

Science, Service, Stewardship

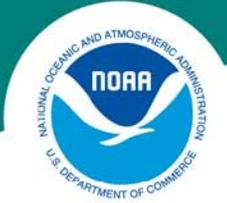


HMS Management Overview

Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel

September 30 – October 2, 2008

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**



Rulemaking/Operations Update

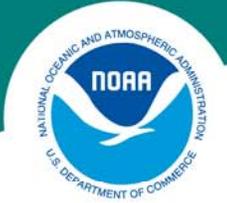
Since the April 2008 AP meeting,

- Published 1 proposed rule with 2 more in progress
- Published 4 final rules, including Shark Amendment 2
- Published Draft EFH Amendment 1
- Conducted Scoping for Small Coastal Shark Amendment 3 & Caribbean Amendment 4
- Issued 31 EFPs, SRPs, & LOAs to date for 2008
- Oversaw 77 workshops to date
- ~2,300 people receiving Atlantic HMS News to date



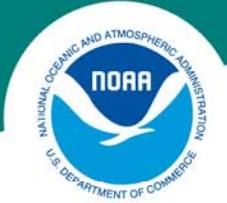
Draft EFH Amendment 1

- Phase 1 of EFH 5-year review – Consolidated HMS FMP; presented updated data
- Phase 2 updates EFH and considers measures to minimize fishing impacts
 - NOI to prepare EIS published Nov 7, 2006
 - Scoping at March & Oct 2007 AP meetings
- NOA of Draft Amendment 1 published Sept 19, 2008
 - Comment period closes November 18
- Proposes new Habitat Area of Particular Concern for BFT in Gulf of Mexico



Final Shark Amendment 2 & Beyond

- Proposed rule & DEIS published July 27
 - Public hearings/consultations Aug & Sept
 - Comment period extended until Nov 2; reopened until Dec 17
- FEIS delivered to EPA on April 11, 2008
- Final rule published June 24, 2008 with printing errors; Corrected publication July 15, 2008
- 2008 Research Fishery Underway
- 2009 Specifications & research fishery notice coming soon
- Florida fisheries disaster declaration request



Small Coastal Shark Amendment 3

- Notice of Intent to Prepare EIS published May 7, 2008
- Blacknose sharks are overfished/overfishing occurring; a rebuilding plan must be implemented
- Notice of Availability of Issues/Options presentation & scoping meetings published July 2, 2008
- 5 scoping meetings to be held plus consultations with 5 Regional Councils & 2 Interstate Commissions
- Comment period closes October 31, 2008



Caribbean Amendment 4

- Intended to address authorized gears, permitting & data collection in Puerto Rico & USVI
- Pre-scoping – Winter 2007/2008
- Notice of Intent to Prepare EIS published May 27, 2008
- Notice of Availability of Issues/Options paper & scoping meetings published July 14, 2008
- 5 scoping meetings to be held plus consultations with 5 Regional Councils & 2 Interstate Commissions
- Comment period closes October 31, 2008



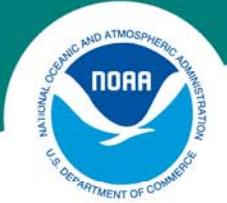
International Trade Monitoring

- HMS International Trade Permit –
 - Proposed rule published April 4, 2008
 - Final rule published June 2, 2008; Effective July 2, 2008
 - Implements Rec 07-10 for BFT Catch Document program, replacing the BSD program
 - ITP required for shark fin importers
 - Resident Agent must hold ITP for foreign importers
 - “Received-by” date & biweekly reporting coordination among ITP and BFT dealers
 - MS Reauthorization import def.; HTS code updates
- Links to Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) & International Trade Data System (ITDS)



Bluefin Tuna Specifications

- 2008 Specs: Implemented annual BFT quota and General and Angling Category effort controls
- Final Rule: Published Dec 31, 2007; effective: Jan 30 – Dec 31, 2008
 - 2008 Base Quota: 1,165.1mt ww
 - 2008 Adjusted Quota: 1,668.9 mt ww
 - Additional 25 mt set-aside to account for BFT bycatch in NED PLL fishery
- 2 Inseason actions
 - Angling category reduction of lg school/sm med limit from 2 to 1, effective Feb 10 – Dec 31;
 - General category at 3 lg med/giant, effective Sept 1 – Dec 31
- 2009 Specs pending ICCAT annual meeting



Bluefin Tuna Continued

- Gulf of Mexico 100% observer coverage
 - PLL vessels; goal to obtain comprehensive view of stock & fishery on spawning grounds
 - March 9 – June 9
- International assessment conducted in June; results in review; SCRS meeting underway
- International management measures major focus at ICCAT in November



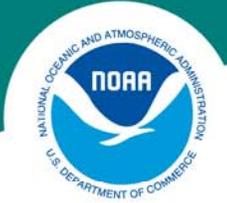
Tuna Longline Permits

- Proposed Rule: Published April 11, 2008
- Final Rule: Published July 3, 2008; Effective August 4, 2008
- Eliminated one-year sunset provision for tuna LL permits & allowed renewal of tuna LL permits if expired for more than one year if SWO (other than handgear) & SHK LAP maintained; SWO & SHK renewal requirements maintained
- Requires SHK dealers, if a proxy is sent, to be certified for each location *where sharks are received* (not each location on permit)



Gear Authorization

- Proposed rule published May 6, 2008
- Final rule published Sept 23, 2008
- Authorizes Green-Stick gear for Atlantic tunas, including BFT in General, Charter/Headboat, and Longline categories
- Does NOT authorize Harpoon use for BFT or BAYS in Charter/Headboat category
 - Comments mixed: some support, considerable opposition
 - Agency concerns regarding BFT stock status, enforcement issues, & relative lack of public support
- Requires one additional sea turtle safe handling and release gear in PLL and BLL fisheries



Swordfish 2008 Specifications

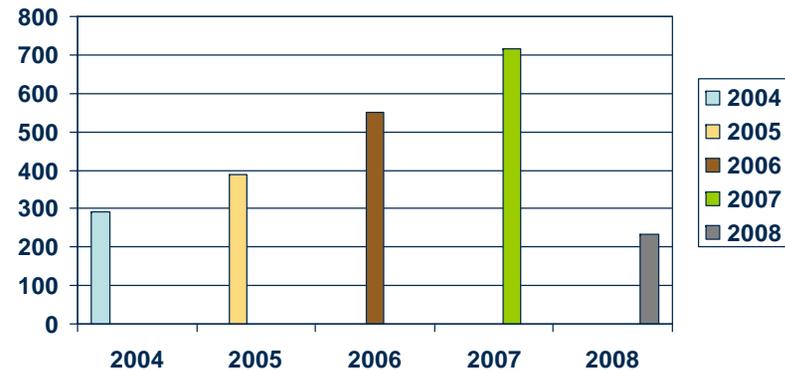
- Proposed rule to adjust 2008 quotas based on 2007 landings anticipated to publish early October
- Considering allowance for chartering arrangements using foreign vessels

SWO SPECS	2007	2008
NSWO Base	2,937.6 mt dw	2,937.6 mt dw
NSWO Adjusted	4,406.4 mt dw	4,406.4 mt dw
SSWO Base	75.2 mt dw	75.2 mt dw
SSWO Adjusted	150.4 mt dw	150.4 mt dw



Recreational Swordfish Issues

- Non-Tournament SWO Landings
 - CY 2004: 290
 - CY 2005: 388
 - CY 2006: 549
 - CY 2007: 716
 - CY 2008: 234 (to date)



- 2008 Non-tournament landings are currently far below recent years even though recreational retention limits were increased in 2007
 - Increased fuel prices?
 - Reduced availability of fish?
 - Reduced interest?
 - Reduced compliance with reporting requirements?



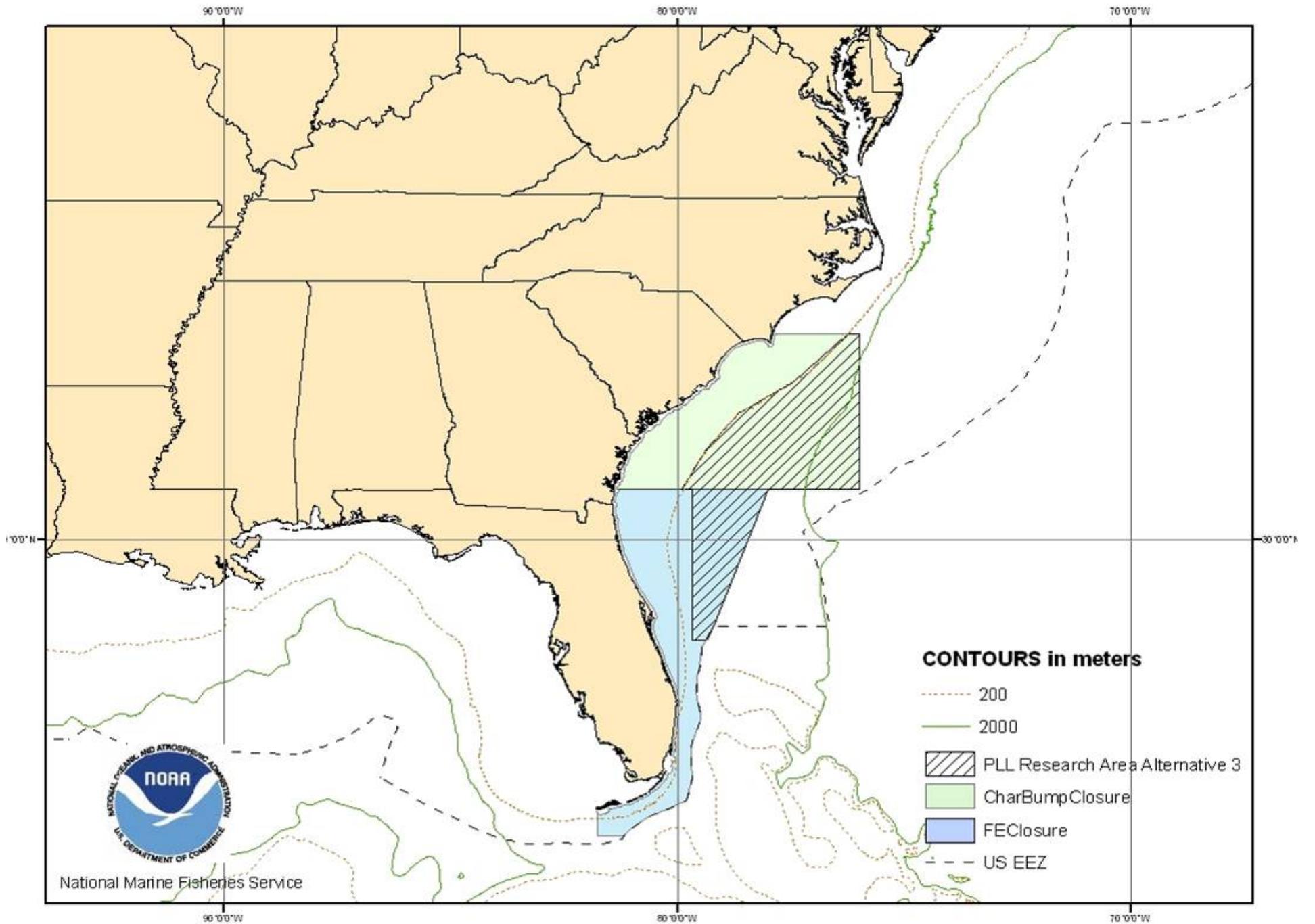
Recreational Billfish Issues

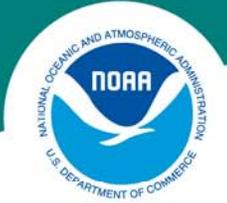
- Preliminary Marlin Landings
 - CY 2007: 59 BUM; 39 WHM = 98 total
 - CY 2008: 42 BUM; 19 WHM = 61 total (to date)
- Preliminary Sailfish Landings
 - CY 2008: 113 total (to date)
- Tournament C-hook regulations effective Jan. 1, 2008
- Non-tournament BLF/SWO reporting website “live”
- 2008 tournaments ~251
- Distribution of NC SeaGrant C-hook DVDs to BLF tournaments ongoing
- Potential underreporting of tournament landed BLF and SWO



PLL Closed Area Research

- Notice of Availability of Final EA published on January 3, 2008
- Goals of research:
 - 1) Collect baseline data in closed areas under current fishery conditions; 2) Evaluate existing bycatch reduction measures, and 3) Collect data to examine the effectiveness of existing area closures to meet current conservation and harvesting goals
- Conditions:
 - Max of 3 boats (only 2 fishing at one time), 289 sets (145 in closed areas) w/500 18/0 non-offset circle hooks, 100% observer coverage





PLL Closed Area Research: Results thru July 2008

- 9 trips completed (2 vessels) from February – July 2008
- 40 sets with 18/0 non-offset circle hooks
- Highest SWO CPUE in Charleston Bump
- No bluefin tuna
- Closed Area:
 - SWO: 173 kept, 57 released alive, 65 dd
 - 1 white marlin, 1 blue marlin, & 4 sailfish (3 sailfish dd)
- Open Area:
 - SWO: 112 kept, 12 released alive, 20 dd
 - 7 white marlin (3 dd), 17 sailfish (5 dd), 16 blue marlin (3 dd), & 6 white marlin/roundscale spearfish (1 dd)
- 3 turtles: 1 loggerhead in open area, 2 leatherback in closed areas, all released alive with no trailing gear



Workshops

- **Protected Resources Handling & Release**
 - Pelagic & bottom longline & shark gillnet vessel owners & operators
 - Required for permit renewal starting in 2007
 - 53 workshops held to date
 - 1,039 (including 122 grandfathered) certificates issued
- **Shark Carcass Identification**
 - Shark dealer modification proposed
 - Required as of Jan 2008
 - 24 workshops held to date
 - 328 certificates issued
- **Outreach**
 - Certified mailing & press release when HMS FMP final rule published; directed mailings to permit holders quarterly; HMS workshops webpage; list serve notices; fact sheets



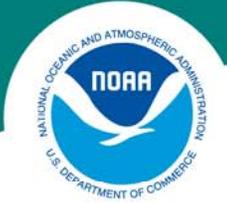
Exempted Fishing Permits

- 2008 to date – total 31
 - 18 EFPs
 - 1 Scientific Research Permits
 - 6 SHK display
 - 6 SHK letters of acknowledgement
- 2006 - 44 total; 2007 - 41 total
- All require some level of analysis



Litigation Update

- Blue Ocean Institute
 - Challenges NMFS denying their petition for BFT spawning area/time closure in Gulf of Mexico
 - Administrative record contested; Agency prevailed
 - Briefing complete; awaiting Court decision
- Southern Offshore Fishing Assoc 1st 2008 shark season rule
 - Agency was granted summary judgment on all counts



Operations/Other

- Modernization of BFT dealer reporting underway
- Internal workshop on integration of HMS datasets held in September
- Development of web-fillable BFT international trade reports underway
- Partnership with Enforcement regarding international dealer compliance



Suggestions from April 2008 AP Completed

- ✓ Renew/issue lapsed permits for tuna LL
- ✓ Authorize green-stick gear for tunas, inc. BFT
 - Clearly define green-stick gear to minimize confusion
- ✓ Require gear to restrain turtles; one may be sufficient
- ✓ Allow landings of blacktip, spinner, & bull sharks in recreational fishery
- ✓ Improve education for SHK recreational species ID



Suggestions from April 2008 AP Underway

- Conduct time/area research
- Create BLF recreational landings update
- Improve SWO marketing



Suggestions from April 2008 AP Under Consideration

- Permits:
 - Renew/issue lapsed permits
 - Allow permit leasing
 - Establish gear-based permits
 - Use or lose permit requirement
 - Reopen SWO handgear permits
 - Create SWO General category permit
 - Eliminate triple permit requirement for squid trawlers
- Change CHB SWO retention limit to 1/person
- Improve dealer reporting, i.e., electronic reporting
- Require circle hooks on buoy gear
- Adjust PLL incidental catch limits to reduce BFT discards



Conclusion/Looking Forward

- Rulemaking schedule is quite full
- Operational activities continue
- Your input is valued
- We need you to take the information from the AP meeting back to your constituents & give us feedback

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Questions?

Thank you!

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