



NOV 08 2012

## NMFS Announces Availability of the Highly Migratory Species Commercial Caribbean Small Boat Permit

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the availability of the new Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit (Caribbean permit) that is valid only in the U.S. Caribbean as defined at 622.2 (U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). This permit was created under Amendment 4 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan and implemented by a final rule published on October 1, 2012 (77 FR 59842). The purpose of this amendment is to enact HMS management measures that better correspond with the traditional operation of the small-scale HMS fishing fleet in the U.S. Caribbean Region and to provide us with an improved capability to monitor and sustainably manage those fisheries.

The Caribbean permit allows fishing for and sales of bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack tunas, Atlantic swordfish, and Atlantic sharks; collecting HMS landings data through existing territorial government programs; authorizes specific gears; is restricted to vessels less than or equal to 45 feet length overall all; and, may not be held in combination with any other Atlantic HMS vessel permits.

### How to Apply:

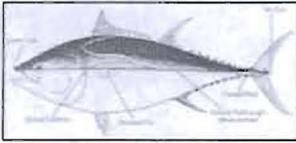
Applications for the Caribbean permit may be obtained from the NMFS Southeast Regional Permits Office at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations\\_management\\_information\\_services/constituency\\_services\\_branch/permits/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/index.html) or by calling 877-376-4877 (toll free). The permit will be effective January 2, 2013.

**Table 1. Caribbean permit retention limits, minimum size limits, and authorized gears** - Additional federal regulations apply. Please go to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/> for more information about federal regulations. Please contact the territorial governments for information about additional territorial regulations that may apply.

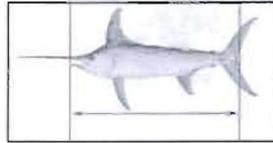
<b><u>Vessel size restriction:</u></b> Less than or equal to 45 feet in length overall			
	<b># of fish per vessel per day</b>	<b>Minimum Size</b>	<b>Authorized Gear with this permit</b>
<b>Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack Tunas</b>	10 (total for all species)	<u>Bigeye and yellowfin tunas:</u> 27 inches (69 cm) CFL <u>Albacore and skipjack tuna:</u> no minimum size	Rod and reel, handline, harpoon, bandit gear, greenstick gear, buoy gear (yo-yo gear)
<b>Swordfish</b>	2	47 inches LJFL (if head naturally attached) 25 inches CK (if any portion of head removed)	Rod and reel, handline, harpoon, bandit gear, buoy gear (yo-yo gear)
<b>Sharks</b>	No retention	Not applicable	Rod and reel, handline, and bandit gear

**Figure 1a-c. Measurement methods for: a) bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack tunas; and b-c) swordfish**

a. Curved fork length (CFL)



b. Lower jaw fork length (LJFL)



c. Cleithrum to caudal keel (CK)



This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information about this permit, please call Randy Blankinship at 727-824-5399 or Delisse Ortiz at 301-427-8503. Copies of the final rule and environmental assessment are available upon request from the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-427-8503, fax: 301-713-1917). Information about this permit and other Atlantic HMS fishery information is available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

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