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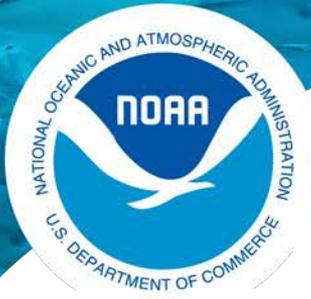
Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated
Atlantic Highly Migratory Fishery
Management Plan
Final Environmental Impact Statement

September 2014

Summary of Situation Prior to Amendment 7

- Difficult to account for bluefin mortality, and limited dead discard information
- Too many bluefin interactions resulting in dead discards (~21% of 2012 catch)
- FMP quota allocation percentages did not take into account changes in ICCAT recommendations or recent trends in fishery
- Longline category vessels may continue to fish when the category's incidental bluefin quota is attained (but may no longer retain bluefin), resulting in continuing discards

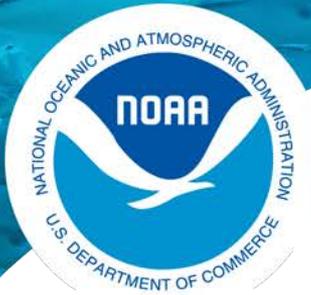


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Where we have been...

- June 2009 Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on HMS fisheries overall
- September 2011 HMS Advisory Panel meeting - summary of recent issues & white paper on bluefin bycatch in the HMS fisheries
- March 2012 HMS Advisory Panel meeting - preliminary scoping document for Amendment 7 to Consolidated HMS FMP
- April through July 2012 - Scoping Meetings (ME, MA, NJ, NC, LA)
- September 2012 HMS Advisory Panel Meeting – Pre-draft discussed
- August 21, 2013 - Proposed rule published
- August 2013 - January 2014: conducted 11 public hearings & consulted with the NEFMC, GMFMC, and SAFMC (shared with MAFMC & CFMC)
- September 2013 HMS Advisory Panel Meeting - Proposed rule and DEIS consultation
- January 10, 2014 - Public comment period ended (after several extensions)
- March 2014 HMS Advisory Panel meeting - Summary of Comments received
- August 28, 2014 - Final Environmental Impact Statement

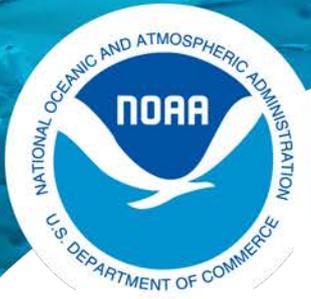
... and where we are going



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- Publish Record of Decision & Final Rule (Fall 2014)
- Effective date of most measures: 30 days after final rule publishes
- Effective dates of delayed measures (e.g., electronic monitoring for Longline category): January 2015
- Consider Appeals
- Implement operational changes – electronic monitoring installation, IBQ administration, VMS reporting forms

Public Comment



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NMFS received over 188,000 written comments

- Included large numbers of identical or similar comments
- 2,394 distinct written comment letters
- Oral statements also made at public hearings
- Comments ranged from requests for no action to much more drastic actions to conserve bluefin
- **All written comments can be found at**
www.regulations.gov/
- **Summary of comments presentation is located at:**

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/advisory_panels/hms_ap/meetings/april_2014/documents/a7_presentation_040314_final.pdf

Amendment 7 Objectives – (abridged version)

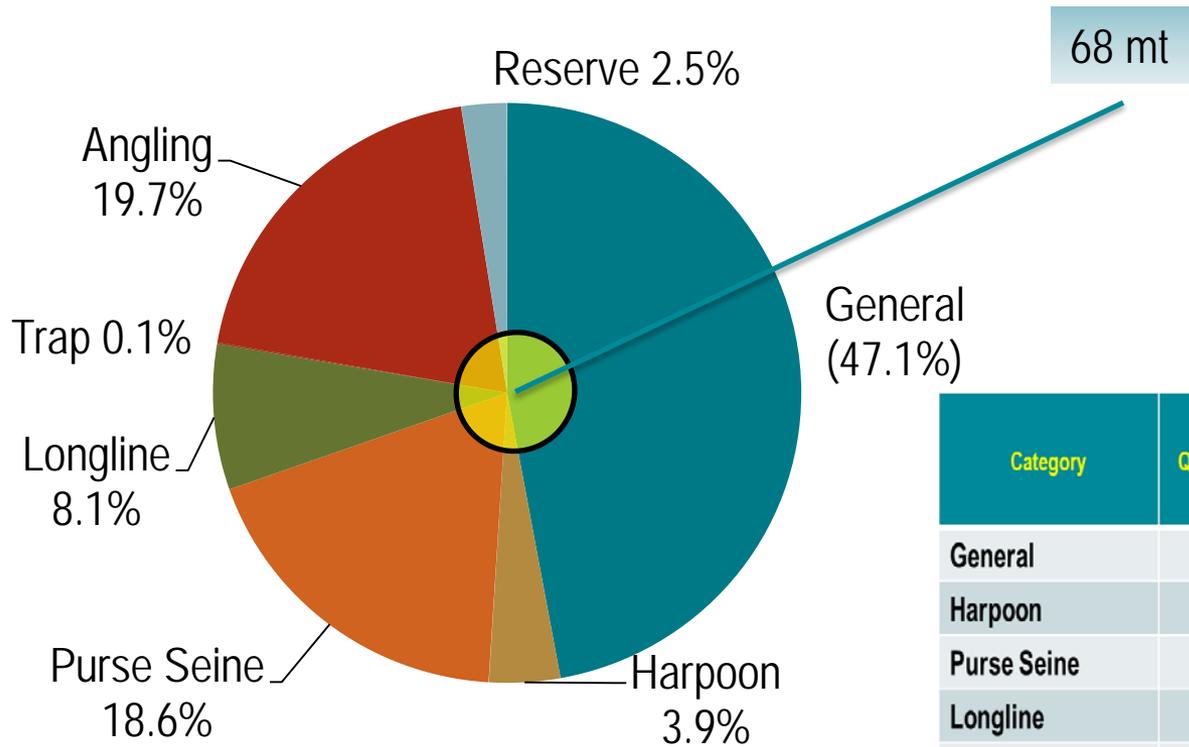
- Prevent **overfishing and rebuild** bluefin tuna, **operate within the overall TAC** set by ICCAT
- **Optimize** the ability for all permit categories to **harvest** bluefin quota allocations; **account for** all sources of **mortality**
- **Reduce dead discards** of bluefin
- Improve the **timeliness and quality** of catch data
- Adjust **other** aspects of the FMP

Overview of Preferred Management Measures

- **Reallocate quota** among categories, adjusting quotas based on historical dead discard allowance
- Reduce pelagic longline bluefin interactions with **gear restricted areas**
- Increase accountability and create strong incentives to avoid bluefin with **individual bluefin quotas** for pelagic longline fishermen
- Improve quality and timeliness of catch data with enhanced **reporting requirements** for commercial quota categories
- Optimize fishing opportunity with adjustments to **General and Harpoon** category quota rules
- Implement **other** measures (e.g., northern albacore quota)

Specifics

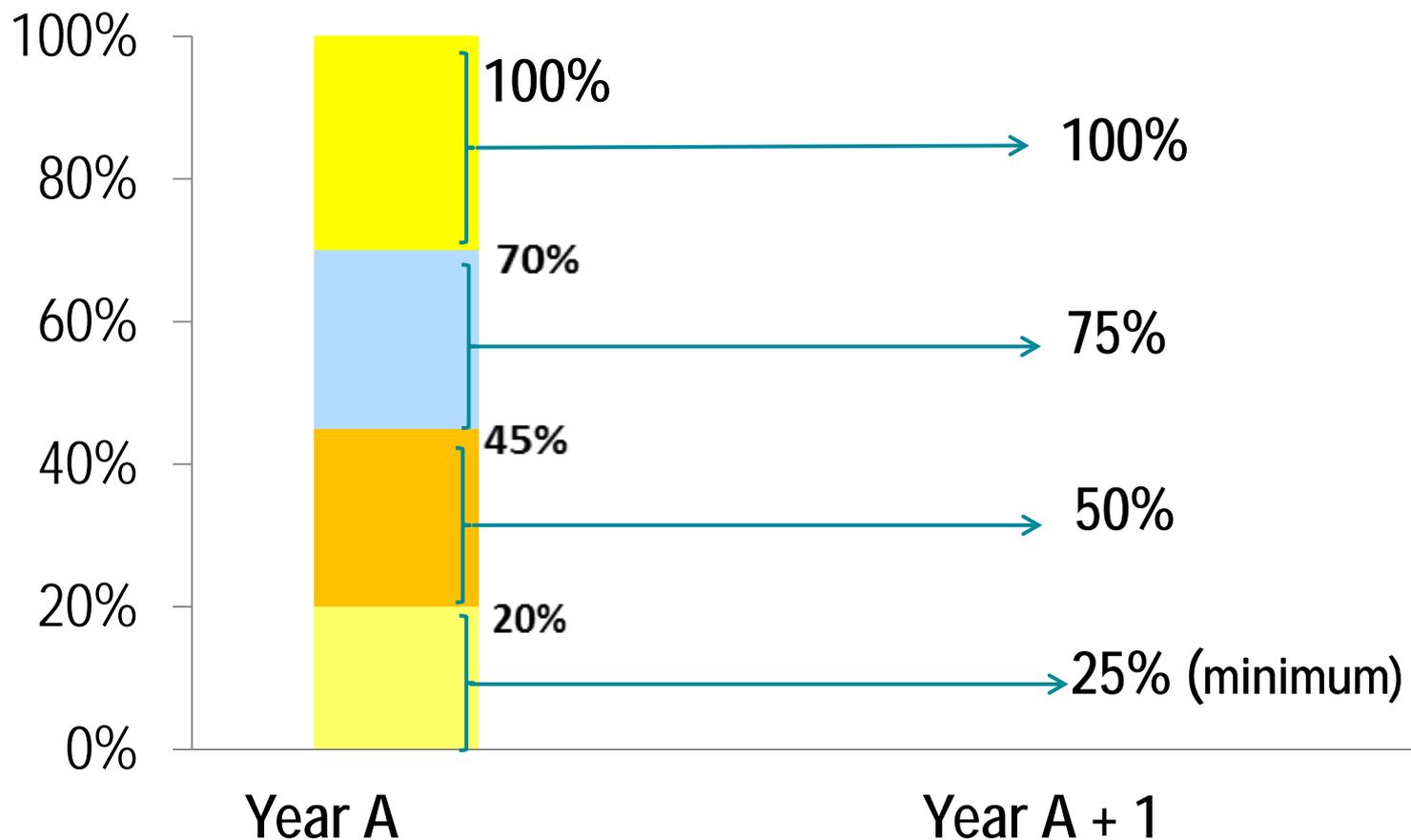
Preferred Codified Reallocation (to Longline category) - No Change from DEIS



Category	Quota %	Amount (mt) from each Category	Example (mt)	
			2013 Base Quota	With proposed reallocation
General	47.1	32.1	435.1	403.0
Harpoon	3.9	2.6	36.0	33.4
Purse Seine	18.6	12.7	171.8	159.1
Longline	8.1	5.5	74.8	*137.3
Trap	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.9
Angling	19.7	13.4	182.0	168.6
Reserve	2.5	1.7	23.1	21.4
Total to Longline Category		*68 mt		

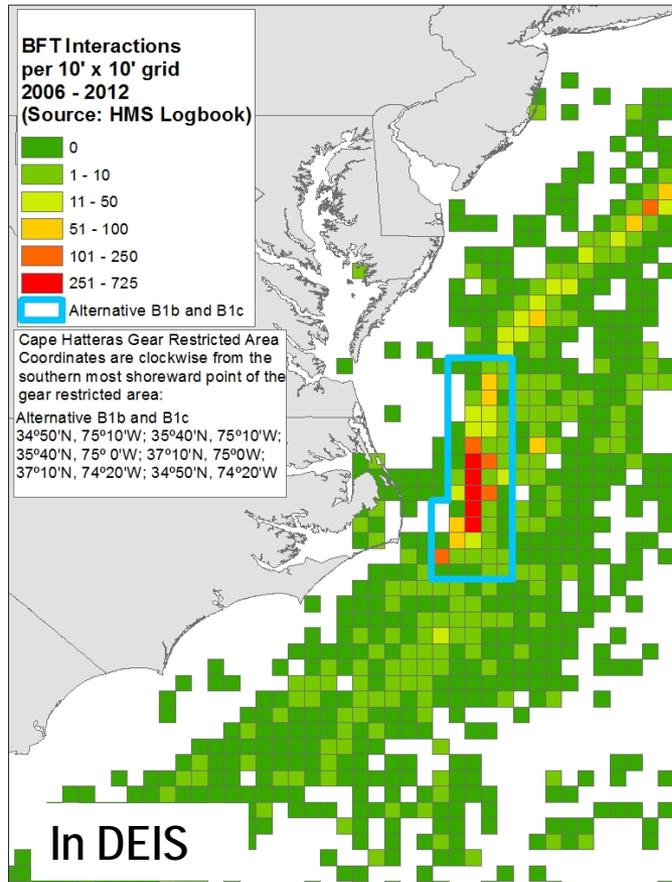
Preferred Annual Reallocation from Purse Seine Category Participants - *Change from DEIS to calculate on individual basis (not Category)*

If Purse Seine Catch  then Purse Seine Quota

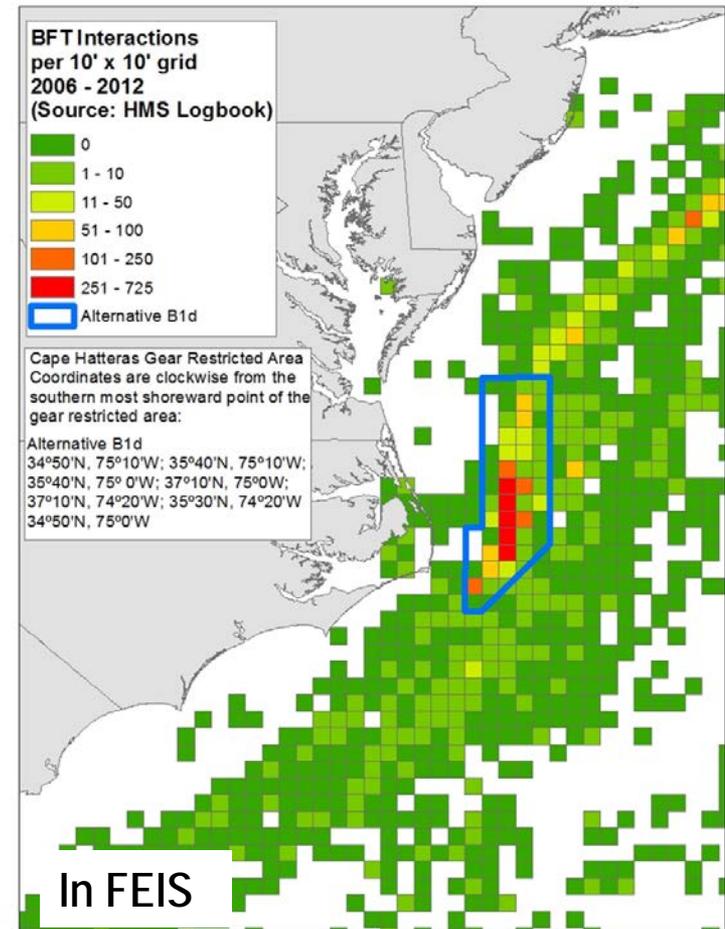


Preferred Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

Modified from DEIS



Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area, Showing Number of Bluefin Interactions with Pelagic Longline Gear (2006 - 2012)



Modified Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area, showing number of bluefin interactions with pelagic longline gear (2006 - 2012)

Preferred Cape Hatteras GRA (December through April):
Conditional access based on past vessel performance
No Change from DEIS

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)

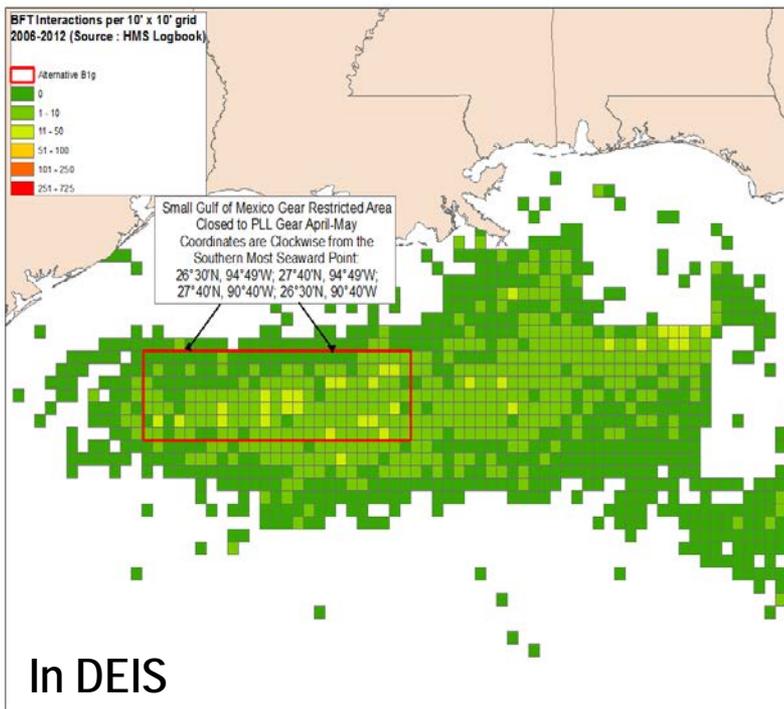
2) Compliance with the Pelagic Observer Program (POP) requirements

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

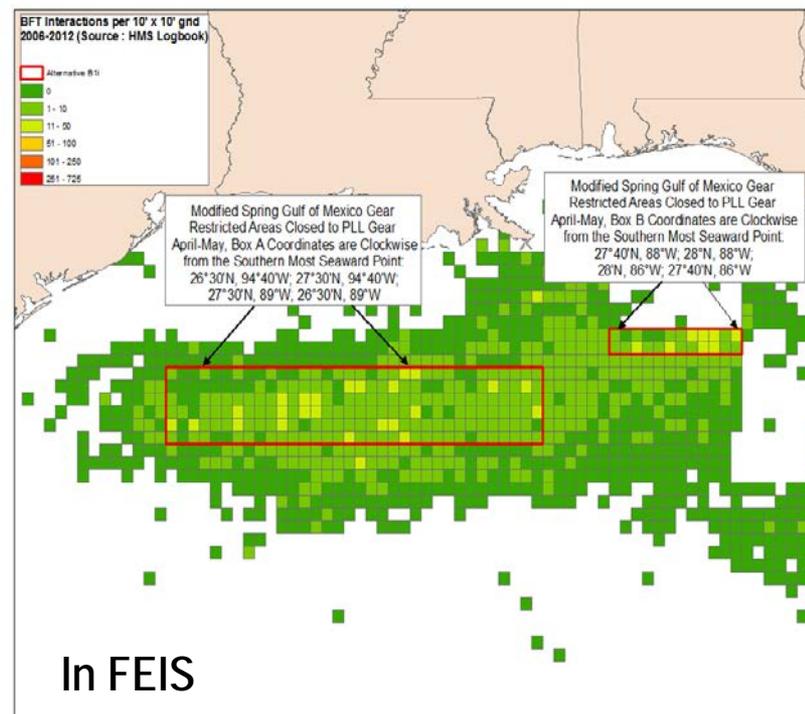
3) Compliance with HMS Logbook reporting requirements

Timeliness of logbook submission

Preferred Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Area (GRA) Modified from DEIS



Small Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Area (Alternative B 1g) Number of Bluefin Interactions with Pelagic Longline Gear (2006 – 2012)



Modified Spring Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Areas (Alternative B 1i) Number of Bluefin Interactions with Pelagic Longline Gear (2006 – 2012)

Area Based Alternatives No Longer Preferred in the FEIS

Allow Pelagic Longline Vessels to Fish under General Category Rules in the Cape Hatteras GRA

- Would have allowed PLL vessels without access to the Cape Hatteras GRA to fish under General category rules
- No longer preferred -- potential benefits of allowing PLL vessels to fish under the open-access General category rules do not outweigh the potential costs and risks associated with this activity at this time

Limited Conditional Access to Pelagic Longline Closed Areas

- Would have created new mechanism that would have allowed PLL vessels access to current closed areas if (1) they were selected for observer coverage in a quarter and area that had a closed area and (2) they had an observer on board
- No longer preferred -- benefits associated with providing additional fishing opportunities (by providing access) would not outweigh the costs in terms of the risk of undermining the conservation benefits of the closed areas

Preferred Alternatives Regarding IBQ Program – *Minor Changes from DEIS*

- Quota shares allotted to **“active” PLL vessels that also have the permit associated with a vessel**. Each share would represent a set percentage of the Longline category quota. Based on that percentage, the permitted vessel would also receive an annual Quota allocation (mt of bluefin)
- Quota shares and related allocation use would be **regional** (Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic). Atlantic shares may not be used in the Gulf of Mexico
- Vessels would need a **minimum amount of quota allocation to depart on a fishing trip** with pelagic longline gear
 - Atlantic minimum required: 0.125 mt whole weight (~275 lb)
 - Gulf of Mexico minimum required: 0.25 mt whole weight (~550 lb)
- **Landings and dead discards** count toward the IBQ

Preferred Alternatives Regarding IBQ Program - continued

- If a vessel catches more bluefin than the amount of bluefin allocation it has, it may finish the trip and land the bluefin, but **must then account for the bluefin landed** by obtaining additional quota allocation through a lease (annual) before another trip can be made
- Only temporary **leasing of quota allocation** would be available initially; Leasing quota would be allowed **between Purse Seine and Longline** category vessels
- Vessels may not depart on a fishing trip w/o sufficient IBQ available
- A permitted vessel's annual quota allocation **would not carry over** from one year to the next
- Permitted Longline category vessels that are not initially allocated bluefin shares may lease quota
- SERO ITQ web-based system is being adapted for IBQ program

Preferred IBQ Shares and Initial Allocations

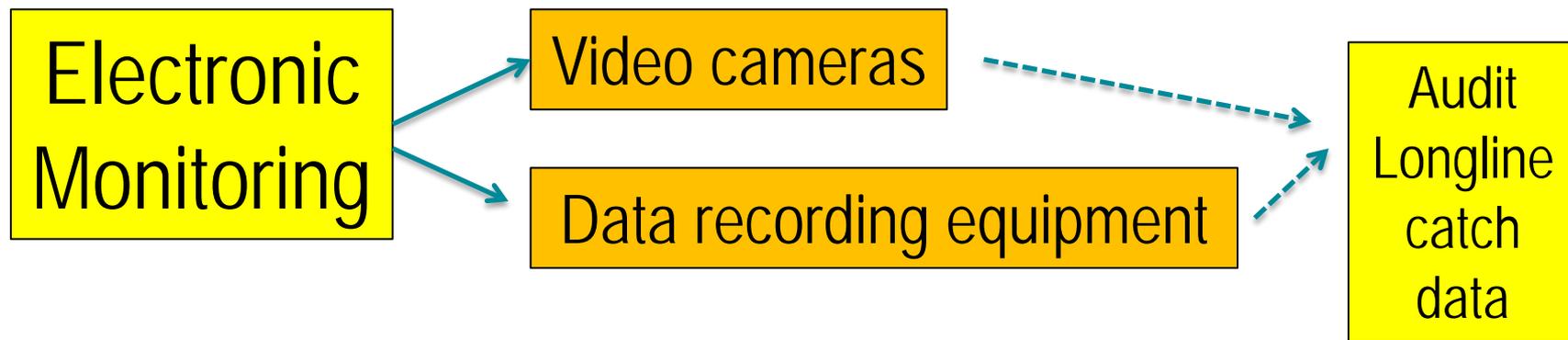
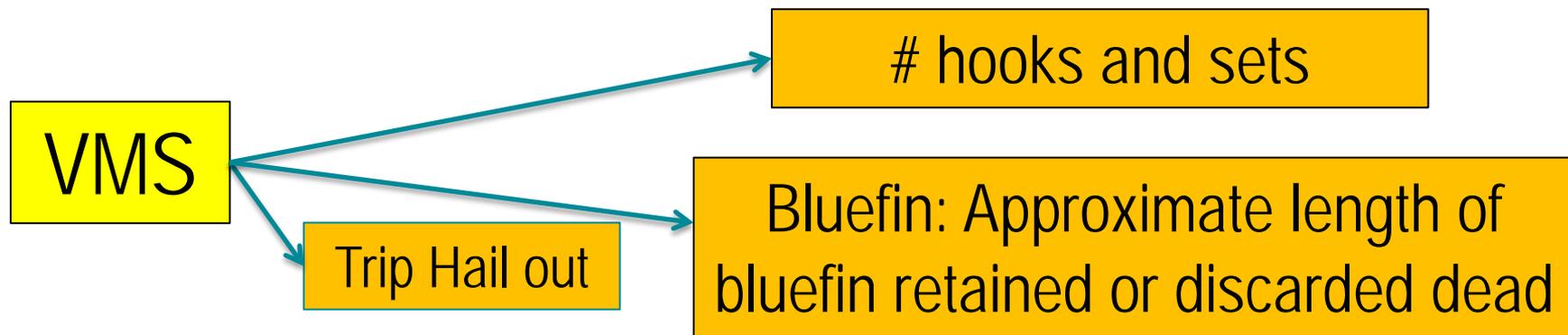
- Active Vessels (one set between 2006 through 2012) & permit on date of proposed rule (August 21, 2013)
- Permit associated with a vessel
- Amount of shares based on: 1) Amount of target species caught and 2) Ratio of Number of bluefin interactions to target species

Share Type	Quota Share	Quota Allocation*
high	1.2 %	1.64 mt
med.	0.6%	0.82 mt
low	0.37%	0.51 mt

*Allocations derived from a baseline Longline category bluefin quota of 137 mt: (e.g., 1.2 % of 137 mt = 1.64 mt). Percentages may be amended once all appeals have been vetted.

Preferred Enhanced Reporting Requirements – Longline

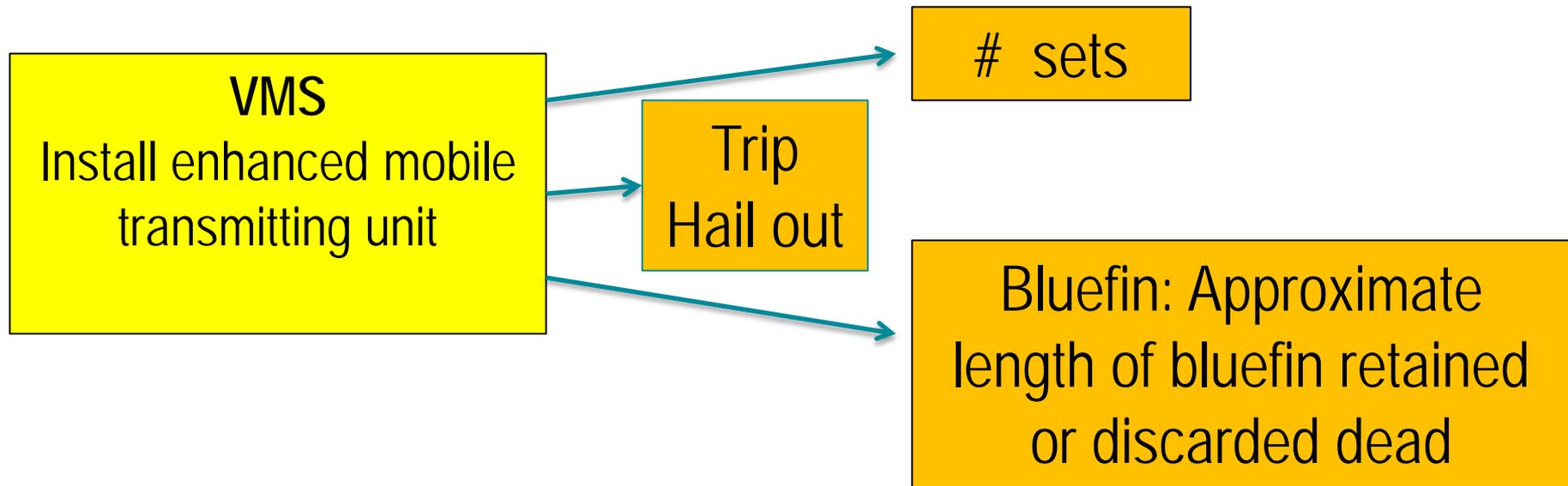
No Change from DEIS



Electronic monitoring requirements would be fully implemented in 2015

Preferred Enhanced Reporting Requirements – Purse Seine

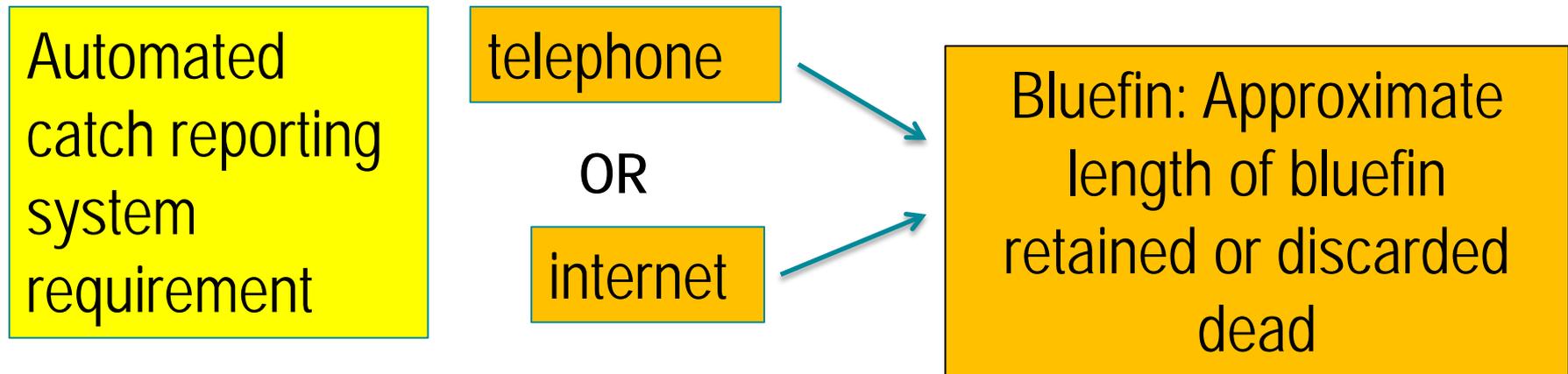
No Change from DEIS



Report # sets within 12 hours of completion of the set

For Purse Seine sets with bluefin tuna catch, the VMS report must be submitted within 12 hours of completion of the set, and reporting of zero bluefin on a set is not required

Preferred Enhanced Reporting Requirements – General, Harpoon, Charter/Headboat - *No Change from DEIS*



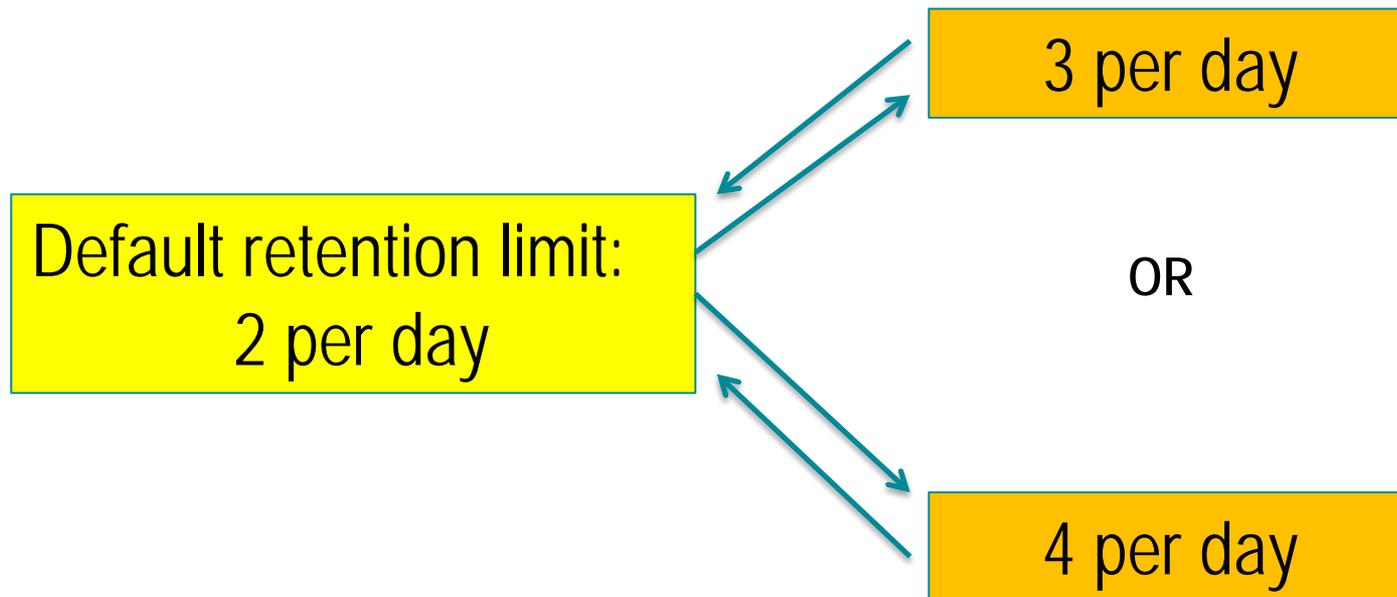
Preferred Flexibility for General Category Quota Adjustment - *No Change from DEIS*



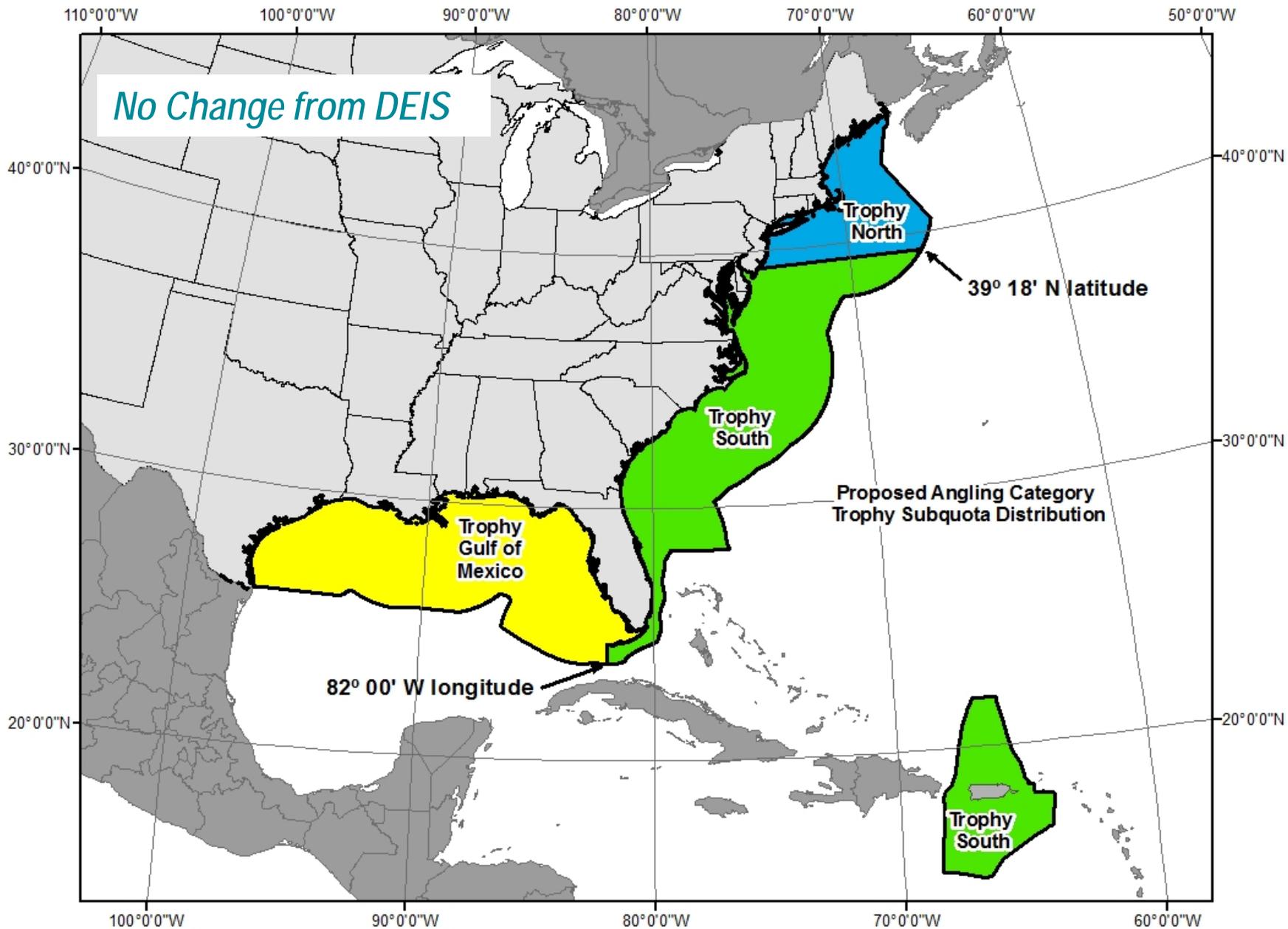
- Proactively transfer General category quota to January subperiod per regulatory determination criteria

Preferred Authority to Adjust Harpoon Category Retention Limits of Large Medium Bluefin (73" to < 81")

No Change from DEIS



Limit on Giants ($\geq 81''$) would remain the same



Preferred Start Date of the Purse Seine Category -

No Change from DEIS

➤ Current: July 15 (or NMFS may delay until Aug 15)

➤ Preferred: **June 1** (or NMFS may delay until Aug 15)

Preferred Modification Regarding Permit Category Changes – *No Change from DEIS*

- Would allow a permit holder to **modify the category** of an Atlantic Tunas or HMS permit issued **for up to 45 days** from date of issuance, **provided the vessel has not landed bluefin tuna** as verified via landings data

Preferred Alternatives Regarding North Atlantic Albacore Tuna Quota - *No Change from DEIS*

- Implement the U.S. annual quota of northern albacore tuna recommended by ICCAT
- Carry-forward of unused quota from one year to the next would be limited to 25 percent of the initial quota
- Account for overharvest and underharvest of the quota adjusted as appropriate for prior year catch, including delayed adjustment (that would skip a year) or adjustments over several years

How to Submit Comments

Comments to NMFS due by October 6, 2014

- Electronically: <http://www.regulations.gov>
“submit a comment” ; “NOAA-NMFS-2013-0101”
- Mail: Tom Warren

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Questions?



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