



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NOAA Fisheries Proposes Initial Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quotas, Effort Controls for 2004

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) issued a proposed rule to set initial 2004 fishing year quotas for the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fishery, General category effort controls, and a catch-and-release provision for BFT.

Based on the 2002 quota recommended for the United States by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic tunas (ICCAT), 2003 fishing year underharvests/overharvests, and the unused portion of the dead discard allowance, NOAA Fisheries proposes for the 2004 fishing year the quotas shown in the attached table, which also shows the proposed time-period subquotas for the General category. NOAA Fisheries also proposes restricted fishing days for: all Friday, Saturday, and Sundays through January 31, 2005, inclusive, provided the fishery remains open. These days are intended to extend the General category BFT fishery into the late season and provide fishing opportunities for the southern Atlantic region.

Comments on proposed initial 2004 BFT quota specifications, General category effort controls, and catch-and-release provision should be sent to: Email: 04BFTSPECS@noaa.gov; Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>; Mail: Brad McHale, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, Office of Sustainable Fisheries (F/SF1), NMFS, One Blackburn Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930; Fax: 978-281-9340.

NOAA Fisheries will hold two public hearings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public regarding these proposed initial quota specifications and General category effort controls. The public hearing dates and locations are:

1. December 27, 2004, 2:00-4:00 p.m. NOAA Science Center, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910
2. December 28, 2004, 3:00-4:30 p.m. NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region Downstairs Conference Room, 1 Blackburn Drive Gloucester, MA 01930.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information contact the HMS Management Division at (978) 281-9260.

John H. Dunnigan, Director
Office of Sustainable Fisheries

DEC - 7 2004

Date



Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Proposed Initial Quota Specifications and General Category Effort Controls for the 2004 Fishing Year

Category	Quota Results of FY 03 (inclusive of Revised Quota results of FY '02)	Annual Adjustments to the Quota Results of FY 03	Baseline Allocation for FY 04	Subperiod or Subquota	Proposed Initial 2004 FY BFT Quotas
General	-30.8	0.0	689.8	June - August	659.0
				September	389.4
				Oct - Jan	194.7
				New York Bight	64.9
					10.0
Harpoon	24.3	0.0	57.1		81.4
Longline	27.6	0.0	143.6		171.2
				North	58.2
				NED	49.2
				South	63.8
Trap	0.8	0.0	1.5		2.3
Purse Seine	117.0	0.0	272.4		389.4
Angling	-440.7	217.6	288.6		65.5
				<u>School</u>	<u>21.0</u>
				North	8.1
				South	9.1
				<u>School Reserve</u>	<u>3.8</u>
				<u>Lg Sch/Sm Med</u>	<u>42.7</u>
				North	20.2
				South	22.5
				<u>Trophy</u>	<u>1.8</u>
				North	0.6
				South	1.2
Reserve	209.8	-209.8	36.6		36.6
Total	-92.0	7.8	1489.6		1405.4

Note: 2003 Fishing year landings figures are preliminary and subject to change; For the Angling category, landings were estimated using revised preliminary LPS numbers, and North Carolina tagging figures; For commercial landings, figures are derived from NERO dealer report database.

Landings counting towards Reserve are based on scientific research projects (e.g., archival tagging off North Carolina and in the Gulf of Mexico).

2004/2005 Proposed Restricted Fishing Days for the General Category

January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



= Proposed Restricted Fishing Day for BFT