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FISHERIES**

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# Pelagic and Demersal Indicator Species Lists and Gear Considerations

Highly Migratory Species Management Division  
September 2021

# Pelagic and Demersal Indicator Species Lists



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# Implementation and Purpose

- 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan implemented regulations to enforce gear restrictions and time/area closures, including species lists (§ 635.21(c)(1)(i) and (d)(3))
- Applicable in pelagic longline (PLL) and bottom longline (BLL) closed areas
- Intended to differentiate between PLL and BLL gear based on species composition of catch on board or landed
- 5% limit (by weight) on:
  - Amount of pelagic indicator species that BLL vessels may possess or land from PLL closed areas, and
  - Amount of demersal indicator species that PLL vessels may possess or land from BLL closed areas

**Table 2 of Appendix A to Part 635—Pelagic Species**

Albacore tuna  
Bigeye tuna  
Blue shark  
Bluefin tuna  
Dolphin fish  
Oceanic whitetip shark  
Porbeagle shark  
Shortfin mako shark  
Skipjack tuna  
Swordfish  
Thresher shark  
Wahoo  
Yellowfin tuna

**Table 3 of Appendix A to Part 635—Demersal Species**

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Atlantic sharpnose shark | Queen snapper        |
| Black grouper            | Red grouper          |
| Blackfin snapper         | Red hind             |
| Blacknose shark          | Red snapper          |
| Blacktip shark           | Rock hind            |
| Blueline tilefish        | Sand tilefish        |
| Bonnethead shark         | Sandbar shark        |
| Bull shark               | Schoolmaster snapper |
| Cubera snapper           | Silk snapper         |
| Dog snapper              | Snowy grouper        |
| Finetooth shark          | Speckled hind        |
| Gag grouper              | Spinner shark        |
| Lane snapper             | Tiger shark          |
| Lemon shark              | Tilefish             |
| Mangrove snapper         | Vermilion snapper    |
| Marbled grouper          | Warsaw grouper       |
| Misty grouper            | Yellowedge grouper   |
| Mutton snapper           | Yellowfin grouper    |
| Nurse shark              | Yellowtail snapper   |



# Regulatory Changes since 2006

- Some species on these lists can no longer be targeted or retained

For example:

- PLL vessels cannot retain oceanic whitetip sharks
- PLL vessels cannot retain live shortfin mako or porbeagle sharks
- BLL vessels cannot retain sandbar sharks (except in shark research fishery)
- Possible changes in regulations for council-managed species

# Regulatory Changes since 2006

- Current regulations may provide other ways to determine which gear is being used in PLL and BLL closed areas

For example:

- Electronic monitoring systems are required on all PLL vessels
- Vessels must declare the type of gear they are using via vessel monitoring systems (VMS)
- VMS are required on all PLL vessels
- VMS are required on some BLL vessels in the mid-Atlantic shark closed area

# Input from Stakeholders

- No longer need indicator species lists and regulations
- Regulations affect the ability of HMS permit holders to fish in closed areas (e.g., PLL vessels in BLL closed areas), while not affecting vessels that do not hold HMS permits and that fish for council-managed species (even those vessels using the same gear)

# Discussion Questions

- Is there additional background information on this issue that was not presented here?
- What are your recommendations for maintaining, updating, or removing the indicator species lists and/or associated gear regulations?



# Fishing Gear Considerations



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# Fishing Gear Considerations

- Atlantic HMS fishing gear and techniques continue to evolve
- The HMS Management Division is interested in AP input on recent changes to fishing gear and techniques that we have heard about

## Reminder:

Regulations clearly define the fishing gears that are authorized in specific fisheries

# Fishing Gear Examples

The Agency has received reports and questions about:

- Deep-set pelagic longline
  - Reports of some pelagic longline sets fished deeper in the water column to catch larger swordfish during the day and to reduce bycatch
  - Deeper-set gear also doesn't drift as far while soaking
- Hydraulic/electric assist for deep-set buoy gear
  - Some experimentation with deep-set buoy gear to catch larger swordfish during the day
  - To assist with gear retrieval, the Agency has received requests to authorize hydraulic and/or electric assist for deep-set buoy gear

# Fishing Gear Questions and Considerations

- Discussion topics and questions:
  - Are there changes in fishing techniques or gear that have been particularly effective?
  - Are there other gear modification requests from fishermen in your region and/or sector?
- When NOAA Fisheries considers new fishing gear and techniques:
  - What are the effects on conservation and sustainability of target, incidental, or bycatch species?
  - Is the enforceability of fishing regulations maintained or enhanced?