HMS Advisory Panel Wrap-Up

Fall 2019 HMS AP Meeting
September 4-5, 2019
Overview of Agenda Items

I. Overview of recent activities/rulemaking
II. Amendment 12 Scoping
III. Leadership update
IV. Shark population and depredation discussion
V. Scoping review for Amendment 13
VI. Scoping review for Amendment 14
VII. Data collection for spatial management of HMS
VIII. General category cost earnings survey summary
IX. Update on CITES species listing and permitting
X. HMS recreational roundtable discussion
XI. Stock assessment update for yellowfin tuna, white marlin, shortfin mako
XII. Bluefin tuna fishery update
XIII. HMS compendium update
XIV. Enforcement update
XV. Wrap-up
I. Overview of recent activities/rulemaking

• Shark specs
• BFT/ALB/SWO
• A5b litigation and remand document
• New tech memo/turtle rule
• Area-based weak hook proposed rule
• Three-year review
• Other business
II. Amendment 12 Scoping

• Commenting on the FMP objectives requires knowledge of National Standard 1 Guidelines.

• Re: stock status determination criteria, concerns about potential impacts of adopting international SDCs on U.S. fisheries, especially if a stock goes from “not overfished” to “overfished.”
  • How would NMFS manage domestic HMS fisheries based on the reference points ICCAT establishes for stocks managed through management strategy evaluation?
  • Consider low U.S. catches relative to Atlantic-wide catch.

• Request for confirmation that no regulatory changes would result from SBRM review – confirmed.

• It is important that NMFS reflect that new information is key in what the public brings forward in an attempt to trigger allocation review.
III. Leadership Update from Chris Oliver

- Chris heard from AP members about:
  - Concerns about timely involvement from fishery constituents in the wind turbine permitting process.
  - Suggestion that NMFS work on parts of Amendment 13 in phases, starting with the allocation process.
  - Concerns about seals (pinnipeds).
IV. Shark Population and Depredation

• General agreement that depredation is an issue in all areas and gear types.

• Discussion on methods to collect information to determine extent of problem and species involved, including non-shark species (e.g., pilot whales, barracuda, etc.).

• There are economic impacts across all sectors – lower profits from commercial fishing, customer dissatisfaction on charters, lower tourism as a result of safety concerns.

• Does increased depredation mean more sharks or less prey or learned behavior?
IV. Shark Population and Depredation (cont.)

- Request for more shark stock assessments.
- The issue is more complicated than just stock-based; need to consider ecosystem implications.
- Focus on characterization and mitigation.
V. Scoping Review for Amendment 13 (bluefin tuna)

- **Purse Seine Fishery**
  - Support for redistributing the quota; the fishery is over. Reallocate to active vessels (where quota will be used).
  - Should not reallocate quota among categories until after A13 addresses the PLL IBQ allocation issues.
  - Premature to sunset the fishery; new owners of vessels trying to acquire permits (public comment).
  - Opposition to leasing of Purse Seine category quota to pelagic longline vessels.

- **Pelagic Longline Quota**
  - Agreement that unused PLL quota is an issue that should be addressed.
  - Need to facilitate PLL fishery’s ability to catch target species.
  - Allocate to active vessels based on number of sets.
  - Support for additional flexibility to enable vessels from the Atlantic to fish in the Gulf of Mexico.
V. Scoping Review for Amendment 13 (cont.)

- **Charter/Headboat Fishery**
  - Support for maintaining flexibility that allows CHB to fish either commercially or recreationally for bluefin (status quo).
    - Need diversity of activities to preserve revenue opportunities.

- **Trophy Recreational Fishery**
  - Support for creating a new trophy fishery subarea/subquota in the northern area (i.e., to allow landings opportunities north of New York).
VI. Scoping Review for Amendment 14 (sharks)

• Currently no sharks are managed under ICCAT; discussion on ICCAT’s impact on sharks affected by this rulemaking, included removing species affected by ICCAT from the Amendment.

• Discussion regarding funding for more assessments and data for sharks.

• Support for focusing on domestic shark stocks in this action.

• Conversations on how A14 could assist with data collection for Caribbean shark species.
VII. Data Collection for Spatial Management

- General agreement on need for research in HMS closed areas.
- Request for a summary of existing funding mechanisms for spatial research.
VIII. General Category Cost Earnings Survey

• Sector profitability should be considered before reallocating bluefin quota to a sector.

• Most General category fishermen participate in multiple fisheries, so their annual expenditures are supported by more than bluefin tuna revenue.

• Need to examine costs and earnings by permit sector (Tuna General vs. Charter/Headboat) as well as by fishing methods (i.e., rod and reel and harpoon).

• Need to examine costs and earnings by level of participation/activity in the fishery.
IX. Update on CITES species listing and permitting

• Shortfin mako and longfin mako will be listed on Appendix II as of November 26.

• Specific CITES permits will now be needed for importing and exporting these species.

• Contact FWS or go to their webpage if you need more information – link to webpage is 
X. HMS Recreational Roundtable

• **LPS Redesign**
  - Move away from using MRIP where possible due to wide fluctuations from year-to-year.
  - Incorporate electronic reported data into LPS estimates.
  - Questions about purpose, sample design, incorporation of state data.

• **For Hire Electronic Reporting**
  - Strong support for moving forward with For Hire electronic reporting.
  - HMS could use this data for more than just effort data.
  - Captains reporting in logbooks do not want to continue reporting via MRIP/LPS.

• **Tournaments**
  - Tournaments provide opportunities for education and outreach. HMS should continue to support a robust outreach program (i.e., visiting tournaments). Leverage partnerships to do this as needed (e.g., Apex Predator program for biological sampling/outreach; port agents).
  - Adjust tournament request to include an indication of when outreach materials need to arrive.
  - Add an upload / import option for excel into the ATR.
  - Tournaments are businesses. HMS and OLE should step up enforcement / compliance efforts.
  - Consider expanding the observer program for tournaments.
X. HMS Recreational Roundtable (cont.)

- **Improving Communication of Recreational Regulations**
  - Emphasis on the need for accurate reporting and regulations re: less active components of the fishery (i.e., those folks taking only a few trips per year).
  - A large portion of the recreational fishery is not filling out reports, need to figure out a way to make reporting easier & more accessible, such as improved mobile apps.
  - NMFS should consider some type of tag program for landings, such as catch cards. It can be a challenge to scale these programs up.
  - Fish Rules app is a popular resource for many anglers.
  - Apex Predator program bio sampling and tagging program very effective in meeting outreach needs and heightens profile of NOAA Fisheries.

- **Atlantic Tuna Issues**
  - Don’t get ahead of ICCAT.
  - Consider pushing more quota into the Trophy category within the recreational Angling category (i.e., take quota for smaller fish and apply it for bigger fish).
  - Maintain flexibility for CHB permit – don’t require CHB participants to select either commercial or recreational for permit type.
  - Consider producing educational YouTube videos to convey regulatory information and messaging.
X. HMS Recreational Roundtable (cont.)

- **Marlin 250 Limit**
  - Protect access to this quota for tournaments. If you go to a 0 bag limit the tournaments will be over.
  - Use the carryover provisions to avoid fishery closures if necessary.
  - There is a strong catch and release and fishing ethic for marlin.

- **Recreational Reporting / Apps**
  - Try to move towards a one stop shop with reporting.
  - Private industry could develop, maintain, and license an app for NMFS.
  - NMFS should use social media to its fullest potential for outreach. NMFS needs to be prepared to cultivate and build relationships online.
  - NMFS could tie permits to a reporting app. For example, when a permit is issued, anglers must go onto the app to “activate” the permit. It forces points of engagement that could then be used to provide regulatory information and outreach.
  - The API is available on the ACCSP website for app developers.

- **Targeting Prohibited Species**
  - The regulations do not prohibit “fishing for” prohibited species. There are allowances for that activity to occur provided that “retaining and possessing” does not occur.
  - Fish must be released in a manner that maximizes potential for survival, i.e., the fish must be kept in the water.
  - White shark catch & release used to require participation in a tagging program. That is no longer the case.
  - Florida has implemented new requirements for shore based shark fishing. This can be a significant source of mortality. There is a desire for state/federal coordination.
XI. Stock assessment updates

- SCRS updated 3 assessments – yellowfin tuna, white marlin, and shortfin mako.
- Final results and implications of the assessments will be a topic at the upcoming ICCAT meeting in November.
XII. Bluefin tuna fishery update

• Interest in effect of reduced BFT dead discards (due to A7) on the U.S. reaching quota.
• Interest in seeing price/lb data separated out for domestic sales and exports.
• Concern about the “Wicked Tuna” effect on increased effort and decreased prices.
• Interest in information about BFT imported to satisfy U.S. demand (including price).
• Interest in data re: General category trips with zero landings, including for CHBs.
• As BFT Management Strategy Evaluation is developed, socio-economic impacts like price will be considered when selecting target reference points.
XIII. HMS Compendium Update

• The compendium takes commitment and HMS should strive to see this document published.
• Include the names of those who have helped shape the history of HMS.
• Post the compendium online.
XIV. Enforcement Updates

• Provided an overview of domestic and foreign boarding efforts.
• 317 HMS boardings in 2019 through August with the majority in Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.
• Coast Guard issues violations and forwards to NOAA.
• Taking concerns about non-compliance seriously.
• Presence on U.S./Mexico border is constant.
• USCG working with NOAA to link permits to safety decals.
• Trying to use more carrot than stick to build compliance.
XV. Wrap-up

- A12 (national policies) – comment period through Nov 4.
- A14 (shark ABC control rule) – questions seeking clarity on domestic vs ICCAT management, need for more funds for shark assessments, Caribbean small boat permit.
- Spatial management – request for summary of funding sources which HMS will update.
- Shark depredation – talked about how to get more population information.
- Rec roundtable – lots of good suggestions, including improvements for surveys, education/outreach, fishing for prohibited sharks, 250 marlin limit management.
- Pelagic weak hook proposed rule – comment period through Sept 30; additional hearing Sept 19 in Gloucester, MA.
Thank you to the AP, Bennett, and to HMS Management Division Staff for a great meeting!