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Tab M, No. 4(a)

Amendment 13 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP

Bluefin Tuna Management

Public Hearing Presentation

May-July 2021

Presentation outline

- Background
 - Why changes to the management measures are needed
 - How the proposed measures were developed
 - Objectives
- Proposed Measures
 - Bluefin quota allocation procedures
 - Pelagic longline
 - Purse seine
 - Handgear
 - Other
- Next steps



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Why changes to the regulations are needed

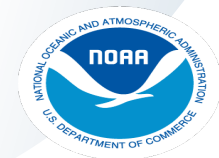
- Suggested changes to the Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) Program – from pelagic longline fishermen, and recommendations from NOAA Fisheries' review of Program
- Purse seine fishery has been inactive; other, active fisheries need bluefin quota
- Interest in equitable allocation of bluefin quota in the handgear fisheries; increases in landings; recent high number of permit holders



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How the proposed measures were developed

- In 2019, NOAA Fisheries released an Issues and Options document and received public comments
- In 2019, NOAA Fisheries released the “Three-Year Review of the IBQ Program” with recent data and recommendations
- Suggestions from the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel
- NOAA Fisheries analysis of data (Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS))



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Objectives of Amendment 13

- (1) Evaluate and optimize the allocation of U.S. bluefin quota among bluefin quota categories*
- (2) Maintain flexibility of the regulations to account for the highly variable nature of the bluefin fisheries and maintain fairness among permit/quota categories

*see full text of objective in proposed rule and DEIS



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Objectives of Amendment 13

(3) Continue to manage the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery consistent with the IBQ Program objectives (and fishery management plan and relevant laws)*

(4) Modify the management of the pelagic longline fishery in response to the Three-Year Review of the IBQ Program, and in response to important relevant prevailing trends (e.g., declining fishing effort and revenue for target species)

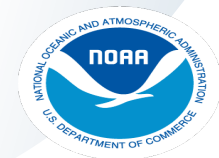
*see full text of objective in proposed rule and DEIS



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Proposed Measures – quota allocation procedures (all quota categories)

- Would modify a relatively minor step in the annual quota allocation methods regarding the allocation of 68 mt to the Longline category
- Instead of subtracting a fixed amount (in weight) from each category and adding 68 mt to the Longline quota, each quota category would have a slightly revised percentage allocation
- Simplifies the annual quota allocation mathematical method from a two-step process to a one-step process.
- Revised category percentages are shown on slide 22



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Proposed Measures – Pelagic Longline – annual IBQ share determination

- Active vessels (with a valid permit) receive IBQ share based on their designated species* landings during the 3 previous years

*Designated species: swordfish, and bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, and skipjack tunas (based on dealer data)

- Vessels assigned to one of four percentage shares based on the vessel's weight of designated species landings relative to the total fleet-wide total



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Pelagic Longline, cont. – annual IBQ shares determination

- 1) Active vessels ranked based on *landings percentages (vessel landings/fleet landings)*, and assigned to one of four groups, based on the 25th, 50th, 75th, and 100th percentiles
- 2) Based on the number of vessels in each group, and the sum of the *landings percentages* in each quartile, four *share percentages* are defined
- 3) Example: Based on 2015 through 2018 data, the four share percentages would be: 2.09, 1.18, 0.64, and 0.12 percent of the Longline category quota



Pelagic Longline, cont. - IBQ shares

Regional Gulf of Mexico (GOM) and Atlantic (ATL) Designations

- Regional designations based on the location of individual vessel pelagic longline fishing activity during the three years used as the basis for annual determination of shares
- Amount of IBQ shares designated as GOM or ATL would change annually as fishing location of the fleet changes
- Total amount (fleet-wide) of GOM IBQ shares capped at no more than 35%



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Pelagic Longline, cont. - IBQ Shares and Allocations

Cap amount of IBQ shares that can be issued to a permit holder at 25 percent of total shares

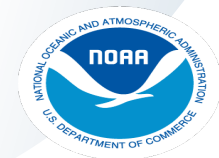
- Would limit acquisition of IBQ shares via acquisition of permits, or changes in the relative amount of shares due to changes in the number of active permit holders
- To prevent a single entity from holding a disproportionate amount of either IBQ shares or allocations
- An “entity” is defined in this context as an Atlantic Tunas Longline category permit holder where that permit holder is an individual, corporation, partnership, or other entity.



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Pelagic Longline, cont. – other aspects of the IBQ program

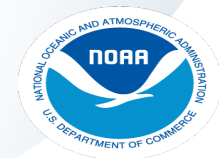
- Dealer would no longer report vessel PIN or dead discards in the IBQ system
- Electronic monitoring (EM) program changes:
 - Hard drives mailed in every two trips instead of after every trip
 - Installation of boom-mounts for some video cameras if necessary to obtain a clear view of side of vessel where fish removed from water
 - Measuring grid on deck (painted or a mat) to serve as a size-reference



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Pelagic Longline, cont. – other aspects of the IBQ program

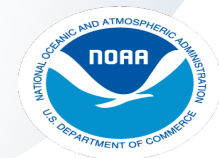
- Cost Recovery Program
 - NOAA Fisheries would implement a system to recover its costs of administering the IBQ Program, as required for limited access privilege programs under the Magnuson-Stevens Act
 - Vessels would pay a fee based on amount of bluefin landed and average price
 - NOAA Fisheries would make an annual decision whether or not to charge a fee. Total fees limited to a maximum of 3% of the ex-vessel value of bluefin landed by pelagic longline vessels



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Pelagic Longline, cont. – other aspects of the IBQ program

- Cost Recovery Program
 - Annual decision would be based on whether the amount of total fees to be recovered would result in a meaningful net benefit (\$)
 - NMFS will determine the fee associated with each vessel that harvested BFT, based on the total dressed weight of BFT sold to dealers by a vessel, and the total amount of fees that may be recovered (fishery-wide).
 - NMFS will not assess fees, if the total amount of fees that may be recovered is similar to or less than the estimated cost of implementing the cost recovery program



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Pelagic Longline, cont. – other aspects of the IBQ program

Retention of bluefin tuna caught with green-stick gear onboard a vessel with an Atlantic tunas longline permit

- Allow retention of one 73” bluefin caught incidentally on green-stick gear (per trip)
- Account for bluefin using IBQ allocation
- Report greenstick sets with bluefin interactions via vessel monitoring system (VMS)
- Vessels abide by other IBQ Program requirements
- Use of EM not required on green-stick gear sets



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Proposed Measures – purse seine

- Discontinue the Purse Seine quota category upon implementation of Amendment 13 (due to inactivity)
- Redistribute the Purse Seine quota proportionally among the directed quota categories: General, Harpoon, Angling, and Reserve quota categories (*not to the Longline or Trap categories because they are incidental quota categories*)
- Revised category percentages are shown on slides 21, 22



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Proposed Measures – angling category

Create new trophy bluefin (> 73”) subquota areas in the north:

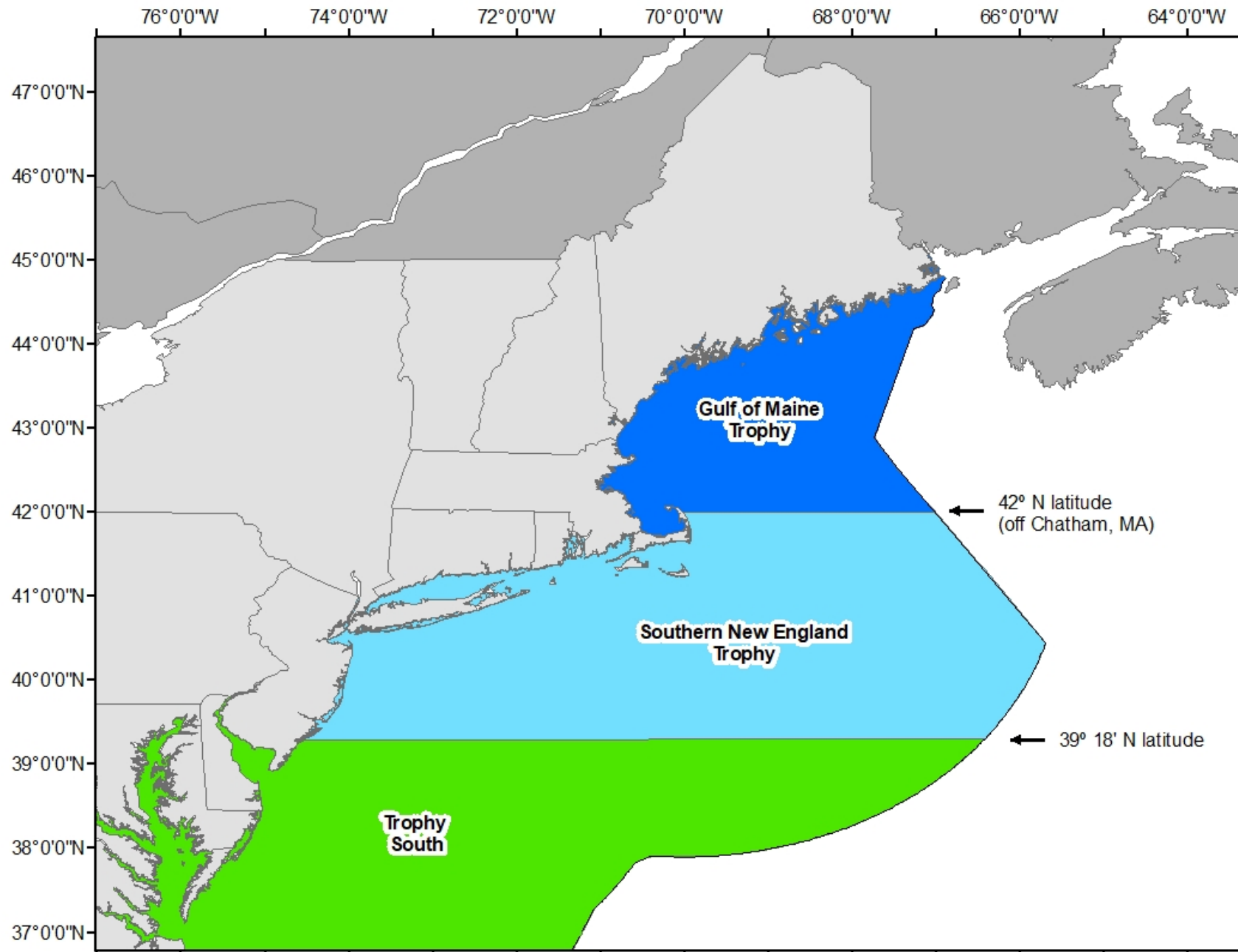
- Divide the current Trophy North area into two zones: north and south of 42° north latitude (off Chatham, MA)
- Minor increase in subquota for trophy fishery, with equivalent reduction of the subquota for large school/small medium bluefin (47” - < 73”)

(change in the portion of the Angling category quota allocated for trophy bluefin from 2.3 percent to 3.1 percent)



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Proposed Gulf of Maine Trophy and Southern New England Trophy Subquota Areas



Proposed Measures – harpoon category

- Daily Retention Limits:
 - Maintain current Harpoon category retention limit (range of 2* to 4 fish) on large medium bluefin (>73”)
 - Set a limit on the total number of bluefin (large medium *and* giant (≥ 81 ”)) of 10 fish total (per day or trip)

*2 fish is the default retention limit of large medium fish; may be adjusted by NOAA Fisheries to up to four fish inseason



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Proposed Measures – changes in permit categories

- For vessels issued an open access permit*

Allow to change permit categories within a fishing year, provided the vessel has not landed any bluefin

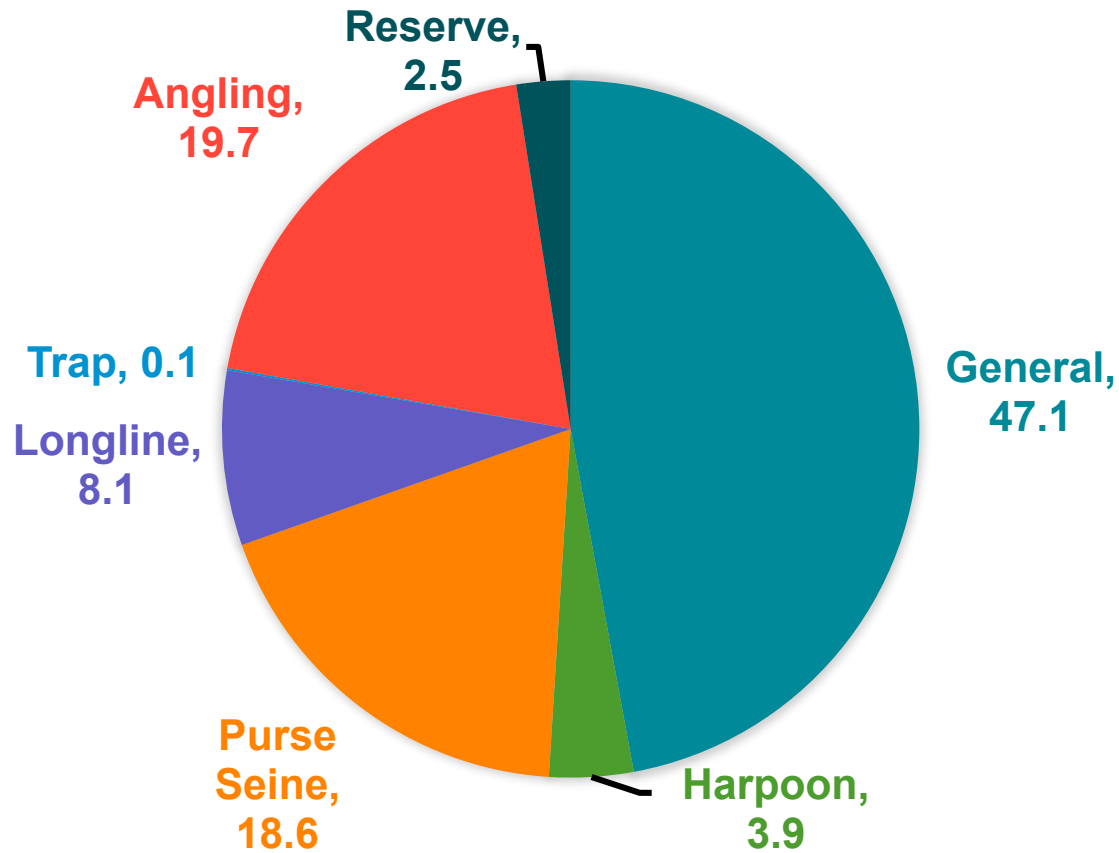
*Open access permits: Atlantic Tunas General category, Charter/Headboat category, Angling category



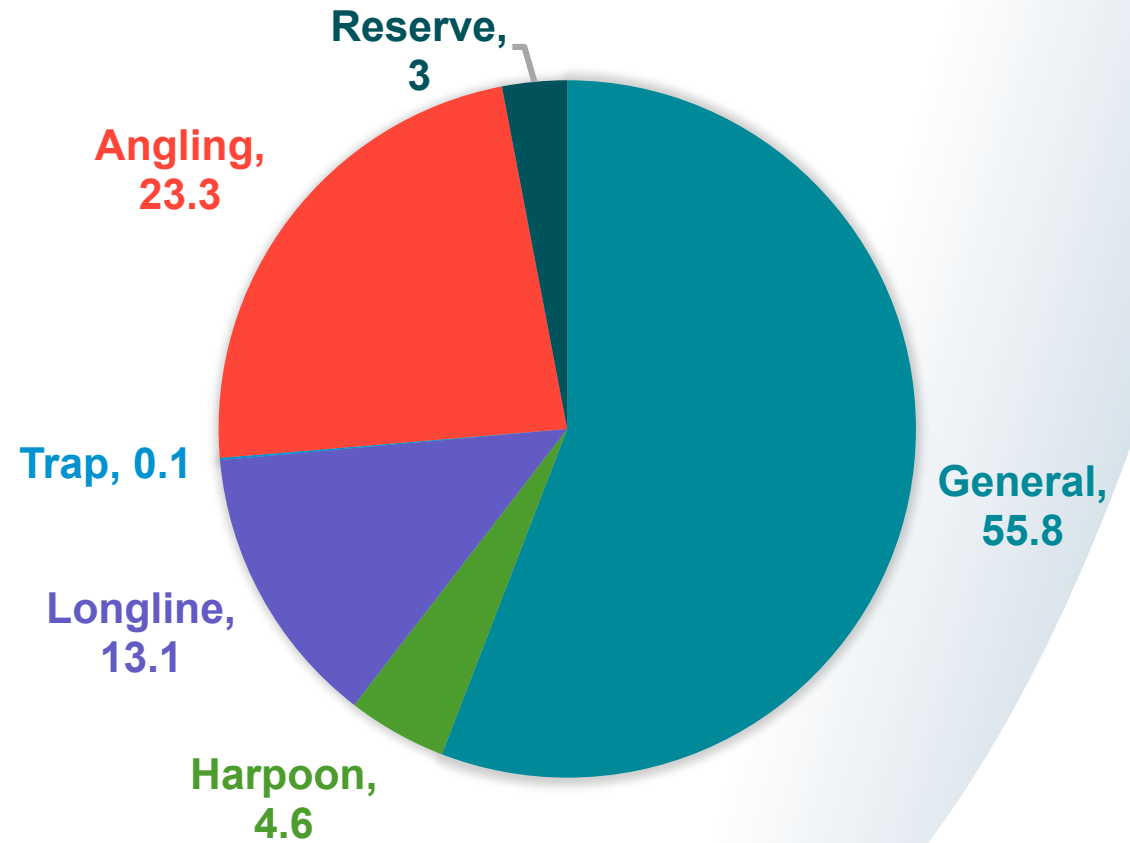
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Buefin quota percentages

Current



Proposed

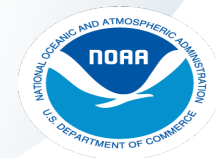


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Proposed bluefin quota percentages

Quota Category	Current Percentages	Column A (Revisions from Simplified Method of Allocating 68 mt to Longline category*)	Net Revisions Proposed (from "A" and Reallocation of Purse Seine category quota)
General	47.1	44.5	55.8
Harpoon	3.9	3.7	4.6
Purse Seine	18.6	17.6	0
Longline	8.1	13.1	13.1
Trap	0.1	0.1	0.1
Angling	19.7	18.6	23.3
Reserve	2.5	2.4	3.0

*slide 7



Amendment 13 - next steps

Public Comments Accepted through **July 20, 2021**

- Submit comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.
- Go to: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2019-0042> and click the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.



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Amendment 13-public webinars

Date	Time	Details: HMS Amendment 13 Webpage
June 8, 2021	2 to 4 p.m.	https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/amendment-13-2006-consolidated-hms-fishery-management-plan-bluefin-management-measures
July 8, 2021	2 to 4 p.m.	https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/amendment-13-2006-consolidated-hms-fishery-management-plan-bluefin-management-measures
July 14, 2021	2 to 4 p.m.	https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/amendment-13-2006-consolidated-hms-fishery-management-plan-bluefin-management-measures

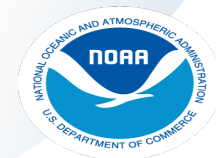


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Additional Information



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Pelagic Longline – annual IBQ shares

Participants in Deepwater Horizon Oceanic Fish Restoration Project (OFRP):

- For the time period during which participants were fishing in the project, a proxy amount of fishing effort would be used to calculate annual IBQ share
- Proxy amount of effort would represent an estimate of pelagic longline fishing effort that each participating vessel would have had if it was not participating in the OFRP

Participants voluntarily did not fish using pelagic longline gear during certain time periods



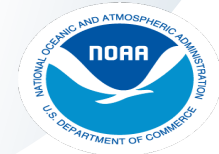
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Pelagic Longline – annual IBQ shares

Participants in Deepwater Horizon Oceanic Fish Restoration Project (OFRP)- continued:

- Proxy Effort: Average weight of designated species landings by in the Gulf of Mexico during the months of January through June (the months of the Repose)
- Proxy amount of landings would be added to the participating vessels' actual designated species landings during the years of participation (in July through December)

Proxy only used in years when vessel participated in the Project



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