

Summary points from AP BFT Working Group, May 12, 2010

Angling category

Issue: Substantial overharvest of base and adjusted quota

Potential solutions:

- seasons
- retention limits
- slot limit to prevent retention of small medium BFT

Issue: CHBs and private boats using same quota while having different goals and participation

Potential solutions:

- different retention limits for private boats and CHBs
- dedicated Angling category quota for CHB permit category

Issue: underreporting (call-in/web system)/untimely reporting of recreational landings

Potential solutions:

- make reporting (incl. negative reporting) a condition of permit issuance
- catch card/web-based reporting system
- tail tag program (with verification number)... Or hybrid

Issue: illegal sale and highgrading of Angling category fish

Potential solution: enforcement and outreach

Issue: illegal chartering (without CHB permit and operator permit)

Potential solution: enforcement and outreach

Issue: release mortality

Potential solution: outreach and education

Longline category

Issue: excessive bycatch of BFT

Potential Solutions:

- extend weak hook research into Atlantic;
- encourage voluntary weak hook use in Gulf of Mexico;
- mandate weak hook use in Gulf of Mexico;
- implement a bycatch cap in Gulf of Mexico; modify retention limit and observer coverage as appropriate
- modify boundaries of existing closed areas where BFT bycatch is at a minimum
- increase observer coverage and focus coverage in high CPUE areas
- when weak hook research proven effective, shift observer coverage to areas with more uncertain bycatch rates

Issue: transfer of large amount of Reserve to cover Longline category landings overharvest and discards
Potential Solution: eliminate such transfer

Purse Seine category

Issue: recent un- or under-utilized allocations for vessels
Potential Solution: inseason transfer of quota to the Reserve

Issue: two vessels have totally left the fishery
Potential Short-term Solution: inseason transfer of quota to the Reserve or to all categories
Potential Long-term Solution: consider FMP allocation change
(NMFS should contact the vessel owners to determine intentions for the short and long-term)

General category

Issue: underutilized quota
Potential Solutions:

- year-round fishery
- increase daily retention limit (up to 5 fish)
- allow CHB to fish commercially and recreationally on the same day

Issue: potential for quota being met early in season
Potential Solution: monitor catch rates and adjust retention limit if needed

Issue: concerns about bycatch of undersized fish
Potential Solution: enforcement and outreach

Harpoon category

Issue: Harpoon category base quota fully utilized
Potential Solution: maintain some quota in Reserve and consider transfer if needed

Issue: inconsistent limit for large medium BFT for General and Harpoon categories
Potential Solution: increase retention limit of large mediums from 2 to 3