



HMS Advisory Panel: Priorities and Next Steps

NOAA
FISHERIES

Highly
Migratory
Species



March 13, 2015
Bethesda, Maryland

Comments from Overview



- Support for actions to reduce IUU fishing
- Recommendation to work with FWS to allow taking a part of an animal, shipping it overseas, and developing a documentation system for shipping hammerhead fins.
- Interest in expediting NMFS' data collection for CITES

National Recreational Fishing Policy

- Policy has become more detailed and transparent in description of its principles and goals
- AP would like to see inclusion of education and outreach in the policy goals
- AP would like to see more engagement of fishing community with smart phone apps
- Data collection surveys must be thorough, as with commercial fisheries
- AP would like to comment on implementation plan

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management



IBQ Program and System

- Value of leased bluefin, availability of allocation
- Conversion of landings from dressed to whole weight
- Continuing need to educate fishery participants about A 7
- Process of redistribution of Reserve quota, and will such a distribution be a useful amount in IBQ context?
- What regulatory flexibility will there be in 2016?
- Continuing questions regarding the specifics of A 7, such as the performance metrics

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

Electronic Monitoring

- Process for non-eligible vessels (i.e., without quota share) EM installation, funding available if they are active?
- Questions regarding logistical details (e.g. swapping of hard drives); Continuing communication is needed.
- Questions regarding the functionality of EM systems post installation
- Cost/benefits of electronic monitoring? Long-term funding?
- Access to EM footage?

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

Vessel Monitoring System Reporting

- Ongoing technical issues (i.e., Skymate)
- Reporting confirmation, data quality issues (large values in data)

Purse Seine Measures

- Concern about 2 inactive participants receiving quota
- Concern about revised start date measure

Other

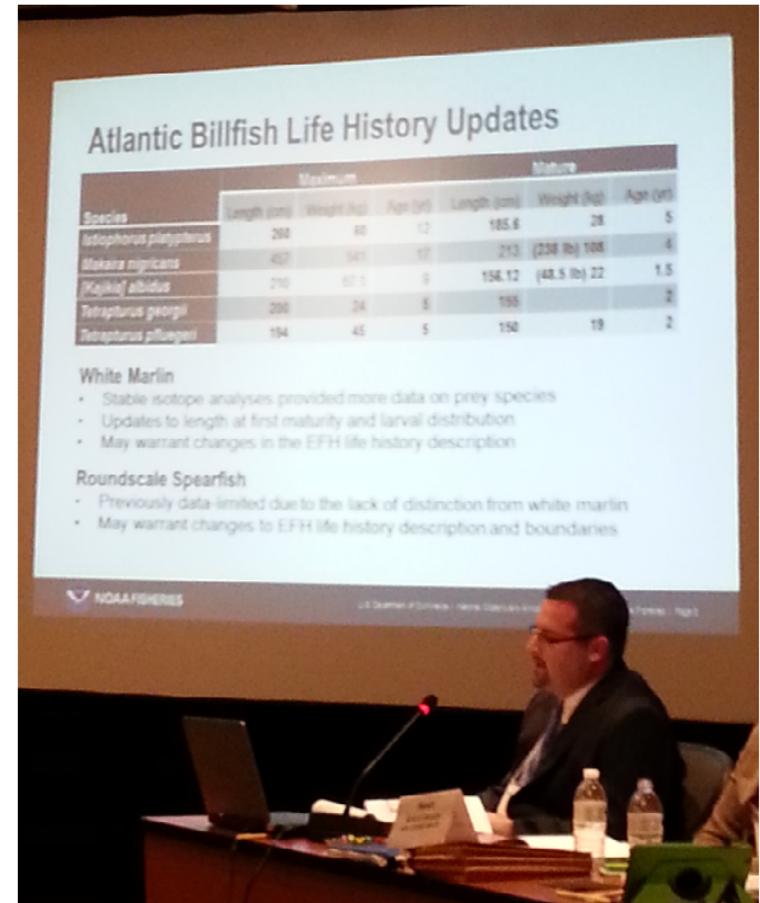
- Future viability of pelagic longline fishery
- Request to see value of PLL catch in SAFE report
- Access to closed areas
- Questions about Amendment 7 three year review

2015 Swordfish Specifications

- Few specific concerns about the adjusted quota
- Some questions/comments on international quota transfers
- Many comments on reduction in landings and effort since 2012
 - Overly-burdensome regulations causing reduction in effort
 - Imports drive down prices
 - Allow access to closed areas, perhaps through dynamic area management
 - Move toward results-based management. Provide goals to industry and allow flexibility to meet those goals

Draft HMS Essential Fish Habitat 5-Yr Review

- Concern about the apparent lack of review of non-fishing impacts, including Deepwater Horizon oil spill (reviewed; change to EFH boundaries not warranted in recommendation)
- Need to review seismic testing (please submit available information)
- Suggestion to review recent council EFH analyses, including non-fishing impacts



Atlantic Billfish Life History Updates

Species	Maximum			Minimum		
	Length (cm)	Weight (kg)	Age (yr)	Length (cm)	Weight (kg)	Age (yr)
<i>Istiophorus platypterus</i>	260	40	12	185.6	28	5
<i>Makaira nigricans</i>	457	161	17	213	(238 lb)	8
<i>Kajikia albidus</i>	210	47.7	9	154.12	(48.5 lb)	2.5
<i>Tetrapturus georgii</i>	200	24	8	155		2
<i>Tetrapturus pfluegeri</i>	194	45	5	150	19	2

White Marlin

- Stable isotope analyses provided more data on prey species
- Updates to length at first maturity and larval distribution
- May warrant changes in the EFH life history description

Roundscale Spearfish

- Previously data-limited due to the lack of distinction from white marlin
- May warrant changes to EFH life history description and boundaries

NOAA FISHERIES

Public Comment: Day 1

Pew Charitable Trust Comments:

- US ICCAT delegation made important recommendations for eBCD
- Recent agreement to increase quotas means higher fishing pressure on the species
- It's important to have eBCD to prevent total catch from getting above that recommended by best available science
- Ensure eBCD is implemented on both sides of Atlantic
- Continue forward with eBCD plans in advance of ICCAT deadlines, for ICCAT to be a strong advocate
- Include trade between EU member states in eBCD tracking

Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards

- Concern about the underlying science available and ability to conduct all the stock assessments needed, particularly for sharks
- Questions about:
 - How guidelines apply to HMS
 - Who decides what is an indicator stock for a complex
 - The proposed changes regarding the differences between international and domestic management status determination criteria
 - The applicability towards ecosystem based management practices
 - How the guidelines relate to assessment timelines and prioritizations
- Concerns about mixed stock issues, bycatch, and uncertainty in management, and indicator stocks

NOAA Fisheries Leadership

- Important to rebuild trust with the recreational community; chance to review policy & implementation plan
- Interest in and concern about management and monitoring of shared stocks with Cuba
- Concern about electronic monitoring systems issues
- Interest in improving recreational representation on councils (need to contact state governors)
- Need for funding to resolve disconnect between fishery observations and stock assessments
- Need to increase monitoring and observer coverage

Smoothhound Shark Stock Assessment

- Concern about the fate of Gulf smoothhounds caught incidentally; dead discards should instead be landed and utilized as sustainable resource
- Interest in average size of Atlantic smooth dogfish to estimate future size limits and quotas since projections were provided in numbers of fish
- Interest in total catch estimate comparisons between Gulf and Atlantic fisheries and how those estimates relate to future quotas



Amendment 9: Smoothhound Shark Management

- Encourage expediting final rule to regulate fisheries
- Interest in observer coverage and bycatch in fishery
- Discussion regarding the benefits and costs of processing smooth dogfish at sea
- Strongly encourage close monitoring of the fishery and a zero-tolerance policy on violations to the at-sea processing allowance
- Quota should be based on stock assessment, not preferred alternative in the proposed rule (max annual landings + 2 st. dev.)
- Concerns about the enforceability of net checks and soak time restrictions in the gillnet fishery

Dusky Shark Update

- Encouraged by survey abundance trends
- Dismayed by lack of progress on rulemaking
- Explore working with other countries; need for strong international cooperation
- Support for assessing dusky shark early but concerns as well:
 - An update assessment is internal with little transparency
 - An update assessment doesn't use new data and may not see all the increases fishermen are seeing
 - Rearranging stock assessment schedule affects other species - e.g., Atlantic blacktip may be doing well, but stock status is still unknown
 - Need more shark assessments for other species (e.g., sandbar)
- Move forward with some recreational measures (ridgeback prohibition, education/outreach) but don't remove species without good reason

Amendment 6: Future of the Shark Fishery

- Implement 100-200 lb trip limit for blacknose sharks in both regions or prohibit retention in the GOM to prevent early closure of the non-blacknose SCS fishery.
- Open the ATL aggregated LCS management group on 1/1 or 3/1
- The seasonal opening dates have impacted fishing effort and participation, and historical participants would be impacted by the current proposed sub-regional quotas.
- The increased retention limit would only help state-water fishermen, especially in NC.
- Divide the GOM sub-regional quotas at 88° or 88.3 ° long.
- Investigate need for upgrading restrictions in other HMS permits.
- Support for alternative C7 (increase in Atl SCS non-blacknose quota) since bonnethead sharks do not comprise a large portion of landings
- Shark numbers are increasing and affecting other non-HMS fisheries

eDealer Reporting and Quota Monitoring

- Appreciate HMS staff's proactive approach towards getting our dealers up to compliance
- It is time to marry point of sale with logbook, federal reporting, and state reporting to address the two year time lag between the results of the stock assessment and implementation
- Concern that some states allow paper reports

Beyond eDealer:

- ACCSP vessel swipe card project in MA & ME Request for verification of BFT VMS reports
- Request for ITP dealers to report CITES listed species

Office of Sustainable Fisheries Strategic Plan

- Improve the science processes
 - Need real time data and more data analysts for stock assessments
 - Streamline data quality checks, analyses, and recommendations
 - Grants and contracts should be longer-term to develop the next generation of fisheries scientists
- Protect fishermen and industry
 - Educate them about regulations, even if that means new technologies to do so
 - Provide new opportunities and appeal to enter the fisheries, maybe by increasing LAP availability
 - Monitor the success of fisheries, not just species
 - Support/promote working waterfronts and their communities' interests
- Streamline regulatory processes to implement necessary regulations more quickly
- A bigger share of domestic consumption should be from domestic production
- May need a higher goal for recreational fishery participation
- Drastic regulatory changes leave manufacturers sitting with a lot of inventory
- Examine previous strategic plans to see how they were used, and whether they had positive effects
- More information to this panel about how the budget process works may help members get involved.
- Consider the desired end state, and work backwards to determine how to get there
- RFMOs are making progress towards improved communication to the public well in advance of actions. NOAA should, too – public can promote proposals here and in other countries
- More paperwork is a burden. U.S. South Atlantic, HMS, and NE reporting systems should be in sync

Public Comment: Day 2

- Allow the for-hire fishery to have a larger trip limit for school sized bluefin like last year – it allowed a successful niche fishery off NJ and NY
- Evaluate increased retention limits on school sized bluefin by region for for-hire fleet. Fisheries in different regions may not all need trip limit increase.
- Revisit 5% demersal / pelagic rule (sidebar discussion)
- Prefer A6 alternatives that will allow year round fisheries and reduce the effects of one region's fishing behavior on another
- Develop a tagging program for sandbar (fishermen receive a limited number of tags per) instead of the shark research fishery quota. Tagging program will provide data and result in fewer problems than raising the trip limit to 55 head
- The Shark Research Fishery is not representative of all shark fisheries.
- Revisit the cut bait regulations - it would reduce costs & a turtle can't swallow a mackerel cut in half (HMS is consulting with NMFS Protected Resources to evaluate the cut bait regulations)

HMS Research Priorities and Funding Opportunities

- Suggested establishment of a separate research program that funds HMS research
- The current funding opportunities are appreciated; however, they are fragmented and may not move NMFS towards achieving an end goal
- Research funding is bluefin tuna-centric. Should recognize research needs for other HMS
- Concern that current cooperative research programs may not meet their potential in fostering relationships between NMFS scientists and industry
- The panel discussed the integration of aerial surveys for research, with specific focus on whether aerial surveys could be useful measures of abundance and presence/absence, and whether aerial surveys could help in estimating effort

HMS Electronic Technology Implementation Plan

- Recognize this as an opportunity to develop an App/program that eliminates reporting redundancy and paperwork that includes all requirements tied to the permits and is shared across agencies (a more comprehensive system)
- Improve technologies before implementing them in the field. NOAA needs to beta test devices on NOAA vessels before implementing them
- Support for video monitoring replacing observers
- Need for education/outreach about, and reinforcement of, recreational reporting requirements
- Be cautious of cost and burden incurred by fishermen for implementation of technologies
- June 1st = A 7 video monitoring deadline

Please Remember....

Comments are due:

- March 23 - 2015 swordfish specifications proposed rule
- April 3 – Draft Amendment 6 on commercial shark management
- April 6 – Draft Essential Fish Habitat 5-Year Review
- June 30 – National Standards proposed rule

Upcoming Actions:

- Proposed rule on bluefin tuna quota – spring
- Final 2015 swordfish specifications – early summer
- Final Essential Fish Habitat 5-Year Review - summer
- Draft Office of Sustainable Fisheries Strategic Plan - summer
- Final Amendment 6 – late summer/early fall 2015
- Final Amendment 9 - fall 2015

Reminders to AP Members

Please return your
name tags and table tents
to the registration table

Please fill out an **evaluation form** and
return to the registration table

Travel Forms and Receipts are due
Wednesday, March 18th

Return envelopes will be provided for
receipts and signed travel vouchers

