



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# Summary of Scoping

Amendment 13

to the

2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species  
Fishery Management Plan

HMS Management Division

September 2019

Advisory Panel Meeting

# Scoping Summary

- Purpose of Scoping - To obtain and consider public input on potential management options for modifications to bluefin tuna management regulations.
- Need – New information & changing conditions prompting questions:
  - Draft Three-Year Review of Individual Bluefin Quota Program
  - (Should the Program be modified? If so how?)
  - Purse seine fishery has been relatively inactive for several years
  - (Should this fishery be discontinued or phased-out?)
  - Other management options – recent fishery trends
  - (Can changes be made to optimize fishing opportunity?)
- Public Input
  - Notice of Intent Published and Issues and Options paper released: 5/21/19
  - Scoping Meetings (11 total) and a presentation to the NEFMC
  - End of Comment period for scoping: 7/31/19





School of Atlantic  
bluefin tuna NE of  
Provincetown,  
MA

*Photo: NOAA  
Fisheries; Large  
Pelagics Research  
Center)*



# A13 Objectives *(abridged)*

Fishery	Objective	Additional Context or Details
PLL	Consider changes to the IBQ regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recent formal review of IBQ Program completed (Draft)</li> <li>▪ Declining fishing effort and revenue</li> </ul>
All	Optimize allocation of bluefin quota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Optimize allocation among bluefin quota categories</li> <li>▪ Consider historical allocations and current fishery characteristics</li> <li>▪ Purse seine fishery inactive</li> </ul>
All	Facilitate harvest of full bluefin allocation by quota categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain flexibility</li> <li>▪ Account for highly variable nature of fishery</li> <li>▪ Maintain fairness</li> </ul>
All	Enhance data quality in bluefin reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate best available data into management decisions</li> </ul>
All	Consistency with relevant requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amendment 7</li> <li>▪ 2016 Consolidated HMS FMP</li> <li>▪ MSA</li> <li>▪ ATCA</li> </ul>



# Amendment 13 Scoping – Public Input (by topic)

- a) Purse seine fishery future – Consider the future of the fishery and relevant management questions
- b) IBQ Program – Quota allocation
- c) IBQ Program – Other aspects
- d) General category subquota periods and percentages
- e) Harpoon fishery
- f) Charter/Headboat fishery
- g) Recreational trophy fishery



## a) Purse Seine Fishery Future - principal themes

- Discontinue immediately
- Don't allow to lease; provides too much quota to longline vessels
- Phase out
- Support “No Action”; Do not discontinue
- Various suggestions on how to reallocate Purse Seine quota
  - Proportionally among categories
  - Where quota would be economically stimulating
  - All to General category
  - To all categories except Longline





Purse seine  
catch of  
bluefin

*Photo: NMFS  
Pelagic  
Observer  
Program*



## b) IBQ Program – Quota Allocation - principal themes

- No changes warranted
- Don't increase quota – concern about bluefin catch increasing
- Support for dynamic allocation to active vessels based on 'effort' / need for bluefin
  - Allocate based on landings, or # hooks, or # sets
  - Base annual allocation on prior 3 years of activity
  - Count NED effort in such a system
  - Don't count NED effort in such a system
- Provide IBQ allocation to new entrants (those without allocation)



## c) IBQ Program – other aspects - examples

- Gulf of Mexico (GOM) – Constraints on IBQ allocation use:
  - Support current system; GOM-designated IBQ allocation (35% of total)
  - Need to provide more flexibility to Atlantic vessels to fish in GOM (can still cap on GOM catch of bluefin at 35% or less)
  - GOM dealers need more target species - more Atlantic vessels fishing could help
  
- Don't allow permanent sale of IBQ shares
  
- No need to set a cap on IBQ allocation use or leasing
  
- Set a cap on IBQ allocation use by a vessel at 20% of Longline quota
  
- Electronic Monitoring (EM)
  - Improve EM, better viewing and measuring needed
  - No change needed; focus on improving operation of current systems



## d) General Category Subquota Periods and Percentages - principal themes

- Do not change: businesses structured around current system; change would be detrimental
- Extend January period until end of April; increase January subquota to 14.8%
- Change: reduce June-August % and provide to fall time periods



## d) continued - General Category Subquota Periods and Percentages - principal rationale

- Environmental conditions are shifting and bluefin availability is shifting by a month
- Dynamics of fishery are changing; pulses of fish show up
- Booming technology, proximity to fish, social media, and technology have contributed to the surge in landings
- International dynamics affect price more than fishery limits
- Conditions and factors affecting the northern and southern fisheries are different



## e) Harpoon Fishery - examples

- Continue to allow use of harpoons in the General category; little impact on quota
- Restrict use of harpoon gear to Harpoon category only
- Starting and ending dates for the Harpoon fishery
- Set retention limit for giants (>81" fish)
- Change range of authorized retention limits of large medium to 2-6 fish (currently 2-4 fish)

## f) Charter / Headboat Fishery - examples

- Allow use of harpoon gear in Charter/Headboat category
- Don't allow use of harpoon gear in Charter/Headboat category; would increase fishing effort
- Require USCG safety sticker to obtain the permit (concern is too many vessels not meeting commercial vessel safety requirements)
- Eliminate flexibility for Charter/Headboat category (commercial / recreational) by splitting into two categories:
  - < 73" fish: recreational category
  - > 73" fish: commercial category (handgear, including harpoon)

## g) Recreational Trophy Fishery - examples

- Trophy quotas need to be increased everywhere; good for recreational fishery
- Increase everywhere but Gulf of Mexico (ICCAT prohibition on targeting there)
- Create a new northern trophy area and quota
  - Currently quota attained and fishery closed before the fish are in northern waters
  - Very few fish < 73"
  - New line: North of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, or Chatham (~ 42° N lat.)





Bluefin Blowout  
tournament,  
Gloucester, 2016

*Photo: Tom Warren*

# Amendment 13 - Next Steps

## Draft Schedule and Milestones

### ➤ Fall 2019

- Development of Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) and Proposed Rule
- HMS staff analyze data, develop and analyze alternatives, draft regulations

### ➤ First to second quarters of 2020

- Publication of DEIS and Proposed Rule
- Timing consideration: Spring 2020 AP during comment period

### ➤ Second to third quarter of 2020

- End of comment period
- Development of Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Final Rule

### ➤ Fourth quarter of 2020

- Publication of FEIS and final rule, delay in effectiveness period

### ➤ January 1, 2021

- Target for effective date of final rule/new regulations



## Amendment 13 – For more information:

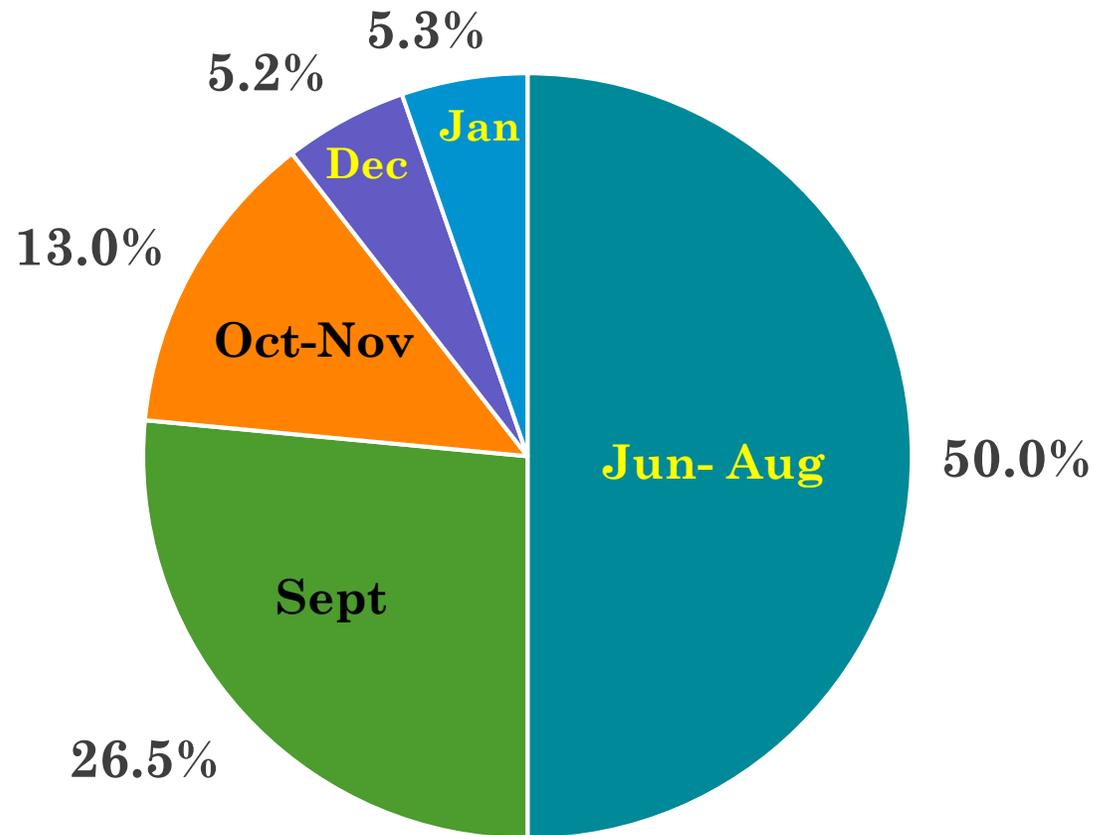
- Find scoping comments online at the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> (search for “NOAA-NMFS-2019-0042”)
- Documents on HMS Website - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>
- Call: Tom Warren, 978-281-9260; email: [Thomas.Warren@noaa.gov](mailto:Thomas.Warren@noaa.gov)
- HMS phones: *Gloucester* (978)-281-9260; *Silver Spring* (301) 427-8503; *St. Petersburg* (727) 824-5399
- Amendment 13 Team: *Craig Cockrell, Jen Cudney, Brad McHale, Sarah McLaughlin, Ian Miller, Larry Redd, George Silva, Dianne Stephan, Tom Warren*



~ End of Presentation ~



# Current General category base subquota allocations



# Bluefin Landings by General Category Time-Period Subquota

**2015-2018**

