



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# HMS Advisory Panel Wrap-Up

Fall 2018 HMS AP Meeting  
September 6, 2018



# Overview of Recent Activities/Rulemaking

- Concerns about wind energy and potential impacts on HMS and HMS fisheries. What will cumulative impacts of noise and energy do to migration and spatial distribution of HMS?  
Consider having someone from BOEM come to speak to AP?
- Request for clarification on hammerhead listing and an update on the oceanic whitetip listing
- Request for clarification on lack of data from the EFP issued to Cape Cod groundfish permit holders - have not yet pursued HMS on groundfish trips
- HMS should send information to all permit holders, i.e., there are ~5,700 subscribers to HMS news listserv and 25,000+ HMS Angling permit holders

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# Overview of Recent Activities/Rulemaking

- Clarification on the timelines required for the General category cost earnings survey - how long do participants have to return reports?
- Request to consider allowing headboats to fillet tunas at sea, given the small number of tuna headboats in the northeast, so customers wouldn't need to wait for their fillets at the dock



# EBFM Road Map Draft Implementation Plan

- Science Center work is tied into the HMS and regional plans
- EBFM should be included as a priority in S-K or other national level RFPs
- Should include involvement with states/territories and regions such as FL and Puerto Rico that have unique EFH and nursery grounds
- EBFM is important. Need to focus on all forage species for tunas and other target fish, beyond just herring, since they impact availability
- Need to consider seals, spiny dogfish, and other species with growing populations that eat fish
- Expand coordination with Protected Resources to include endangered species taken in HMS fisheries, e.g., smalltooth sawfish

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# EBFM Road Map Draft Implementation Plan

- Is EBFM implemented in parallel with MSE protocols? Lacking data for EBFM and MSE to put species in food web context (e.g., phytoplankton data for herring, predation). Is the needed research prioritized under this plan?
- Planning to include some economic questions in SEFHIER, consider for community health tracking
- Need to consider HMS fishermen and the impact of additional regulations



# Bluefin Tuna Management: 2018 Year to Date

- Appreciation for improvements in inseason General category management this year
- Question about 2017 BFT dead discards by area (provided). Includes handgear? (no)
- Questions about 2018 LPS catch data and confidence (FYI: July data now available)
- Question about plans for enforcement of the Fishing Vessel Safety Act (FVSA) requirements that apply to General category vessels & CHB category vessels w/sale endorsement



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# Bluefin Tuna Management: 2018 Year to Date

## Suggestions:

- Consider compliance rates when providing additional quota/opportunities (e.g., more to General category January fishery)
- Show General category compliance rate with FVSA requirements as well as CHB
- Make Vessel Inspection decal number a requirement for obtaining a commercial permit. (Could ultimately save NMFS and USCG time and resources.)
- Provide handgear discards to AP in future
- Increase Angling category trophy subquotas (Reg/FMP amendment?)

# Pelagic Longline Bluefin Tuna Weak Hook and Area-Based Management

## Overall (Applies to weak hooks & spatially managed areas)

- A7 accomplished individual accountability; need to remove redundant measures and fleetwide restrictions
- Trend is vessels moving overseas to fish under fewer restrictions
- Concern about politics driving decisions instead of science
- PLL fishery is not socially or economically sustainable any longer
- Need to decide if United States still wants a PLL fishery
- NMFS or other user groups need to help the PLL fleet before its too late
- Request for DOC representative

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# Pelagic Longline Bluefin Tuna Weak Hook and Area-Based Management

## Weak Hooks

- NMFS should remove weak hooks
- Removal of weak hooks would increase SWO landings.
- Support for January to June seasonal requirement
- Retain weak hooks in the GOM GRA

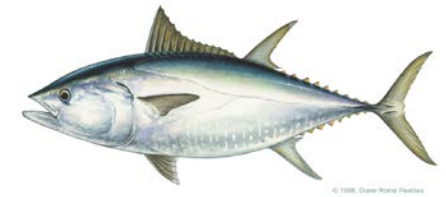


## Spatially Managed Areas

- Keep the GOM GRAs
- Communication protocol is PLL fleet's number one tool to avoid interactions
- There should be no closed areas

# Individual Bluefin Quota Program 3-Year Review and Amendment 13- Bluefin Tuna Management

- Re: data:
  - Analyze economic data by vessel size or by number of trips. Averaging across the fleet masks real trends.
  - Calculate per-day operational costs.
  - Note increased costs of bait and fuel.
- Don't undo the success of Amendment 7
- For more flexibility, allow use of Atlantic IBQ in the Gulf of Mexico
- Don't allocate IBQ to non-active vessels. Allocate based on effort (hooks or sets).
- Overhaul IBQ allocation system, the conditions have changed and the fleet is diverse



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# Individual Bluefin Quota Program 3-Year Review and Amendment 13- Bluefin Tuna Management

- Don't allow sale, stockpiling, or concentration of IBQ. Watch for impacts on small vessels.
- Sunset the Purse Seine category fishery
  - Consider impacts on the pelagic longline fleet, which is currently leasing IBQ from purse seiners
  - Need to make quota available for use (legal mandate: ATCA).
- Make General category "January" fishery closure date later (e.g., in April vs. March 31)
- Explore options for Angling category trophy quota division to ensure opportunities for New England fishermen.
- Consider bag limits for bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

# HMS Charter/Headboat Electronic Logbook Reporting

- **Outreach?** Reach all user groups; more port agents will be helpful for outreach/validation, council coordination, OLE coordination, state involvement
- **Where to start?** Pilot project; consider using regional systems in place; in Caribbean utilize charter captains for pilot
- **Who should be required to report?** For-hire and non-for hire trips; Caribbean captains doing for-hire trips
- **Getting buy in?** Do a pilot project; train users; protect data confidentiality; keep it simple; sub-sample economic information
- **How to fund?** Identify funding early; recover cost via permit fee
- **Goal of program?** Be clear about objectives and data use from onset; reduce burden (one-stop-shop), validate data; must be usable in stock assessments
- **Enforcement?** Must have robust enforcement, no reports/no permit renewal, use port samplers to validate, need accountability
- **"Most Stringent"** Need clarity on which portions of reporting programs are most stringent and how to comply

# Amendment 12- Recent National Policy Directives

Re: Objectives:

- In Objective 1 (ending overfishing/precautionary approach) opportunity to recognize international trend toward management procedures/harvest control rules
- Helpful to show changes in underline/strikeout

Re: Stock Status Determination Criteria:

- Some support for one set of thresholds; international thresholds stronger and U.S. scientists contribute to SCRS assessments
- Interest in operational implications, e.g., new bigeye tuna stock assessment
- Concerns about potential unilateral action if ICCAT does not take effective action
- Question about implication for BFT, which currently has unknown status domestically

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# Amendment 12- Recent National Policy Directives

Re: SBRM:

- Consider species-level vs. fishery-level SBRM; standardization important for sharks

Re: Allocation Criteria

- Question about whether the 10-year maximum would force changes?

# Public Comment

On BFT area-based mgmt. and weak hooks:

- Given individual accountability under A7, these other requirements:
  - Are inefficient and redundant
  - Cause declines in PLL landings (swordfish, albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna) and in number of active participants
- Consider Executive Order to eliminate redundant regulations
- Concern that U.S. quota will be reallocated to other countries
- Concern on timelines for this action, IBQ Program 3-year review, and Amendment 13. Should take action quickly

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# Public Comment

On IBQ Program 3-year review and Amendment 13:

- Appear to achieve IBQ Program objective of reducing PLL catch and dead discards of BFT, but overshooting that objective since PLL fleet is only catching 48% of adjusted Longline BFT quota
- No conservation basis not to fully catch BFT quota
- Goal of Amendment 13 should be to fully utilize Longline portion of U.S. ICCAT BFT quota
- Should reform performance metrics and disperse IBQ to active vessels

# NMFS Bottom Longline Shark Survey

- Questions on Survey Variables – e.g., whether the hooks have changed or bend well, comparison of bait switching, monitoring of physical environment
- Questions on Survey Stations – e.g., whether locations change over time, changes in southern and northern range, change of status if physical environment not ideal
- Support for the Survey's decision to occur in the spring
- Questions about sex ratios and age ratios of different species
- Questions between the Apex predator bottom longline survey and the bottom longline survey out of the Pascagoula Lab
- Members are looking forward to the 32-year report

# Trends in Shark Indices of Abundance

- Concerns about the indices and if they are weighted or ranked
- Questions on why the split at the BLL observer indices given changes in research fishery protocols
- Observer data indices review should consider who was the lead of the Program
- Question on whether temperature can be incorporated into the assessment models and/or catch indices
- Question on the peak of the curve in the plot on abundance and if we have compared this data to historical data on abundance. How close are we to getting back to the biomass we saw years ago?
- When is the target date for the next sandbar assessment?

# Amendment 11- Shortfin Mako Shark Mgmt.

- Concerns about the catch data from other countries and how this affects the stock assessment including IUU fishing and reporting
- U.S. should use the SCRS suggestion of total prohibition of landings
- U.S. should slow down and not jump ahead of ICCAT
- Support for the preferred commercial alternative and/or a combination of Alternatives A2, A3, and A5
- U.S. should encourage the use of EM by all ICCAT countries
- Support for the recreational Alternative B2 that mirrors the ICCAT recommendation (male 71 in FL and female 83 in FL), and some concern about complicating the shark regulations
- Questions about circle hooks



# MRIP Fishing Effort Survey Transition Plan Update

- LPS estimates are not affected by the new MRIP surveys. LPS redesign is being re-initiated with new team, and is not expected to result in as big of changes to catch estimates.
- LPS remains the primary source of HMS recreational catch estimates for Maine to Virginia. MRIP estimates are used for the HMS fisheries in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.
- MRIP catch estimates will increase the most for fisheries with significant shore-based components (i.e., coastal sharks). Fisheries dominated by private boats and for-hire vessels will be affected less.
- Separate estimates for Atlantic and Gulf coasts, states, and two-month sampling waves can be found on the MRIP data query website. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/saltwater-recreational-data-and-statistics-queries>

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# MRIP Fishing Effort Survey Transition Plan Update

- All stock assessments moving forward will use the new MRIP catch estimates, and will be used to calculate new ACLs. Catch estimates back-calibrated to reflect the old survey methodology will be available to manage old ACLs until new stock assessments are conducted.
- MRIP is examining ways to address highly variable estimates for rare event species like HMS to identify ways to make more precise/accurate catch estimates.

# Amendment 14- Domestic Shark Quota Mgmt.

- AP is concerned that this will complicate and create a more convoluted process. Additionally this will take a long time to implement
- AP members also indicated that the flexibility gained in the NS1 Guidelines has been something the Councils have been asking for and HMS should be take advantage of these provisions
- The concern regarding a lack of an SSC was reiterated; need clear outline of what the analog to the SSC is here at HMS. Suggestion of allowing the AP to act like an SSC



# Public Comment

On Amendment 11:

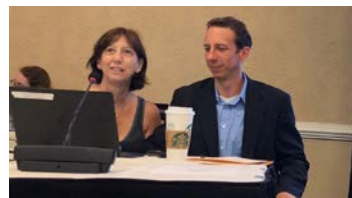
- This rulemaking is premature and should wait until after the November ICCAT meeting
- Support for both the commercial alternatives that are consistent with the ICCAT Recommendation and the alternative to work with ICCAT to rebuild the stock
- General concern about the large change in stock assessment results over time and with the U.S. landings when compared to landings of other countries with larger fleets
- Request for Enric Cortes to provide the AP a summary presentation of the assessment

# Noteworthy Dates and Upcoming Actions

- Comments on Draft EBFM Implementation Plan by **September 30**
- Comment period for Amendment 11 proposed rule ends **October 1**
- Proposed 2019 commercial shark quotas – coming soon
- Final rule for bluefin tuna and albacore quotas – coming soon
- NOAA Fisheries conducting a review to evaluate whether and how to improve the National Bycatch Report - comments by **October 31** - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/give-us-your-feedback-national-bycatch-report>
- Oceanic whitetip shark recovery outline available - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/oceanic-whitetip-shark-recovery-outline>

# Reminders to AP Members

- Complete Google Travel Voucher Form by September 14
  - <https://goo.gl/7J3aRR> - Attach receipts in the form
- Please return table tents and name badges
- Please complete the AP satisfaction survey



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