

Science, Service, Stewardship

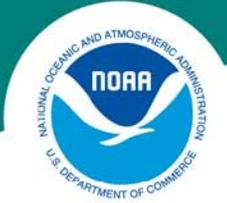


Scoping for Amendment 4 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

Highly Migratory Species
Management Division
NMFS/NOAA

Summer/Fall 2008

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Presentation Objectives

Purpose: to listen to your ideas on the management issues and options specific to the Caribbean region

This presentation will give you:

- **An overview of the amendment process and the purpose of scoping**
- **Overview of current Federal regulations**
- **Highlight differences in the Caribbean region**
- **Outline some potential options and issues for the upcoming amendment**

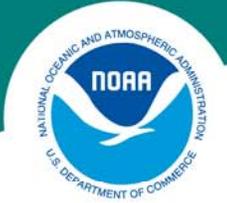
Information on where to send comments will be given at the end of this presentation.



The Amendment Process

Purpose: NMFS is considering changes to some of the regulations in the Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP that would be applicable to the Caribbean region

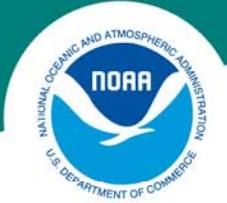
- **These changes will be done through an amendment**
- **NMFS starts the process with scoping**
- **Findings from the scoping process are then summarized in a Predraft**
- **NMFS develops a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and proposed rule based on the issues summarized in the Predraft. The public then comments on the draft EIS and proposed rule.**
- **NMFS addresses and considers the public's comments and designates the preferred management measures in a final EIS and implements those measures in the final rule.**



The Purpose of Scoping

Purpose: To gather public input on the issues and options that need be addressed in the upcoming EIS for the amendment

- **NMFS held several scoping meetings around the Caribbean (St. Croix, St. Thomas, and Puerto Rico) to gather public feedback on the issues that need to be addressed**
- **The public submits comments/input at these meetings as well as via fax, mail, e-mail, or phone**
- **NMFS will summarize the comments received and synthesize the issues raised during the scoping process in a Predraft**
- **The issues raised and potential solutions suggested during scoping will be considered as part of management alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS and proposed rule**



Need for Action

- **NMFS believes that interest in HMS resources is increasing in the U.S. Caribbean. This may be due to depletion of shelf resources.**
- **However, NMFS recognizes that many HMS regulations established for the continental United States do not well fit the Caribbean region**
- **NMFS is developing an amendment to address the issues that are unique to the Caribbean, such as improving permitting compliance and data collection and enhancing enforcement of regulations**
- **Such changes are needed to ensure compliance with U.S. regulations and that the United States is in compliance with multilateral treaties relating to HMS**



Current Commercial Management Measures

- **Permits**
 - **Commercial permits** - issued to the vessel; some limited access
 - **Dealer permits** - issued to a person, company, or entity; open access
- **Authorized gear & species, fishing seasons, & fishing quotas**
- **Trip limits, size limits, & landing conditions**
- **Vessel reporting, upgrading restrictions, & observer requirements**
- **Closed areas**
- **Dehooking gear**
- **ID certification & handling and release workshops**



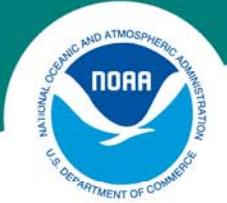
Current Recreational Management Measures

- **Permits**
 - **Recreational permits - issued to the vessel; open access**
- **Authorized gear & species**
- **Bag limits, minimum size limits, & landing conditions**
- **Reporting requirements**



Issues Unique to the Caribbean Region

- **Small, artisanal fisheries mostly in territorial waters**
- **Many fishermen sell their catch directly to restaurants or individuals that are not Federally permitted dealers.**
- **Due to the expense of limited access permits, many Caribbean fishermen cannot afford to enter HMS commercial fisheries.**
- **If fishermen do not have Federal permits, they do not have to report to NMFS, and NMFS does not receive data on catch amount or catch composition in the Caribbean region.**
- **Fish aggregation devices (FADs) are being used in the Caribbean region to target pelagics. The effect of FADs on pelagic stocks is not well understood.**



Issues and Options

Issue: Vessel Permitting

Options:

- **Maintain current permit program (Status quo)**
- **Create a Caribbean handgear permit valid for commercial swordfish and shark fishing – limited to vessels under a certain length**
- **Create a Caribbean handgear permit valid for commercial tuna, swordfish, and shark fishing – limited to vessels under a certain length**
- **Create a Caribbean HMS permit valid for commercial swordfish, shark, and tuna fishing which allows all authorized gears and is not limited by vessel size**
- **Other options?**



Issues and Options

Issue: Dealer Permitting

Options:

- **Maintain current dealer permitting regime - separate swordfish, shark, and tunas dealer permits (Status quo)**
- **Create a single Caribbean HMS dealer permit allowing the purchase and sale of swordfish, shark, and tunas in the Caribbean**
- **Allow Caribbean handgear permit holders to wholesale/retail catches**
- **Other options?**

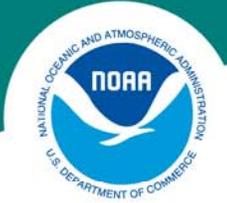


Issues and Options

Issue: Commercial Reporting

Options:

- **Maintain current reporting regulations (Status quo)**
- **Collect catch and effort data from territorial governments**
- **Require vessel logbooks for Caribbean handgear permit holders**
- **Require vessel logbooks from Caribbean handgear permit holders and collect catch data from territorial governments - if permit holders are allowed to wholesale/retail catch**



Issues and Options

Issue: Commercial Reporting (continued)

Options:

- **Require vessel logbooks and bi-weekly dealer report from Caribbean handgear permit holders - if allowed to wholesale/retail catch**
- **Monitor fishing effort and catches near FADs (perhaps via a checkbox on dealer forms)**
- **Other options?**



Issues and Options

Issue: Recreational Reporting

Options:

- **Maintain current recreational reporting requirements (Status quo)**
- **Increase outreach and education regarding recreational reporting requirements**
- **Establish mandatory HMS reporting stations in the U.S. Caribbean (dockside reporting)**
- **Increase dockside intercept programs such as the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS or its replacement) in the region**
- **Other options?**



Issues and Options

Issue: Authorized Gear

Options:

- **Maintain current regulations regarding authorized gears (Status quo)**
- **Authorize free-floating handlines (buoy gear) in Caribbean BAYS tuna fishery**
- **Allow possession of HMS with certain non-authorized gears onboard (e.g., reef fish traps or others)**
- **Prohibit the possession of HMS in the vicinity of FADs**
- **Other options?**



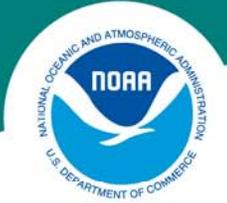
Scoping Meetings – Summer/Fall 2008

Date	Time	Meeting Locations	Address
8/14/2008	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	St. Thomas, VI	USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Cyril E. King Airport, Terminal Building, 2nd Floor, St. Thomas, VI 00802
9/8/2008	3 pm – 5 pm	San Juan, PR	Biblioteca Carnegie, Ave. Ponce de León #7, San Juan, PR 00901-2010
9/9/2008	4 pm – 6 pm	Fajardo, PR	Salón Centro de Usos Múltiples de Fajardo, Estacionamiento Municipal, Último Piso, Esquina de Calle Dr. López y Calle Celis Aguilera, Fajardo, PR 00738 (Detrás de la Plaza del Mercado de Fajardo) For additional location information call the Servicio de Extensión Agrícola at 787-863-0352
9/10/2008	2 pm – 4 pm	Ponce, PR	Servicio de Extensión Agrícola, 2440 Ave. Las Americas, Ste. 208, Centro Gubernamental, Ponce, PR 00717-2111
9/11/2008	7 pm – 9 pm	Mayagüez, PR	University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus, Physics Building, Room 310, Mayagüez, PR 00680



Scoping: U.S. Virgin Islands

- **Concern about increasing fishing effort with a new Federal fishing permit; territorial permits under moratorium for 8 years**
- **St. Croix has a small scale BAYS tuna fishery; St. Thomas fishermen mostly target shelf/reef fish (very little HMS)**
- **Few fish dealers currently authorized to purchase HMS**
- **Fishermen want the ability to continue to use free-floating handlines to target BAYS tunas**
- **Fishermen “multi-fish” and request the ability to possess HMS while non-authorized gears are onboard their vessels**
- **FADs were deployed off St. Croix to reduce effort on the shelf resources – local fishermen depend on them for tunas and other pelagics**



Scoping: Puerto Rico

- **Interest in a Caribbean handgear permit that authorizes fishing AND sales of HMS**
- **Few fish dealers currently authorized to purchase HMS**
- **Interest in using unattached handlines to target swordfish should a market develop in the region**
- **NMFS should use the Puerto Rico trip ticket program (already in Spanish); request modification of the trip ticket to gather more species specific information for HMS**
- **Any logbooks or additional reporting would need to be extremely simple and in Spanish**
- **NMFS should increase outreach and emphasize the need for timely and accurate reporting; outreach materials need to be available in both English and Spanish**



Scoping: Puerto Rico Continued

- **Requests for shark identification workshops in the region**
- **No FADs are currently deployed off Puerto Rico**
 - **Recreational fishermen are interested in using FADs**
 - **Commercial fishermen would want FADs restricted to commercial use only**
- **NMFS should request that Puerto Rico issue a territorial shark and pelagics permit to help track territorial shark landings**
- **NMFS should request that Puerto Rico deny vessel registration renewals if vessel owners have unresolved fishing violations**



Tentative Timeline

- Scoping: Summer/Fall 2008
- Predraft: Spring 2009
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Proposed Rule: Summer 2009, 60 day comment period
- Final EIS: Winter 2010, 30 day comment period
- Final Rule: Spring 2010, 30 days until effective



Comments/Questions

Send Comments by October 31, 2008

Mail:

- Greg Fairclough, HMS Management Division, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701 – indicate “Scoping Comments on Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP ” on envelope

Email:

- **noi.hms.caribbean@noaa.gov**

FAX:

- (727) 824-5398
- Indicate “Scoping Comments on Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP ”

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Issues and Options

Any additional comments and/or issues and options?