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Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel

Gear Considerations in Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries

May 16, 2024

Overview

- Background
- Potential options
- Feedback and discussion
- **Presentation goal - to gather your input!**



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List of Acronyms

BAYS	Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack tuna
CCSB	Commercial Caribbean Small Boat
HMS	Highly Migratory Species
LAP	Limited Access Permit
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
PLL	Pelagic Longline
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System



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Need for action

- Over the years, NMFS has implemented a number of measures related to fishing gears
- These fishing gear restrictions are meant to achieve fishery management and conservation goals
- HMS fishing gear and techniques have evolved over time
- We want to review some of these restrictions to see if they are limiting fishing opportunities or the ability to achieve optimum yield
- We have received requests for gear-related changes, e.g., deep-set PLL, power assistance for buoy gear, and commercial authorization of speargun use for BAYS



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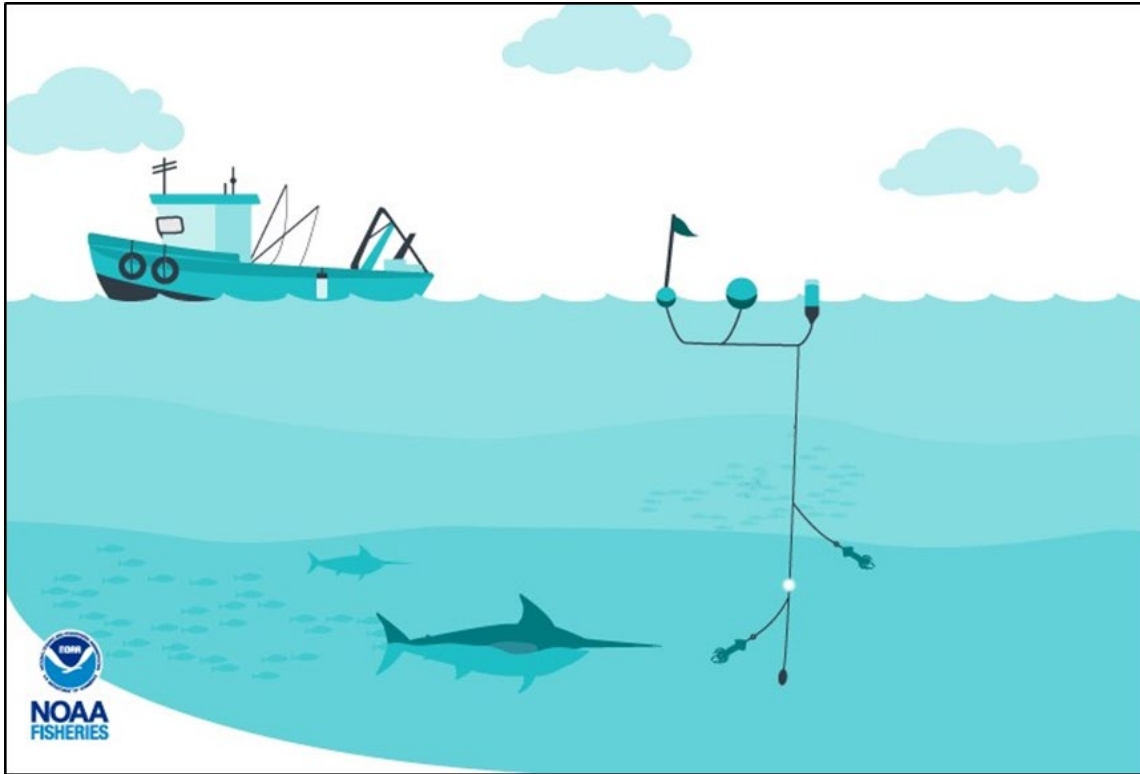
Objectives

- Increase flexibility for targeting HMS while maintaining consistency with management and conservation goals, domestic fishery regulations, and international agreements
- Consider regulatory changes to facilitate fishing for swordfish deeper in the water column
 - Data collection from other swordfish fisheries: high target, lower bycatch rates
- Reduce interference between newer and more established fishing gear configurations and techniques
- Consider additional authorizations (more species with certain gears, gears and permit combinations)
- Address gear regulation inconsistencies across HMS and non-HMS fisheries



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Buoy Gear Background

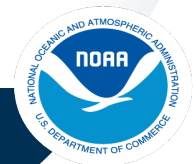


Typical U.S. buoy gear

- Authorized under certain permits
 - Swordfish only
 - Swordfish Handgear LAP
 - Swordfish Directed LAP (along with an Atlantic Tunas Longline permit and a Shark Directed or Shark Incidental LAP)
 - CCSB (valid only in U.S. Caribbean)
 - Swordfish, BAYS
- Generally used at night; must be released and retrieved by hand
- Lower dead discard rates vs. PLL
- Increasingly deep-set during the day, achieving high swordfish selectivity

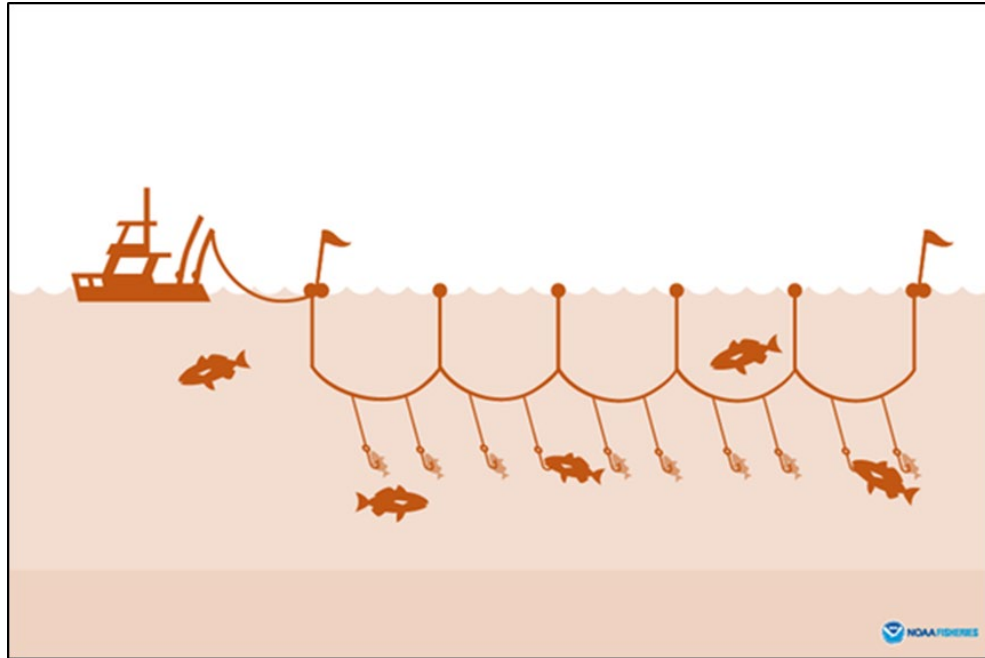
Buoy Gear Options

- A1: No changes - maintain current regulations
- A2: Authorize the use of power assistance for buoy gear (e.g., hydraulic, electric)
- A3: Authorize the use of buoy gear for Swordfish General Commercial permit holders
- A4: Allow the retention of BAYS tunas with buoy gear in all areas, except in the Florida Swordfish Management Area
- A5: Allow the retention of some shark species with buoy gear
- A6: Require circle hooks on buoy gear

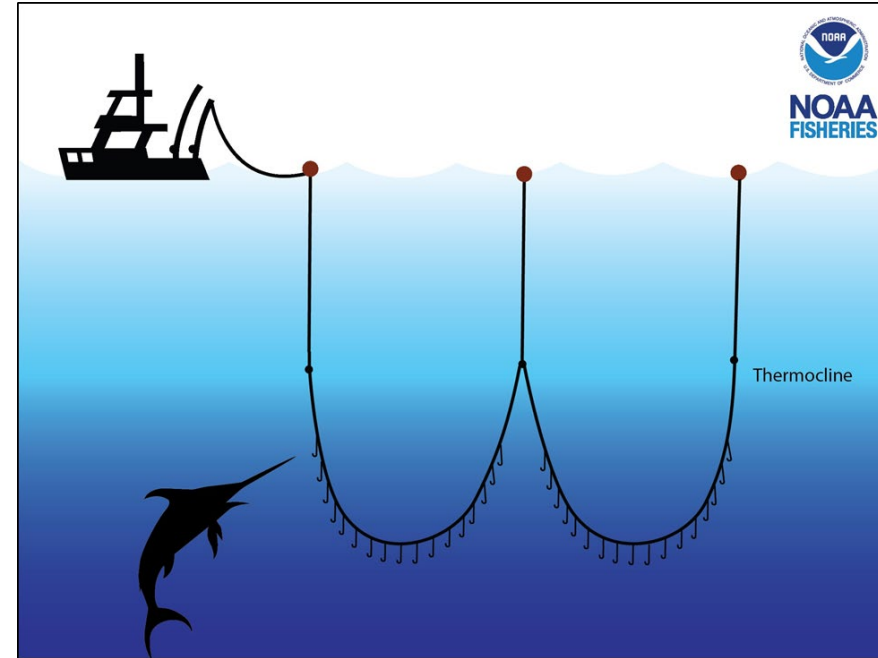


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Pelagic Longline (PLL) Background



Typical U.S. pelagic longline gear



Example of deep-set pelagic longline gear

- Generally, PLL deployed at sunset and hauled at sunrise
- Technique changing in recent years
- Deep-set technique consistent with PLL definition, but two different techniques



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Deep-Set PLL Options

- B1: No changes - keep the current definition and regulations for PLL
- B2: Modify the PLL gear definition to clarify the recent deployment of the gear in deep sets
- B3: Require enhanced communication when deploying deep-set PLL
- B4: Require intent to deep set during VMS hail-out



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Bait Collection Net Restrictions Background and Options

- Commonly carried on board but not explicitly authorized in HMS regulations, not considered a secondary gear
- Options
 - C1: No changes - maintain current regulations that do not authorize bait collection nets on HMS fishing vessels
 - C2: Modify regulations to allow small nets for bait collection on HMS fishing vessels



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Speargun Background

- Speargun use authorized in 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP
- Targeting HMS with spearguns authorized only in recreational and charter/headboat BAYS tuna fisheries
- Not authorized for targeting other HMS or in commercial HMS fisheries



Speargun Options

- D1: No changes - keep current regulations regarding the usage of spearguns
- D2: Authorize speargun use for HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders fishing for swordfish
- D3: Authorize speargun use for HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders fishing for sharks authorized for retention by recreational fishermen
- D4: Authorize speargun use for some HMS commercial permit holders fishing for swordfish, BAYS tunas, and sharks authorized for retention by their commercial permit



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Discussion, Q&A, Feedback, Ideas

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Buoy Gear

- Power assistance
- Authorize buoy gear under Swordfish General Commercial permit
- Buoy gear for retention of BAYS tunas (except Florida Swordfish Management Area)
- Buoy gear for retention of some shark species
- Require circle hooks

Deep-set PLL

- Modify PLL definition
- Enhanced communication during deployment
- Require VMS hail-out

Bait collection nets

- Allow small nets for bait collection

Speargun - Authorize for

- HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (swordfish)
- HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (recreationally authorized sharks)
- Some HMS commercial permit holders (BAYS tunas, sharks authorized for retention by their commercial permit)



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