, and ICCAT Recommendations
- In contemplating how to account for dead discards within the quota and allocate the underharvest carried forward, NMFS believes that operational issues facing the Longline category as the fleet continues directed fishing operations for swordfish and other tunas should be considered
- NMFS anticipates that dead discards in the Longline category may be reduced due to continued weak hook use in the Gulf of Mexico

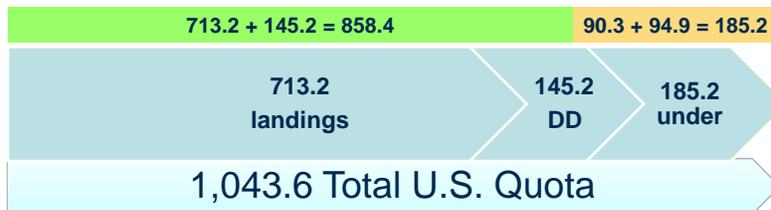
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Public comment requested

IF the final 2012 landings and dead discards information results in a total of greater than 948.7 mt but less than 1,043.6 mt:

- the amount of 2012 underharvest that the United States may carry forward to 2013 would need to be reduced from 94.9 mt accordingly.
- e.g., if the dead discards estimate increases by > 90.3 mt



Public comment requested

NMFS invites comment on the range of possible allocations if the amount carried forward is 0-94.9 mt, e.g.:

- Provide ½ of the available amount (each) to the Longline and Reserve categories
 - If 80 mt is available, 40 mt to Longline and 40 mt to Reserve
- If small (~20 mt), provide entire amount to the Longline or Reserve category
- Allocate the amount in another manner after considering domestic management needs for 2013

(Baseline subquotas for the directed fishing categories and Trap category would not be changed)



Public comment requested

Need to consider possibility that deducting $\frac{1}{2}$ of the final dead discard estimate from the baseline Longline category subquota would result in little to no Longline category quota for 2013 prior to application of underharvest.

NMFS also may need to close the Longline category fishery to BFT retention based on codified quotas, as in 2012.

- Closed southern area May 29 and northern area June 30
- NMFS accounted fully for those landings in the final rule by applying 76.2 of the available 94.9-mt underharvest to the Longline category and maintaining the remaining underharvest (18.7 mt) in the Reserve category.

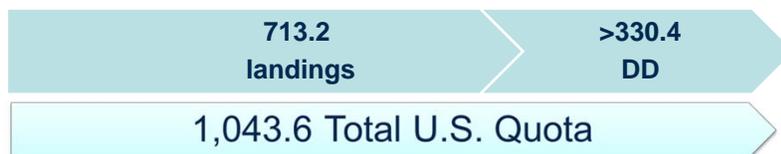
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Public comment requested

IF 2012 landings and dead discard estimate > 1,043.6 mt:

- NMFS may need to take further action, consistent with the BFT quota adjustment regulations and with ICCAT Recommendations, and
- The U.S. BFT quota may be adjusted, consistent with ICCAT recommendations.



Unlikely, as the dead discard estimate would need to be more than ~ 330 mt, and recently has ranged from 122 to 204 mt. However...

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Public comment requested

To address the possibility of overharvest of the adjusted U.S. quota, NMFS requests public comment on potential options to consider for the final 2013 quota and subquotas.

e.g., the Longline and/or the Reserve category quotas could be reduced as necessary, or the overall 2013 BFT quota could be reduced, which would affect all category subquotas

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General and Angling Category Daily Retention Limits

As in past years, NMFS will make daily retention limit adjustments for the 2013 fishing year via Federal Register notices separate from the final specifications.

Recreational daily retention limits, effective April 4:

HMS Angling: 1 school, large school, or small medium BFT (27 to <73")

HMS Charter/Headboat: (when fishing recreationally):

1 school BFT (27 to <47") & 1 large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73")

Southern area trophy BFT fishery closed, including Gulf of Mexico, April 4-December 31, 2013

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Timeline for Rulemaking

- Proposed rule published on April 11, 2013
- 30-day comment period ends May 13, 2013
- Public hearings in Gloucester (April 29) and Silver Spring (May 3)
- Intend to publish final rule by June 2013

Draft Amendment 7 anticipated to be available mid-2013 for public comment.

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Public Comments due May 13, 2013

Please submit comments to www.regulations.gov

Keyword: "NOAA-NMFS-2013-0042"

or

Mail: NMFS – HMS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

Fax: (978) 281-9340 Attn: Sarah McLaughlin

Identify comments with "NOAA-NMFS-2013-0042"

Please do not submit electronic comments directly to NMFS staff

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Comments? Questions?

- For further information on this rulemaking or Atlantic tunas management, contact Brad McHale or Sarah McLaughlin at (978) 281-9260
- For information on other HMS issues, contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503