



# NOAA Fisheries Service

## HMS Advisory Panel Summary: Priorities and Next Steps



March 15, 2012  
Silver Spring, MD

# Bluefin Tuna Quota Specifications

- If substantial quota remains late in the year, do not reduce bag limits
- Allow retention of small medium BFT (59-73”) for all or a portion of the season
- 2010 and 2011 dead discard estimates may not be best proxies for 2012 amount

Projected comment period end date: April 16



# A7: Bluefin Tuna White Paper

- Qualified support for breadth of measures and use of multiple approaches
- Ready for scoping soon, but not during peak fishing season (summer)
- Should prioritize, overall and by region
- Key goal is to stay within U.S. quota while maximizing benefits to all categories

## Add to Scoping Document:

- Option to expand weak hook use beyond Gulf of Mexico
- Reduce PLL length during a specific time or area
- Transition to other gears (greenstick, buoy gear)



# A7: Bluefin Tuna White Paper Considerations

- Discards are regulatory; focus on reducing waste
- Gulf of Mexico unique (spawning grounds, higher mortality rate)
- Data collection takes time and money – what is realistic?
- Not exceeding ICCAT requirements
- Fairness/consistency (e.g., prohibit *all* hook gear in T/A closures)
- All groups should take responsibility for actions and impacts
- Balance, e.g.:
  - find right PLL catch cap w/o impacting SWO & tuna fishery
  - allocation changes
- NRDA funds - unique opportunity to finance research and facilitate gear transition
- Consider multiple types of data (e.g., show Catch Per Unit Effort, which is more helpful than BFT totals in T/A analysis maps)
- Consider regs - at time existing T/A closures established (J-hooks, trip limits)
- Consider Gulf vessel hold capacity in target catch requirements



# A5: Atlantic Shark Rebuilding

- Soak time and gear tending measures are unenforceable and restrictive on the fishery
- Hook measures could be problematic for trips that want to fish for other species as well as sharks; look at economic impacts of hook restrictions
- Split the blacknose stock; use catch percentage to set Gulf of Mexico TAC
- Unlink the blacknose and non-blacknose SCS quotas; Fishermen are avoiding blacknose sharks
- Manage hammerhead sharks as a complex; no recreational retention
- Allow recreational retention of hammerheads; don't eliminate the opportunity to land a trophy fish
- Set a commercial scalloped hammerhead quota but not a trip limit

# A5: Atlantic Shark Rebuilding

- Status quo for sandbar sharks; need to rationalize straddling stock scenario with Mexico for sandbar and dusky
- Look at effort when considering time/area closures; how do current closures impact effort and how would effort shift with additional closures
- Look at the timeframe of dusky shark interactions; consider U.S. vs international impacts on the stock
- Maps show dusky interactions off of Hatteras, but not seeing them on the water; look at who is setting that gear before closing areas
- Backstopping the 35 fathom GOM Reef Fish closure is not effective for sharks
- Don't micromanage the fishery; consider catch shares

# A6: Shark Fishery Catch Shares

- Catch shares could solve some of the issues in A5
- Fishery micromanagement supports the use of catch shares
- NMFS needs to get management structure in place and improve science before it considers catch shares
- Operational issues need to be considered
- Quotas need to be distributed on a state-by-state basis
- NMFS should assemble a catch share team/working group
- A referendum is important and should include all of the directed permit holders
- Consider state permitted fishermen as well

# A4: Caribbean Management

## NMFS Considerations:

- The consequences of issuing an open-access permit, such as the displacement of fishing effort from the mainland to the Caribbean
- Retention limits per day versus per trip
- A minimum size requirement if the retention limit for sharks is set above zero
- Horsepower restrictions in conjunction with vessel size restrictions



# A8: SWO Commercial Access

## Recommendations:

- Regional management measures
- Separate open access permit
- Only allow sale to authorized dealers
- Support for both low and high retention limits
- Consider historical participation
- Relieve PLL restrictions

## Concerns:

- Consider value of existing LAP
- Increased effort off S. FL (“S. FL is special”)
- Overcapitalizing fishery & available quota

# SWO 2012 Quotas, Min. Sizes, etc.

- NMFS should implement the new 25" CK minimum size
- NMFS should consider keeping the LJFL measurement for recreational fisheries
- NMFS should remove the LJFL measurement for simplicity
- Some interest in re-implementing 33 lb minimum weight standard
- 25" CK will reduce regulatory discards; will increase revenue due to increased landings
- NMFS should estimate the amount of additional landed swordfish due to the CK minimum size change

# Looking Ahead



- BFT Specs Hearings
- A4 Hearings
- A7 Scoping Meetings and Notice of Intent
- BFT Angling/CHB
- Retention Limits
- Silky Shark Proposed Rule
- SWO Quotas Proposed Rule



# Upcoming Dates

Date	Action
16 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BFT Quota Specs Proposed Rule Publishes</li><li>• A4 Caribbean Management Proposed Rule Publishes</li></ul>
31 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A7 BFT White Paper Comments Due</li><li>• A6 Catch Share Scoping Comments Due</li></ul>
13 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A5 Pre-draft Comments Due</li></ul>
16 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BFT Quota Specs Comments Due</li></ul>
14 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A4 Caribbean Management Comments Due</li></ul>

Fall AP Meeting:  
Week of September 17<sup>th</sup>  
(tentative)



