

## NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ACTIVITIES

### **Pacific Bluefin Tuna Final Rule**

On March 29, 2021, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule to implement IATTC [Resolution C-20-02](#) (*Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, 2021*) ([86 FR 16303](#)). The rule imposes a 425 metric ton (mt) catch limit for U.S. commercial vessels fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean during 2021. Additionally, NMFS is imposing an initial trip limit of 20 mt, and then will reduce trip limits as follows:

- January-March: If cumulative catch reaches 250 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt; and if cumulative catch reaches 325 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 2 mt for the remainder of the year or until the annual catch limit is met and the fishery is closed.
- April-June: If cumulative catch reaches 275 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt; and if cumulative catch reaches 350 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 2 mt for the remainder of the year or until the annual catch limit is met and the fishery is closed.
- July-September: If cumulative catch reaches 300 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt; and if cumulative catch reaches 375 mt, then the trip limit is reduced 2 mt for the remainder of the year or until the annual catch limit is met and the fishery is closed.
- October-December: If cumulative catch reaches 325 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt; and if cumulative catch reaches 375 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 2 mt for the remainder of the year or until the annual catch limit is met and the fishery is closed.

The rule also requires fish buyers to submit electronic landings receipts with Pacific bluefin tuna landings in California ports using the E-tix system within 24 hours of landing. See the [NOAA Fisheries Pacific Bluefin Tuna Commercial Harvest Status](#) webpage for more information.

### **90-day Finding on Petition to List Shortfin Mako Shark under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

NMFS has published a 90-day finding on a petition to list the shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) as threatened or endangered under the ESA and to designate critical habitat concurrent with the listing ([86 FR 19863](#)). This finding states that the petition presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted. To ensure this status review is comprehensive, NMFS is soliciting scientific and commercial information regarding this species. The deadline for providing scientific and commercial information is June 14, 2021. See the notice in the Federal Register for more information.

### **Update on Monitoring Initiatives in the drift gillnet (DGN) Fishery**

In its draft Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan, the Council highlighted its intent to “work with NMFS to increase DGN fishery monitoring and/or develop statistical methods to better estimate rare event bycatch in the absence of 100 percent monitoring.” Related to this objective, NMFS produced a preliminary analysis of the Council’s 2015 recommendation to increase monitoring to 100 percent ([Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 3](#)) and conveyed plans to (1) integrate DGN datasets to enable comparison of unobserved fishing trips to observed and (2) obtain funding to test the use of electronic monitoring (EM) systems for use in the fishery ([Agenda Item G.7.a,](#)

[Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#)). With that information, the Council, in 2018, reaffirmed its preferred approach to achieve a 30 percent monitoring coverage level through a combination of human observers and EM, and work toward 100 percent monitoring. The Council also reported its intent to further consider this approach when more information is available on initiatives to enhance DGN fishery monitoring.

While NMFS has been unable to obtain funding for testing EM in this fishery, the Eastern Pacific subgroup of the Highly Migratory Species Professional Specialty Group was able to complete an integration of HMS datasets to evaluate potential observer bias on DGN fishing trips (i.e., whether the presence of onboard observers is associated with significant differences in fishing behavior). The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) has provided NMFS an unpublished manuscript of this work. These methods and non-confidential findings are included in the Council's Briefing Book (Agenda Item F.1.a, NMFS Report 2). PSMFC staff will provide a presentation on this work under this agenda item.