



NOAA
FISHERIES



Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006
Consolidated Atlantic Highly
Migratory Fishery Management
Plan

August 2013

Area-based Measures and Performance Criteria

Principal Objectives of Area-Based Measures

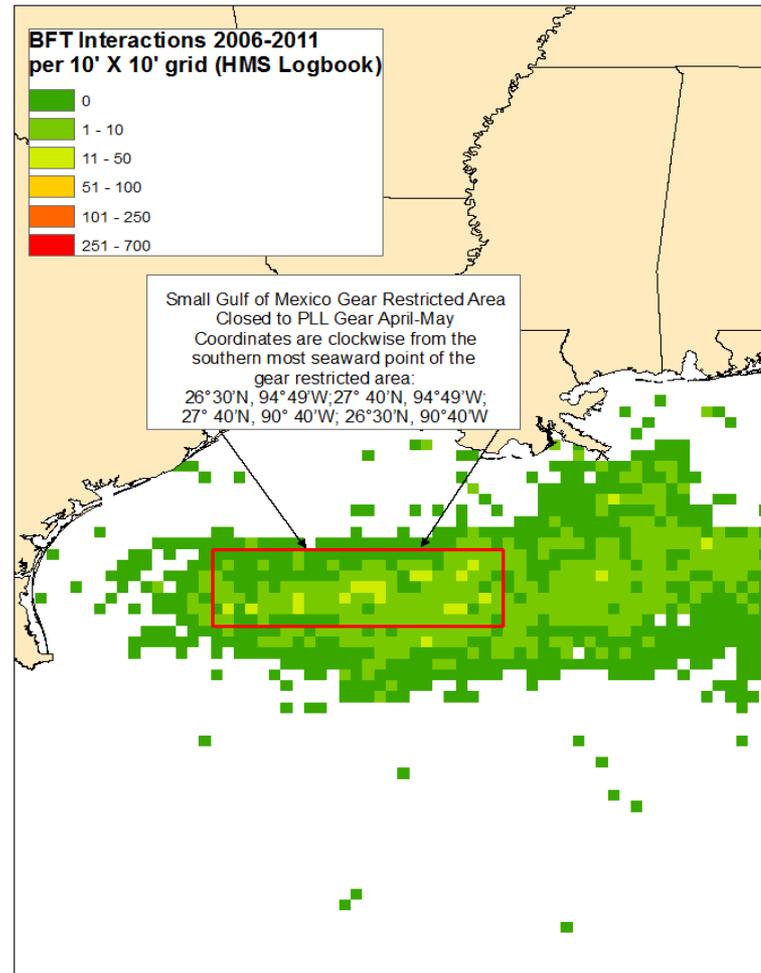
- Reduce bluefin interactions, thereby decreasing dead discards
- Optimize fishing opportunity.

Alternatives Analyzed and Considered in the DEIS

- No Action
- Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area (GRA)
- **Cape Hatteras GRA with Access Based on Performance (proposed)**
- Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone GRA
- **Small Gulf of Mexico GRA (proposed)**

Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

Closed to fishing with Pelagic Longline Gear: April & May

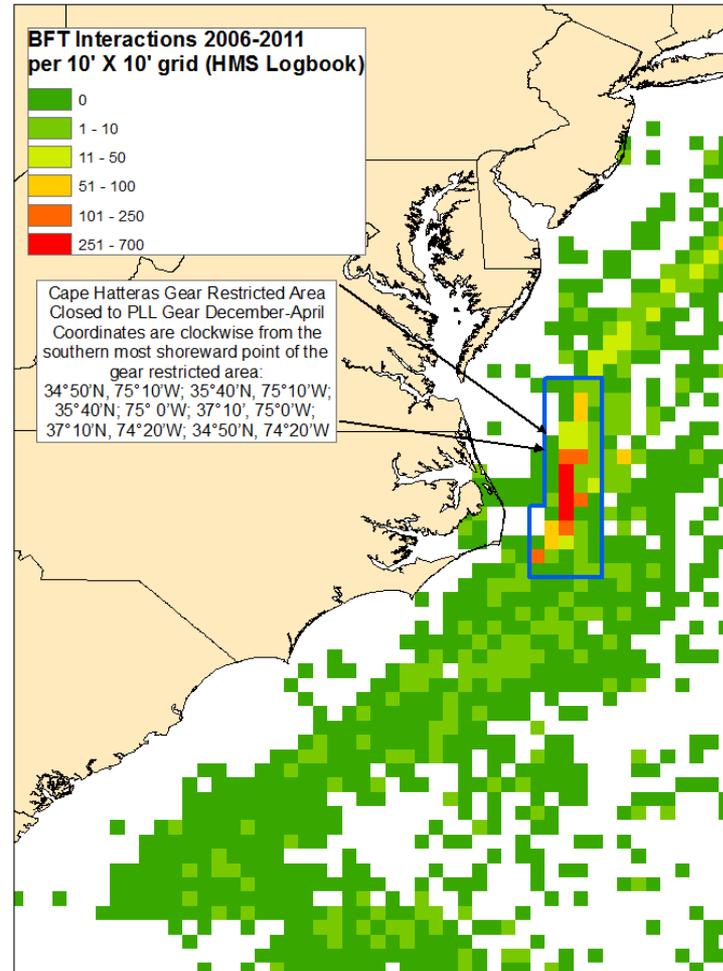


Would reduce bluefin catch in Gulf of Mexico (kept and discarded) by 20%.
Would reduce bluefin catch overall by 3%.

Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

Dec. through
Apr:
*Conditional
Access for
143 Pelagic
Longline
vessels;*

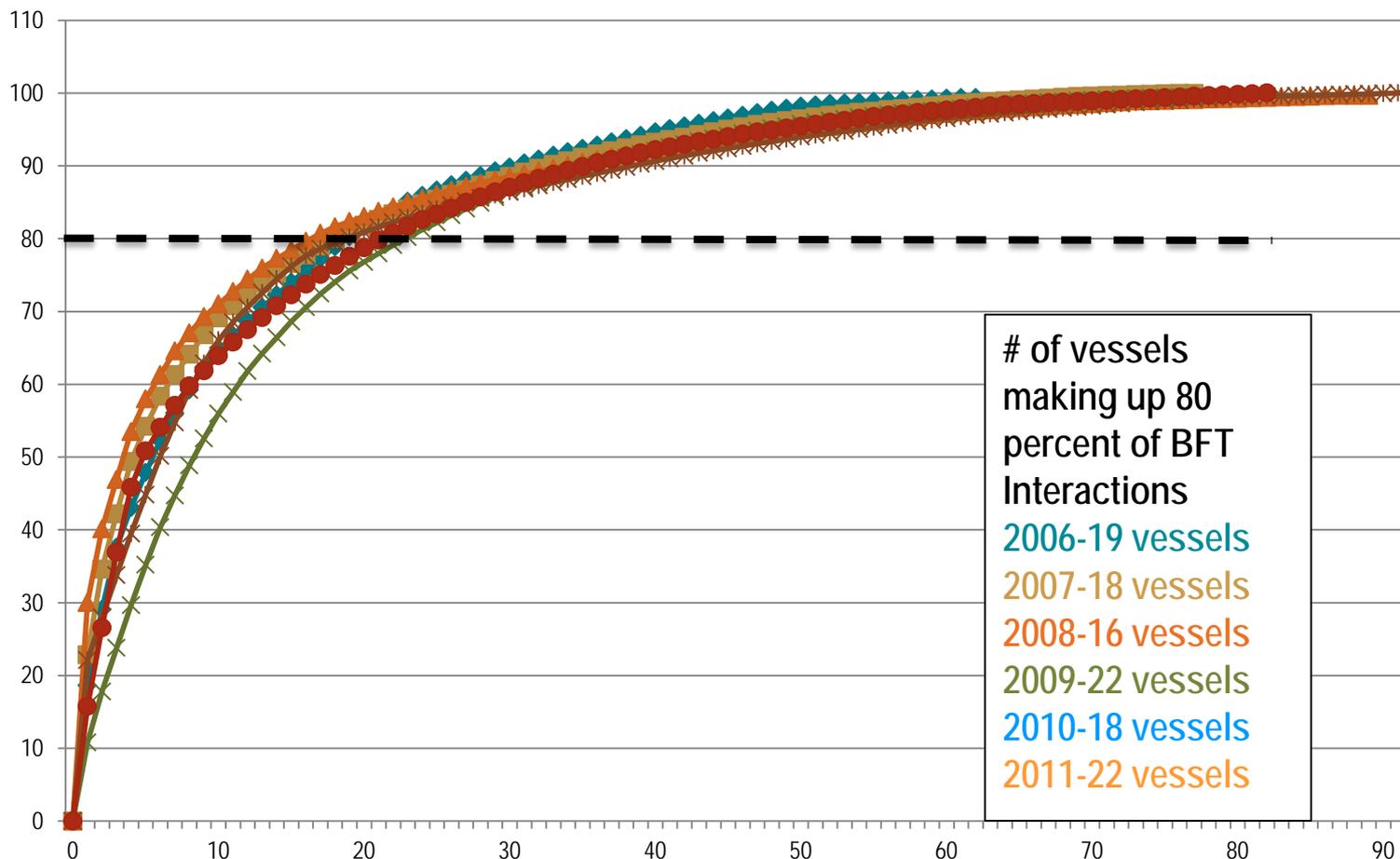
18 vessels
would not
have access



Would
reduce the
bluefin
discards in
the Atlantic
by 77% (# of
fish), and
would
reduce the
bluefin
discards
overall by
29%.

Specifics

Cumulative Frequency Distribution of Bluefin Interactions and Number of Vessel, 2006 - 2011. HMS Logbook Data. (DEIS Figure 3.23)



Cape Hatteras GRA (Dec. through Apr.):

Conditional access based on past vessel performance –
3 “performance metrics”

1) Bluefin interactions

Ratio of bluefin interactions to **designated species landings**

(swordfish, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, albacore, skipjack, dolphin, wahoo, and porbeagle, shortfin mako, and thresher sharks)

2) Compliance with the Pelagic Observer Program requirements

Multiple aspects: Communications, and timing of those communications, with POP; presence/absence of a USCG safety decal; life raft capacity, bunk space, vessel selection and observer deployment

3) Compliance with HMS Logbook reporting requirements

Timeliness of logbook submission

Cape Hatteras GRA (Dec. through Apr.) – continued (18 vessels without access in year one, as proposed)

- Access eligibility would be **evaluated annually**, based on **performance metrics** for the most recent three years of data. Vessels would be **“qualified”** or **“not qualified.”**
- All Longline category vessels would be allowed to use authorized hand gear in the Cape Hatteras GRA under **General category rules**. Bluefin tuna landed would count against the General category quota. Such vessels would be required to declare into the GRA via VMS

Performance Metric 1: **Bluefin Interactions**

Scoring of ratio of number of bluefin tuna interactions to designated species landings (x 10,000):

Data Range	0	>0 to <1	≥ 1 to <2	≥ 2 to <3	≥ 3
Score	5	4	3	2	1

Designated species landings: swordfish, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, albacore, skipjack, dolphin, wahoo, and porbeagle, shortfin mako and thresher sharks

Performance Metric 2: Pelagic Observer Program (POP) Compliance – Elements

- **Communications** with POP, and timing of those communications;
- Presence/absence of a USCG **safety decal**
- Life **raft** capacity
- **Bunk** space
- Vessel selection and observer deployment: The scoring system is designed to be neutral with respect to **valid reasons** that a vessel may have been selected by the observer program, but **did not take an observer** (e.g., no observer was available, or the vessel did not fish using pelagic longline gear (for a variety of reasons))
- The scoring system is also designed to **weigh the communication elements/requirements more heavily** than the safety aspects, as well as consider evidence of fishing activity.

Performance Metric 2: Pelagic Observer Program (POP) Compliance – Scoring

Percent Compliant	100%	80-100%	80-100%	<80%	na
Percent Observed	>90-100%	>60-90%	>33-60%	0-33%	na
Initial Score	5	4	3	2	1

Final Scores: Equal to initial score unless evidence of fishing activity after either refusing to take an observer or non-communication with Pelagic Observer Program, which reduced the initial score by one. Vessels with a composite score of less than 1 receive a final score of 1.

Performance Metric 2: Pelagic Observer Program (POP) Compliance – Scoring: Example

$$\frac{\# \text{ compliant trips}}{\# \text{ selected trips}} = \frac{13}{15} = 87 \%$$

$$\frac{\# \text{ observed trips}}{\# \text{ selected trips}} = \frac{11}{15} = 73 \%$$

Based on the scoring table in slide 47, the score would be 4

Performance Metric 3: **Logbook Compliance**

Scoring of timeliness of the submission of the logbooks:

	Days Between Offload and Mail Opening				
Data Range	≤ 7	>7 to ≤ 30	> 30 to ≤ 60	>60 to ≤ 90	> 90
Score	5	4	3	2	1

Logbooks must be submitted within 7 days of offloading

Performance Metrics Decision Rules: **Combining the 3 scores**

- Vessels with the lowest **bluefin tuna interaction score** (1) may not fish in the proposed Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area using pelagic longline gear, nor would they qualify to enter current closed areas and fish with pelagic longline gear regardless of whether the trip is observed
- If a vessel's **observer program compliance score** is 2 or less, a vessel may not have access to the area, *unless* the **vessel's logbook compliance score** is 4 or 5

Conditional Access to Current Closed Areas (pelagic longline vessels)

- Objectives: provide commercial data to evaluate closed areas; provide fishing opportunity for pelagic longline vessels
- Charleston Bump closed area; *a portion of* the East Florida Coast closed area*; the DeSoto Canyon closed area; and the Northeastern U.S. closed area (June). * North of 28° 17' 10" North latitude, East of the 100-fathom curve
- Using the same performance metrics, "Qualified" vessels may fish in these closed areas, provided:
 - Vessel is **selected for an observer** during that quarter, in the same geographic area as the closed area
 - Trip is **observed**
 - Report **bluefin catch** daily via VMS

NMFS Termination of Access to Current Closed Areas

- NMFS can terminate access to the area for all pelagic longline vessels via inseason action in order to address issues including:
 - (1) failure to achieve or effectively balance the objective of reducing dead discards with the objective of providing fishing opportunity;
 - (2) bycatch of bluefin tuna or other HMS species that may be inconsistent with the objectives or regulations or the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP, or ICCAT recommendations; or
 - (3) bycatch of marine mammals or protected species that is inconsistent with the Marine Mammal Protection Act or the Endangered Species Act.

Transiting Closed and Restricted Areas

- Current regulations do not allow fishermen to stow their longline gear and transit closed areas. Instead, fishermen must go around the areas to remain in compliance with the regulations.
- Would allow vessels with an Atlantic Tunas Longline permit, Swordfish Incidental or Directed Limited Access permit, and/or a Shark Limited Access permit fishing with bottom or pelagic longline gear to transit areas that are closed or restricted to such gear
- Must remove and stow the gangions, hooks, and buoys from the mainline and drum. No baited hooks would be allowed.