

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

Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) final rule

On May 6, 2025, NMFS published a final rule in the Federal Register ([90 FR 19126](#)) to implement provisions in Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Resolution C-24-02 on PBF management measures. The IATTC adopted this Resolution at its September 2024 meeting. The final rule implements annual catch and trip limits on United States commercial catch of PBF in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) for the 2025-2026 biennial cycle.

The final rule set the U.S. PBF biennial catch limit for 2025-2026 at 1,872.85 metric tons (mt), not to exceed 1,285 mt in a single year. In addition, the final rule implements a trip limit scheme with adjusting seasonal buffers. These trip limits are consistent with Council recommendations and discussions with advisory bodies at the September and November 2024 meetings. The initial trip limit for both 2025 and 2026 is 60 mt, and reduces as follows:

- January - June:
 - The trip limit reduces to 40 mt once the total catch is within 400 mt of the annual limit.
 - The trip limit reduces to 5 mt once the total catch is within 225 mt of the annual limit.
- July - September:
 - The trip limit reduces to 40 mt once the catch is within 300 mt of the annual limit.
 - The trip limit reduces to 5 mt once the total catch is within 175 mt of the annual limit.
- October - December:
 - The trip limit reduces to 40 mt once the catch is within 200 mt of the annual limit.
 - The trip limit reduces to 5 mt once the total catch is within 125 mt of the annual limit.

Existing in-season action and reporting procedures continue to apply under this rulemaking. NMFS will use available fishery information to estimate when the overall catch is expected to reach thresholds to reduce the trip limit. NMFS will announce in-season actions to reduce the trip limit or close the fishery on the [NMFS PBF Commercial Harvest Status Page](#), via email, and by Federal Register notice. Please [click here](#) to view the rule and supporting documents.

Deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) updates

On March 31, 2025, the application period for limited entry DSBG permits under Tier 9 closed. NMFS received a total of 39 permit applications. The first 25 applications were processed and permits were issued in March for the fishing period beginning May 1, 2025. As of April 28th, there are five individuals who have not renewed their DSBG permits for the 2025-2026 fishing year. The regulations provide for a grace period of 60 days for anyone who does not renew

before the initial deadline. If, at the end of the 60 days, those permits have not been renewed, NMFS will issue five permits to the next five people on the list (i.e., applicants 26-30).

Exempted fishing permits (EFPs)

On March 14, 2024, the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) notified the public of the availability of the [Final EIS](#) to consider issuance of EFPs for testing an array of fishing practices to target swordfish and other marketable highly migratory species in a portion of the U.S. West Coast exclusive economic zone. These fishing practices are considered “longline-type” (i.e., hooks set along a horizontal mainline) in that the permits ‘exempt’ holders from certain longline regulations under the HMS FMP ([50 CFR § 660.712](#)).