

Atlantic Blue Crab Trap/Pot Fishery

Fishing gear type: Trap/pot

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The total annual mortality and serious injury West Indian manatees (FL stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stocks' Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. Also, when the stocks of bottlenose dolphins killed/injured in this fishery were updated on the 2011 LOF, the superscript "1" was retained after each of these stocks. The 2010 LOF included a superscript "1" following bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal stock) and NMFS cannot yet differentiate to which stock a killed/injured animal belongs. Until NMFS is able to do so, each stock of bottlenose dolphin is considered to be driving the classification of the fishery.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a ⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Bottlenose dolphin, Northern North Carolina (NC) estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Southern NC estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Charleston estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Northern Georgia (GA)/Southern South Carolina (SC) estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Southern GA estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Jacksonville estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Indian River Lagoon estuarine system ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Northern Migratory coastal ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Southern Migratory coastal ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Northern Florida (FL) coastal ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, Central FL coastal ⁽¹⁾; Bottlenose dolphin, SC/GA coastal ⁽¹⁾; West Indian manatee, FL ⁽¹⁾.

Estimated number of current participants: 10,008

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP), 50 CFR 229.32; Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan (BDTRP), 50 CFR 229.35.

Year added to the LOF: Current fishery added in 2001 though fishery was included in the "Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico blue crab trap/pot fishery" prior to 2001.

Category when originally listed under current fishery name: Category II

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was created by splitting the Category III "Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico blue crab trap/pot fishery" into the Category II "Atlantic blue crab trap/pot fishery" and the Category III "Gulf of Mexico blue crab trap/pot fishery." The Atlantic portion of the fishery was elevated to Category II based on bottlenose dolphin stranding data in the Southeast Atlantic. Specifically, from 1994-1998, 22 bottlenose dolphin carcasses were recovered with evidence of possible interaction with trap/pot gear, and another 2 bottlenose dolphins were reported to be released alive. This stranding data indicated that the average annual mortality and serious injury was 4.4 dolphins/year as a minimum estimate, or 17.6% of PBR (PBR=25). The analyzed level of interaction was considered a minimum because it was based solely on stranding data. At the time of the 2001 LOF, Virginia stranding data had not yet been analyzed but was thought to likely include more cases of interactions. There is no observer coverage for this fishery; therefore, observer data was unavailable.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: >16,000

Past names, if any: "Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico blue crab trap/pot fishery" from 1991-2001.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses pots baited with fish or poultry typically set in rows in shallow water. The pot position is marked by a buoy line attached to a surface buoy.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

Target species: Blue crab.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery occurs year-round from the south shore of Long Island at 72° 30'W. long. in the Atlantic and east of the fishery management demarcation line between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (50 CFR 600.105), including state waters.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

Management and regulations: The fishery is managed under state Fishery Management Plans, and is subject to ALWTRP implementing regulations. It is also an affected fishery under the BDTRP.

History of Changes on the LOF

2012 LOF:

- Combined bottlenose dolphin (GA coastal stock) and bottlenose dolphin (SC coastal stock) on the list of species/stocks killed/injured and renamed the stock as “bottlenose dolphin (SC/GA coastal stock)” to reflect the stock name in the 2010 SAR.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 6,479 to 10,008.

2011 LOF:

- Updated the stock name for bottlenose dolphins killed/injured in this fishery, based on the revised stock structure presented in the final 2008 and 2009 SARs. Replaced bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal) with the following stocks: bottlenose dolphin (Northern NC estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Southern NC estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Charleston estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Northern GA/Southern SC estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Southern GA estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Jacksonville estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Indian River Lagoon estuarine system); bottlenose dolphin (Northern Migratory coastal); bottlenose dolphin (Southern Migratory coastal); bottlenose dolphin (Northern FL coastal); bottlenose dolphin (Central FL coastal); bottlenose dolphin (SC coastal); bottlenose dolphin (GA coastal).
- Retained a superscript “1” after each of these stocks because the 2010 LOF includes a superscript “1” following bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal) and NMFS cannot yet differentiate to which stock a killed/injured animal belongs. Until NMFS is able to do so, each stock of bottlenose dolphin is considered to be driving the classification of the fishery.
- Estimated number of participants updated from >16,000 to 6,479.

2008 LOF: Updated the fishery description to reflect that it is now subject to ALWTRP implementing regulations under an October 5, 2007, rulemaking (72 FR 57104; October 5, 2007).

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “1” in table 2 after bottlenose dolphin (WNA coastal) and West Indian manatee (FL), indicating that these stocks were driving the categorization of this fishery.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Report (SAR).