

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

This report is intended to inform discussion on implementation of [Resolution C-21-05](#) (*Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean*) which establishes Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) catch limits for commercial fishing vessels, as described in Supplemental NMFS Report 1 under this Agenda Item.

IATTC Resolution C-21-05

Per Resolution C-21-05, the commercial U.S. catch limit for 2021-2022 is 739 metric tons (mt), not to exceed 523 mt in a single year. For 2023-2024, the catch limit is 1,017 mt, not to exceed 720 mt in a single year. Similar to previous resolutions, a member may carry under-harvest from the previous biennium in an amount not to exceed 5 percent of the previous catch limit. For example, the United States may add 5 percent of 600 mt (i.e., 30 mt) from 2019-2020 to the 2021-2022 biennial catch limit; consequently, the 2021-2022 catch limit for the United States is 769 mt. Although under-harvest may be applied to the biennial limit, the one-year maximums will not change (i.e., the U.S. may not exceed 523 mt in 2022). Provided that 2021 catch remains 246 mt or less, the U.S. catch limit will be 523 mt in 2022. Currently, cumulative catch in 2021 is approximately 185 mt.

NMFS 2021 Regulations

NMFS promulgated regulations implementing [Resolution C-20-02](#), which established a 425 mt commercial catch limit for U.S. vessels for 2021 only. While Resolution C-21-05 establishes a biennial catch limit for 2021-2022, as well as 2023-2024, NMFS will be writing regulations that apply to 2022-2024.

The current rule implementing Resolution C-20-02 ([86 FR 16303](#), March 29, 2021) implements a 425 mt catch limit for 2021. Additionally, NMFS is imposing an initial trip limit of 20 mt, an intermediate trip limit of 15 mt and a low 2 mt trip limit on individual fishing vessels that reduces as catch thresholds are met throughout the year. These thresholds are as follows:

- January-March: If cumulative catch reaches 250 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt. 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. 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. 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.
- October-December: If cumulative catch reaches 325 mt, then the trip limit is reduced to 15 mt. 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, within 24 hours of landing, electronic landing receipts with PBF landings in California ports using the [E-tix system](#). Inseason action is announced on the [NMFS website](#), followed by a USCG Notice to Mariners, and Federal Register Notice published as soon as practicable.

Considerations for 2022-2024 Rule

In 2022, the catch limit is likely to be 101 mt higher than the 2021 catch limit. In 2023-2024, the maximum catch limit for a single year is 720 mt, which is 295 mt higher than the 2021 catch limit, although the 2024 catch limit is contingent on quantity caught in 2023. This could result in an annual limit in 2024 lower than the 2021 catch limit. The Council may consider a management scheme in 2022 that is different from 2023-2024, and one in 2023 and 2024 that considers different annual limits (i.e., different management schemes if the annual limits are different).

Below are tables which may help inform the discussion on domestic implementation of commercial catch limits. Additionally, for consideration of whether to maintain or change the lower trip limit of 2 mt, we note there were 2 landings greater than 2 mt in 2020.

Table 1. Estimates of annual PBF catches by fishery 2015-2021. Catch in 2021 reflects catches through November 9, 2021. Confidential values are reflected as “less than ____”.

Year	Large-mesh Drift Gillnet	Longline	Albacore Hook and line	Hook and Line	Miscellaneous	Purse Seine
2015	4	<1	0	7	0	86
2016	9	0	<1	31	0	316
2017	1	<1	<1	18	<1	467
2018	19	0	0	31	5	12
2019	10	0	0	36	1	226
2020	28	<1	0	87	0	<120
2021	27	0	0	112	4	<46

Table 2. Estimates of the sum of PBF catches by fishery by quarter in 2015-2021. Catch in 2021 reflects catches through November 9, 2021. Confidential values are reflected as “less than ___”.

Year	Quarter	Large-mesh Drift Gillnet	Longline	Albacore Hook and line	Hook and Line	Miscellaneous	Purse Seine
2015	1	1	0	0	<0.5	0	0
	2	<1	<1	0	2	<1	<50
	3	<1	0	0	5	0	<40
	4	3	0	0	<1	0	0
2016	1	<1	0	0	0	0	0
	2	<1	0	0	9	<1	<1
	3	2	0	<1	12	<1	315
	4	6	0	0	6	0	0
2017	1	<1	0	0	<1	0	0
	2	<1	<1	0	2	<1	<5
	3	<1		<1	16	<1	462
	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
	2	<1	0	0	4	<1	0
	3	0	0	0	25	4	12
	4	16	0	0	2	0	0
2019	1	3	0	0	<1	0	0
	2	<1	0	0	7	<1	0
	3	<1	0	0	23	<1	226
	4	7	0	<1	6	<1	0
2020	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
	2	<1	<1	0	12	0	0
	3	<2	0	<1	56	0	<112

Year	Quarter	Large-mesh Drift Gillnet	Longline	Albacore Hook and line	Hook and Line	Miscellaneous	Purse Seine
	4	24	0	<1	18	0	<8
2021	1	<3	0	0	0	<1	0
	2	0	0	0	5	0	0
	3	<11	0	0	96	2	<46
	4	16	0	<1	11	1	0