

## VIII. ATLANTIC TUNAS PURSE SEINE RESTRICTIONS

### INDIVIDUAL BLUEFIN QUOTA (IBQ) ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

The IBQ electronic system is a web based program that allows Atlantic Tunas Purse Seine category participants to lease quota allocation among purse seine participants or to pelagic longline permit holders, and are required to participate in the program in order to report their bluefin catch. The IBQ electronic system is managed through NMFS's Southeast Regional Office Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program webpage (<https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqgt/main.html>). Atlantic Tunas Purse Seine category participants will be issued a percentage of the overall Purse Seine category quota, which is 184.3 mt under the current ICCAT U.S. total allowable catch (TAC). For each fishing year, purse seine participants will be allocated quota based on the Amendment 7 "Annual quota reallocation" formula. As of 2015, all dead discards, as well as landings of bluefin tuna will count against a vessel's quota. Once the total amount of quota allocation is utilized, participants must either lease additional quota or stop fishing until more quota is disbursed. Purse Seine quota is designated for use in the Atlantic (named "PSG ATL" in the IBQ system). Atlantic allocation may only be used for bluefin landings and dead discards in the Atlantic.

### VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS) REQUIREMENTS

- Vessels with an Atlantic Tunas Purse Seine category permit must have an approved Enhanced Mobile Transmitting Unit (E-MTU) VMS unit installed by a qualified marine electrician in order to fish with purse seine gear. The VMS hardware and communications service provider must be on the VMS type approval lists for use in HMS fisheries, which is available at [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/docs/2014/noaa\\_fisheries\\_service\\_type\\_final\\_020514.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/docs/2014/noaa_fisheries_service_type_final_020514.pdf).
  - Vessels must follow the procedures for installation and activation provided by NMFS and submit to NMFS the completed checklist and compliance certification statement.
- The VMS unit must submit automatic position reports every hour, 24 hours a day, unless a valid power down exemption has been granted by NMFS law enforcement.
  - Purse Seine category participants may request a documented power down exemption from NMFS law enforcement if the vessel will not be fishing for an extended period of time. The request must describe:
    - the reason an exemption is being requested;
    - the location of the vessel during the time an exemption is sought;
    - the exact time period for which an exemption is needed; and
    - sufficient information to determine that a power down exemption is appropriate.
- If a vessel operator is aware that transmission of automatic position reports has been interrupted, or is notified by NMFS that such reports are not being received, the vessel operator must contact NMFS and follow the instructions given.
  - After a fishing trip during which interruption of automatic position reports has occurred, the vessel's owner or operator must have a qualified marine electrician replace or repair the VMS unit prior to the vessel's next trip.
- As a condition of obtaining an HMS limited access permit, the vessel owners or operators must allow NMFS, the USCG, or their designees access to the vessel's position data. On each trip to fish for Atlantic tunas with purse seine gear:
- Hail out: Prior to departing on a trip, vessels must submit a "Highly Migratory Species Trip Declaration Form" through E-MTU VMS to:
  - declare their intent to fish for Atlantic tunas with purse seine gear, and
  - note their HMS target species.

- Catch reports: Vessels must submit through VMS, a “Highly Migratory Species Bluefin Tuna Catch Report,” for each set. Specifically, such vessels must: o report the number of all bluefin discarded dead or retained (by standardized size ranges) within 12 hours of completion of each set (including reporting of zero bluefin on a set).
- Hail in: At least three hours and no more than 12 hours in advance of landing , the vessel operator must provide advanced notice of landing, by submitted the “Highly Migratory Species Pre-Landing Notification Form” with information on the time and location of landing.
- Declare out: If a vessel operator decides not to fish for or retain HMS for two or more trips, the operator may choose to “declare out” of the fishery, according to instructions provided by NMFS, and would not be subject to the HMS hail in / hail out requirements during trips for which they are declared out of the HMS fishery.
- NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) will provide vessel owners with instructions regarding the detailed methods of reporting such information using their VMS units.
- For questions regarding VMS, please contact OLE Southeast Division at 1-800-758-4833 or 727-824-5334.

## IX. BOTTOM LONGLINE RESTRICTIONS

Vessels fishing with bottom longline gear must possess valid Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop certificates onboard for both the owner and operator.<sup>180</sup>

### PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR

Generally, in HMS fisheries, only commercial shark fishermen use bottom longline gear because tunas and swordfish are found in the water column while many species of sharks are found on the bottom.

- Shark fishermen need a commercial shark (**Directed** or **Incidental**) limited access permit or, as of March 15, 2016, a **Smoothhound Shark** open access permit to harvest sharks.<sup>181</sup> Fishermen holding all three limited access permits listed in the pelagic longline section (VII) may also use bottom longline gear.<sup>182</sup>

Prior to renewing or obtaining a shark limited access permit, both the owner and operator must attend a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and obtain a certificate. A copy of the workshop certificate must be included in the permit application package.<sup>183</sup> For more information on workshops, see Section XIX.

### TIME/AREA CLOSURES FOR USE OF BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR

To reduce bycatch, NOAA Fisheries has closed a number of areas to fishermen with HMS permits who have bottom longline gear onboard.

To determine compliance with the closed area restrictions, NMFS Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard use the definitions for pelagic and bottom longline gear (see Section 0) to determine if a vessel is fishing with pelagic or bottom longline gear.

### Stowing Longline Gear

If a vessel is in an area closed to bottom longline gear and has bottom longline gear onboard, it is a rebuttable presumption that fish on board that vessel were taken with bottom longline gear in the closed area unless the vessel is transiting a closed or gear restricted area with all fishing gear stowed appropriately. Longline gear is stowed appropriately if:

- All gangions and hooks are removed from the mainline and are stowed on or below deck;