



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Adjusts Recreational Bluefin Tuna Retention Limits

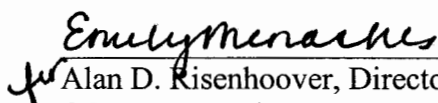
In response to recently available Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) recreational landings estimates from the 2007 fishing year, NMFS has determined that it is necessary to reduce the retention limit of large school/small medium BFT (measuring 47 to <73 inches curved fork length) from 2 fish to 1 fish.

Based on data from the Large Pelagics Survey (LPS), North Carolina BFT Census Tagging Program, and NMFS Automated Landings Reporting System, and using averaged fish weights from 2004 through 2006 as proxies for 2007 weights, NMFS has determined that the landings of large school/small medium BFT during the 2007 fishing year were more than twice the allocated subquota, i.e., 362 mt of landings and a 144-mt subquota.

In the 2008 final BFT specifications and effort controls, which took effect on January 30, 2008, NMFS set the recreational daily vessel/trip retention limits to one school BFT (measuring 27 to <47 inches curved fork length) and two large school/small medium BFT. NMFS indicated in that action that an Angling category adjustment may be necessary once complete LPS estimates for the 2007 fishing year were available. **In an effort to limit large school/small medium BFT landings to the available subquota (183.4 mt) for 2008, NMFS is reducing the daily retention limit of large school/small medium BFT. Effective February 10, 2008, through December 31, 2008, the Angling category daily vessel/trip retention limit will be one school BFT (27 to <47 inches) and one large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73 inches).** This limit applies to vessels permitted in the HMS Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category (when fishing recreationally). This action does not change the annual Angling category retention limit of one large medium/giant BFT (73 inches or greater) per vessel.

NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fishery closely through dealer landing reports, the Automated Landings Reporting System, state harvest tagging programs in North Carolina and Maryland, and the LPS. Depending on the level of fishing effort, NMFS may determine that additional retention limit adjustments are necessary prior to December 31, 2008. Closures or subsequent adjustments to the daily retention limits, if any, will be published in the Federal Register. In addition, fishermen may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260, or access the internet at www.hmspermits.gov, for updates on quota monitoring and retention limit adjustments.

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic bluefin tuna interests to keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Sarah McLaughlin at (978) 281-9260.


Alan D. Risenhoover, Director
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2/6/2008
Date

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