

Science, Service, Stewardship

**2012
Recreational
Compliance
Guide**

Guide for Complying with the
Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish,
Sharks, and Billfish
Regulations

Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species
Management Division



(As of March 1, 2012)



Introduction to Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management



Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) including tunas, swordfish, sharks, and billfish are managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the authority of the Secretary of Commerce, with consideration for the domestic and international aspects of these fisheries.

The *Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan* (HMS FMP) was developed for the integrated management of HMS within the Atlantic Ocean, which includes the Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico. Consistent with the HMS FMP, NMFS recently updated and amended several regulations. Important regulatory changes from the previous Compliance Guide (August 3, 2010) include, **but are not limited to**, the following sections:

- VIII. Recreational Shark Fishing: Possession of hammerhead (scalloped, smooth, and great) and oceanic whitetip sharks
- VIII. Shortfin Mako: NMFS encourages live release of shortfin makos. A new website/Android application for mapping released fish has been launched.
- IX. Recreational Tuna Fishing Landing restrictions (tail trimming)
- XI. Recreational Billfish Fishing (addition of Roundscale Spearfish to the HMS Management Unit)

This 2012 Recreational Compliance Guide amends all previous guides and is produced in compliance with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. This guide is intended to provide a plain-language summary of how to comply with the regulations for Atlantic tunas, swordfish, sharks, and billfish.

Recreational fishermen **are required** to hold an Atlantic HMS (Angling category) recreational fishing permit in order to recreationally harvest Atlantic sharks, tunas, swordfish, and billfish in federal waters. Permit applications can be completed online at <http://www.hmspermits.gov> or can be obtained via fax or mail by calling (888) 872-8862.

HMS permit holders must abide by all applicable federal regulations, regardless of where fishing occurs, including in state waters. However, when fishing in the waters of a state with more restrictive regulations, the more restrictive state regulations apply.

Fishery rules change frequently. It is **your responsibility as a fisherman** to become familiar with the latest regulatory updates and to comply with the current official regulations. For a comprehensive list of updated Atlantic HMS regulations, please refer to the ELECTRONIC CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov>). **If there is a discrepancy between the summary in this document and the regulations in 50 CFR**

part 635, the regulations will take precedence.

For updates on **Atlantic sharks, swordfish, or billfish** call the HMS Management Division located in Silver Spring, Maryland at (301) 427-8503. For updates on **Atlantic tunas**, such as bluefin tuna quota monitoring or retention limits, visit <http://www.hmspermits.gov> or call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) 872-8862. For more detailed information on tunas, contact the HMS Management Division located in Gloucester, Massachusetts at (978) 281-9260.

To request a copy of a particular rule or for current updates, call the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503 or visit the HMS website at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/. To stay up-to-date on HMS regulations, sign-up for the HMS email newsletter and listserv *Atlantic HMS News* at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/newslist/>.

What’s Inside?

This Compliance Guide covers the four HMS species categories: Atlantic sharks, tunas, swordfish, and billfish. Each category has a quick reference sheet containing basic, need-to-know information, regarding HMS fishing regulations. More detailed sections that provide in-depth information for each category are also included. There is also specific information regarding charter/headboat fishing, HMS tournaments, and relevant contact information.

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Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

I. PERMITS

In order to fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS in federal waters, fishermen must have a valid federal fishing permit for their vessel. There are a variety of different permits available. The required permit will depend upon the species being fished for, what type of gear is being used, and how recreational fishing activities are being conducted. There are three types of permits that can be used to recreationally fish for Atlantic HMS: HMS Angling, HMS Charter/Headboat, and Atlantic Tunas General category. All passengers on board a vessel with a valid recreational HMS permit, may recreationally fish for Atlantic HMS while on board the vessel. **Please note that only one type of permit can be issued to a vessel, and that permit holders may only change permit category within 10 days of the permit issuance date.** Please refer to each species section for specific restrictions regarding target species and gear use.

HMS Angling: This permit is strictly for recreational fishing (*i.e.*, no sale) and is issued to the owner for a specific vessel.

HMS Charter/Headboat: This permit is required for vessels taking for-hire passengers recreational fishing for Atlantic HMS. See Section XII for detailed information.

Atlantic Tunas General category: This permit is a commercial fishing permit for Atlantic tunas, but can be used for fishing recreationally for all HMS **only** when participating in a registered HMS tournament. See Section XII for more information.

To acquire or renew an HMS recreational fishing permit, fishermen must complete either an initial or permit renewal application. Applications can be completed online at www.hmspermits.gov or obtained via fax or mail by calling (888) 872-8862.

Where do the Federal regulations apply?

Federal recreational fishing regulations apply in federal waters, and may also apply to recreational fishing in state waters. Fishermen possessing a federal HMS fishing permit who are fishing in state waters should note that the federal regulations apply, unless the state regulations are more restrictive. Therefore, fishermen who are planning on fishing in state waters should familiarize themselves with the appropriate state regulations, as the appropriate regulations (federal or state) may be species and situation-specific. A list of state agency contacts can be found in Section XV.

II. GEAR DEFINITIONS

Each HMS permit allows the use of certain fishing gears, depending on: 1) the type of permit, and 2) the HMS that is being fished for. Certain gears may only be fished certain ways, while others may be fished using multiple techniques or approaches. Please see each species section for specific fishing gear information and definitions. The following gears are authorized for recreational use.

Bandit gear – Consists of a vertical hook and line gear with rods that are attached to the vessel when in use. Lines can be retrieved by manual, electric, or hydraulic reels.

Circle hook – With regard to Atlantic HMS, a circle hook is a hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook is turned perpendicularly back toward the shank of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape.

Rod and reel – Consists of a handheld fishing rod with a manually or electronically operated reel attached.

Handline – Consists of a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks are attached. A handline is retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means, and must be attached to, or in contact with, a vessel.

Speargun – Consists of a muscle-powered speargun equipped with a trigger mechanism, a spear with a tip designed to penetrate and retain fish, and terminal gear. Terminal gear may include, but is not limited to, trailing lines, reels, and floats. The term “muscle-powered speargun” means a speargun that stores potential energy provided by the operator’s muscles, and that releases only the amount of energy that the operator has provided to it from his or her own muscles. The operator must be physically in the water when using this gear.

Greenstick – An actively trolled mainline attached to a vessel and elevated or suspended above the surface of the water with no more than 10 hooks or gangions attached to the mainline. The suspended line, attached gangions and/or hooks, and catch may be retrieved collectively by hand or mechanical means. Greenstick does not constitute a pelagic longline or a bottom longline as described at § 635.21(c) or § 635.21(d), respectively.

Secondary gears – Secondary, or “cockpit,” gears may be used only at boatside to aid and assist in subduing, or bringing onboard a vessel, Atlantic HMS that have first been caught or captured using primary gears authorized for recreational HMS fishing. Secondary gears include, but are not limited to, dart harpoons, gaffs, and tail ropes. Secondary gears may not be used to capture, or attempt to capture, free-swimming or undersized HMS.

FISHING TECHNIQUES

Surface trolling – A fishing technique where the lines trail behind a vessel which is in constant motion at speeds in excess of four knots with a visible wake. Such trolling may not involve the use of down riggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices.

Downrigger – A piece of equipment attached to a vessel that has a weight on a cable that is in turn attached to hook-and-line gear to maintain lures or bait at depth while trolling. Downriggers are to be used with the authorized recreational hook and line gears including bandit, rod and reel, handline, and greenstick gear.

III. GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

Recreational fishermen who receive or renew an Atlantic HMS permit may fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS in open areas. Please note that the following areas are closed to recreational Atlantic HMS fishing, and see Figure 1 on the back cover for a reference map of these closure areas.

CLOSED AREAS

The Tortugas Marine Reserves: Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing in vessels is prohibited year-round in the EEZ portions of Tortugas North and Tortugas South by non-HMS regulations. The Tortugas North area is bounded by 24° 40'00" N. lat., 83° 06'00" W. long.; 24° 46'00" N. lat., 83° 06'00" W. long.; 24° 46'00" N. lat., 83° 00'00" W. long.; thence along the line denoting the seaward limit of Florida's waters, as shown on the current edition of NOAA chart 11438 to 24° 40'00" N. lat., 83° 06'00" W. long. Tortugas South is bounded by 24° 33'00" N. lat., 83° 09'00" W. long.; 24° 33'00" N. lat., 83° 05'00" W. long.; 24° 18'00" N. lat., 83° 05'00" W. long.; 24° 18'00" N. lat., 83° 09'00" W. long.; 24° 33'00" N. lat., 83° 09'00" W. long. (50 CFR 622.34(d)).

Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas: Surface trolling is allowed from May-October, consistent with the recommendations of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, but fishing by any other method is prohibited year-round. The coordinates for the Madison-Swanson closed area are: 29° 17' N. lat., 85° 50' W. long.; 29° 17' N. lat., 85° 38' W. long.; 29° 06' N. lat., 85° 38' W. long.; 29° 06' N. lat., 85° 50' W. long. The coordinates for the Steamboat Lumps closed area are: 28° 14' N. lat., 84° 48' W. long.; 28° 14' N. lat., 84° 37' W. long.; 28° 03' N. lat., 84° 37' W. long.; 28° 03' N. lat., 84° 48' W. long. Surface trolling is defined as fishing with lines trailing behind a vessel which is in constant motion at speeds in excess of four knots with a visible wake. Such trolling may not involve the use of downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices.

Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area: This area is closed to all HMS fishing gears from January- through April, consistent with the recommendations of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Open to HMS fishing May-December. The Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area is an area bounded by straight lines connecting the following coordinates: 28° 51' N, 85° 16' W; 28° 51' N, 85° 04'W; SW = 28° 14'N, 84° 42'W; SE =28° 14'N,84° 54'W.. Lat., 85° 04' W. Long. to 28° 14' N. Lat., 84° 42' W. Long. to 28° 14' N. Lat, 84° 54' W. Long.

Other Marine Protected Areas: There are a number of marine protected areas (MPAs) throughout U.S. waters that may restrict recreational fishing activities. For more information on MPAs and their restrictions, please visit www.mpa.gov.

Fishing for Bluefin Tuna in the Gulf of Mexico: This area has been designated as bluefin tuna spawning grounds, thus, targeting bluefin tuna is prohibited year-round. However, HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders may retain one “trophy” bluefin tuna (>73”) per vessel per year from the Gulf of Mexico caught incidentally while targeting other species.

IV. SHARK QUICK REFERENCE SHEET



AUTHORIZED SPECIES (species that may be retained)

Large Coastal Sharks (LCS): blacktip, bull, great hammerhead*, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead*, smooth hammerhead*, spinner, and tiger sharks (non-ridgeback LCS plus tiger).

Small Coastal Sharks (SCS): Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, bonnethead, and finetooth sharks.

Pelagic Sharks: blue, oceanic whitetip*, porbeagle, shortfin mako**, and thresher sharks.

*HMS Angling and charter/headboat permit holders cannot simultaneously possess hammerhead (great, scalloped, or smooth) or oceanic whitetip sharks AND tunas, billfish and/or swordfish.

** NMFS encourages the live release of shortfin mako sharks and has developed a free application (app) called “Release Mako” that fishermen can use to share information on the water about shortfin mako releases using their Android mobile devices. Information can also be submitted via the Atlantic HMS website (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/shortfinmako/index.htm>), telephone, or fax.

PROHIBITED SPECIES (species that must be released)

Atlantic angel, basking, bigeye thresher, bignose, Caribbean sharpnose, Caribbean reef, dusky, Galapagos, longfin mako, narrowtooth, night, sandbar, sandtiger, bigeye sandtiger, sevengill, silky, sixgill, bigeye sixgill, smalltail, whale, and white sharks*.

* A person may fish for white sharks with rod and reel, provided that the person releases such fish to the sea immediately with minimal injury and does not remove the fish from the water.

PERMITS AND GEARS

Authorized Permits in Federal Waters	Gear	Species
1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.	Handline, and Rod and Reel*	LCS, SCS, and Pelagic sharks

* Rod and Reel includes downriggers

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permits	Size Limit*	Bag Limit**	Season
All permits listed above	>54" FL	1 shark (any authorized species) per vessel per trip	Jan. 1- Dec. 31
	None	1 Atlantic sharpnose and 1 bonnethead per person per trip	

*Fork Length measurement

**No more than three sharks per vessel per trip if one is an Atlantic sharpnose and one is a bonnethead shark

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If contacted, fishermen must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS). Survey contact may occur at the dock or by phone.

RESTRICTED AREAS

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (surface trolling without downriggers allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

All sharks must be landed with the head, fins, and tail naturally attached, but may be gutted and bled at sea. An Atlantic shark harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water.

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V. TUNA QUICK REFERENCE SHEET



AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Bluefin tuna (BFT), bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack (*i.e.*, “BAYS”) tunas

PERMITS AND GEARS

Species	Gear	Authorized Permits in Federal Waters
BAYS and BFT	Bandit	1. HMS Charter/Headboat
BAYS and BFT	Handline, and Rod and Reel*	1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
BAYS and BFT	Greenstick	1. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 2. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in registered Atlantic HMS tournament.**
BAYS only	Speargun	1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat

*Rod and Reel includes downriggers

**Tournament rules vary, please check with the Tournament Director

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Species	Size Limit***	Bag Limit	Season
Albacore	None	None	Jan 1- Dec. 31
Bigeye	27”	None	Jan 1- Dec. 31
Bluefin	27 to <47”	BFT retention limits may change throughout the season. Visit www.hmspermits.gov or call (888)-872-8862 or (978)-281-9260	Jan 1- Dec. 31
	47” to <73”		Jan 1- Dec. 31
	≥73”		Jan 1- Dec. 31
Skipjack	None	None	Jan 1- Dec. 31
Yellowfin	27”	3 per person per day	Jan 1- Dec. 31

*** Curved Fork Length measurement

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- All recreational bluefin tuna landings must be reported.
 - Fishermen in MD and NC must report their bluefin tuna catch at a state-operated reporting station (see Section IX for details).
 - All other fishermen must report to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by calling (888) 872-8862.
- If contacted, fishermen must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS). Survey contact may occur at the dock or by phone.

RESTRICTED AREAS

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (surface trolling without downriggers allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)
- Targeting bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico is prohibited year-round

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

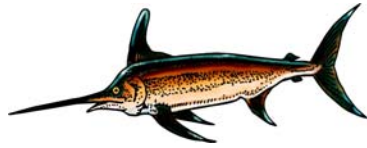
All tunas must be landed with at least the tail and one pectoral fin attached. An Atlantic tuna harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival without removing the fish from the water.

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VI. SWORDFISH QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Swordfish



PERMITS AND GEARS

Authorized Permits in Federal Waters	Gear	Species
1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.	Handline, and Rod and Reel*	Swordfish

*Rod and Reel includes downriggers

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permit	Size Limit*	Bag Limit	Season
HMS Angling OR Atlantic Tunas General category**	47" LJFL or 29" CK	1 per person, up to 4 per vessel per trip.	Jan 1- Dec. 31
HMS Charter/ Headboat (Charter Vessels)	47" LJFL or 29" CK	1 per paying pas- senger, up to 6 per vessel per trip.	Jan 1- Dec. 31
HMS Charter/ Headboat (Headboat Vessels)	47" LJFL or 29" CK	1 per paying pas- senger, up to 15 per vessel per trip.	Jan 1- Dec. 31

* LJFL = Lower Jaw Fork Length - use this measurement if the head is naturally attached; CK = Cleithrum to Caudal Keel - use this measurement if the head is removed. See Section X for details.

** These size and bag limits apply to General category permit holders only when participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- All non-tournament recreational swordfish landings (except in MD and NC) must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by calling (800) 894-5528.
- Fishermen in MD and NC must report their swordfish catch at a state-operated reporting station (see Section X for details).
- All other fishermen must report to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by calling (888) 872-8862.
- If contacted, fishermen must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS)

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS). Survey contact may occur at the dock or by phone.

RESTRICTED AREAS

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (surface trolling without downriggers allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)
- South of 5° N latitude (year-round)

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

Swordfish may be headed and gutted at sea. Swordfish with the head attached will be measured using LJFL. A swordfish with the head naturally attached that is damaged by shark bites may be retained only if the length of the remainder of the fish is equal to or greater than 47” LJFL. Swordfish with the head removed will be measured using CK. In the case of a swordfish that has been damaged by shark bites (and the head is still attached), the remainder of the carcass must be equal to or greater than 29” CK. An Atlantic swordfish harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water.

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VII. BILLFISH QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Blue marlin, white marlin, roundscale spearfish, and sailfish.



PROHIBITED SPECIES

Longbill spearfish

PERMITS AND GEARS

Species	Gear	Authorized Permits in Federal Waters
Blue marlin, white marlin, roundscale spearfish, and sailfish	Rod and Reel*	1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.

*Includes downriggers

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Species	Size Limit*	Bag Limit	Season
Blue marlin	99" LJFL	None**	Jan. 1-Dec. 31
Sailfish	63" LJFL	None	Jan. 1-Dec. 31
White marlin	66" LJFL	None**	Jan. 1-Dec. 31
Roundscale spearfish	66" LJFL	None**	Jan. 1-Dec. 31

Lower Jaw Fork Length measurement *There is no bag limit per trip; however, there is a recreational annual landings limit of 250 Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish combined for the entire United States. Please contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503 for landings updates and seasonal closures.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- All non-tournament recreational Atlantic billfish landings (except in MD and NC) must be reported to NMFS within 24 hours either online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by calling the HMS Recreational Reporting Line (800) 894-5528.
 - Fishermen in MD and NC must report their billfish catch at a state-operated reporting station (see Section XI for details).
- If contacted, fishermen must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS). Survey contact may occur at the dock or by phone.

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

RESTRICTED AREAS

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (surface trolling without downriggers allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

Billfish may be gutted at sea, but must be landed whole with head, fins, and bill intact.

FISHING GEARS AND TECHNIQUES

Authorized fishing gears and permit(s) required for recreational harvest of Atlantic billfish in federal waters are listed below. Detailed definitions of each gear type can be found in Section II.

Rod and reel: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (only if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices may **not** be used when trolling in the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas. Please see Section III for more information.

There are no restrictions on the types of hooks that recreational billfish anglers can use unless they are participating in an Atlantic billfish tournament. Any fishing tournament that awards points or prizes for Atlantic billfish is considered an Atlantic billfish tournament, even if billfish are not the main species targeted in the tournament. Billfish tournament participants must use non-offset circle hooks when using natural bait or a natural bait/artificial lure combination. J-hooks may only be used with artificial lures.

NMFS strongly encourages releasing all billfish alive. An Atlantic billfish harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water.

VIII. RECREATIONAL SHARK FISHING

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Large coastal non-ridgeback sharks (sharks that do not have a ridge between their first and second dorsal fin) and tiger sharks may be retained recreationally. The large coastal non-ridgeback sharks include blacktip, bull, great hammerhead, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, and spinner sharks. Small coastal shark species that may be retained include Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, bonnethead, and finetooth sharks. Pelagic shark species that may be retained include blue, oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, shortfin mako, and thresher sharks. A shark identification guide for recreational anglers is available online at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/2008/Rec_shark_ID_placard_09_04_2008.pdf

HMS Angling, Charter/headboat, and General Category (if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament) permit holders may not possess hammerhead sharks (great, smooth, or scalloped) or oceanic whitetip sharks simultaneously with billfish, tunas, or swordfish.

FISHING GEARS AND TECHNIQUES

Authorized fishing gears and permit(s) required for recreational harvest of Atlantic sharks in federal waters are listed below. Detailed definitions of each gear type can be found in Section II.

Rod and reel: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (when participating in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Handline: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (when participating in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Fishermen may use rod and reel and handline gear to fish for Atlantic sharks. Downriggers may be used when fishing hook and line gears. If handlines are used, they must remain attached to, or in contact with, the fishing vessel. Downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices may **not** be used while trolling in the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas. Please see Section III for more information. **There are no restrictions on the types of hooks that may be used to catch Atlantic sharks.**

MINIMUM SIZES

Most authorized species of sharks that may be kept recreationally have a minimum size of 54 inches (4.5 feet) fork length, which is the straight-line distance between the tip of the shark's nose and the fork of the tail (see image

below). The only exceptions are for Atlantic sharpnose and bonnethead sharks, which have no size limit. Sharks that are under the minimum size limit cannot be possessed and must be released using a method that maximizes their chance of survival, without removing them from the water.



RETENTION LIMITS

The possession limits for Atlantic sharks are one shark of any authorized species, and of at least the minimum size, per vessel per trip **plus** one Atlantic sharpnose and one bonnethead shark per person per vessel per trip.

If an Atlantic shark is caught by a hook and not retained, the fish must be released by cutting the line near the hook or by using a dehooking device, in either case without removing the fish from the water.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If contacted on the dock or by phone, recreational anglers must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species.

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Recreational fishermen **must** land sharks with the head, fins, and tail naturally attached. Sharks may be gutted and bled by making an incision at the base of the tail as long as the caudal (tail) fin is still naturally attached by at least a small flap of uncut skin.

RELEASING SHORTFIN MAKO SHARKS

Recreational fishermen may retain shortfin mako sharks subject to the recreational regulations. NMFS encourages, through the NMFS's Shortfin Mako Live Release Website, all commercial and recreational fishermen to release and report all shortfin mako sharks that come to the vessel alive in order to decrease fishing mortality and help prevent the shortfin mako shark population from becoming overfished. A "Release Mako" Android app is also available that allows anglers to report live releases of shortfin mako sharks from Android mobile devices while still on the water. Information can also be submitted via the Atlantic HMS website (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/shortfinmako/index.htm>), telephone, or fax.

IX. RECREATIONAL TUNA FISHING

FISHING GEARS AND TECHNIQUES

This compliance guide applies to federally managed Atlantic tunas including bigeye, albacore, yellowfin and skipjack tunas, collectively known by the acronym "BAYS," and bluefin tuna. Authorized fishing gears and permit(s) required for recreational harvest of Atlantic tunas in federal waters are listed below. Detailed definitions of each gear type can be found in Section II.

Bandit gear: HMS Charter/Headboat Permit

Rod and reel: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Handline: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Speargun: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat. Can only be used for BAYS tunas (not bluefin tuna).

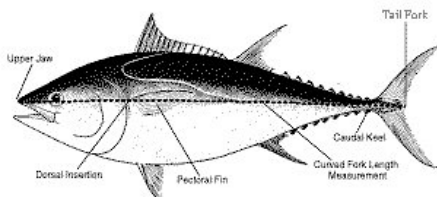
Greenstick: HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament).

An Atlantic Tunas General category permit may be used to fish for Atlantic tunas during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament; however, General category regulations, including authorized gears, techniques, and size limits apply. Bluefin tuna less than 73" may not be retained aboard Atlantic Tunas General category permitted vessels.

Fishermen may use rod and reel, greenstick, and handline gears to fish for Atlantic tunas. Downriggers may be used when fishing hook and line gears. If handlines are used, they must remain attached to, or in contact with, the fishing vessel. Downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices may **not** be used while trolling in the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas. Please see Section III for more information. There are no restrictions on the types of hooks that may be used to catch Atlantic tunas.

MINIMUM SIZES AND LANDING REQUIREMENTS

The minimum size is 27 inches curved fork length (CFL) for bluefin, yellowfin, and bigeye tunas. There is currently no minimum size for albacore or skipjack tuna. All Atlantic tunas may be landed round with fins intact (except tail lobes which can be removed), or eviscerated with the head removed, as long as the fish remains within the specified minimum size. The tail and at least one pectoral fin must remain attached through landing; all other fins may be removed.



Curved Fork Length (CFL)

Tunas with heads on

CFL is the sole measurement for determining the size class of whole (with head on) Atlantic tunas. The measurement must be taken in a line, tracing the contour (*i.e.*, curve) of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail, which abuts the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin and the dorsal side of the caudal keel.

Tunas with heads removed

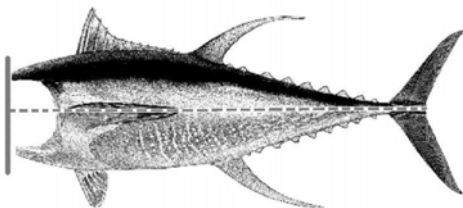
For tunas with the heads removed, pectoral fin curved fork length (PFCFL) may be taken and multiplied by a conversion factor of 1.35 to obtain total curved fork length. The PFCFL measurement must be taken from the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin, tracing the contour of the body, to the fork of the tail. (**NOTE: The tape must run along the outer surface of the pectoral fin.**)

Bluefin tuna

No person shall retain, or possess a **bluefin tuna** with the head removed that is less than 20 inches (51 cm) pectoral fin curved length.

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna

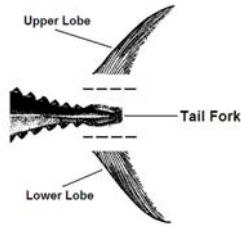
No person may remove the head of a **bigeye tuna** or **yellowfin tuna** if the remaining portion would be less than 27 inches (69 cm) from the fork of the tail to the forward edge of the cut (see image below).



Forward edge of the cut

Tail trimming

The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact.



Trimmed Tuna Tail

RETENTION LIMITS

BAYS tunas

Three yellowfin tuna may be retained per person per day. There are no retention limits for albacore, bigeye, and skipjack tuna.

Bluefin tuna

Recreational bluefin tuna retention limits depend on the size class of bluefin tuna. Size classes consist of school bluefin tuna with a CFL $\geq 27''$ to $< 47''$, large school bluefin tuna with a CFL $\geq 47''$ to $< 59''$, and small medium bluefin tuna with a CFL $\geq 59''$ to $< 73''$. Recreational anglers need to check the websites or call the telephone numbers below for current retention limits for these size classes. In addition to the daily bluefin tuna retention limits, vessels permitted to fish recreationally may retain one bluefin tuna per year that measures $\geq 73''$ CFL per year, as a "trophy" fish. In the Gulf of Mexico, this trophy fish is only allowed if caught incidentally while targeting other species. No sale of bluefin tuna caught on Angling Category permitted vessels is allowed. For Charter/Headboat category vessels, see the Atlantic HMS Commercial Compliance Guide concerning sale of Atlantic tunas.

Important notes:

1. Bluefin tuna retention limits may change through out the season. For up-to-date information please visit www.hmspermits.gov, or call the Atlantic Tunas Information line at (888) 872-8862 or call (978) 281-9260.
2. Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders may never retain a bluefin tuna $< 73''$ CFL, even when recreationally fishing in a registered HMS tournament. When tournament fishing, General category permit holders must abide by commercial regulations for Atlantic tunas.
3. Targeting bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico is **prohibited**. See Section III. For further information.

If an Atlantic tuna is caught by a hook and not retained, the fish must be released by cutting the line near the hook or by using a dehooking device, in either case without removing the fish from the water. A careful handling and

release brochure is available from the Atlantic HMS website:

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance_Guide/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance_Guide/Careful_release_brochure.pdf)

[Careful_release_brochure.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance_Guide/Careful_release_brochure.pdf). This brochure outlines fishing techniques and gear modifications that can be employed to increase the survival of HMS caught by recreational anglers.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All recreationally landed non-tournament bluefin tuna must be reported to NMFS by vessel owners or their designee within 24 hours of landing at the dock.

Tuna landings in Maryland or North Carolina, must be reported at state-operated reporting stations. For additional information on these state's reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC). All other landings must be reported online at www.hmspermits.gov or by phone by calling the HMS Recreational Reporting Line at (888) 872-8862. If reporting by phone, the vessel owner will be asked to provide their name, phone number, HMS permit number, species caught, and size of fish. NMFS will return the call and provide a confirmation number for the reported landing. The reporting process is not complete until NMFS has supplied a confirmation number.

If contacted on the dock or by phone, recreational anglers must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species.

X. RECREATIONAL SWORDFISH FISHING

FISHING GEARS AND TECHNIQUES

Authorized fishing gears and permit(s) required for recreational harvest of Atlantic swordfish in federal waters are listed below. Detailed definitions of each gear type can be found in Section II.

Rod and reel: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (when fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Handline: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (when fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Fishermen may use rod and reel and handline gear to fish for Atlantic swordfish. Downriggers may be used when fishing hook and line gears. If handlines are used, they must remain attached to, or in contact with, the fishing vessel. Downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices may **not** be used

while trolling in the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas. Please see Section III for more information.

There are no restrictions on the types of hooks recreational fishermen may use to catch Atlantic swordfish. However, NMFS recommends that fishermen use circle hooks to reduce the mortality of released swordfish.

MINIMUM SIZES

There are two minimum size measurements for swordfish. One of these measurements will be used to determine if the swordfish is of legal size, depending on whether or not the head is naturally attached to the carcass.

47" (119 cm) lower jaw fork length (LJFL): Straight line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail. This measurement is used if head is naturally attached.

29" (73 cm) cleithrum to caudal keel (CK): Curved length measurement from cleithrum to caudal keel. This measurement is used if the head is removed prior to the time of landing. In the case of a swordfish that has been damaged by shark bites, the remainder of the carcass must be equal to or great than 29" CK.



Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL)



Cleithrum to Caudal Keel (CK)

RETENTION LIMITS

Recreational retention limits for swordfish depend upon the type of fishing permit that is possessed. Fishermen who possess an **HMS Angling permit**, or those fishing in a registered HMS tournament under an **Atlantic Tunas General category permit**, may keep one swordfish per person, up to a maximum of four per vessel per trip.

The **HMS Charter/Headboat permit** has different retention limits, depending upon whether the vessel is operating as a charter or headboat fishing vessel. Vessels fishing as **charter vessels**, must be less than 100 gross tons and meet the United States Coast Guard (USCG) requirements to carry six or fewer passengers for hire. Vessels fishing under these requirements are allowed to keep one swordfish per paying passenger, up to a maximum of six swordfish per trip. Vessels fishing as **headboat vessels** must have received a Certificate of Inspection from the USCG to carry passengers for hire. Vessels fishing under these requirements may keep one swordfish per paying passenger, up to a maximum of 15 swordfish per trip.

If an Atlantic swordfish is caught by a hook and not retained, the fish must be released by cutting the line near the hook or by using a dehooking device, in

either case without removing the fish from the water.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All recreationally landed non-tournament North Atlantic swordfish must be reported to NMFS by vessel owners or their designee within 24 hours of landing at the dock. For swordfish landed in Maryland or North Carolina, landings must be reported at state-operated reporting stations. For additional information on these state's reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC). Landings outside Maryland or North Carolina must be reported online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by phone by calling the HMS Recreational Reporting Line at (888) 894-5528. If reporting by phone, the vessel owner will be asked to provide their name, phone number, HMS permit number, species caught, and size of fish. NMFS will return the call and provide a confirmation number for the reported landing. The reporting process is not complete until NMFS has supplied a confirmation number.

In Maryland and North Carolina, vessel owners must report their recreational swordfish landings at state-operated reporting stations. For additional information on these state's reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC).

Landings from a registered Atlantic HMS tournament are exempt from the telephone call-in or internet reporting requirements because tournament operators are responsible for providing the information to NMFS, if selected for reporting. If a tournament operator fails to register a tournament and/or report a landed fish, it is the vessel owner's responsibility to report the landing.

If contacted on the dock or by phone, recreational anglers must cooperate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species.

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Swordfish may be gutted and the head may be removed. Swordfish must remain in either round (whole) or dressed form through offloading. Swordfish may **not** be cut into pieces while at sea. If the head or tail of a swordfish has been removed prior to the time of landing, a minimum size of 29" (73 cm) from cleithrum to caudal keel (CK) shall be applied in all cases. If the head is not removed prior to the time of landing, a minimum size of 47" (119 cm) LJFL shall be applied in all cases. In the case of a swordfish that has been damaged by shark bites, the remainder of the carcass must be equal to or greater than 29" CK.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS

In addition to the Tortugas Marine Reserves, Edges 40 Fathom Contour, and the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas, recreational anglers may not land swordfish south of 5° N latitude.

XI. RECREATIONAL BILLFISH FISHING

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Blue marlin, white marlin, roundscale spearfish, and sailfish may be retained recreationally. Longbill spearfish are prohibited and **may not be retained**.

FISHING GEARS AND TECHNIQUES

Authorized fishing gears and permit(s) required for recreational harvest of Atlantic billfish in federal waters are listed below. Detailed definitions of each gear type can be found in Section II.

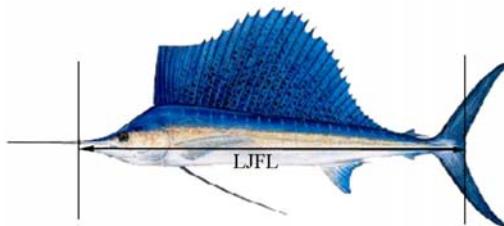
Rod and reel: HMS Angling **OR** HMS Charter/Headboat **OR** Atlantic Tunas General category (when fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS Tournament).

Downriggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices may **not** be used when trolling in the Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas. Please see Section III for more information.

There are no restrictions on the types of hooks that recreational billfish anglers can use unless they are participating in an Atlantic HMS billfish tournament. Any fishing tournament that awards points or prizes for Atlantic billfish is considered an Atlantic billfish tournament, even if billfish are not the main species targeted in the tournament. Billfish tournament participants must use non-offset circle hooks when using natural bait or a natural bait/artificial lure combination. J-hooks may only be used with artificial lures.

MINIMUM SIZES

A lower jaw fork length measurement (LJFL) is used to determine if Atlantic billfish are of legal size. The LJFL is a straight line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork in the tail (see image below). Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, roundscale spearfish, and sailfish all have minimum size limits (see Section VII). Longbill spearfish retention is **prohibited**.



Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL)

RETENTION LIMITS

There are no trip limits, but the U.S. has an annual recreational landings limit of 250 blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish combined. If NMFS determines that the U.S. has exceeded, or will exceed, its annual landings limit, the Agency may prohibit possession of Atlantic marlins and roundscale spearfish for that year. NMFS may modify the minimum size requirements for billfish to maintain compliance with the annual quota. Please contact the NMFS Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5399 for the most up-to-date information on quotas and size limits. (**NOTE:** Any changes to the minimum size or closures would also be announced in the Federal Register, posted on the HMS website, and sent via the HMS newsletter and listserve *Atlantic HMS News*.)

NMFS strongly encourages releasing all billfish alive. An Atlantic billfish harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All non-tournament Atlantic billfish that are landed recreationally must be reported to NMFS by vessel owners or their designee within 24 hours of landing at the dock (for MD and NC landings, see below) online at www.hmspermits.gov, or by phone by calling the HMS Recreational Reporting Line at (800) 894-5528. If reporting by phone, the vessel owner will be asked to provide their name, phone number, HMS permit number, species caught, and size of fish. NMFS will return the call and provide a confirmation number for the reported landing. The reporting process is not complete until NMFS has supplied a confirmation number.

In Maryland and North Carolina, vessel owners must report their recreational billfish landings at state-operated reporting stations. For additional information on these state's reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC).

Landings from a registered Atlantic HMS billfish tournament are exempt from the telephone call-in or internet reporting requirement because tournament operators are responsible for providing the information to NMFS, if selected for reporting. If a tournament operator fails to register a tournament and/or report landed billfish, it is the vessel owner's responsibility to report the landing. If contacted on the dock or by phone, recreational anglers must participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species.

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Billfish may be gutted, but they must be landed with the head, fins, and bill intact and remain in whole condition.

XII. CHARTER/HEADBOAT FISHING

Vessels fishing with a HMS Charter/Headboat permit are able to take for-hire passengers recreational fishing for HMS. These vessels have different requirements than vessels fishing under an HMS Angling or Atlantic Tunas General category permit. Regulations may vary further among Charter/Headboat permit holders based on the following two vessel types:

Charter: A vessel less than 100 gross tons (90.8 mt) that meets the requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard to carry six or fewer passengers for-hire.

Headboat: A vessel that holds a valid Certificate of Inspection issued by the U.S. Coast Guard to carry passengers for-hire.

A “for-hire” trip is a recreational fishing trip carrying a fee-paying passenger; or a trip having more than three persons for a vessel licensed to carry six or fewer people; or a trip having more persons aboard than the number of crew specified on the vessel’s Certificate of Inspection for a U.S. Coast Guard inspected vessel.

The HMS charter/headboat fishery fleet is managed as a unique sector, due to its intrinsic mix of commercial and recreational operations. Charter and headboat vessel operators should continue to apply for the HMS Charter/Headboat permit, which covers the same fish as the HMS Angling permit. Only one type of permit that allows recreational fishing (HMS Angling, Charter/Headboat, or Atlantic Tunas General category permit) may be issued to any single vessel. (**NOTE**: Vessels issued a Charter/Headboat permit cannot possess an Atlantic Tunas Longline category permit or other tuna permits.)

COMMERCIAL SALE RESTRICTIONS FOR ATLANTIC HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT PERMITS

Since there are commercial components to the Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit fishery, there are instances when the catch may be commercially sold; however, this will depend on the species, and other types of commercial fishing permits that are held. Below is a list of HMS that can be commercially sold according to HMS permit combinations, and the type of charter/headboat trip that is occurring.

Shark

HMS Charter/Headboat AND Shark Directed Limited Access permits

- o **For-hire**: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits as long as

the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may keep, but not sell, up to the recreational size and bag limits.

- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size (no minimum size) and bag limits (33 non-sandbar LCS per vessel per trip, no limit for SCS and Pelagic sharks) as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may not keep any sharks from that fishery.

HMS Charter/Headboat AND Shark Incidental Limited Access permits

- For-hire: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may not keep any sharks from that fishery.
- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size (no minimum size) and bag limits (3 non-sandbar LCS per vessel per trip, 16 SCS and Pelagic sharks combined per vessel per trip) as long as the commercial fishery is open.

Tuna

HMS Charter/Headboat permit only

- BAYS
 - For-hire: May sell BAYS tuna up to the recreational size and bag limits.
 - Non-for-hire: There are no recreational bag limits, but size limits do apply.
- Bluefin

HMS Charter/Headboat category vessels may fish under either the Angling or General category retention limits. The size class of the first bluefin tuna retained will determine the fishing category of all persons aboard the vessel for a given day. If fish >73" CFL are retained, they may be sold in accordance with the General category seasons and retention limits. HMS Charter/Headboat category vessel bluefin tuna retention limits are effective for all areas, except for the Gulf of Mexico as it is designated as a spawning ground for bluefin tuna. Therefore, NMFS does not allow HMS Charter/Headboat vessels to target or sell bluefin tuna while fishing in the Gulf of Mexico.

Swordfish

HMS Charter/Headboat AND Swordfish Limited Access Handgear permits

- For-hire: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits, as long as the commercial fishery is open.
- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size (47" LJFL or 29" CK) and bag limits (no limit), as long as the commercial fishery is open.

HMS Charter/Headboat AND Swordfish Limited Access Directed or Incidental permits

- o No possession of swordfish is allowed under this permit combination due to the requirement to hold Atlantic Tunas Longline and Swordfish Directed or Incidental permits in order to retain swordfish.

Billfish

Commercial sale of all Atlantic billfish species is **prohibited**. Fishermen retaining billfish recreationally on a non-for-hire trip may **not** possess commercial limits of other HMS species.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recreational reporting requirements

Non-tournament landings

All HMS Charter/Headboat vessel owners/operators must report all **non-tournament landings** (*i.e.*, fish kept) of Atlantic bluefin tuna, blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, and swordfish to NMFS within 24 hours of landing at the dock (with the exception of fish landed in Maryland or North Carolina*). Non-tournament recreational landings of all **bluefin tuna** must be reported to NMFS by logging onto www.hmspermits.gov or by calling the HMS Recreational Reporting Line at (888) 872-8862. Non-tournament recreational landings of all **billfish** and **swordfish** must be reported to NMFS by logging onto www.hmspermits.gov, or by calling (800) 894-5528.

* In **Maryland** and **North Carolina**, HMS Charter/Headboat vessel owners must report their HMS landings at state-operated reporting stations (not via the web or phone number reported above). For additional information on these state's reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC).

Atlantic HMS Tournament landings

Atlantic bluefin tuna, billfish and swordfish that are **landed in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament** do not need to be reported by the vessel owners if the tournament operator reports them. However, a vessel owner is responsible for reporting these landings if the tournament operator does not.

NMFS recreational surveys

Recreational anglers may be contacted on the dock or by phone and asked to participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS). If contacted, anglers must participate in these surveys to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species. Participation in the LPS or MRIP does not fulfill non-tournament reporting obligations

Commercial reporting requirements

Billfish

No commercial landings of billfish are allowed.

Swordfish, Sharks, and Tunas

If a vessel owner issued an HMS Charter/Headboat permit also has a permit issued in a NMFS fishery that is required to report (*e.g.*, NMFS Northeast Region Multispecies logbook (VTR) or NMFS Southeast Region Snapper/Grouper logbook), then any commercial landings must be reported under the appropriate NMFS Regional vessel logbook program. If the vessel owner only holds an HMS Charter/Headboat permit, that owner is required to report commercial landings in the appropriate NMFS logbook program, if selected.

HMS Logbook and NMFS Observer Program

In addition, if selected by NMFS, HMS CHB permit holders must complete a logbook and submit cost earnings information to NMFS. You are not required to carry a fishery observer on board, but you may participate in a voluntary Charter/Headboat observer program. If you are interested in participating in the voluntary observer program, please contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503.

XIII. TOURNAMENTS

DEFINITION

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 HMS. This includes fishing tournaments where the target species is not an Atlantic HMS, but where points, prizes, or awards are received for catching Atlantic HMS. Tournaments may take place in ports within any Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico coastal state, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

REGISTRATION

Atlantic HMS tournament operators are required to register their tournament with the HMS Management Division of NMFS **at least four weeks prior** to the start of the tournament.

Registration information includes, but is not limited to:

- Tournament name
- Location
- Date(s)
- Director name, contact information
- Target Species

An Atlantic HMS tournament **registration form** must be completed, signed, and sent to the Atlantic HMS Management Division via one of the following methods:

NMFS HMS Management Division
263 13th Ave, South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: (727) 824-5399
Fax: (727) 824-5398

Fax
(727) 824-5398

E-mail
HMSTournamentRegistry@noaa.gov

To download a registration form, please go to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/tournaments> and click “Reporting Forms” or www.hmspermits.gov and click “Tournaments.” You may also call the HMS office in St. Petersburg, FL at (727) 824-5399 to request a form.

Upon receiving and processing the registration form, a unique Atlantic HMS tournament **confirmation number** will be produced and provided to the tournament operator. Please note that registration is not considered complete unless the operator has received a confirmation number from the HMS Management Division of NMFS. NMFS will post registered tournament information, such as tournament name, date(s), city, state, and target species for public viewing at: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Tournaments/.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Tournament registration and reporting is a critical component of the HMS monitoring program. The information collected is used to estimate tournament fishing effort and landings of HMS for stock assessments, national and international reports, and other monitoring efforts.

The NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) will notify tournament operators in writing if their tournament has been selected for reporting. A reporting form and instructions will be sent to the operator. The form must be returned within **7 days** after tournament fishing has ended to the SEFSC by fax at (305) 361-4562 or by mail at the following address:

Atlantic HMS Tournament Reporting
NOAA Fisheries
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

Atlantic HMS tournament reporting forms are also available for download by clicking “Reporting Forms” at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>. Please direct questions about reporting requirements to the SEFSC at (305) 361-4214.

TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANTS

To participate in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, fishermen must have one of the following: (1) HMS Angling, (2), HMS Charter/Headboat, or (3) Atlantic Tunas General category permit.

*Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders are prohibited from fishing under HMS Angling category regulations except when participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. When fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders must comply with HMS Angling category regulations for swordfish, sharks, and billfish, and with General category regulations

for Atlantic tunas (*i.e.*, General category permit holders may not fish for or land bluefin tuna <73" CFL under any circumstances).

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

All Atlantic HMS recreational fishing regulations (*e.g.*, size limits, bag limits, gear restrictions, possession restrictions) apply to Atlantic HMS tournament participants. Anglers fishing from Atlantic HMS permitted vessels and participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments must use only non-offset circle hooks when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. A billfish tournament is defined as any fishing tournament that awards points or prizes for billfish, even if billfish are not the main species targeted in the tournament. Billfish tournament anglers may deploy "J"-hooks only with artificial lures. NMFS encourages the use of circle hooks by non-tournament anglers to reduce post-release mortality of Atlantic billfish.

XIV. NATIONAL SALTWATER ANGLER REGISTRY

A registry of saltwater anglers began on January 1, 2010 that will be used as the basis for conducting surveys of saltwater recreational fishermen to find out how often they fish. Many saltwater recreational fishermen are required to register, but if you have a HMS Angling permit or HMS Charter/Headboat permit, you do not have to register. Also, if you have a state saltwater fishing license, you may already be part of the registry.

For more information about the Angler Registry, please go to <http://www.countryfish.noaa.gov> or call the toll-free registration line at 1-888-MRIP411 (1-888-674-7411) from 4:00 am to 12 midnight EST daily.

Following are several points of clarification about the relationship between anglers/vessels with Atlantic HMS permits and the Angler Registry:

- Individuals who fish exclusively on state- or NMFS-licensed for-hire vessels (*e.g.*, on a charter or headboat) are exempted from registering because fishing data can be obtained from the vessel operator.
- In the case of HMS Angling permit holders, only the individual permit holder is exempt. Other anglers fishing aboard the vessel will need to register.
- Individuals who hold a commercial or subsistence fishing license or permit issued by NOAA Fisheries or a state/territory will need to register if they intend to fish recreationally. These individuals do not need to register while fishing pursuant to their commercial or subsistence fishing license or permit.

IXV. CONTACT LIST

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

Margo Schulze-Haugen, Chief
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>
(301) 427-8503

Topics	Office	Phone Number and Address
Commercial swordfish Sharks Exempted fishing permits Atlantic HMS news list Pelagic and bottom longline	HMS Headquarters Office	Phone: (301) 427-8503; Fax: (301) 713-1917 Address: 1315 East-West Highway, NMFS/SF1 Silver Spring, MD 20910

<p>Atlantic tunas Atlantic tunas dealer reporting Bluefin tuna catch document Program Charter/Headboat operation International Trade Permit</p>	<p>HMS Gloucester Office</p>	<p>Phone: (978) 281-9260; Fax: (978) 281-9340 Address: 55 Great Republic Drive NMFS/ SF1 Gloucester, MA 01930-2298</p>
<p>Billfish Swordfish Tournament registration Billfish Certificate of Eligibility Pelagic longline</p>	<p>HMS St. Petersburg Office</p>	<p>Phone: (727) 824-5399 Fax: (727) 824-5398 Address: 263 13th Ave. South St. Petersburg, FL 33701</p>

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

FISHING AND DEALER PERMITS

<p>- Shark, Swordfish, and Atlantic tunas longline Vessel and Shark and Swordfish Dealer permits</p>	<p>NMFS Southeast Regional Permit Office Webpage: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/</p>	<p>Phone: (727) 824-5326 Address: 263 13th Ave. South St. Petersburg, FL 33701</p>
<p>- Atlantic tunas, Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat and HMS Angling Vessel Permits</p>	<p>Automated Permitting System Webpage: http://www.hmspermits.gov/</p>	<p>Phone: (888) 872-8862 Please dial “0” to speak with a person.</p>

Please see 50 CFR part 635 for the current Atlantic HMS regulations, as regulations are subject to change. Regulations may change, and if disparities with this guide exist, the regulations prevail.

<p><i>- Atlantic tunas Dealer Permits</i></p>	<p>NMFS Northeast Region Permit Office</p> <p>Webpage: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/permits/</p>	<p>Phone: (978) 281-9370; Fax: (978) 281-9366</p> <p>Address: 55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930</p>
<p>Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)</p>		
<p>Kelly Spaulding-Behner</p>	<p>National VMS Program Manager</p>	<p>(301) 427-2300</p>
<p>Patrick O'Shaughnessy</p>	<p>Southeast VMS Program Manager</p>	<p>(727) 824-5358</p>

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NMFS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

Aguadilla, PR	(787) 890-0715	New Bedford, MA	(508) 992-7711
Bellport, NY	(631) 776-1734	Newport News, VA	(757) 595-2692
Boston, MA	(617) 884-5754	Niceville, FL	(850) 729-8628
Ellsworth, ME	(207) 664-0508	North Charleston, SC	(843) 554-9896
Galveston, TX	(832) 689-9174	Ocean City, MD	(410) 629-1258
Gloucester, MA	(978) 281-9213	Portland, ME	(207) 780-3241
Guaynabo, PR	(787) 749-4405	Portsmouth, NH	(603) 436-3186 x224
Harlingen, TX	(956) 423-3450	Slidell, LA	(985) 643-6232
Marathon, FL	(305) 743-3110	St. Petersburg, FL	(727) 824-5344
Marmora, NJ	(609) 390-8303	Titusville, FL	(321) 269-0004
Miami, FL	(954) 746-4160	Wall, NJ	(732) 280-6490
Morehead City, NC	(252) 726-0314	Woods Hole, MA	(508) 495-2147

24-Hour Enforcement Hotline: (800) 853-1964

The NMFS Office of Law Enforcement maintains a 24-hour hotline for the public to report potential violations of Atlantic HMS regulations. This number should be used only to report potential violations, not for general information, concerning Atlantic HMS.

U.S. COAST GUARD -Coast Guard Regulations

Commercial vessels are subject to the Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988. For information, contact one of the following local Coast Guard offices:

Maine to New York 617-223-8440

New Jersey to North Carolina (757) 398-6554

South Carolina to Florida (305) 415-6868

Gulf of Mexico (504) 671-2154

Please also visit the Coast Guard Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Program's Website at: www.fishsafe.info

COOPERATIVE TAGGING PROGRAMS

To obtain a tuna, billfish, or swordfish tagging kit or report a tag recovery: (800) 437-3936

To obtain a shark tagging kit or report a tag recovery:

Apex Predators Investigation

NOAA/NMFS/NEFSC

28 Tarzwell Drive

Narragansett, RI 02882-1152

401-782-3320 or (877) 826-2612

<http://na.nefsc.noaa.gov/sharks/>

STATE FISHING RREGULATIONS

State	Agency	Contact Information
Maine	ME Department of Marine Resources http://www.state.me.us/dmr/index.htm	Phone: (207) 624-6550
New Hampshire	NH Fish and Game http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/	Phone: (603) 868-1095
Massachusetts	MA Division of Marine Fisheries http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/	Phone: (617) 626-1520
Rhode Island	RI Department of Environmental Management http://www.dem.ri.gov/	Phone: (401) 789-3094
Connecticut	CT Department of Environmental Protection http://www.ct.gov/dep/site/default.asp	Phone: (860) 424-3000
New York	NY Department of Environmental Conservation http://www.dec.ny.gov/	Phone: (631) 444-0430
New Jersey	NJ Fish and Wildlife http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/	Phone: (609) 292-2083
Delaware	DE Division of Fish and Wildlife http://www.fw.delaware.gov/Pages/FWPportal.aspx	Phone: (302) 739-9914

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**STATE FISHING REGULATIONS
CONTINUED**

State	Agency	Contact Information
Maryland	MD Department of Natural Resources http://www.dnr.state.md.us/	Phone: (410) 260-8264 (877) 620-8367
Virginia	VA Marine Resources Commission http://www.mrc.state.va.us/	Phone: (757) 247-2200
North Carolina	NC Division of Marine Fisheries http://www.ncfisheries.net/	Phone: (252) 808-8013 (800) 682-2632
South Carolina	SC Department of Natural Resources http://www.dnr.sc.gov/	Phone: (843) 953-9312
Georgia	GA Department of Natural Resources http://www.gadnr.org/	Phone: (912) 264-7218
Florida	FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission http://myfwc.com	Phone: (850) 487-0554

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Alabama	AL Department of Conservation and Natural Resources http://www.outdooralabama.com/	Phone: (251) 861-2882 (251) 968-7576
Louisiana	LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries http://www.wlf.state.la.us/	Phone: (225) 765-2800
Mississippi	MS Department of Marine Resources http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/	Phone: (228) 523-4078
Texas	TX Parks and Wildlife Department http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/	Phone: (512) 389-4800 (800) 792-1112
Puerto Rico	Caribbean Fishery Management Council http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/	Phone: (787) 766-5927
U.S. Virgin Islands	Caribbean Fishery Management Council http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/	Phone: (787) 766-5927

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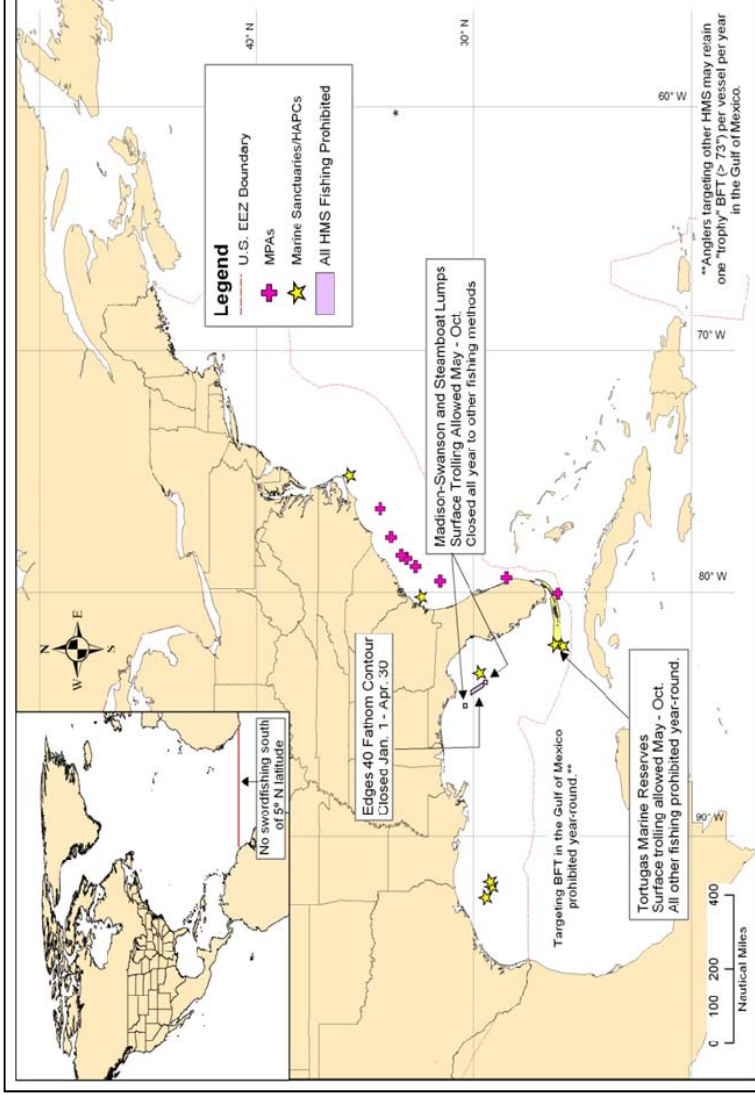


Figure 1. Marine sanctuaries, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, and time area closures that may affect HMS recreational anglers in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea.