

Mid-Atlantic Mid-Water Trawl (Including Pair Trawl) Fishery

Fishing gear type: Trawl

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The total annual mortality and serious injury of white-sided dolphins (Western North Atlantic [WNA] stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a ⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): Bottlenose dolphin, WNA offshore; Common dolphin, WNA; Long-finned pilot whale, WNA; Risso's dolphin, WNA; Short-finned pilot whale, WNA; White-sided dolphin, WNA ⁽¹⁾.

Estimated number of current participants: 669

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Team (ATGTRT).

Year added to the LOF: 1996

Category when originally listed: Category II

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was listed as a Category II based on logbook data. Observer data existed but was not available for the 1996 LOF. This fishery consisted of the "Mid-Atlantic squid trawl fishery" and the "Mid-Atlantic mackerel trawl" as defined in the 1994 LOF (developed under section 114 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, prior to the establishment of section 118 and the current LOF provisions). This fishery was joined with the butterfish trawl to parallel the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and titled the "Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl fishery" to indicate the target species. Data averaged over 1990-1992 showed that the incidental mortality and serious injury was of 5 pilot whales/year, which was more than 1% and less than 50% PBR for short- and- long-finned pilot whales (combined as one stock for the purposes of analysis because the similarities between the species made it difficult for observers to identify the species).

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 620

Past names, if any: "Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl fishery" 1996-2005; "Atlantic mid-water trawl fishery" in the proposed 1996 LOF; "Mid-Atlantic squid trawl fishery" and the "Mid-Atlantic mackerel trawl fishery" prior to 1996.

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses both single and pair trawls, which are designed, capable, or used to fish for pelagic species with no portion of the gear designed to be operated in contact with the bottom of the ocean.

Target species: Atlantic mackerel, chub mackerel, and miscellaneous other pelagic species.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery for Atlantic mackerel occurs primarily from southern New England through the mid-Atlantic from January-March and in the Gulf of Maine during the summer and fall (May-December). The Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl fishery includes all waters due east from the NC/SC border to the EEZ and north to Cape Cod, MA in waters west of 70° W. long.

* 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.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: From 1997-2008, observer coverage (measured in trips) was 0%, 0%, 1.01%, 8.43%, 0%, 0.77%, 3.5%, 12.16%, 8.4%, 8.9%, 3.85%, and 13.33% respectively.

Management and regulations: This fishery is managed under the Federal Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan using an annual quota system.

History of Changes on the LOF

2012 LOF:

- Updated the spatial boundary to further clarify the spatial distribution of this fishery, by adding the following statement: “The Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl fishery includes all waters due east from the NC/SC border to the EEZ and north to Cape Cod, MA in waters west of 70° W. long.”
- Estimated number of participants updated from 546 to 669.

2011 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 620 to 546.

2009 LOF: Modified the fishery description based on a public comment received on the 2008 LOF that this fishery was inaccurately characterized as targeting *Illex* squid, *Logligo* squid, and Atlantic butterfish. NMFS determined that the gear targeting these species is better characterized by the “Mid-Atlantic bottom trawl fishery” (Category II). Additionally, NMFS became aware of additional species targeted by the “Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl fishery” (2007 final Stock Assessment Report). Therefore, NMFS replaced the current fishery description with: “The ‘Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl fishery’ primarily targets Atlantic mackerel, chub mackerel, and miscellaneous other pelagic species. This fishery consists of both single and pair trawls, which are designed, capable, or used to fish for pelagic species with no portion of the gear designed to be operated in contact with the bottom. The fishery for Atlantic mackerel occurs primarily from southern New England through the mid-Atlantic from January to March and in the Gulf of Maine during the summer and fall (May to December). This fishery is managed under the Federal Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP using an annual quota system.”

2007 LOF:

- Downgraded from a Category I to a Category II based on data in the draft 2006 Stock Assessment Reports (SARs). Mortality and serious injury was 0% of PBR for common dolphins (WNA), 0.3% of PBR for pilot whales (WNA), and 4.3% of PBR for white-sided dolphins (WNA). Therefore, a Category II classification was warranted based on mortality and serious injury of white-sided dolphins (WNA).
- Removed the subscript "1" from short- and long-finned pilot whales (WNA) and common dolphins (WNA) because the mortality and serious injury of these stocks was less than 1% of PBR for each stock; therefore, they were no longer driving the classification of the fishery.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “1” in Table 2 after common dolphin (WNA), long-finned pilot whale (WNA), short-finned pilot whale (WNA) and white-sided dolphin (WNA), indicating that these stocks are driving the categorization of the fishery.

2005 LOF:

- Renamed from the “Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl fishery” to the “Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl (including pair trawl) fishery” to appropriately classify all similar mid-water trawl fisheries operating in this region that may be interacting with marine mammals.
- Bottlenose dolphin (WNA offshore) added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery because interactions had been documented in recent SARs.

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

2001 LOF: Elevated from a Category II to a Category I based on serious injury and mortality of common dolphins (WNA). The estimated annual mortality and serious injury for pilot whales was 43, or 38% of PBR (PBR=113) and common dolphins is 367, which exceeded PBR (PBR=227). While mortality and serious injury of pilot whales (short- and long-finned combined) was not more than 50% with the updated PBR, serious injury and mortality of common dolphins (WNA) continued to exceed 50% of PBR.

1997 LOF: Combined with the Category III "Gulf of Maine mackerel trawl fishery" because a separate listing was duplicative.