



NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna General Category Fishery: September Time-period Fishery Closing September 17, 2017

Announcement date: September 14, 2017

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closes the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) General category fishery for large medium and giant BFT (measuring 73 inches curved fork length or greater) **effective 11:30 p.m. local time on September 17, 2017**, until it reopens on October 1, 2017. Based on the best available landings information for the General category BFT fishery (*i.e.*, 81 mt of the available 123.7 mt landed as of September 12, 2017), as well as average catch rates and anticipated fishing conditions, NMFS has determined that the General category September subquota will be reached by September 17, and that a closure is warranted at this time.

Retaining, possessing, or landing large medium or giant BFT by persons aboard vessels permitted in the Atlantic tunas General and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Charter/Headboat categories must cease at 11:30 p.m. local time on September 17, 2017, through September 30, 2017. The intent of this closure is to prevent overharvest of the General category September BFT subquota and help ensure reasonable fishing opportunities in each of the remaining subquota time periods. Catch-and-release fishing is permissible as described below.

Who is affected?

This closure applies to vessels permitted in the **commercial** Atlantic tunas General category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category. For more information on BFT fishing regulations, including recreational size and retention limits, please go to hmspermits.noaa.gov.

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/.

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For additional information, please go to 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.

Sign up for Atlantic HMS News

An electronic newsletter informing you of the latest HMS-related actions

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news_list/index.html