



NMFS Proposes 2009 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quotas and Effort Controls

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes 2009 fishing year quotas for the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fishery and effort controls based on the reduced 2009 western Atlantic BFT Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and resulting total U.S. quota recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) (see attached table). The TAC is intended to rebuild the stock consistent with the BFT rebuilding program and end overfishing by 2010. NMFS also proposes General and Angling category daily retention limits in this action as follows:

Category	Daily Retention Limit (per vessel)	Duration
General	3 large medium/giant BFT (measuring 73" or greater)	June 1, 2009 – August 31, 2009
Angling	1 school, large school, or small medium BFT (measuring 27-<73")	January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009 (default limit currently in effect)

Regardless of the duration of a fishing trip, the daily retention limit applies. General category example: whether a vessel takes a two-day trip or makes two trips in one day, the limit of three fish overall applies and may not be exceeded. Angling category example: whether a vessel takes a two-day trip or makes two trips in one day, the limit of one fish overall applies and may not be exceeded.

To view the proposed rule and supporting documents, see www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/breaking_news.htm. You may submit comments (identified by "0648-AV58") by any one of the following methods:

- Submit electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>
- Fax: 978-281-9340, Attn: Sarah McLaughlin
- Mail: Sarah McLaughlin, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

Comments must be submitted by March 20, 2009. In addition to general comment on the proposed rule, public comment is specifically requested on the Angling category daily retention limit and how to avoid overharvest of the Angling category quota and subquotas. NMFS will hold two public hearings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public regarding these proposed initial quota specifications and effort controls, as follows:

1. March 4, 2009, 3 p.m.-5 p.m., NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
2. March 17, 2009, 4 p.m.-6 p.m., NOAA, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact the HMS Management Division at (978) 281-9260.

Emily Menachis

for Alan D. Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

FEB 18 2009

Date

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**Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Final Quota Specifications (in metric tons) for the 2009 Fishing Year
(January 1-December 31, 2009)**

Category (% share of baseline quota)	Baseline Allocation	Dead Discard Deduction	Adjustment to Baseline Quota ¹	Final 2009 Fishing Year Quota
Angling (19.7)	199.0 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 103.5 Reserve 19.1 North 39.8 South 44.5 Lg. Sch/Sm. Med 90.9 North 42.9 South 48.0 Trophy 4.6 North 1.5 South 3.1		61.6	260.6 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 103.5 Reserve 19.1 North 39.8 South 44.5 Lg. Sch/Sm. Med 151.1 North 71.3 South 79.8 Trophy 6.0 North 2.0 South 4.0
General (47.1)	Total: 475.7 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 25.2 Jun-Aug 237.8 Sept 126.1 Oct-Nov 61.8 Dec 24.7		147.4	623.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 33.0 Jun-Aug 311.5 Sept 165.1 Oct-Nov 81.0 Dec 32.4
Harpoon (3.9)	39.4		12.2	51.6
Purse Seine (18.6)	187.8		58.2	246.0
Longline (8.1)	81.8 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 32.7 NED 25.0 ³ South 49.1	-90.0	82.5 ²	74.3 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 29.7 NED 25.0 ³ South 44.6
Trap (0.1)	1.0		0.3	1.3
Reserve (2.5)	25.2		155.2 ⁴	180.4
Total (100)⁵	1,009.9	-90.0	517.5	1,437.4

(1) The distribution of 517.5 mt of underharvest (per ICCAT recommendation) to the quota categories is consistent with FMP allocations, after considerations as calculated below for the Longline category and the Reserve.

(2) Adjustment to Longline category quota is intended to provide sufficient quota for the 2009 fishing year. Proposed Longline category quota=81.8-90.0+82.5=74.3. Dead discard deduction consistent with § 635.27(a)(10).

(3) 25 mt to account for bycatch of BFT in directed longline fisheries in the NED. Not included in total baseline allocation, which is allocated according to the category percentages contained in the Consolidated HMS FMP.

(4) Allocation of 15% of the U.S. quota (155.2 mt) to the Reserve for potential ICCAT transfer and other domestic management objectives.

(5) Totals are subject to rounding error.