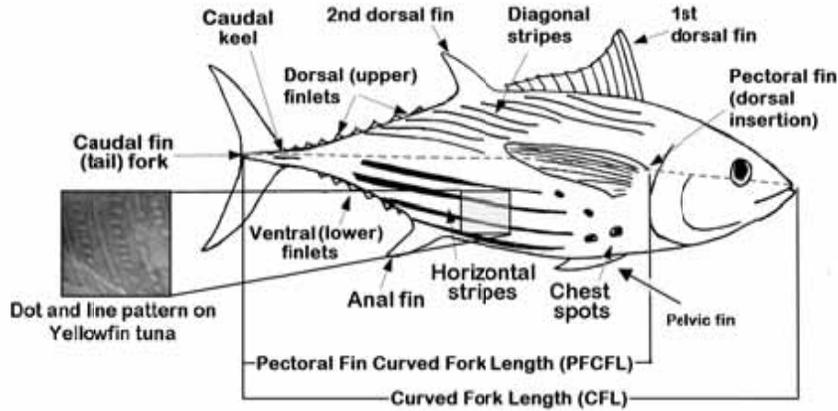


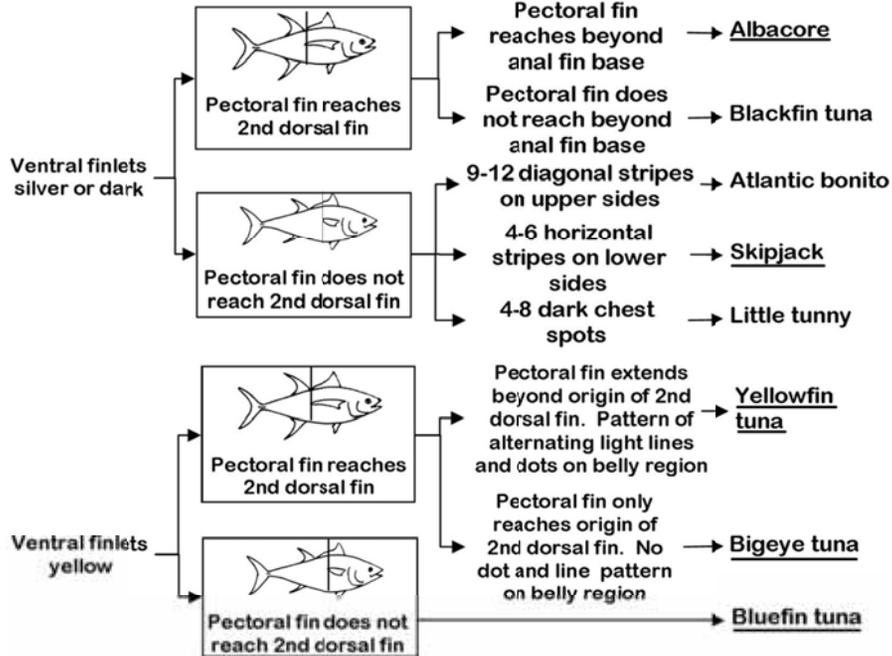
VII. TUNAS

ANATOMY OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



CFL measurement – use if the head is attached.⁶⁹ CFL is measured from the tip of the upper jaw, tracing the contour (i.e., curve) of the body along the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin and dorsal side of the caudal keel to the fork of the tail.⁷⁰ **PFCFL measurement** – use if head is removed from bluefin tuna. PFCFL is measured from the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin, tracing the contour of the body along the outer surface of the pectoral fin to the fork of the tail.⁷¹

IDENTIFICATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



This guide covers regulations for the tuna species that are underlined.



AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack (BAYS) tunas | Bluefin tuna

PERMITS AND GEARS

Species	Gear ⁷²	Permits ⁷³
BAYS and Bluefin tunas	Bandit	1. HMS Charter/Headboat OR 2. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
	Handline and Rod and reel	1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category OR Swordfish General Commercial ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
	Greenstick	1. HMS Charter/Headboat OR 2. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
BAYS tunas only	Speargun*	1. HMS Angling OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat

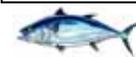
*Only free-swimming BAYS tunas; not those restricted by fishing lines or other means.⁷⁴

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Species	Minimum Size (CFL) ^{75,76}	Bag Limit ⁷⁷	Season
Albacore	None	None	Jan. 1- Dec. 31
Bigeye	27"	None	
Skipjack	None	None	
Yellowfin	27"	3 per person per day	
Bluefin	27" to less than 47" <i>School</i>	Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Call (888)-872-8862 or (978)-281-9260 or visit https://hmspermits.noaa.gov for current limits.	
	47" to less than 73" <i>Large school</i> or <i>Small medium</i>		
	73" or greater <i>Large medium</i> or <i>Giant</i>		1 per vessel per year ("Trophy")

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

All Atlantic tunas may be landed round with fins intact, or eviscerated with the head removed, as long as the fish remains within the specified minimum size



(described below) and both the tail and at least one pectoral fin remain attached through landing (all other fins may be removed).⁷⁸ The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact (see tail trimming).⁷⁹

A vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category permit may be used to fish recreationally for Atlantic tunas during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, applying the General category regulations, including authorized gears, techniques, and size limits (see the HMS Commercial Compliance Guide).⁸⁰ Bluefin tuna less than 73" may not be retained aboard Atlantic Tunas General category permitted vessels.⁸¹

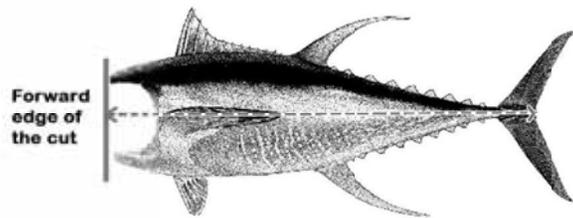
A vessel that has been issued only a Swordfish General Commercial permit may fish recreationally for Atlantic tunas during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament; however, HMS Angling category regulations for Atlantic tunas, including those addressing authorized gears, techniques, and size limits apply.⁸²

Any Atlantic tuna that is caught but not kept must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.⁸³

Tunas with heads removed

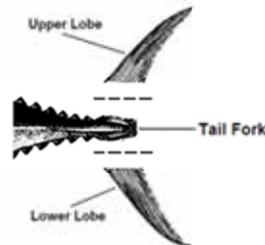
Bluefin tuna must be at least 20 inches (51 cm) pectoral fin curved fork length (PFCFL) if the head is removed.⁸⁴ Multiplying the PFCFL by 1.35 gives the CFL (20" PFCFL \times 1.35 = 27" CFL).⁸⁵

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna must be at least 27 inches (69 cm) from the forward edge of the cut to the fork of the tail (see image below) if the head is removed.⁸⁶



Tail trimming

The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact.⁸⁷



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS⁸⁸

- Anglers must report all recreational bluefin tuna landings and dead discards.
 - Anglers in Maryland and North Carolina must report at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).
 - All other anglers must report to NMFS within 24 hours either online at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>, or by calling (888) 872-8862.
- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) may survey anglers at the dock or by phone. If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys.

RESTRICTED AREAS⁸⁹

- Targeting bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico is prohibited year-round. HMS Angling or Charter/Headboat permit holders may retain one "trophy" bluefin tuna (greater than 73" CFL) per vessel per year from the Gulf of Mexico if it is caught incidentally while targeting other species, provided the Gulf of Mexico "trophy" category subquota is still available at the time of harvest.⁹⁰
- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (except for surface trolling allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)⁹¹

