



Adjusted 2017 Northern Albacore, North and South Atlantic Swordfish, and Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Reserve Category Quotas

September 15, 2017

Action being taken and important dates

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) adjusts the northern albacore annual baseline quota for 2017 with available underharvest of the 2016 adjusted U.S. northern albacore quota, adjusts the North and South Atlantic swordfish baseline quotas for 2017 based on available underharvest from the 2016 adjusted U.S. quotas and international quota transfers, and augments the 2017 Atlantic bluefin tuna Reserve category quota with available underharvest of the 2016 adjusted U.S. bluefin tuna quota. This action is consistent with the annual quota adjustment processes established in Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (Amendment 7; 79 FR 71510, December 2, 2014) and the 2016 North and South Atlantic Swordfish Quota Adjustment Rule (81 FR 48719, July 26, 2016). This action is necessary to implement binding recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), as required by the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act, and to achieve domestic management objectives under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. NMFS makes such adjustments annually, when complete catch information for the prior year is available and finalized. This action is effective through December 31, 2017. Note that weight information for northern albacore and bluefin tuna below is shown in metric tons (mt) whole weight (ww), and both dressed weight (dw) and ww is shown for swordfish.

Adjustment of the 2016 Northern Albacore Quota

For 2016, the adjusted quota was 658.75 mt (527 mt plus 131.75 mt of 2015 underharvest carried forward to 2016). The total 2016 northern albacore catch was 249.60 mt, which is 409.15 mt less than the 2016 adjusted quota. Thus, the underharvest for 2016 is 409.15 mt, 131.75 mt of which may be carried forward to the 2017 fishing year under ICCAT Recommendation 16-06. **Thus, the adjusted 2017 northern albacore quota is 527 mt plus 131.75 mt, totaling 658.75 mt.**

Adjustment of the 2017 North and South Atlantic Swordfish Quotas

The 2017 North Atlantic swordfish baseline quota is 2,937.6 mt dw (3,907 mt ww). The total 2016 North Atlantic swordfish catch and dead discards totaled 1,144.4 mt dw, which is 2,215 mt dw less than the 2016 adjusted quota of 3,359.4 mt dw. Thus, the North Atlantic swordfish underharvest for 2016 was 2,215 mt dw and NMFS is carrying forward 440.6 mt dw, the

maximum carryover allowed under Recommendation 16-03. The 2,937.6 mt dw baseline quota is reduced by the 18.8 mt dw annual quota transfer to Mauritania and increased by the underharvest carryover of 440.6 mt dw. **Thus, the final adjusted North Atlantic swordfish quota for the 2017 fishing year is 3,359.4 mt dw (2,937.6 - 18.8 + 440.6 = 3,359.4 mt dw).** From that adjusted quota, 50 mt dw will be allocated to the reserve category for inseason adjustments and research, and 300 mt dw will be allocated to the incidental category, which includes recreational landings and landings by incidental swordfish permit holders, in accordance with regulations at 50 CFR 635.27(c)(1)(i). This would result in an allocation of 3,009.4 mt dw (3,359.4 - 50 - 300 = 3,009.4 mt dw) for the directed category, which would be split equally between two seasons in 2017 (January through June, and July through December).

U.S. fishermen landed no South Atlantic swordfish in 2016. The adjusted 2016 South Atlantic swordfish quota was 75.1 mt dw due to nominal landings in previous years. Therefore, 75.1 mt dw of underharvest, or 100% of the baseline quota, is available to carry over to 2017. NMFS is carrying forward 75.1 mt dw to be added to the 75.2 mt dw baseline quota. The quota is then reduced by the 75.2 mt dw of annual international quota transfers, including 37.6 mt dw (50 mt ww) to Namibia, 18.8 mt dw (25 mt ww) to Côte d'Ivoire, and 18.8 mt dw (25 mt ww) to Belize. **Thus, the adjusted South Atlantic swordfish quota is 75.1 mt dw for the 2017 fishing year.**

Adjustment of the 2017 Bluefin Tuna Reserve Category Quota

The total 2016 bluefin tuna catch was 1,025.10 mt. This total catch includes landings and dead discards. The total catch of 1,025.10 mt is 167.07 mt less than the 2016 adjusted quota of 1,083.79 mt. Thus, the underharvest for 2016 is 167.07 mt. Per ICCAT Recommendation 16-08, only 10 percent of the total 2016 U.S. quota, or 108.38 mt, of that underharvest may be carried forward to the 2017 fishing year, resulting in a 2017 adjusted quota of 1,192.17 mt (baseline quota of 1,083.79 mt + underharvest carryover of 108.38 mt). The codified Reserve category quota is 24.8 mt. Consistent with the process established in Amendment 7, NMFS augments the Reserve category quota with 108.38 mt in this action. Effective February 28, 2017, NMFS adjusted the Reserve category quota for 2017 to 118 mt ww by reallocating 138.2 mt ww of Purse Seine quota to the Reserve category (based on 2016 catch by Purse Seine category participants) and also transferring 45 mt ww of Reserve category quota to the Longline category (82 FR 12296, March 2, 2017). Effective March 2, 2017, NMFS transferred 40 mt ww from the Reserve to the General category (82 FR 12747, March 7, 2017). Additionally, effective August 11, 2017, NMFS transferred an additional 30 mt from the Reserve to the Harpoon category (82 FR 38853, August 16, 2017). **Thus, as of September 18, 2017, the adjusted 2017 bluefin tuna Reserve category quota would be 156.38 mt (24.8 + 138.2 - 45 - 40 - 30 + 108.38).**

Consistent with the bluefin tuna quota regulations, NMFS may allocate any portion of the Reserve category quota for inseason or annual adjustments to any fishing category quota pursuant to regulatory determination criteria described at § 635.27(a)(8), or for scientific research.

This notice is a courtesy to permit holders to help keep you informed about the Atlantic tuna and swordfish fisheries. For further information, contact the HMS Management Division at (301)

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