

Science, Service, Stewardship



Potential Mid-Range HMS Management Actions – Follow-up to ANPR

Highly Migratory Species
Management Division
NMFS/NOAA

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**

NOAA



Pelagic Longline BFT Incidental Catch Requirements

CURRENTLY

- Limited number of incidental BFT per pounds of target catch
- 25 MT subquota in NED with no incidental requirement

POTENTIAL OPTIONS

- Adjust number of BFT or target catch or both
- Adjust incidental BFT quota allocation (Longline quota)
- Allow targeting of BFT
- Consider changes ocean-wide or specific areas
- Other?



Pelagic Longline BFT Incidental Catch Requirements Public feedback

In favor of altering

- Convert discards into marketable product
- Trips more profitable
- Assist in more swordfish trips

Opposed to altering

- Close the GOM to LL fishing (Yearly/Seasonally)
- May result in targeted fishery
- U.S. should support a CITES listing
- Faulty logic regarding more trips being taken
- Quota limited
- Bycatch concerns – turtles/billfish



Agency Feedback

Data collection

- No changes from status quo

Enforcement

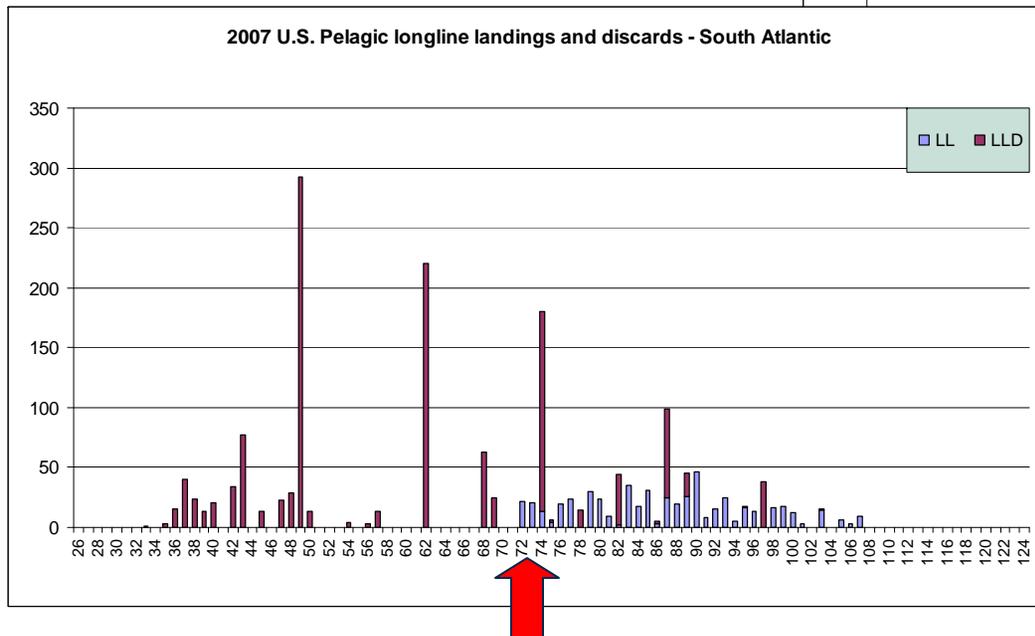
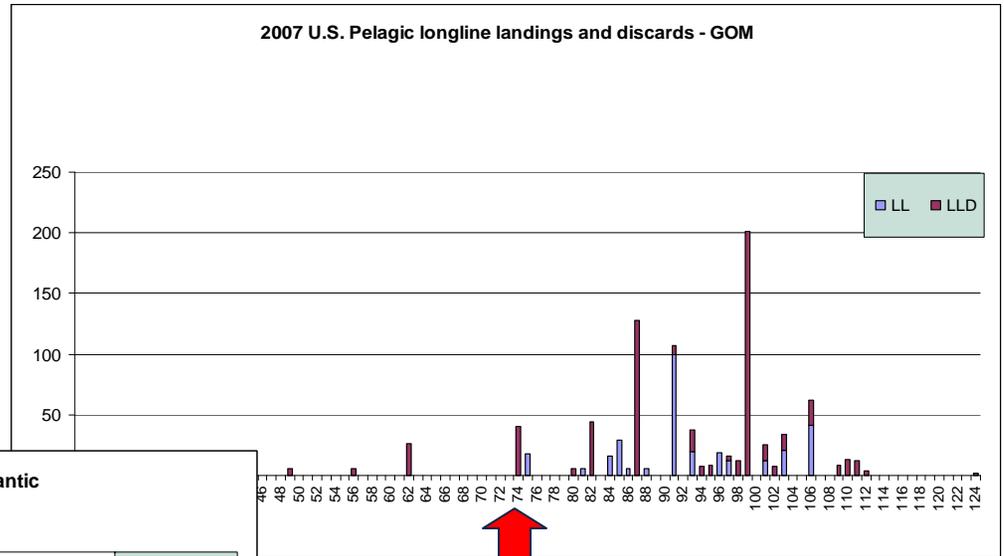
- No changes from status quo

Management

- Biological issues
- Socio-economic issues
- Bycatch issues

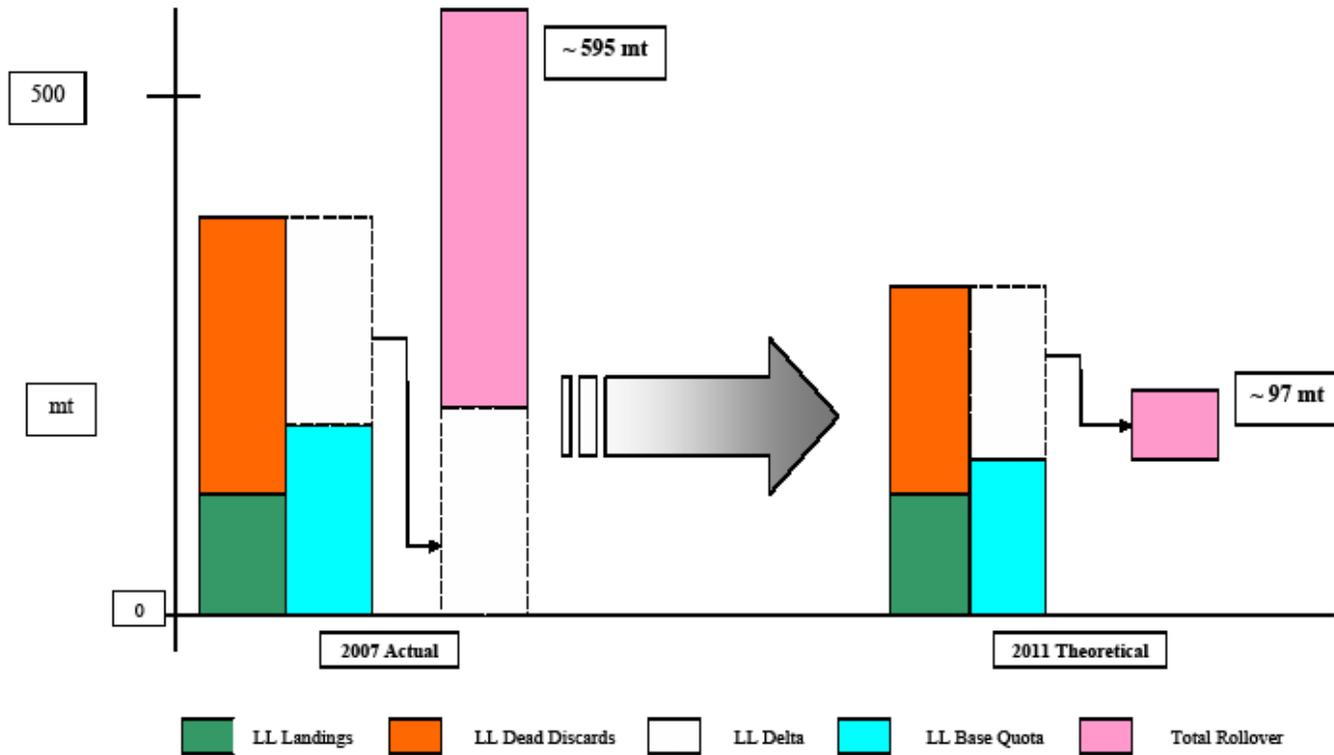


Size Distribution of LL BFT Catch by area





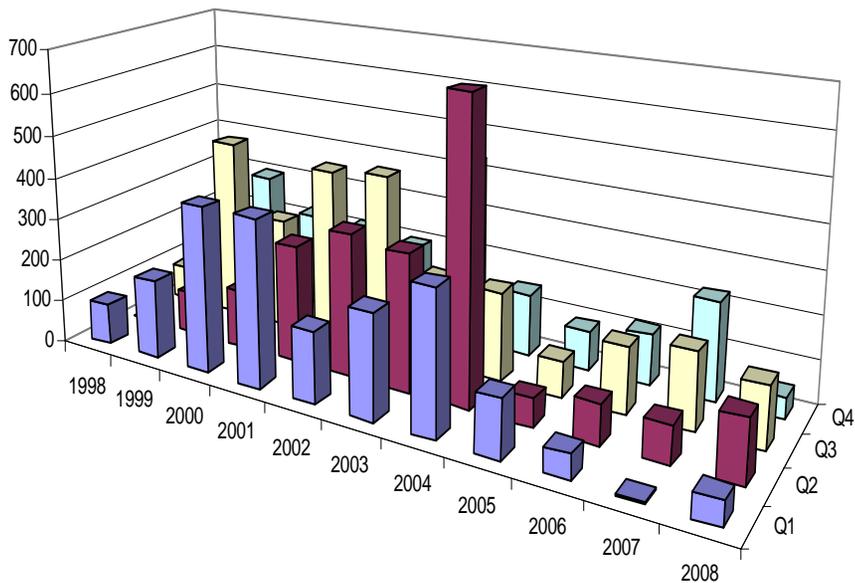
Evolution of LL Quota usage/management



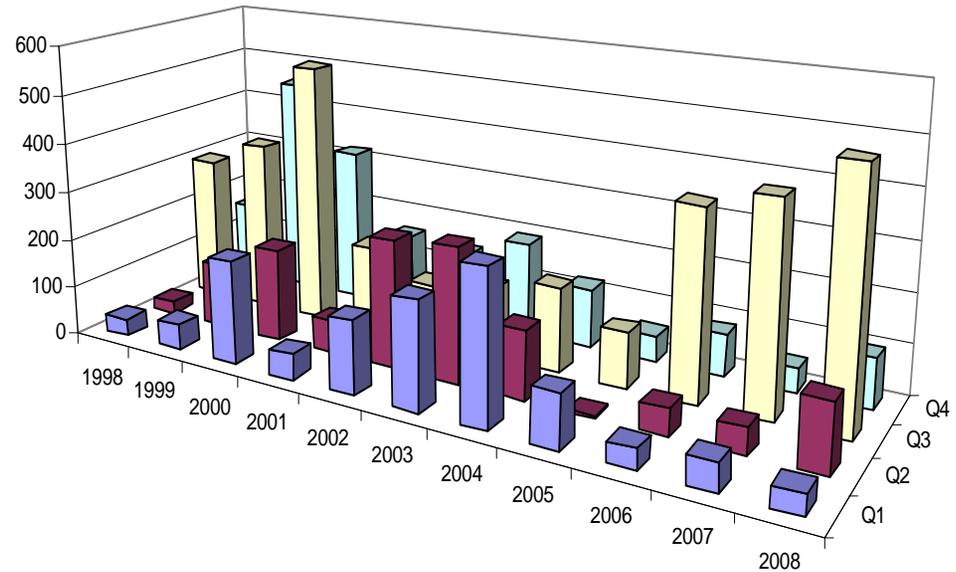


Sea Turtle Interactions by Quarter

Leatherback Take Estimates by Quarter

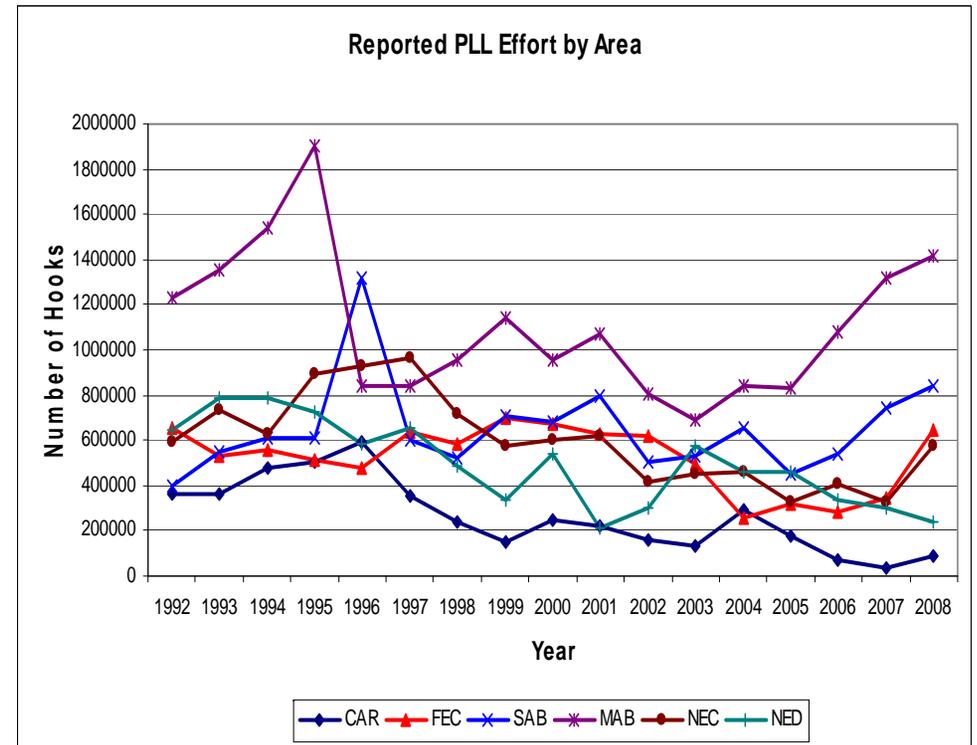
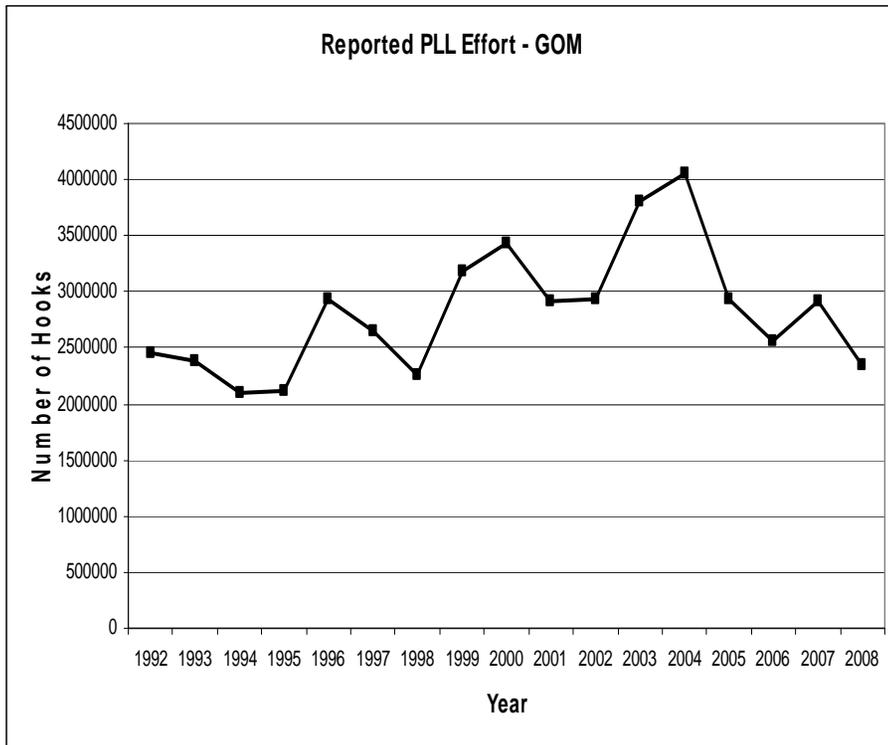


Loggerhead by Quarter





US Atlantic PLL Reported Effort, 1992-2008



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



Current status of estimated sea turtle interactions in the US Atlantic pelagic longline fishery compared to ITS levels set in June 2004 Biological Opinion.

Species	2007	2008	2007-08 Total	2007-09 ITS Level	Delta
Leatherback	500	385	885	1764	879
Loggerhead	543	771	1314	1905	591
Other Hardshell					
Green	0	0	0		
Hawksbill	0	0	0		
Kemp's Ridley	0	0	0		
Olive Ridley	1	0	1		
Other Hardshell (total)			1	105 ¹	104

¹ Green, Hawksbill, Kemp's ridley, and Olive ridley turtles, in combination



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit

CURRENTLY

Atlantic Tunas General category permit allows commercial harvest of tunas only

POTENTIAL OPTIONS

- Expand the species allowed to include SWO and/or SHK
- Other considerations:
 - Open vs. limited access
 - Authorized species
 - Retention limits
 - Tournament participation
 - Bycatch and bycatch mortality
 - HMS Reporting Requirements



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit (cont.)

- What are the benefits of an open versus limited access HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit?
- If SWO and/or SHK are allowed, what retention limit should apply if any?
- Should participation in HMS tournaments and landing of billfish in tournaments continue to be allowed?
- How can impacts to the value of SWO and SHK limited access permits be minimized?
- What data collection methods might be utilized?
- If fish are caught, but not sold, what reporting mechanism might be appropriate?



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit – Comments Received

NMFS received comments including:

- Disagreement with the science indicating that swordfish stocks are almost rebuilt
- Support for measures to increase swordfish landings
- Support for a HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit
 - Caution about avoiding increases in user group and gear type conflicts
 - Authorization should only be for “traditional handgears” and not buoy gear
 - Consider a sunset provision on the permit



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit – Comments Received

- Opposition to a HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit
 - Such a permit will devalue existing limited access permits
 - Small vessels can't care for the catch resulting in low quality product and potential health concerns
 - Fish house and ice infrastructure along Atlantic is not available to support an increase in the number of small commercial vessels
 - Gear conflicts will increase
- Would result in several thousand new entrants to the commercial fishery in South Florida which would devastate the swordfish resource and the fishery
- Would not result in a large influx of new entrants to the fishery
- A large increase in swordfish landings in South Florida would cause the price to decrease



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit – Comments Received

- Commenters expressed concern that the U.S. is going to lose its quota share of bluefin tuna and swordfish at the next ICCAT meeting.
- Encouraging reopening of pelagic longline closed areas
- Opposed to reopening pelagic longline closed areas



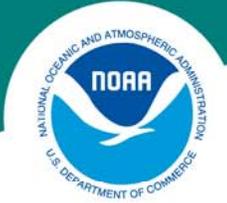
Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit – Comments Received

- Buoy gear fishing with J-hooks is destroying the recreational fishery and should not be allowed
- Buoy gear fishing should only be allowed with circle hooks
- More buoy gear fishing should be allowed
- Swordfish incidental permit holders should be allowed to use buoy gear
- Research is needed on hook type related post-release mortality of fish caught on buoy gear
- Vessel length and horsepower upgrade restrictions on Swordfish Handgear permitted vessels should be removed



Establish HMS General Commercial Handgear Permit – Comments Received

- NMFS should allow limited access permit leasing to improve access to the fishery
- Non-reporting of swordfish landings is a problem – NMFS should increase fines for non-reporting
- Supporting tariffs on swordfish imports
- NMFS should prohibit all commercial fishing in South Florida



Squid Trawl Multi-Permit Exemption

CURRENT REGULATIONS

To retain 15 incidentally caught SWO, squid trawl vessels must currently hold 3 limited access permits (SWO Directed or Incidental, Shark Directed or Incidental, and Atlantic Tunas Longline).

This requirement can be burdensome for squid trawl vessel owners because they must hold an Atlantic Tunas Longline permit (although they do not fish with longline gear and cannot retain tunas), and they must hold a shark permit (although they cannot retain sharks).



Squid Trawl Multi-Permit Exemption – Comments Received

In general, commenters supported some type of multi-permit exemption for squid trawl vessels

- Squid trawlers should be exempt from the requirement to hold three limited access permits
- Each swordfish taken by squid trawls should be reported
- Squid trawlers should be allowed to retain swordfish, tunas, and sharks. There should not be a limit on the number of swordfish retained.
- Squid trawls in the Mid-Atlantic region are not true mid-water trawls, but instead are high rise trawl nets that fish near the bottom



Squid Trawl Multi-Permit Exemption (cont.)

SOME POTENTIAL OPTIONS

- For squid trawl vessels that currently possess the three required permits, only require that they possess a SWO permit to retain SWO under current squid trawl retention limits.
- Issue new SWO incidental permits to all *Loligo* and *Ilex* permitted squid trawl vessels and allow them to retain SWO under current squid trawl retention limits.
- Consider a new incidental HMS squid trawl permit only for vessels that currently possess the three required permits that would allow SWO to be retained under current retention limits and, possibly, some tunas.
- Consider a new incidental HMS squid trawl permit for all *Loligo* and *Ilex* permitted squid trawl vessels that would allow for the retention of SWO under current retention limits and, possibly, some tunas.



Squid Trawl Multi-Permit Exemption (cont.)

Although seemingly minor, amending the HMS regulations to accommodate a potential change for squid trawl vessels is a complex task, involving changes to many sections of the HMS regulations.

The time, and required level of analysis, to implement a potential regulatory change for squid trawl vessels depends upon several specific issues which need to be addressed.



Squid Trawl Multi-Permit Exemption (cont.)

ISSUES

- Which squid trawl vessels should qualify for an exemption from the three permit requirement, or for a new HMS squid trawl permit?
- Should other HMS (*i.e.*, tunas) be allowed to be retained under a potential new HMS squid trawl permit?
- Should a potential new HMS squid trawl permit be open access or limited access?
- Vessel upgrading requirements? Permit transferability? Reporting?
- Should squid trawl gear be authorized for SWO or other HMS fisheries?
- In summary, how should an exemption be implemented (no HMS permit(s) required; SWO permit only; new HMS squid trawl permit)?