



NOAA
FISHERIES

HMS Advisory Panel Wrap-Up

Spring 2018 HMS AP Meeting

March 9, 2018



Overview of Recent Activities/Rulemaking

- Concerns on timing and requests for more information on progress of incorporating HMS into other electronic reporting systems and consolidating reporting, including for mahi mahi and wahoo - Will discuss at fall AP
- Question on streamlining of domestic and international stock status determinations
- Should select additional species for HMS tournament reporting soon, especially to collect data related to possible measures for bigeye and yellowfin tuna at ICCAT



Outcomes from 2017 ICCAT Annual Meeting

- Concerns on potential bigeye tuna measures that could impact minor harvesters and then be implemented domestically
 - Should be focused on reducing juvenile mortality and the purse seine fishery on FADs in the Gulf of Guinea
 - Issue of Taiwanese fishing in the Caribbean
 - Concerns about additional burden on PLL fleet, charter/headboats, and tournaments
- Question on whether the U.S. should call for a vote on the fins attached proposal
- If ICCAT does not fund Walt Golet's tagging study on bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna, suggestion that NMFS fund the study – Send otoliths to Walt

Shortfin Mako Shark Assessment and ICCAT Recommendation

- SCRS and the Recommendation clearly laid out that strong action is needed; based on this, the U.S. should consider prohibiting shortfin mako sharks
- Questions about next steps from ICCAT in 2018 and 2019 and what data would be provided for the first 6 months
- Discussion about the conversion factors used
- Concerns raised regarding the data and accuracy of U.S. numbers; questions about whether the changes in MRIP will change U.S. recreational numbers
- Concern that other countries are not reporting all shortfin mako mortalities

Shortfin Mako Shark Emergency Interim Final Rule

- Should implement the ICCAT recommendation only and nothing more
- Questions about EM footage viewing percent; Concerns about EM footage being used for something other than BFT
- Questions about next steps and whether the regulations could change if the ER is extended in Aug.
- Concern that the one large minimum size will result in large impacts to the recreational fishery
- Link on new site:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/emergency-regulations-address-overfishing-north-atlantic-shortfin-mako-sharks>



Shortfin Mako Shark Amendment 11 Scoping

- Need to consider larger sizes for females based on size of 50% maturity.
- Opposition and support for different male/female minimum sizes; suggestion of slot limit for a recreational male only fishery
- The large size limit for females will have a larger impact on the recreational fishery than Agency estimated
- Opposition and support for U.S. taking unilateral action to rebuild the stock
- Support for various options (e.g., commercial option 3 & 8, recreational 2, 7, & 8)
- Support for mandatory recreational reporting Concern about enforcement with the larger recreational size limit

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Shortfin Mako Shark Amendment 11 Scoping

- Consider gear changes to reduce post-release mortality such as line strength; need to do a study on circle hooks before requiring them for mako sharks
- Concern regarding timing of this Amendment given potential changes from ICCAT; suggestion to not do anything until ICCAT finalizes action Advertise the tagging program – could be one way to achieve reporting
- Link on new site:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/submit-comments-options-address-overfishing-north-atlantic-shortfin-mako-sharks>



Discussion of retention under the Swordfish General Commercial Permit



- Request to allow retention of swordfish in the Florida Swordfish Management Area, particularly in light of higher retention limits in other regions
- Several comments supporting continued zero retention of swordfish in the Florida Swordfish Management Area
 - Concerns about effort in that area
 - Concerns about enforcement and accountability for the recreational sector

Pelagic Longline Closed Area Research EFP

- Concern that economic viability of PLL fleet has been greatly diminished and that IBQs have had a negative impact
- Concerns about EFP misinformation
- Disappointment that research would not be conducted
- Support for EFP due to advances in reporting, EM, and link between catches and oceanographic conditions
- Should reanalyze pre-2001 data to reopen FL closed area
- State of Florida opposes EFP
- Concerns about bycatch of oceanic whitetip and dusky sharks

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Pelagic Longline Closed Area Research EFP

- Good data is still needed
- Should approve new EFP application with quarterly evaluation by NMFS and ability to shut down if excessive bycatch
- Disapprove of EFP because it threatens positive gains to swordfish and sailfish
- Should establish catch caps for billfish



Data Collection and Research in Support of Spatial Fisheries Management

- Many suggestions for future closed areas such as sunset provisions, research timing triggers, etc.
- Wide support for researching the effectiveness of existing closed areas
- Concern that options with high Agency cost aren't feasible due to budget constraints
- Closed area research needs to have clear, pre-defined goals
 - What questions are we trying to answer?
- Robust data and sample sizes under a clear scientific research plan are key
- Suggestions for research requirements include 100% observer coverage or EM, bycatch caps, and publically-available data
- Support of Agency leadership is important
- Varied support for most data collection options

Bluefin Tuna: 2017 Trends and 2018 Management Issues

Market Issues

- Provide price/lb information at the various retention limits
- Interest in what happened when % exported dropped after 2012 (supply; quality; \$/yen)
- To improve quality, provide outreach on best handling practices; require ice
- Consider positive messaging to consumers through FishWatch (i.e., well-managed fishery)



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Bluefin Tuna: 2017 Trends and 2018 Management Issues

Reporting and Accountability – “Spread the Love”

- Agency and fishing organizations should increase outreach efforts re: requirements
- Streamline reporting requirements where possible
- Request for information on vessel reporting compliance by state and/or month (to better ID where outreach or enforcement needed) as well as delays (i.e., > 24 hours)
- Request for figure of vessel reporting lag (# of days)
- Show comparison with Longline category rates
- Compile ‘released dead’ and ‘released alive’ information
- Print reporting requirement *right on permit*; suggestions for more intuitive reporting form instructions/layout
- Do/do not enforce dealer reporting requirements more strictly (make fine appropriate to infraction)

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Bluefin Tuna: 2017 Trends and 2018 Management Issues

Annual/Inseason Management

- Urge NMFS to manage inseason to avoid closures
- Consider best practices re: catch and release after closures and potentially limit; promote *tag* and release for data gathering purposes
- Implement same recreational limits as 2017 and monitor 2018 catch; consider increasing limits in 2019 if/as appropriate
- Consider higher recreational limits for headboats, e.g., 12/day
- Consider ways to increase Trophy quotas to keep seasons open longer
- Concern that commercial handgear fisheries achieve ~ 100% of quota use while Longline category <50% and Purse Seine category 0%

Implementation of ICCAT Recommendations for Bluefin Tuna and Northern Albacore

- Important to recognize that as the Eastern/Mediterranean quota increases over next few years, the West will have less “subsidy” (from mixing); volume on international market will be higher, affecting prices
- Important to recognize that the $F_{0.1}$ approach is projected to result in stock decreases over the interim period and that we may need to accept a TAC decline in the next recommendation
- Announcement re: Marine Stewardship Certification for albacore coming soon; should increase albacore value and encourage commercial fishing activity
- Confirmation that stock mixing *will* be incorporated into Management Strategy Evaluation models going forward



Addressing Shark-Bitten Tunas

- Allowing retention of shark damaged yellowfin tuna would be good for charters and PLL fleet; could count against recreational 3/person limit and reduce waste of the resource
- Regardless of shark damage consideration, NMFS should allow *full* removal of tail as long as remainder > 27"
- Develop other size conversion formulas that would allow yellowfin tuna tail removal
- Some concern about health implications of shark bitten tuna without education on proper bacteria control



Sandbar Shark Stock Assessment

- Questions specific to the assessment including recreational data (e.g., regarding 1983 peak), Mexican data (e.g., which Mexican states), conversion factors used, whether the shark research fishery data was considered, and the use of the Francis 2011 approach
- Suggestion to have COASTSPAN conduct research in area off NC
- Question on whether the assessment shows management is working
- Concern that the assessment does not show the large population of sandbar sharks the fishermen are seeing
- Suggestion to have a full benchmark assessment for sandbar and dusky sharks at the same time



Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team Updates

- Concerns about large population of gray seals in New England and their impact on fisheries
 - Question on whether pelagic longline interactions have increased
 - Concern about transfer of worms or parasites to fish and sharks
- Question on how to measure mainline length
 - Aspirational goal meant to minimize set length
 - Logbook and observer data show a clear break at that length for whale interactions
- Impact of Deepwater Horizon on Bryde's whales is considered in damage assessment

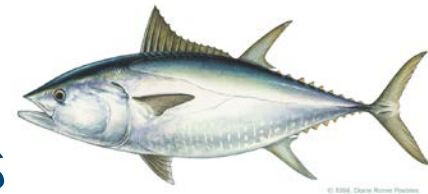
Oceanic Whitetip Shark ESA Listing

- There are a lot of oceanic whitetip sharks in the Caribbean area; concern that data was not considered in the listing
- How is a species delisted?
- Why weren't DPSs established?
- Why isn't oceanic whitetip a prohibited species?
- Have other countries issued non-detrimental findings under CITES?
- Need to update fishermen in Puerto Rico regarding oceanic whitetip and scalloped hammerhead sharks



Individual Bluefin Quota Program 3-Year Review

- Purse Seine fishery: time to close the chapter on fishery as a whole. Should not allow to lease IBQ to longline vessels and profit while purse seine vessels are not active. Purse seine leasing to longline vessels is helpful to longline vessels.
- PLL fleet status: Need to re-evaluate the objectives of the IBQ program with respect to bluefin catch. Enable fishery to more fully utilize its quota in order to help remain economically viable. Costs are increasing.
- IBQ quota: get IBQ in the hands of active vessels
- Cape Hatteras GRA: need to evaluate the access criteria
- EM hard drives: allow multiple trips on one drive.
- Big picture: Success - program has been successful in many respects (e.g., no longer overharvesting the quota, dead discards reduced). Do we need the IBQ program anymore? Fleet is in a different place than before implementation of the IBQ program. Attrition of vessels.



Pelagic Longline Bluefin Tuna Weak Hook and Area-Based Management



- IBQ is enough control to negate the need for fleet-wide measures
- This Issues & Options paper is premature - wait for the 3-Year IBQ Review - particularly regarding the Gulf of Mexico GRAs
- Comments in favor of keeping and eliminating GRAs and weak hook requirement
- Seasonal provision if weak hooks could be applied January to June
- White marlin interactions post-weak hook may be due to increased stock size
- Data collection needed for the NE Closure before deregulation
- NMFS should consider extending the NE Closure to the east
- Political will is necessary for any time area management modifications

Large Pelagics Survey (LPS) Redesign

- Concern expressed about delay in beginning LPS redesign since NRS review was in 2006. This was largely due to NRS finding the issues with the LPS were of much less concern than the issues they identified with the MRIP general surveys which have been the S&T's primary focus for the last decade.
- Concerns expressed about the precision of LPS and MRIP estimates for rare event species, and that this needs to be addressed in the redesign.
- Redesign needs to incorporate electronic for-hire reporting via VTR and logbooks to minimize reporting burden.
- Selection of pilot project state(s) needs to carefully consider the diversity of HMS recreational fisheries to insure results aren't skewed to one fishery.
- Interest in seeing improved catch data collection in the southeast in addition to the LPS region. One option being considered to accomplish this is the addition of an offshore strata to the APAIS survey.
- Desire to see more census based reporting used in the recreational sector, similar to what is done in the commercial sector with logbooks, in the interest of both sectors having equal accountability to management.

Recreational Economic Studies

- The biggest component of the tournament money is from the calcuttas which need to be broken out from registration fees. Fuel impacts are also often discounted.
- Almost all prize money comes from optional fees. Base registration is almost all for covering event costs.
- Goal is to have the report completed in the fall 2018 or early 2019.
- Question about low estimate of charter fees in tournaments. This was due to only a small percentage of participants hiring out charter vessels as opposed to using private vessels.



Louisiana Creel Survey

- AP was encouraged by the higher precision of LA Creel estimates, and it was highlighted that this was the result of the state adequately funding the survey through an increase in license fees to increase the number of trips sampled.
- AP members were encouraged to see the LA Creel was also focusing on improving catch estimates for HMS and other offshore species like blackfin tuna and red snapper.
- Benchmarking and calibration will be finished soon to allow for use of LA Creel data in stock assessments and management.

Request to Allow Filleting of Tunas at Sea on Headboats

- Allow/do not allow filleting at sea
- Original request is for yellowfin tuna but could include all tunas
- Would use tags to associate the loins of the tuna to each rack on the boat for ID
- Concerns that fish ID would be difficult, especially for bigeye and bluefin tunas, but could be possible for albacore and yellowfin
- Should not fillet tuna if there is any question about ID
- Would like more information from enforcement and USCG
- Leads to a bad experience for customers at the dock if they have to wait hours for fish to be filleted
- Some issues with CA program, but retaining carcasses could be a positive difference
- The fillet permit in NJ is for party boats since they could have undercover officers on the boat

MAFMC Chub Mackerel Amendment

- Yellowfin and bigeye tuna interacting with bullet mackerel on the north coast of Puerto Rico
- No evidence of bluefin tuna predation
- Recommendation to add swordfish to the list of HMS predators considered in this amendment



Caribbean Management Update

- Need better data and sound science to characterize regional fauna in Caribbean region before changing management measures
- Support a comprehensive scientific study of sharks in the Caribbean region
- Support of cooperative research with fishermen to meet the HMS data needs in the Caribbean region
- Consideration of a limited cooperative quota for artisanal fishing in the Caribbean region using science-based management
- Interest in the genetic variability of sharks in the Caribbean region including Caribbean and Atlantic sharpnose and Caribbean reef sharks

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Caribbean Management Update

- Species identification of sharks is a major challenge for fishermen in the region
- Need to compile science on 13 of the 14 shark species prohibited in 1999 – many are found in the Caribbean region
- Various questions about the fishery in the Caribbean, e.g., number of vessels, gear types



Modifications to Shark Fishery Closure Criteria

- Many members would prefer to stay with the 5-day notice; would aid in providing timely state water closures
- Some support for threshold preferred alternative, given projection methods
- Some support for the no action threshold, for precautionary purposes
- Some support for moving up to 90% or higher threshold, for full utilization of the quota
- Various questions regarding reporting compliance and timing along with questions on various state regulations
- Various suggestions such as taking bull sharks out of aggregated LCS, limiting the number of dealers, waiting to take action after a comprehensive look of catch versus the TACs, and consideration of rebuilding of some species



Enforcement Updates

- Filleting tunas at sea: OLE not in favor and some concern about mismatch with state regulations regarding landing form. Question about whether the tuna could be loined nearly completely, but leaving the segments attached at one point.
- OLE and Oceanic Fish Restoration Project (OFRP) should explore ways to disassemble PLL gear for OFRP boats to render equipment useless for PLL fishing. Would also be helpful for non-OFRP boats.
- Need to dedicate more resources to addressing recreational sale of swordfish in South Florida. Consider increased reporting requirements, requiring recreational fish to be marked in some way that indicates they are recreationally caught and cannot be sold, check receipts for fish sales in restaurants.
- Requests for more information on Mexican lancha interdictions/intercepts. Do those numbers get reported to ICCAT? USCG has indicated that they don't have the ability to ID species - can NMFS work with them to improve ID so a more accurate accounting of IUU removals can become available?

International Updates

- Under the MMPA, would nations such as Japan and Canada that engage in whaling be banned from exporting seafood to the U.S.?
- How does the SIMP program coordinate with the Shark Conservation Act and other laws?
- New bill has been put forward- the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act
- What is the mechanism for reviewing species that have been listed under CITES, ESA, and MMPA? Can an individual submit a petition to delist a species?
- U.S. is well placed to lead a regional initiative to protect sawfish in the Caribbean

Noteworthy Dates

- Comment period for proposed rule on shark fishery closure criteria ends **March 26**
- Scoping for pelagic longline bluefin tuna weak hook and area-based management – comment period ends **May 1**
- Scoping for shortfin mako shark Amendment 11 – comment period ends **May 7**
- Comment period for shortfin mako shark emergency rule ends **May 7**



Reminders to AP Members

- Complete Google Travel Voucher Form by March 16
 - <https://goo.gl/forms/MKVSX4N4ckuQP3JH3>
 - Email original receipts to Peter.Cooper@noaa.gov
- Please return table tents and name badges
- Please complete the AP satisfaction survey



Thank you to the AP and to Randy for running the meeting!