



## NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

# Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Angling Category Fishery: Southern Area Trophy Fishery Closing April 10, 2016

Announcement date: April 7, 2016

### Actions being taken and important dates

**The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closes the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) Angling category fishery for large medium and giant “trophy” BFT (measuring 73” or greater) in the southern area effective 11:30 p.m. local time, Sunday, April 10, 2016, through December 31, 2016. The southern area is the area south of 39°18’N (off Great Egg Inlet, NJ), outside the Gulf of Mexico.**

Reported landings from the NMFS Automated Catch Reporting System and the North Carolina Tagging Program total approximately 1.6 mt and NMFS has determined that the codified Angling category southern area trophy BFT subquota has been reached and that a closure of the southern area trophy BFT fishery is warranted at this time. Retaining, possessing, or landing large medium or giant BFT south of 39°18’ N. lat. and outside the Gulf of Mexico by persons aboard vessels permitted in the HMS Angling category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category (when fishing recreationally) must cease at 11:30 p.m. local time on April 10, 2016. The intent of this closure is to prevent any further overharvest of the Angling category southern area trophy BFT subquota. The annual Angling category trophy limit of one large medium or giant BFT per vessel remains in effect for vessels fishing in the *northern* area and in the *Gulf of Mexico* area. The Angling category fishery for BFT measuring 27 to less than 73” is open *except in the Gulf of Mexico*. Catch-and-release fishing is permissible as described below.

### Who is affected?

This closure applies to vessels permitted in the HMS Angling category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category fishing in the southern area (defined in bold above).

Fishermen may catch and release or tag and release BFT of all sizes, subject to the requirements of HMS catch-and-release and tag-and-release programs. NMFS regulations require that all BFT that are released be handled in a manner that will maximize their survival, and without removing the fish from the water. For additional information on safe handling, see the “Careful Catch and Release” brochure available at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/).

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For more information on BFT fishing regulations, including recreational size and retention limits, please go to [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov) or call (978) 281-9260. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.

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