



## Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Angling Category Fishery: Recreational Daily Retention Limit Adjustment

April 20, 2016

### Actions being taken and important information/dates

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is adjusting the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) daily retention limits that apply to vessels permitted in the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category (when fishing recreationally for BFT) effective April 23, 2016, through December 31, 2016, as follows:

Quota Category and Vessel/Permit Type	Default Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip	Adjusted Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip	Effective Period of Adjusted Retention Limit
Angling category for private, HMS Angling category-permitted vessels	1 school, large school, or small medium BFT (27 to <73")	2 school BFT (27 to <47") <b>and</b> 1 large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73")	April 23-December 31, 2016
Angling category for HMS Charter/Headboat category-permitted vessels, when fishing recreationally	1 school, large school, or small medium BFT (27 to <73")	3 school BFT (27 to <47") <b>and</b> 1 large school/small medium BFT (47 to <73")	April 23-December 31, 2016

In deciding these retention limits, NMFS considered the regulatory determination criteria regarding inseason adjustments, which include available quota, fishery performance in recent years, availability of BFT on the fishing grounds, and the effects of the adjustment on the stock and on accomplishing the objectives of the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and amendments. These limits should provide opportunities to harvest the available U.S. BFT quota without exceeding it; prevent overharvest of the 2016 quotas; and collect a broad range of data for stock monitoring purposes.

### Who is affected?

These daily retention limits apply to vessels permitted in the **recreational** HMS Angling category and the HMS Charter/Headboat category while fishing recreationally. The daily retention limits are effective for all areas except for the Gulf of Mexico, which is designated as BFT spawning grounds and where NMFS does not allow targeted fishing for BFT. Regardless of the duration of a fishing trip (e.g., whether a vessel takes a two-day trip or makes two trips in one day), no more than a single day's retention limit may be possessed, retained, or landed.

NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fisheries closely. **General category, HMS Charter/Headboat, Harpoon, and Angling 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](https://hmspermits.noaa.gov).** Depending on fishing effort and catch rates, additional retention limit adjustments or fishery closures may be necessary to ensure available quota is not exceeded or to enhance scientific data collection from, and fishing opportunities in, all geographic areas.

NMFS regulations at 50 CFR 635.21(a)(1) require that all BFT that are released be handled in a manner that will maximize survivability, 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/](https://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, call (978) 281-9260 or go to [hmspermits.noaa.gov](https://hmspermits.noaa.gov). 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/newslist/>