

8. HMS PERMITS AND TOURNAMENTS

This section provides updates for the number of permits issued in conjunction with HMS fishing and dealer activities in 2012. The number of permits for Atlantic HMS fisheries and the number of dealer permits for sharks, swordfish, and tunas are updated through October 2012 and presented in Tables 8.1 - 8.8. Section 8.2 reports the historical number, locations, and target species of HMS tournament registrations with final numbers from the 2011 tournaments season.

8.1 HMS Permits

Detailed information about HMS permits is available in the most recent HMS Recreational, Commercial, and Dealer Compliance Guides on the internet at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance_Guide/index.htm.

HMS Charter/Headboat Permit

Owners of charter boats or headboats that are used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, or billfish must obtain an Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit. The distribution of 2012 Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permits is presented in Table 8.1 **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 8.1 Number of Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits by State (as of October 2012)

State/ Territory	Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits	State/ Territory	Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permits
AL	80	NJ	528
CT	77	NY	314
DE	104	OH	1
FL	663	OK	1
GA	22	PA	27
ID	1	PR	24
KY	1	RI	152
LA	87	SC	122
MA	832	TN	1
MD	126	TX	148
ME	143	VA	133
MI	1	VI	16
MN	1	VT	1
MS	21	WI	1
NC	402	WV	4
NH	95	Total	4,129

Atlantic Tunas Permits

Commercial Atlantic tunas permits are categorized by gear type (longline, harpoon, trap, purse seine, and General category) (Table 8.2). The Atlantic Tunas General Category permit authorizes the use of rod and reel, handline, harpoon, green-stick, and bandit gear, and distribution of the permit by state can be found in Table 8.3. HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (Table 8.3) may also participate in the commercial tuna fishery.

Table 8.2 Number of Commercial Atlantic Tunas Permit Holders by Category (2005-2012)

Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*
Longline	200	214	218	241	259	248	242	253
Harpoon	40	40	26	26	23	29	24	13
Trap	7	7	9	9	4	6	6	8
General	4,494	4,824	3,616	4,031	3,824	3,849	3,764	4,084
Purse seine	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
Total	4,746	5,090	3,873	4,311	4,113	4,135	4,039	4,361

* As of October 2012. The actual number of 2012 permit holders in each category is subject to change as individuals renew their permits or allow them to expire.

Table 8.3 Number of General Category Permits by State or Territory (as of October 2012)

State	General Category Permits	State	General Category Permits
AL	25	NJ	185
AZ	2	NY	171
CA	2	OH	1
CT	65	OK	1
DE	22	OR	1
FL	204	PA	9
GA	4	PR	73
IN	1	RI	166
LA	46	SC	35
MA	1,347	TX	21
MD	44	VA	140
ME	808	VI	14
MI	1	VT	1
MS	19	WA	1
NC	406	WV	1
NH	267	Total	4,084

HMS Angling Permit

The HMS Angling Permit is required to recreationally fish for, retain, or possess (including catch-and-release fishing) any federally-regulated HMS, including sharks, swordfish, white and blue marlin, sailfish, spearfish, bluefin tuna, and BAYS (bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack) tunas. It does not authorize the sale or transfer of HMS to any person for a commercial purpose. Atlantic HMS Angling permit distribution is reported in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Number of Atlantic HMS Angling Permits (as of October 2012)

State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**	State/Country	Permits by Home Port*	Permits by Residence**
AK	6	2	MT	2	2
AL	416	367	NC	1,561	1,463
AR	5	10	ND	1	1
AZ	1	3	NE	-	4
BVI	1	4	NH	352	435
CA	3	10	NJ	3,204	2,743
CO	5	9	NV	3	5
CT	582	669	NY	1,709	1,789
DC	1	7	OH	15	25
DE	853	531	OK	6	14
FL	3,953	3,675	PA	224	1,118
GA	115	197	PR	578	592
HI	1	-	RI	608	441
IA	-	4	SC	619	595
ID	-	2	SD	1	4
IL	6	29	TN	23	43
IN	6	12	TX	761	795
KS	2	3	UT	1	3
KY	4	6	VA	1,677	1,762
LA	647	653	USVI	41	20
MA	3,156	3,110	VT	18	40
MD	1,137	1,113	WA	2	4
ME	520	433	WI	7	12
MI	21	37	WV	9	14
MN	5	6	WY	2	4
MO	5	11	Canada	9	13
MS	177	217	Total	23,061	23,061

* The vessel port or other storage location. ** The permit holder's billing address.

Limited Access Permits

The LAP program includes six different permit types: Swordfish Directed, Swordfish Incidental, Swordfish Handgear, Shark Directed, Shark Incidental, and Atlantic Tuna Longline. The Swordfish Directed and Incidental permits are valid only if the permit holder also holds both an Atlantic Tuna Longline and a shark permit. Similarly, the Atlantic Tuna Longline permit is valid only if the permit holder also holds both a swordfish (Directed or Incidental, not Handgear) and a shark permit. No additional LAPs are required to make a Swordfish Handgear or any of the shark permits valid.

Table 8.5 Number of Shark, Swordfish, and Atlantic Tuna Longline Limited Access Permits by State (2004-2012)

State	Directed Swordfish	Incidental Swordfish	Swordfish Handgear	Directed Shark	Incidental Shark	Tuna Longline	Permit Holders/ Permits
ME	4	-	1	2	5	4	8 / 16
NH	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
MA	6	2	8	2	10	7	19 / 35
RI	-	-	11	-	3	-	11 / 14
CT	-	-	-	-	-	-	- / -
NY	17	4	4	11	12	21	27 / 69
PA	1	-	-	-	1	1	1 / 3
NJ	29	11	3	24	28	41	54 / 136
DE	-	-	1	-	-	-	1 / 1
MD	4	-	-	2	2	4	04 / 12
VA	1	-	-	-	1	1	1 / 3
NC	11	7	-	17	13	18	30 / 66
SC	4	1	-	8	10	5	18 / 28
GA	-	-	-	2	2	-	4 / 4
FL	74	38	49	125	133	110	303 / 529
AL	-	-	-	5	2	-	7 / 7
MS	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
LA	30	5	-	12	35	34	48 / 116
TX	3	5	-	5	11	7	16 / 31
CA	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 / 1
Annual Totals							
2012*	184	73	77	215	271	253	555 / 1,073
2011	178	67	78	217	262	242	555 / 1,044
2010	177	72	75	215	265	248	566 / 1,052
2009	187	72	81	223	285	259	636 / 1,107
2008	181	76	81	214	285	241	628 / 1,079
2007	180	79	82	231	296	218	613 / 1,086
2006	191	86	88	240	312	214	604 / 1,131
2005	190	91	92	235	320	200	639 / 1,128

* As of October 2012. Number of permit holders in each category and state is subject to change as permits are renewed or expire.

Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Dealer Permits

HMS Dealer permits are open-access and required for the “first receiver” of Atlantic tunas, swordfish, and sharks. A first receiver is any entity, person, or company that takes, for commercial purposes (other than solely for transport), immediate possession of the fish, or any part of the fish, as the fish are offloaded from a fishing vessel. Atlantic tunas, swordfish and sharks dealer permits (by state) are reported in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 Number of Domestic Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks Dealer Permits (2012 by State; 2005-2012 Totals by Permit)

State/Territory	Bluefin Only	BAYS Only	Bluefin and BAYS	Atlantic Swordfish	Atlantic Sharks	Total
AL	-	-	1	3	2	6
CA	2	-	1	4	-	7
CT	-	1	1	1	-	3
DE	-	1	1	-	-	2
FL	2	-	15	74	27	118
GA	-	-	2	1	1	4
HI	-	-	2	2	-	4
LA	-	1	7	11	7	26
MA	8	7	87	17	6	125
MD	-	1	8	4	3	16
ME	8	1	10	3	-	22
NC	5	4	25	18	16	68
NH	-	-	6	1	-	7
NJ	1	11	38	9	7	66
NY	2	19	55	10	4	90
PA	-	-	3	-	-	3
PR	-	4	1	-	-	5
RI	1	9	31	10	2	53
SC	-	1	2	7	13	23
TX	-	1	1	2	1	5
VA	1	4	13	1	3	22
VI	-	2	1	-	-	3
VT	-	-	1	-	-	1
WA	-	-	1	1	-	2
Annual Totals						
2012*	30	67	313	179	92	681
2011	33	67	316	191	117	724
2010	32	58	323	181	108	702
2009	32	55	289	177	106	659
2008	30	62	303	171	128	694
2007	9	22	255	269	206	761
2006	43	60	313	285	336	1,037
2005	68	66	332	294	228	988

* As of October 2012. The actual number of permits per state may change as permit holders move or sell their businesses.

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, Letters of Acknowledgement (LOAs) Chartering Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs)

EFPs, SRPs, and display permits authorize collections of tunas, swordfish, billfishes, and sharks from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico for the purposes of scientific data collection and public display. EFPs are issued to individuals for the purpose of conducting research or other fishing activities aboard private (non-NOAA) vessels, whereas SRPs are issued to agency scientists who are conducting research aboard NOAA vessels. Similar to SRPs, LOAs are issued to individuals conducting research from “bona fide” research vessels on species that are only regulated by Magnuson-Stevens Act and not ATCA. Display permits are issued to individuals who are fishing for, catching, and then transporting HMS to certified aquariums for public display. Chartering permits are issued to HMS-permitted vessel owners that wish to fish under a chartering arrangement outside U.S. waters. The number of EFPs, display permits, and SRPs issued from 2007 – 2012 by category and species are listed in Table 8.7. Amendment 2 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP implemented the shark research fishery. In 2012, NMFS received 19 applications for entrance into the shark research fishery. Based on the qualification criteria, 5 were chosen to participate.

Table 8.7 Number of Atlantic HMS Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Display Permits, and Scientific Research Permits (SRPs) (2008-2012)

Permit Type		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*
Exempted Fishing Permit	Sharks for display	5	4	2	3	4
	HMS** for display	1	2	2	2	2
	Tunas for display	0	0	0	0	0
	Shark research on a non-scientific vessel	4	4	9	8	10
	Tuna research on a non-scientific vessel	4	4	5	5	5
	HMS** research on a non-scientific vessel	7	5	2	2	3
	Billfish research on a non-scientific vessel	3	1	2	2	1
	Shark fishing	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS** chartering	0	0	0	0	0
	Tuna fishing	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	24	20	22	22	25
Scientific Research Permit	Shark research	0	4	1	3	4
	Tuna research	0	0	1	1	3
	Billfish research	0	0	0	0	0
	HMS** research	1	0	4	6	4
	Total	1	4	6	10	11
Letters of Acknowledgement	Shark research	6	5	8	7	7
	Total	6	5	8	7	7

*As of October 1, 2012. **Multiple species.

8.2 Atlantic HMS Tournaments

An Atlantic HMS tournament is defined as any fishing competition involving Atlantic HMS in which participants must register or otherwise enter or in which a prize or award is offered, for catching or landing such fish. Atlantic HMS tournaments are conducted from ports along the U.S. Atlantic coast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean (i.e., the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico). Some foreign tournaments (e.g., those held in the Bahamas, Bermuda, and the Turks and Caicos) may voluntarily register because their participants are mostly U.S. citizens. Since 1999, Federal regulations have required that tournament registration with NMFS take place at least four weeks prior to the commencement of tournament fishing activities. Tournament operators may be selected by NMFS for reporting, in which case a record of tournament catch and effort must be submitted to NMFS within seven days of the conclusion of the tournament.

Atlantic HMS tournaments vary in size. They may range from relatively small, “members-only” club events with as few as ten participating boats (40 – 60 anglers) to larger, statewide tournaments with 250 or more participating vessels (1,000 – 1,500 anglers). Larger tournaments often involve corporate sponsorship from tackle manufacturers, marinas, boat dealers, marine suppliers, beverage distributors, resorts, radio stations, publications, chambers of commerce, restaurants, and other local businesses.

Tournament registration and reporting forms are available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Tournaments>. The Atlantic HMS tournament registration form includes an option for tournament operators to request HMS regulation booklets and other outreach materials. In 2011, over 100 tournaments requested and received outreach materials from the HMS Management Division through the tournament registration process. As of October 2012, more than 120 tournaments had requested and received outreach materials for the 2012 tournament season.

The number of HMS tournaments that registered each year from 2003 to 2012 is reported in Table 8.8. On annual average (2003-2011), 259 HMS tournaments register each year. In 2011, a final count of 249 tournaments registered with the HMS Management Division. This is the lowest registration count since 2005. The highest number of HMS tournament registrations occurred in 2007.

Table 8.8 Number of Registered Atlantic HMS Tournaments by Year (2003-2012)

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	Average**
Total	244	215	256	259	299	267	270	270	249	235	259

*As of October 2012. **Averages only final numbers (2003-2011); excludes preliminary 2012 number.

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

The distribution of HMS fishing tournaments along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal states and the Caribbean is represented in Figure 8.1. In 2011, most HMS fishing tournaments were conducted in Florida (78), Louisiana (26), New Jersey (25), Texas (20), South Carolina (16), North Carolina (15), Puerto Rico (14), New York (12), Maryland (12), US Virgin Islands (7), Massachusetts (6), and Alabama (5). Since 2003, Florida has consistently been the state in which there is the highest number of registered HMS tournaments.

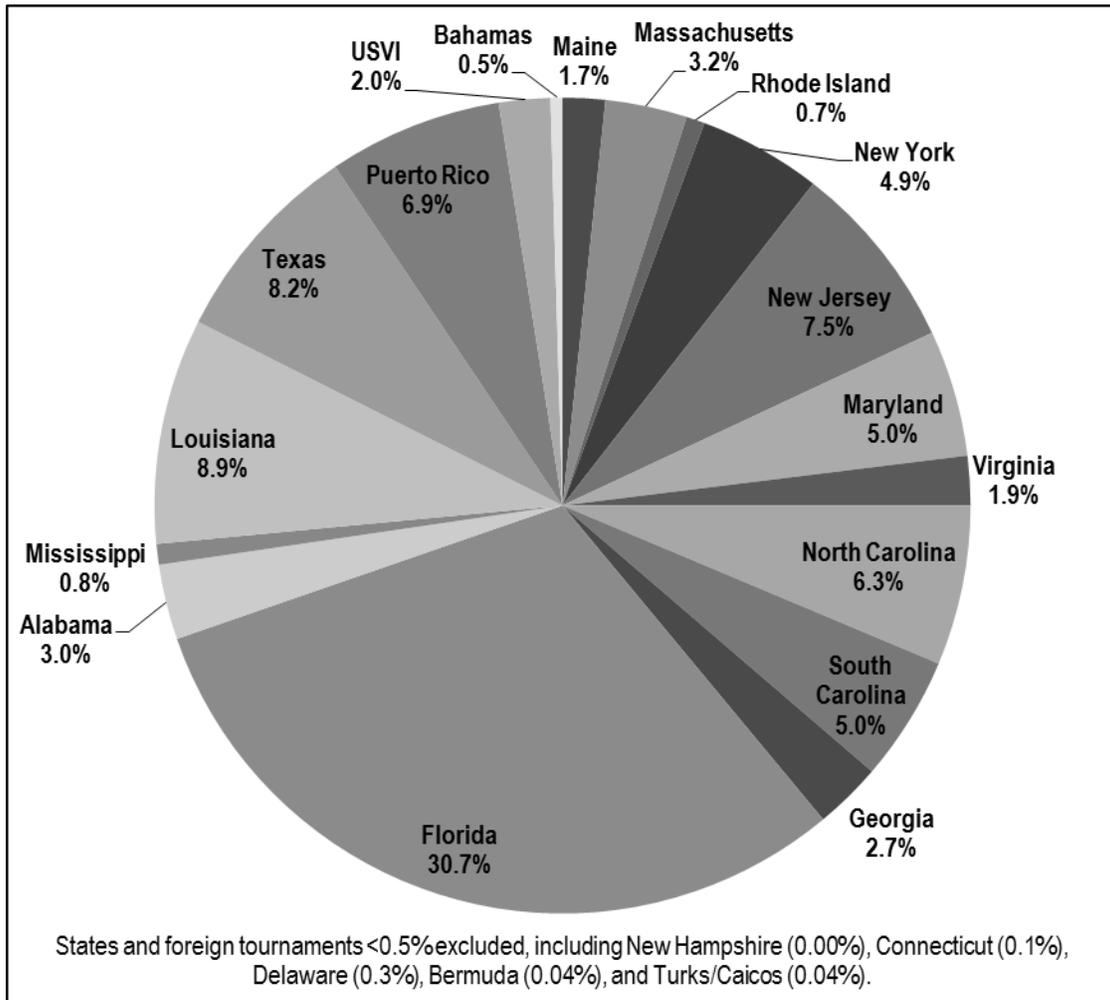


Figure 8.1 Percentage of Atlantic HMS Tournaments in each State (Average, 2003-2011)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Table 8.9 indicates the number of HMS tournaments in 2010 and 2011 that registered to award points or prizes for the catch or landing of each HMS. From 2010 to 2011, the number of tournaments decreased for all billfishes and swordfish; all tunas except bigeye; and for all shark categories. Figure 8.2 shows that sailfish, blue marlin, yellowfin tuna, and white marlin are the predominant target species in HMS fishing tournaments.

Table 8.9 Number of Atlantic HMS Tournaments per Species (2010-2011)

Species	2010	2011
Blue marlin	157	146
White marlin	146	134
Longbill spearfish	75	66
Roundscale spearfish	-	30
Sailfish	160	151
Swordfish	83	75
Bigeye tuna	83	85
Albacore tuna	40	36
Yellowfin tuna	151	137
Skipjack tuna	23	21
Bluefin tuna	91	86
Pelagic sharks	69	55
Small coastal sharks	18	15
Non-ridgeback sharks	21	16
Ridgeback sharks	20	17

- Not available. Roundscale spearfish was not added to the HMS tournament registration form until the end of 2010.

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

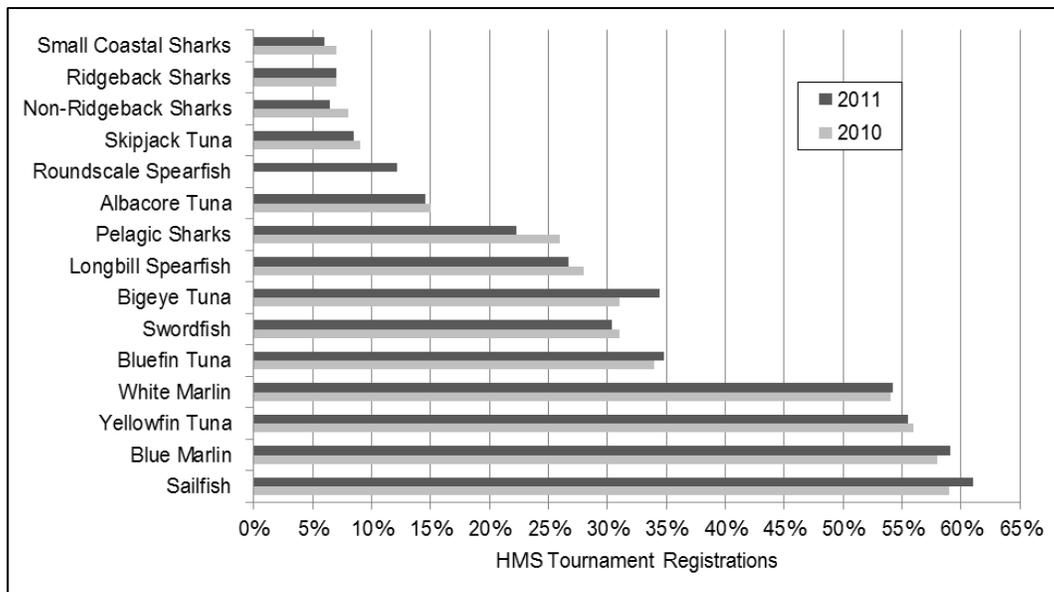


Figure 8.2 Species Composition of HMS Tournaments (2010-2011)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

Billfish Tournaments

A significant number of blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish tournaments are “release-only,” utilizing observers, angler affidavits, polygraph tests, photographs, or digital video camcorders to document the live release of billfish. All billfish tournaments are selected for reporting to the Recreational Billfish Survey (RBS), including numbers of released fish.

Anglers fishing from an HMS-permitted vessel in any tournament awarding points or prizes for Atlantic billfish are required to deploy only non-offset circle hooks when using natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. The use of non-offset circle hooks increases the likelihood of post-release survival for billfish.

The following pages show the number of tournaments in 2011 that selected sailfish (Figure 8.3), blue marlin (Figure 8.4), and white marlin (Figure 8.5) as categories on the HMS tournament registration form. These graphs illustrate that Florida is the leading state in terms of numbers of registered billfish tournaments, followed by Louisiana and Texas.

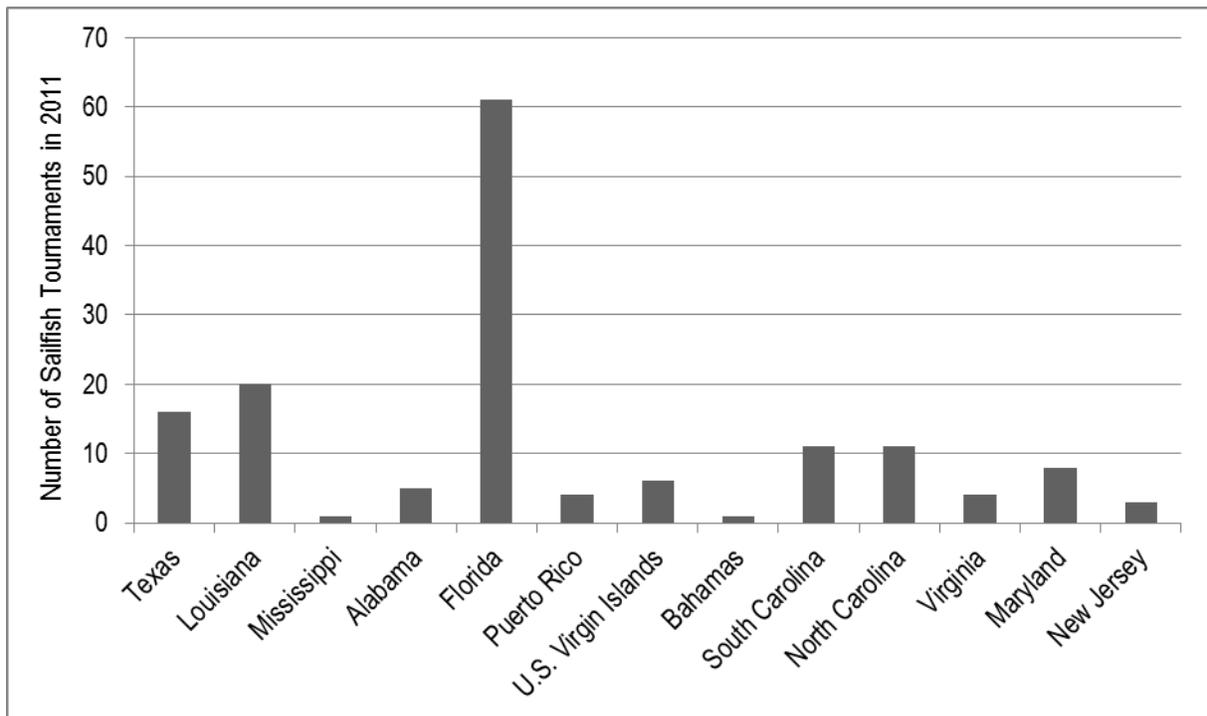


Figure 8.3 Number of Sailfish Tournaments by State (2011)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

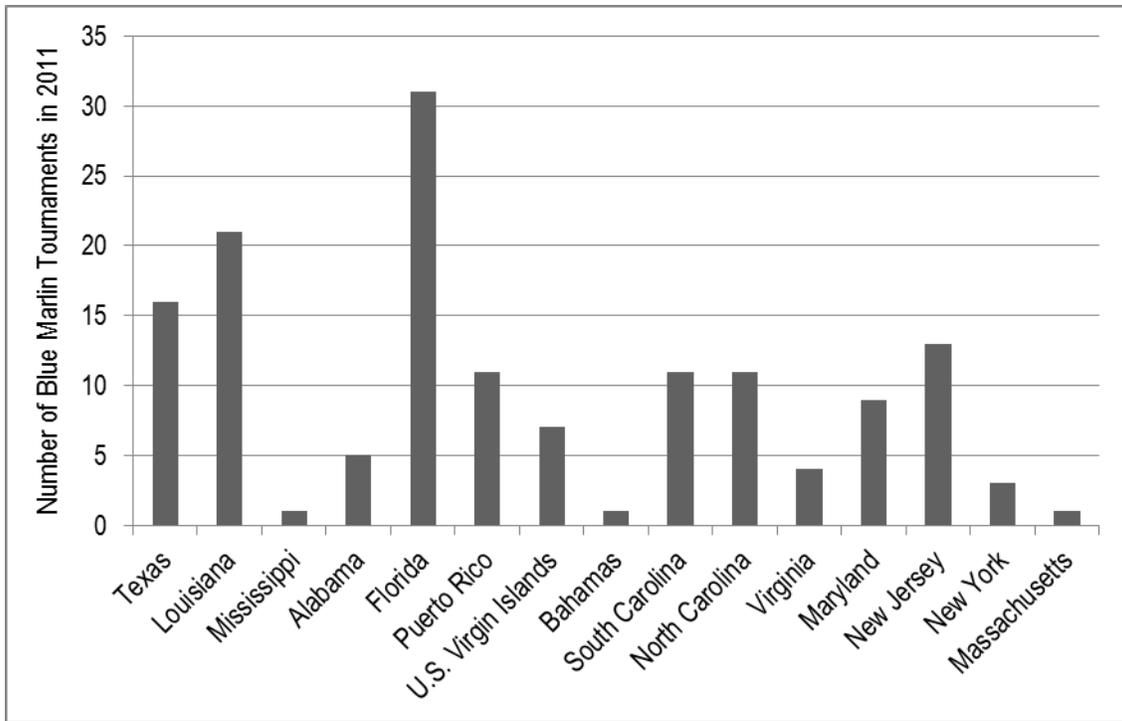


Figure 8.4 Number of Blue Marlin Tournaments by State (2011)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.

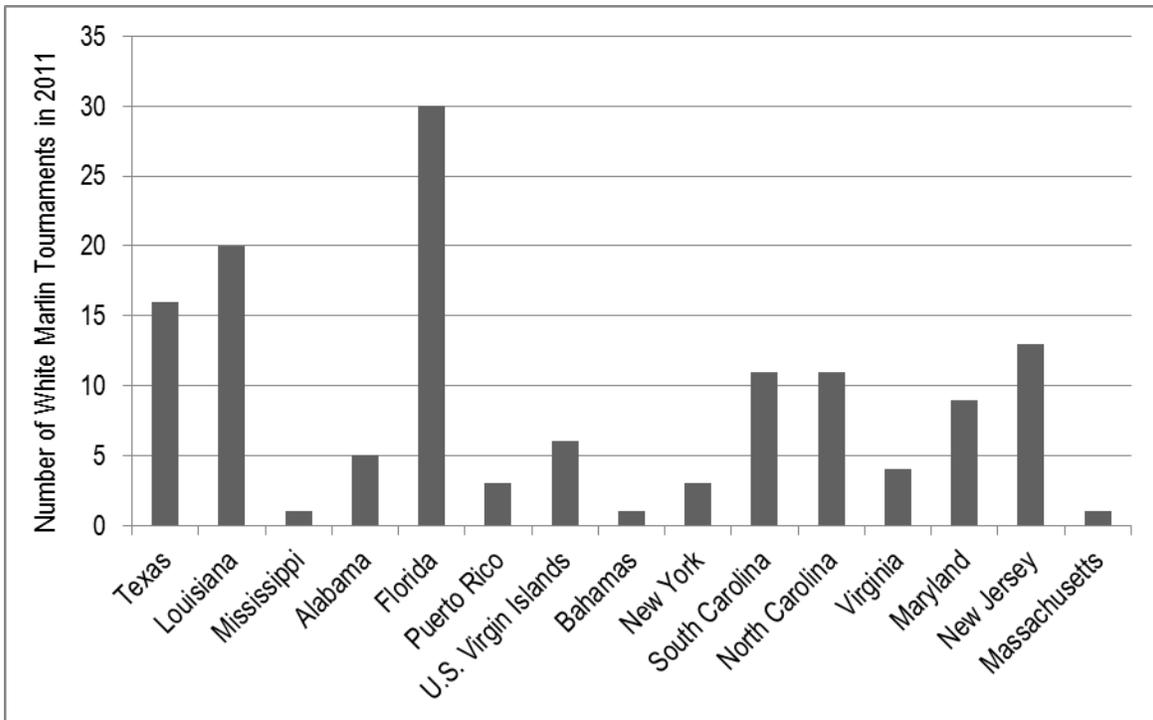


Figure 8.5 Number of White Marlin Tournaments by State (2011)

Source: NMFS Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Database.