



NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Harpoon Category Fishery: NMFS Transfers 30.0 mt from the Reserve Category to the Harpoon Category for 2017

August 11, 2017

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) adjusts the Harpoon category Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) quota by transferring 30.0 mt from the Reserve category. With this transfer, the adjusted Harpoon category quota is 68.6 mt for the 2017 fishing season (i.e., through November 15, 2017, or until the Harpoon category quota is reached, whichever comes first) and the adjusted Reserve category quota is 48.0 mt.

NMFS takes this action after considering the regulatory determination criteria regarding inseason adjustments, which involve considerations about, among other things, available quota, fishery performance in recent years, the anticipated availability of BFT on the fishing grounds, the effects of the adjustment on the BFT stock and on accomplishing the objectives of the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan and amendments. This adjustment is intended to provide a reasonable opportunity to harvest the U.S. BFT quota without exceeding it, while maintaining an equitable distribution of fishing opportunities; help achieve optimum yield in the BFT fishery; and collect a broad range of data for stock monitoring purposes.

As of August 7, 2017, the Harpoon category has landed 35.0 mt. Without a quota transfer at this time, Harpoon category participants would have to stop BFT fishing activities with very short notice, while commercial-sized BFT remain available in the areas Harpoon category permitted vessels operate. NMFS anticipates that the Harpoon category could harvest the transferred 30.0 mt prior to the end of the Harpoon category season, subject to weather conditions and BFT availability.

Who is affected?

This action applies only to Atlantic tunas Harpoon category (commercial) permitted vessels. NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fisheries closely. Dealers are required to submit landing reports within 24 hours of a dealer receiving BFT. **Harpoon category vessel owners are required to report the catch of all BFT retained or discarded dead, within 24 hours of the landing(s) or end of each trip, by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov or by using the HMS Catch Reporting app.** Depending on fishing effort and catch rates, NMFS may determine that additional adjustment or closure is necessary to ensure available quota is not exceeded or to enhance scientific data collection from, and fishing opportunities in, all geographic areas.

This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For additional information, call (978) 281-9260, or go to hmspermits.noaa.gov. Official

notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.

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