



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Closes Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Northern Area Trophy Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closes the northern area Angling category fishery for large medium and giant (“trophy”) BFT for the remainder of 2011. Fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing large medium and giant BFT (measuring 73 inches curved fork length or greater) north of 39°18’ N. lat. (off Great Egg Inlet, NJ,) is prohibited effective 11:30 p.m., local time, on July 29, 2011. Limited catch and release is permissible as described below.

Earlier this year, NMFS announced two Angling category BFT fishery inseason actions, effective April 2, 2011: a change to the daily retention limit and closure of the southern area trophy fishery (south of 39°18’ N. lat.) (76 FR 18416, April 4, 2011). Based on the best available BFT landings information for the trophy BFT fishery, NMFS has determined that the northern area trophy BFT subquota will be reached shortly. The intent of this closure is to prevent overharvest of the Angling category northern area trophy BFT subquota of 1.4 mt.

Anglers are reminded that all non-tournament BFT landed under the Angling category quota must be reported within 24 hours of landing either online at www.hmspermits.gov or by calling (888) 872-8862. In Maryland and North Carolina, vessel owners must report their recreational tuna landings at state-operated reporting stations. For additional information on these programs, including reporting station locations, please call (410) 213-1351 (Maryland) or (800) 338-7804 (North Carolina).

Anglers may catch and release or tag and release BFT of all sizes, subject to the requirements of Highly Migratory Species catch-and-release and tag-and-release programs. NMFS regulations at 50 CFR 635.21(a)(1) require that all BFT that are released be handled in a manner that will maximize survivability, and without removing the fish from the water. For additional information on safe handling, see the Careful Catch and Release brochure available at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/.

NMFS may make further Angling category adjustments via inseason action, if warranted. This notice is a courtesy to BFT fishery permit holders to help keep you informed about the fishery. For additional information, call (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260, or go to www.hmspermits.gov. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.



Emily A. Menashes
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

JUL 28 2011

Date

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