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# Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) Program Accountability Measures

Atlantic HMS Advisory Panel Meeting  
September 2017

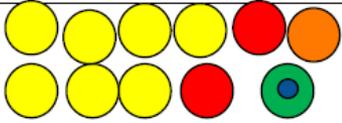
# Background: IBQ Program

- IBQ allocation is used to account for bluefin tuna (BFT) bycatch landings and dead discards while fishing for target species with pelagic longline (PLL) gear
- At start of each year, IBQ share recipients (with ATL permit on a vessel) receive annual IBQ allocation of Longline category BFT quota
- In addition to limiting BFT landings and dead discards in the PLL fishery, the IBQ Program aims to *minimize constraints on fishing for target species* and to *optimize fishing opportunities and maintain profitability*, among other objectives

# IBQ Program Accountability Measures 2015-2017

- **Annual Accountability:** in 2015, a vessel could fish with PLL gear with a balance below the minimum IBQ allocation or with quota debt
  - Vessels were required to account for quota debt by the end of 2015
- **Trip-Level Accountability:** as of January 1, 2016, a vessel fishing with PLL gear must have a minimum IBQ allocation to fish on each trip, and must account for quota debt after each trip
  - Vessels may lease IBQ allocation to obtain sufficient amount for fishing trips or to account for quota debt

# Feedback from AP & PLL Fishery



Revise IBQ accountability (e.g., end of year/quarterly/other vs. trip-level) to increase flexibility

- Increased flexibility in IBQ accounting emerged as a request at the spring AP meeting
  - 11 dots: 7 Commercial, 2 Academic, 1 Environmental, 1 priority for State/Council/Commission representatives
- PLL fishery participants have expressed concerns about dynamics and costs associated with leasing IBQ, which:
  - negatively affect participants' ability to plan their business, including the timing and price at which they lease additional IBQ
  - affect opportunity to fish for target species, as well as profitability of target species catch
  - impact other operational costs such as crew pay
  - increase uncertainty around availability of IBQ

# Description of Potential Alternatives

Potential IBQ Accountability Alternatives	PLL vessels account for quota debt and maintain minimum IBQ allocation to fish:	When PLL vessel's IBQ balance is below the minimum, or in quota debt:
Trip-level accountability (status quo)	After every fishing trip	Vessels must lease additional IBQ or delay fishing
Quarterly accountability	At the end of each calendar year quarter	Vessel may fish with a low balance or quota debt <i>during the same calendar quarter</i>
Biannual accountability	At the end of June and December	Vessel may fish with a low balance or quota debt <i>during the same 6-month period</i>
Annual accountability (as in 2015)	At the end of the year	Vessel may fish with a low balance or quota debt <i>during the same calendar year</i>

# Impacts of Potential Alternatives

**Timing flexibility to “shop around” for IBQ to lease:** the longer the accounting time period (trip-level→ annual), the more flexibility a PLL vessel has to determine when, from whom, and at what price to lease additional IBQ

**Impact on IBQ lease prices or market dynamics:** the longer the accounting time period, the fewer accounting deadlines, and the more IBQ lease prices could potentially surge in advance of those deadlines, or IBQ could become less available

**Impact on target species catch/ability to fish with PLL gear:** the longer the accounting time period, the less constrained a vessel is to lease IBQ and depart on their next trip

**Impact on BFT catch reporting/Longline quota tracking:** under all alternatives, all BFT landings and dead discards will be reported in the IBQ system and deducted from the vessel’s IBQ balance

# Impacts of Potential Alternatives

Trip-level

Quarterly

Biannual

Annual

Flexible timing to lease IBQ

Impact on IBQ leasing market dynamics

Constraint on fishing for target species

BFT catch reporting and quota tracking

- Stay tuned for a proposed rule, with a public comment period and public hearing/webinar
- For further information contact:

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## Questions?