



# Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management

**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**



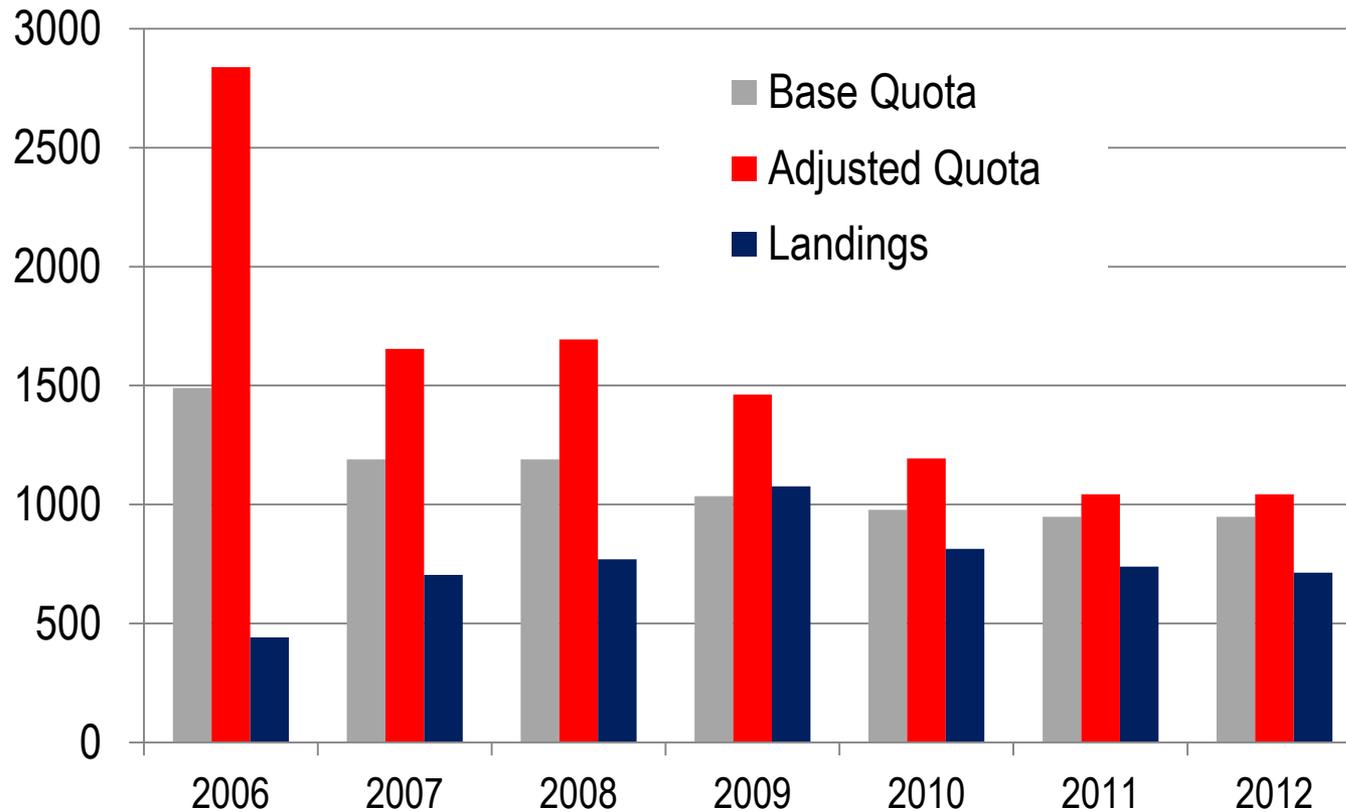
**Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006  
Consolidated Atlantic Highly  
Migratory Fishery Management  
Plan**

August 2013

# Bluefin Tuna – Quota Management History

- Catch limited by overall quota –set by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
- 1999: 7 quota categories established based on historical landings, and a separate ICCAT allowance for dead discards (68 mt)
- 2006:
  - Elimination of 68 mt dead discard allowance; countries must **account for dead discards** within their quota allocations
  - Amount of underharvest that can be carried forward reduced from 100% to 50%
- 2010: **Carryforward** reduced from 50% to **10%** (of initial quota)

# Bluefin Tuna Quota and Landings

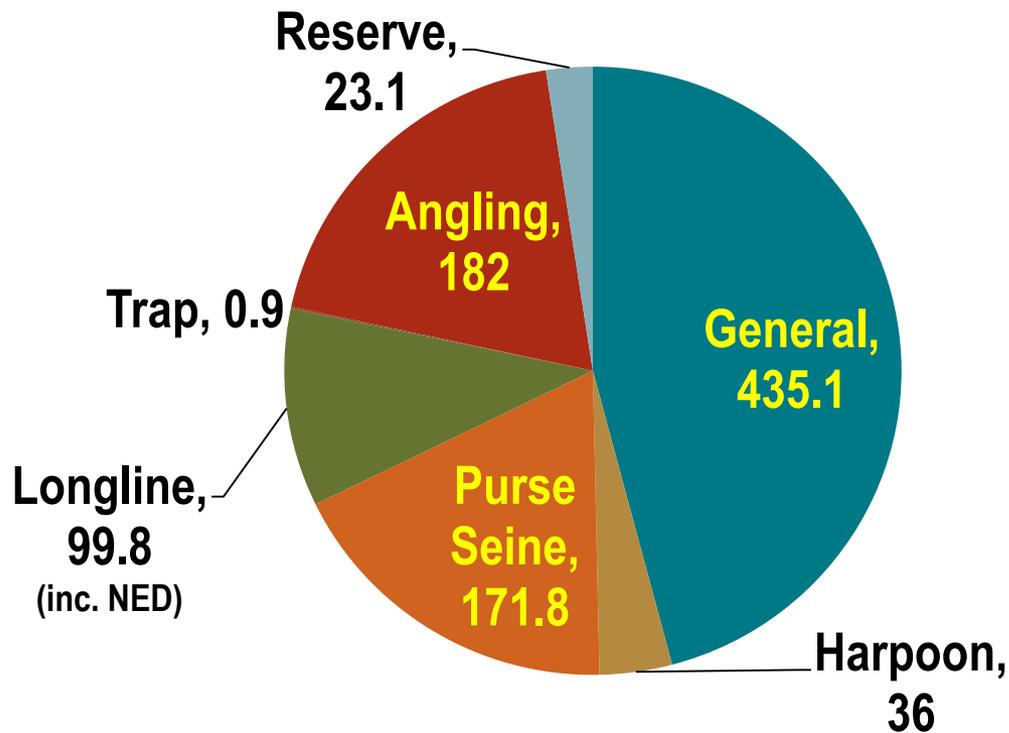


U.S. base quotas for 2006 - 2012 shown as grey bars in relation to recent landings (blue bars) and adjusted quotas (red bars).

# Bluefin Category Quotas (2012)

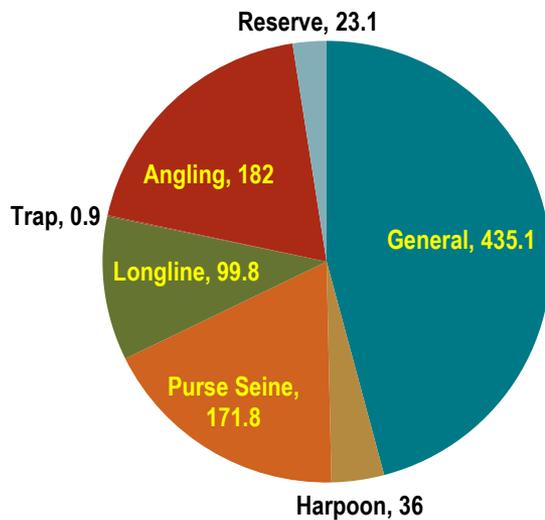
**Base Quota – 948.7 mt**

*(923.7 mt plus 25 mt NED set-aside)*

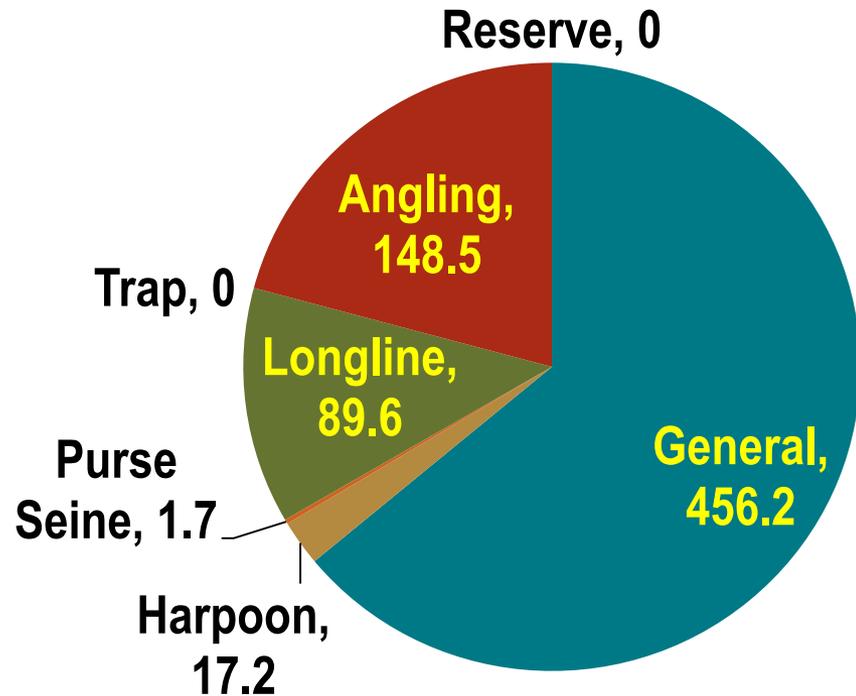


# Bluefin Category Quotas and Landings (2012)

Base Quota  
(948.7 mt)

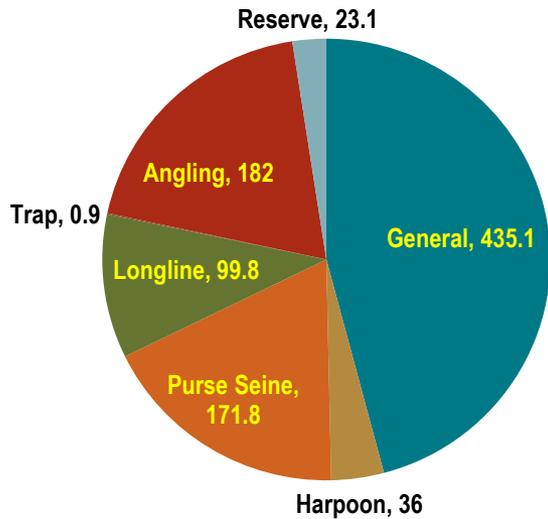


Landings  
(713.2 mt)

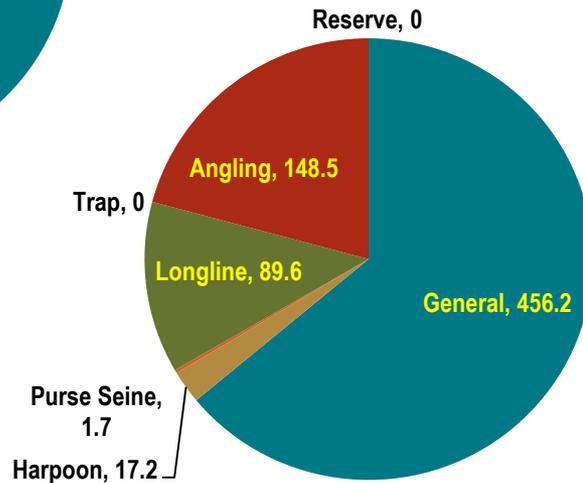


# Bluefin Quotas, Landings, and Dead Discards( 2012)

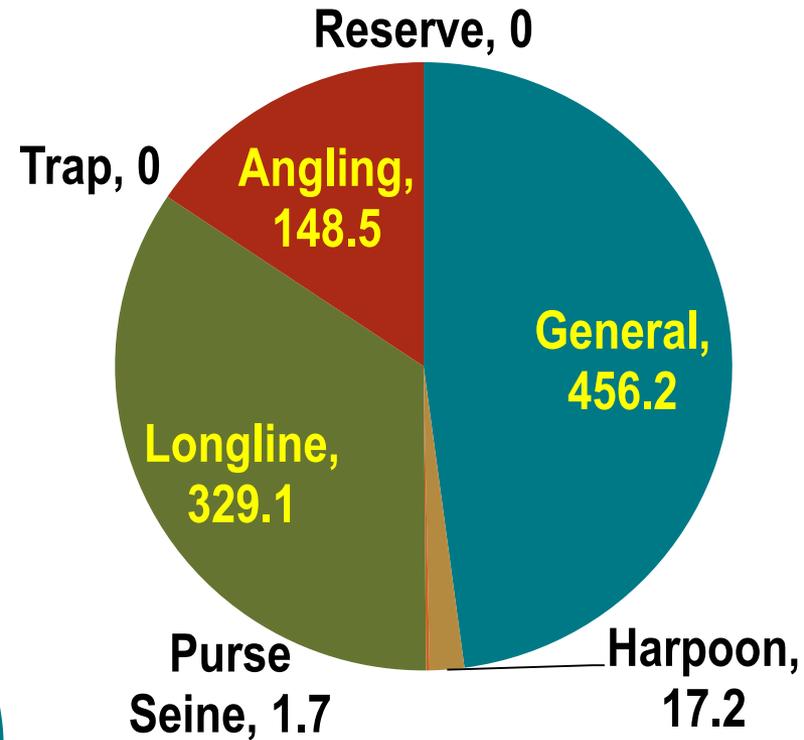
## Base Quota (948.7 mt)



## Landings (713.2 mt)



## Landings and Dead Discards (952.7 mt)



# Summary of Current Situation

- **Difficult to account for mortality, and limited dead discard information**
- **Too many BFT interactions resulting in dead discards (~21% of 2012 catch)**
- **FMP quota allocation percentages do not take into account recent changes in ICCAT recommendations or recent trends in fishery**
- **Longline category vessels may continue to fish when their incidental bluefin quota is attained (but may no longer retain bluefin), resulting in continuing discards.**

## Amendment 7 Objectives – (abridged version)

- Prevent **overfishing and rebuild** bluefin tuna, **operate within the overall TAC** set by ICCAT
- **Optimize** the ability for all permit categories to **harvest** bluefin quota allocations; **account for** all sources of **mortality**
- **Reduce dead discards** of bluefin
- Improve the **timeliness and quality of catch data**
- Adjust **other** aspects of the FMP

# Overview of Proposed Management Measures

- **Reallocate quota** among categories, adjusting quotas based on historical dead discard allowance
- Reduce pelagic longline bluefin interactions with **gear restricted areas**
- Increase accountability and create strong incentives to avoid bluefin with **individual bluefin quotas** for pelagic longline fishermen
- Improve quality and timeliness of catch data with enhanced **reporting requirements** for commercial quota categories
- Optimize fishing opportunity with adjustments to **General and Harpoon** category quota rules
- Implement **other** measures (e.g., northern albacore quota)

## Codified Reallocation (to Longline category)

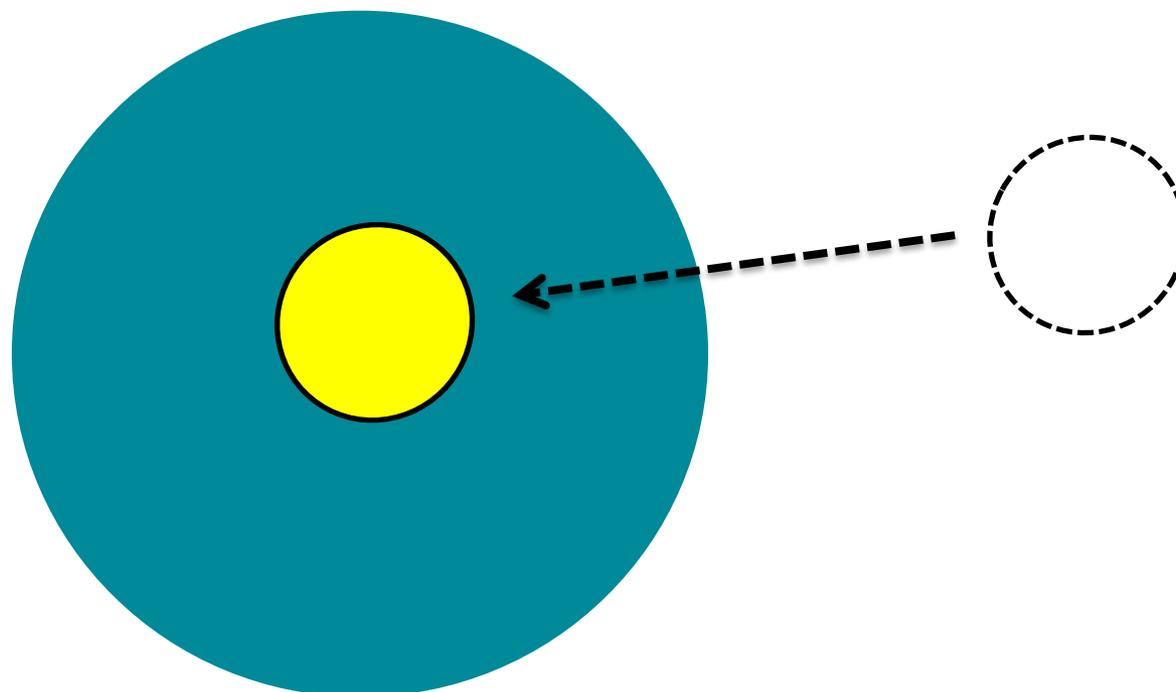
**Historical Basis:** Quota Allocation & Dead Discard Allowance



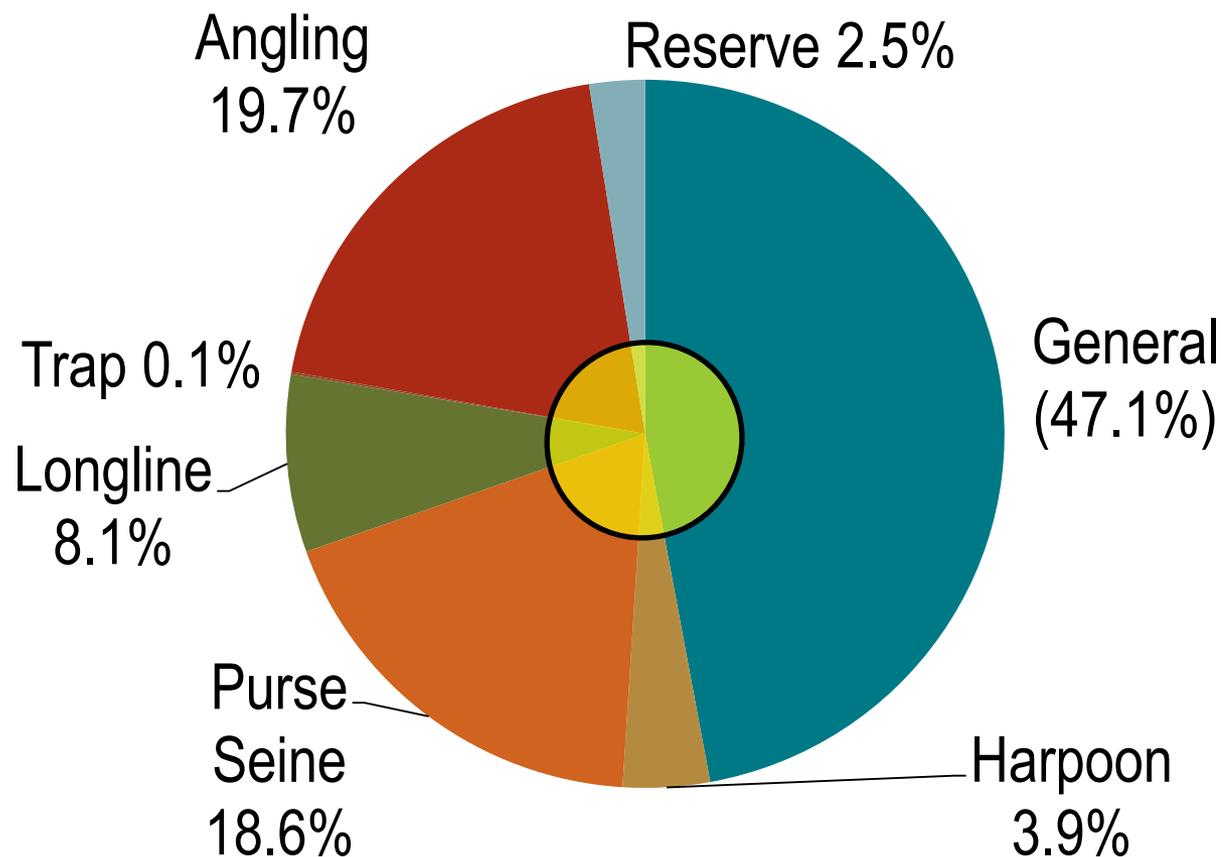
Separate Dead Discard Allowance **Discontinued** in 2006

## Codified Reallocation (to Longline category)

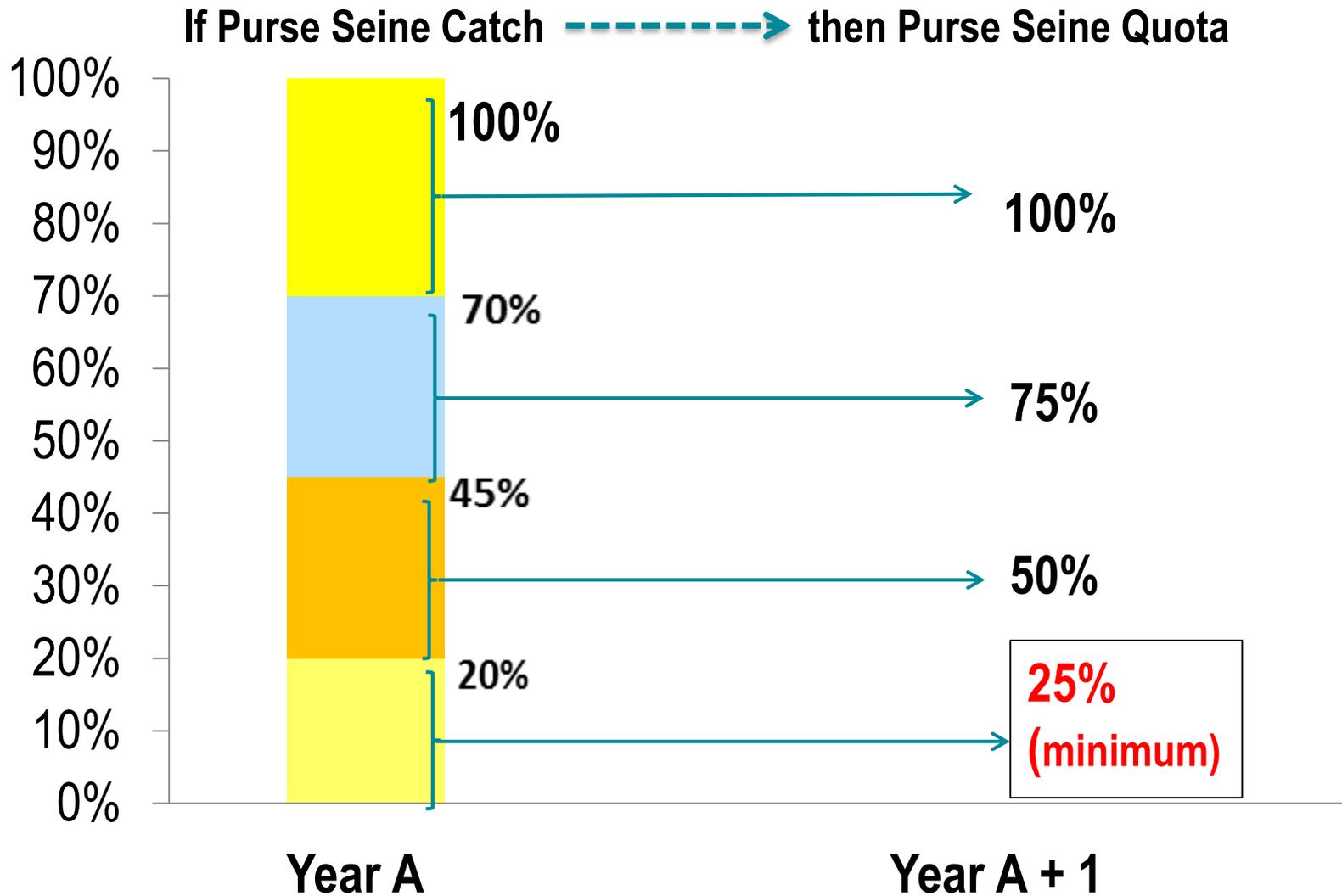
Proposed: Derive 68 mt from all quota categories



## Codified Reallocation (to Longline category)

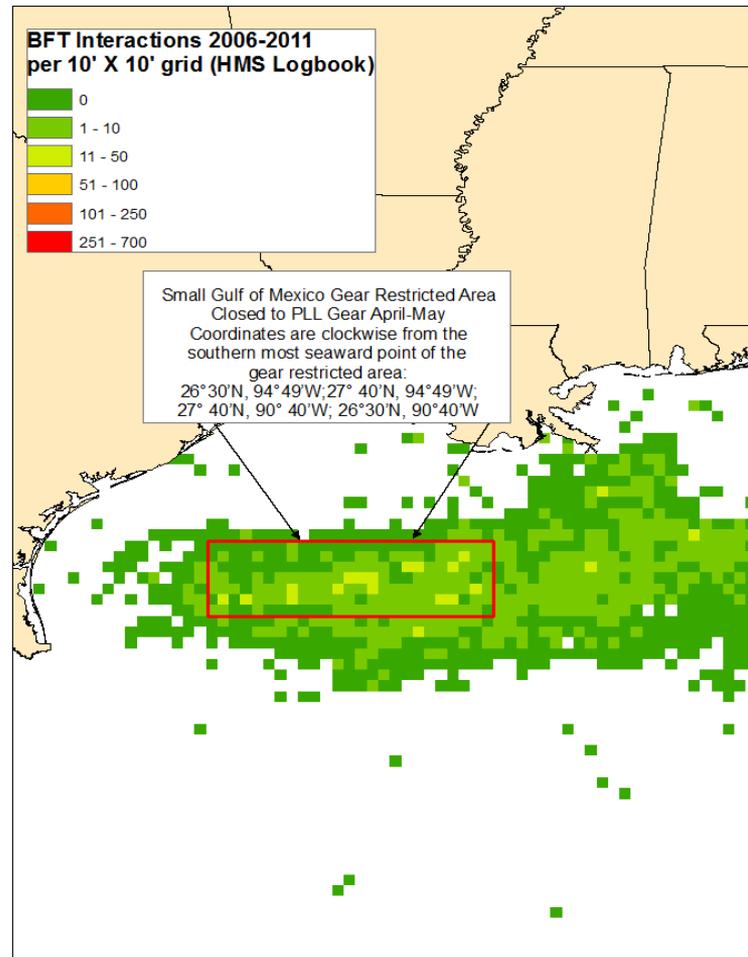


# Annual Reallocation from Purse Seine Category



# Gulf of Mexico Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

**Closed to fishing with Pelagic Longline Gear: April & May**

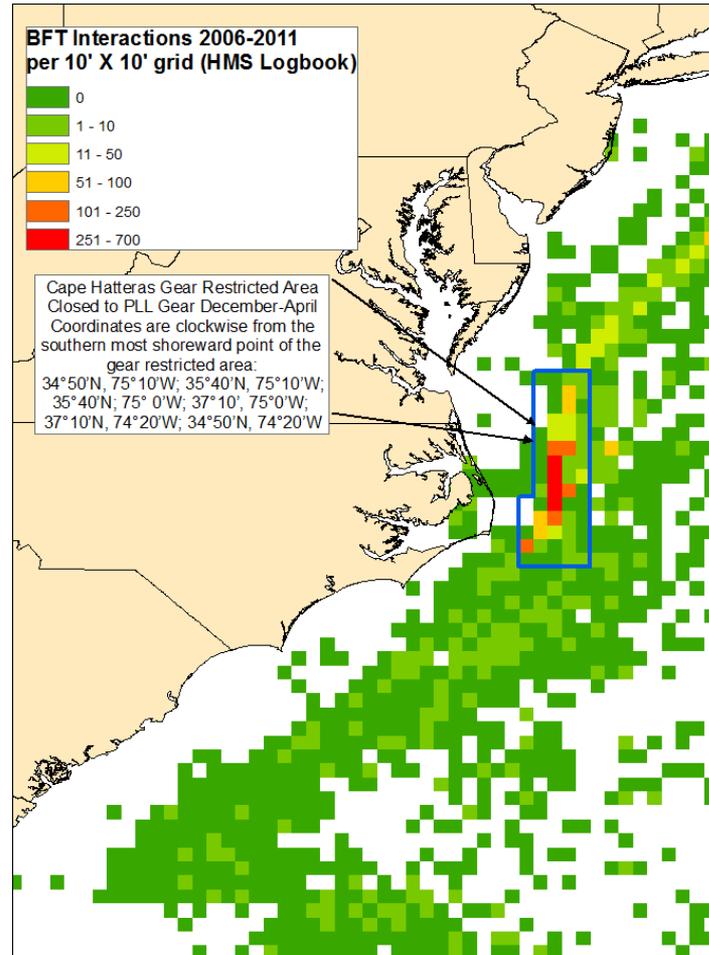


**Would reduce bluefin catch in Gulf of Mexico (kept and discarded) by 20%.  
Would reduce bluefin catch overall by 3%.**

# Cape Hatteras Gear Restricted Area (GRA)

**Dec. through April:**  
**Conditional Access for some Pelagic Longline vessels;**

**18 vessels would not have access**



**Would reduce the bluefin discards in the Atlantic by 77% (# of fish), and would reduce the bluefin discards overall by 29%.**

## Cape Hatteras GRA (Dec. through Apr.):

**Conditional access** based on past vessel performance –  
**3 “performance metrics”**

### 1) Bluefin interactions

**Ratio of bluefin** interactions to **designated species landings**

(swordfish, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, albacore, skipjack, dolphin, wahoo, and porbeagle, shortfin mako, and thresher sharks)

### 2) Compliance with the Pelagic Observer Program (POP) requirements

**Multiple aspects:** Communications, and timing of those communications, with POP; presence/absence of a USCG safety decal; life raft capacity, bunk space, vessel selection and observer deployment

### 3) Compliance with HMS Logbook reporting requirements

**Timeliness** of logbook submission

## Conditional Access to **Current Closed Areas** (pelagic longline vessels)

- Objectives: provide commercial data to evaluate closed areas; provide fishing opportunity for pelagic longline vessels
- Charleston Bump closed area; *a portion of* the East Florida Coast closed area\*; the DeSoto Canyon closed area; and the Northeastern U.S. closed area (June). \* north of 28° 17' 10" North latitude, east of the 100-fathom curve
- Using the same performance metrics, **“Qualified” vessels may** fish in these closed areas, provided:
  - Vessel is **selected for an observer** during that quarter, in the same geographic area as the closed area
  - Trip is **observed**
  - **Bluefin catch** (and/or protected species interactions) are reported daily via VMS

# IBQ Program Overview

- Quota shares allotted to **active PLL vessels**. Each share would represent a set percentage of the Longline category quota. Based on that percentage, the vessel would also receive an annual Quota allocation (mt of bluefin)
- Quota shares and related allocation use would be **regional** (Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic). Atlantic shares may not be used in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Vessels would need a **minimum amount of quota allocation to depart on a fishing trip** with pelagic longline gear
  - Atlantic minimum required: 0.125 mt whole weight (~275 lb)
  - Gulf of Mexico minimum required: 0.25 mt whole weight (~550 lb)
- **Landings and dead discards** count toward the IBQ

## IBQ Program Overview - continued

- If a vessel catches more bluefin than the amount of bluefin allocation it has, it may finish the trip and land the bluefin, but **must then account for the bluefin landed** by obtaining additional quota allocation through a lease (annual) before another trip can be made.
- Temporary **leasing of quota allocation** would be available; Leasing quota would be allowed **between Purse Seine and Longline** category vessels
- Vessels may not depart on a fishing trip w/o sufficient IBQ available
- A vessel's annual quota allocation **would not carry over** from one year to the next
- Permitted Longline category vessels that are not allocated bluefin shares may lease quota

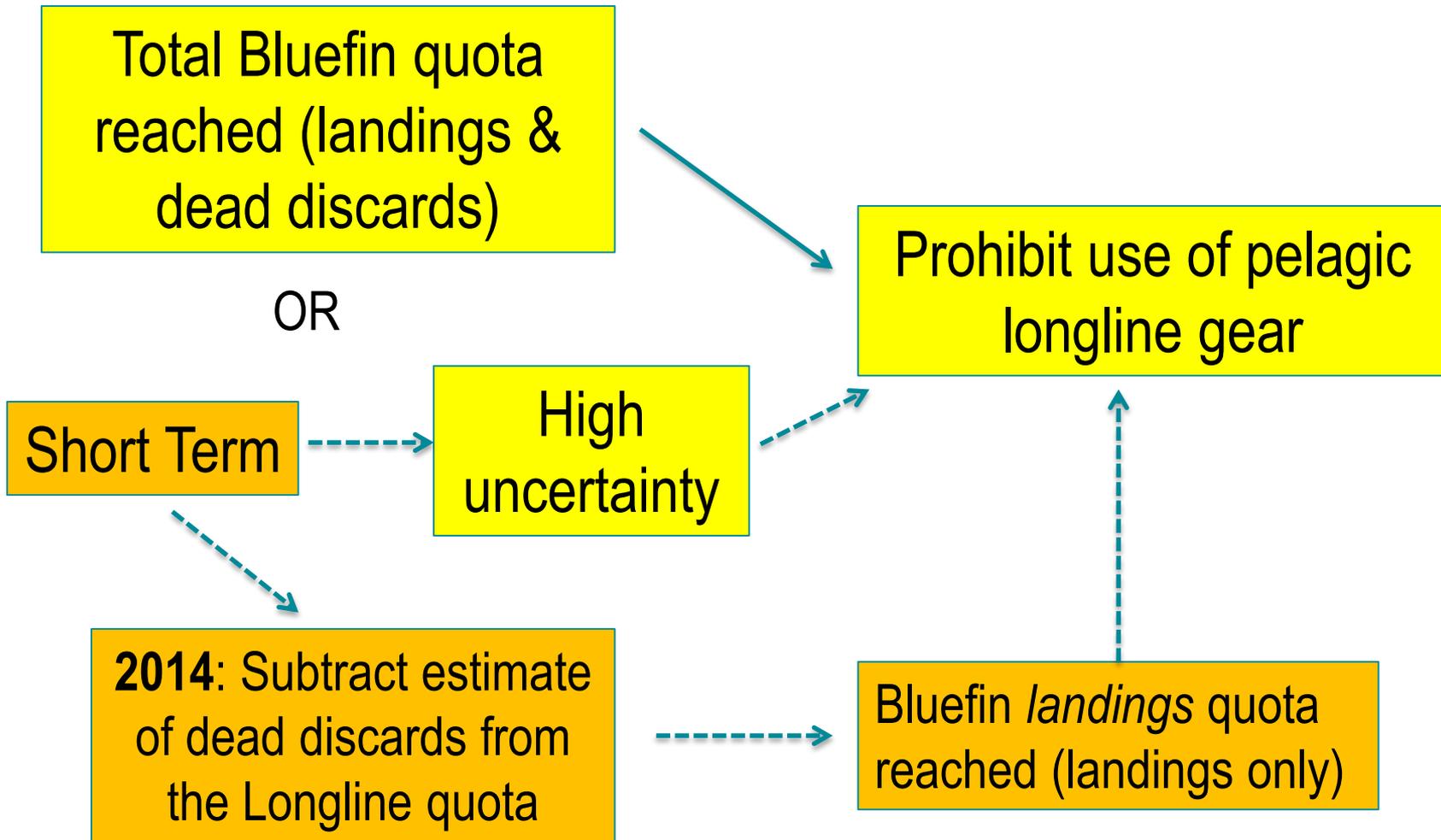
## IBQ shares

- Active Vessels
- Amount of shares based on:
  - Amount of target species caught
  - Ratio of Number of bluefin interactions to target species

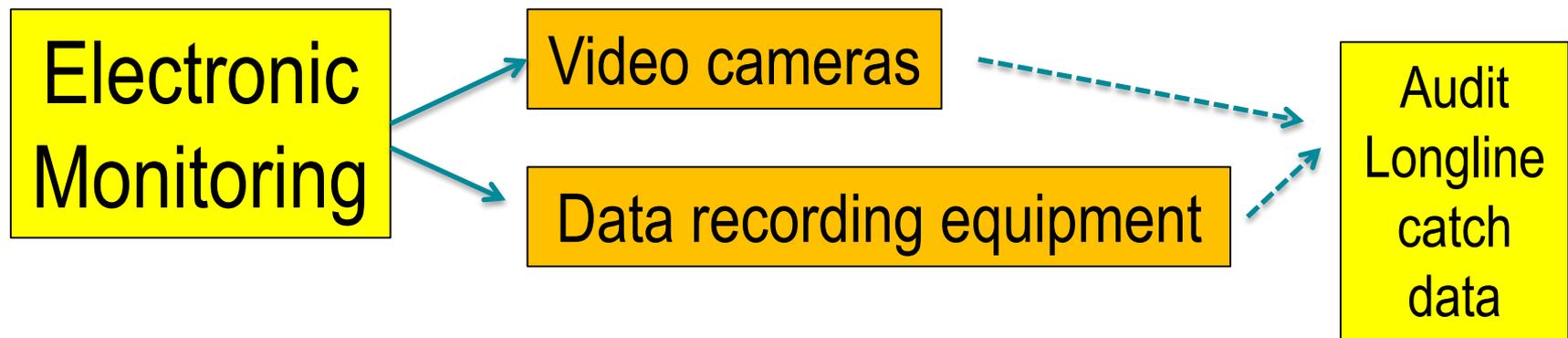
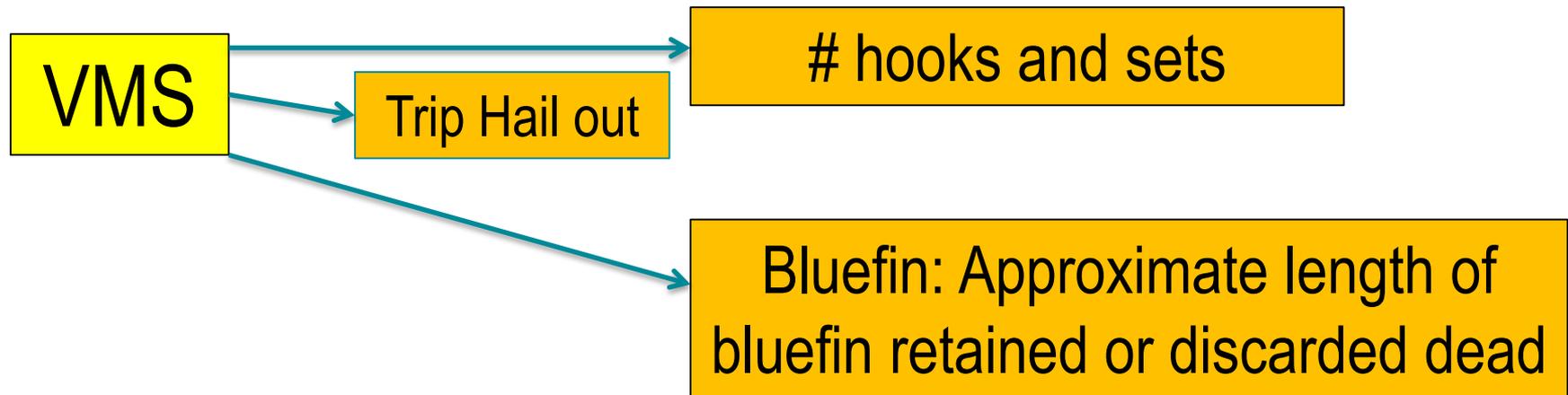
Share Type	Quota Share	Quota Allocation*
high	1.0 %	1.37 mt
med.	0.54%	0.74 mt
low	0.34%	0.47 mt

\*Allocations derived from a baseline Longline category bluefin quota of 137 mt :  
(e.g., 1 % of 137 mt = 1.37 mt)

# NMFS Closure of the Pelagic Longline Fishery

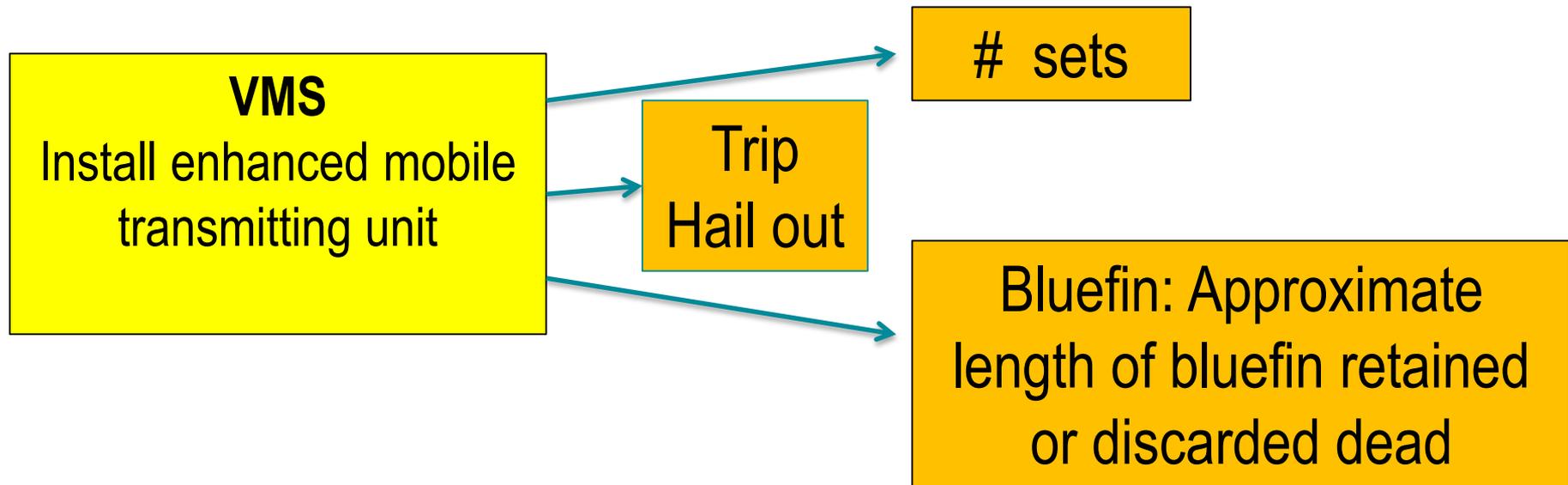


## Enhanced Reporting Requirements Details - Longline



**Electronic monitoring requirements would be fully implemented in 2015**

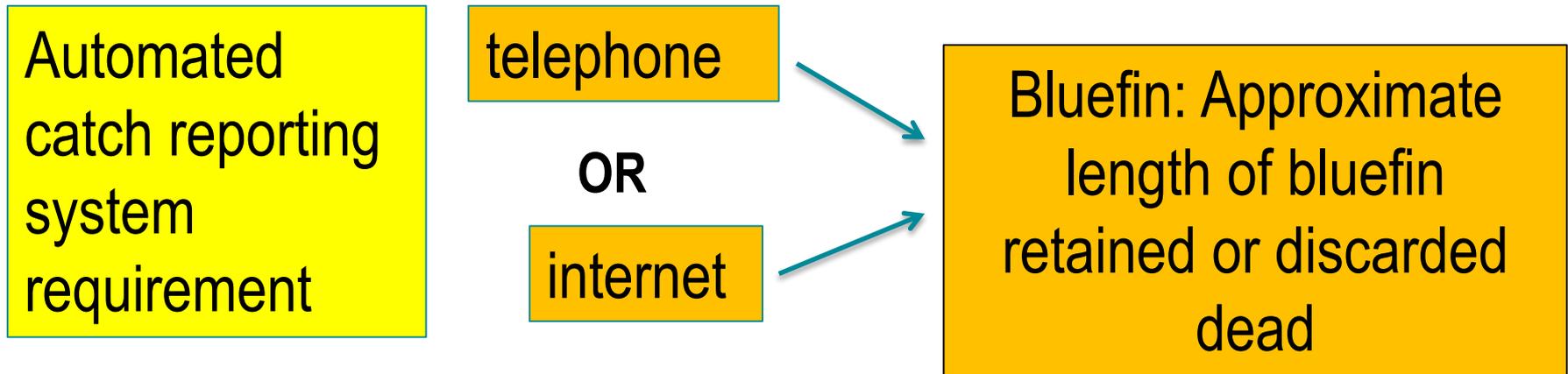
# Enhanced Reporting Requirements Details – Purse Seine



Report # sets within 12 hours of completion of the set.

For Purse Seine sets with bluefin tuna catch the VMS report must be submitted within 12 hours of completion of the set, and reporting of zero bluefin on a set is not required.

# Enhanced Reporting Requirements Details – General, Harpoon, Charter/Headboat

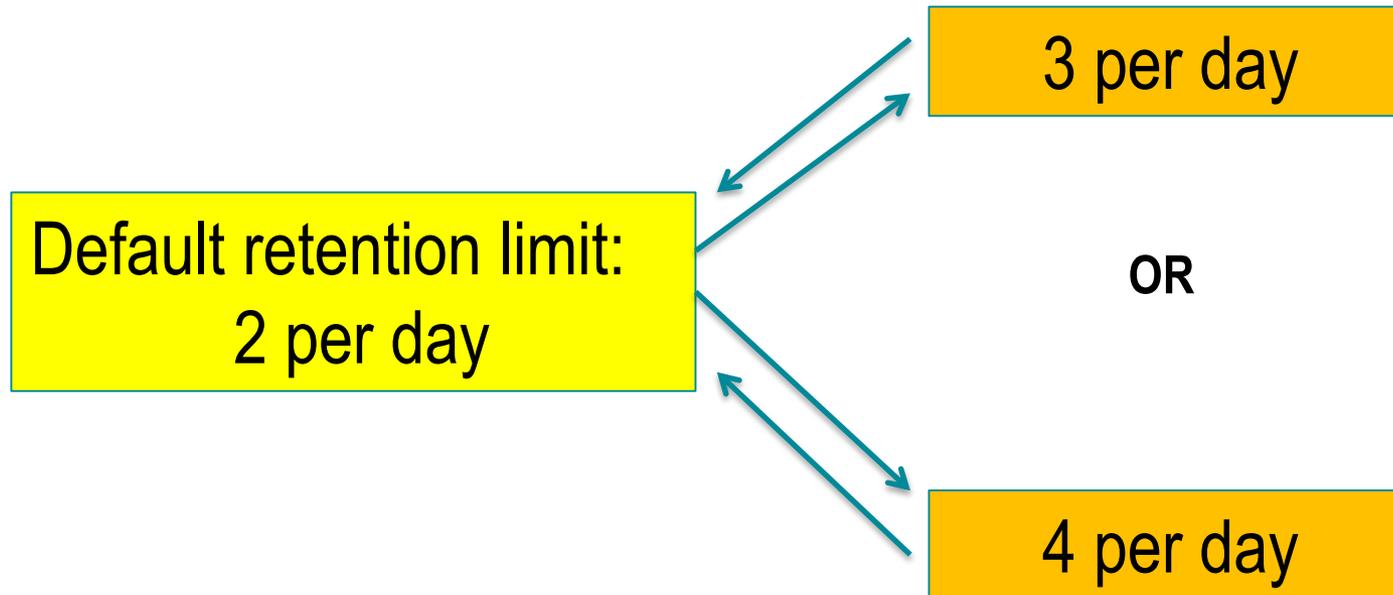


# Additional Flexibility for General Category Quota Adjustment



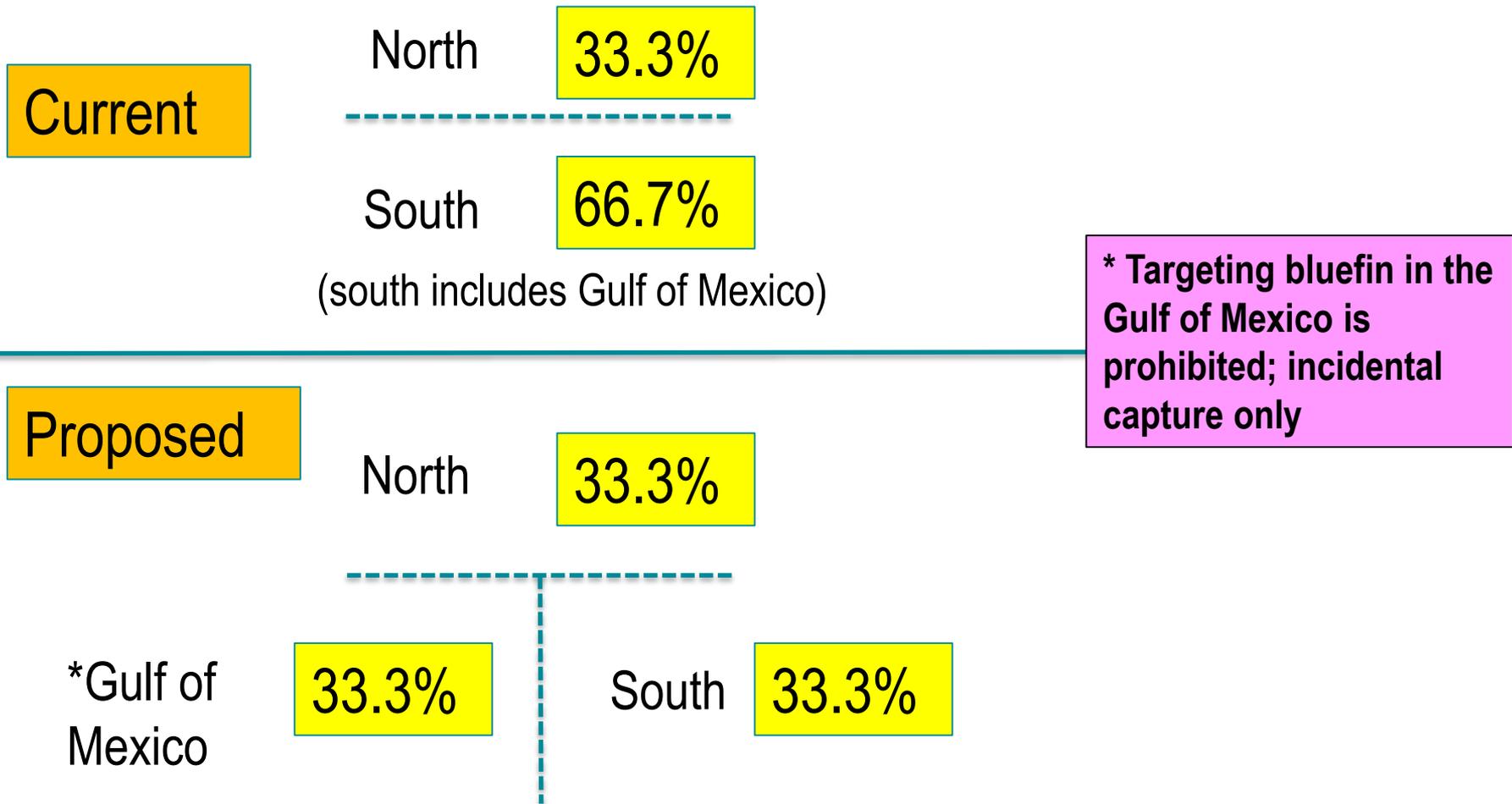
- Proactively transfer General category quota to January subperiod per regulatory determination criteria

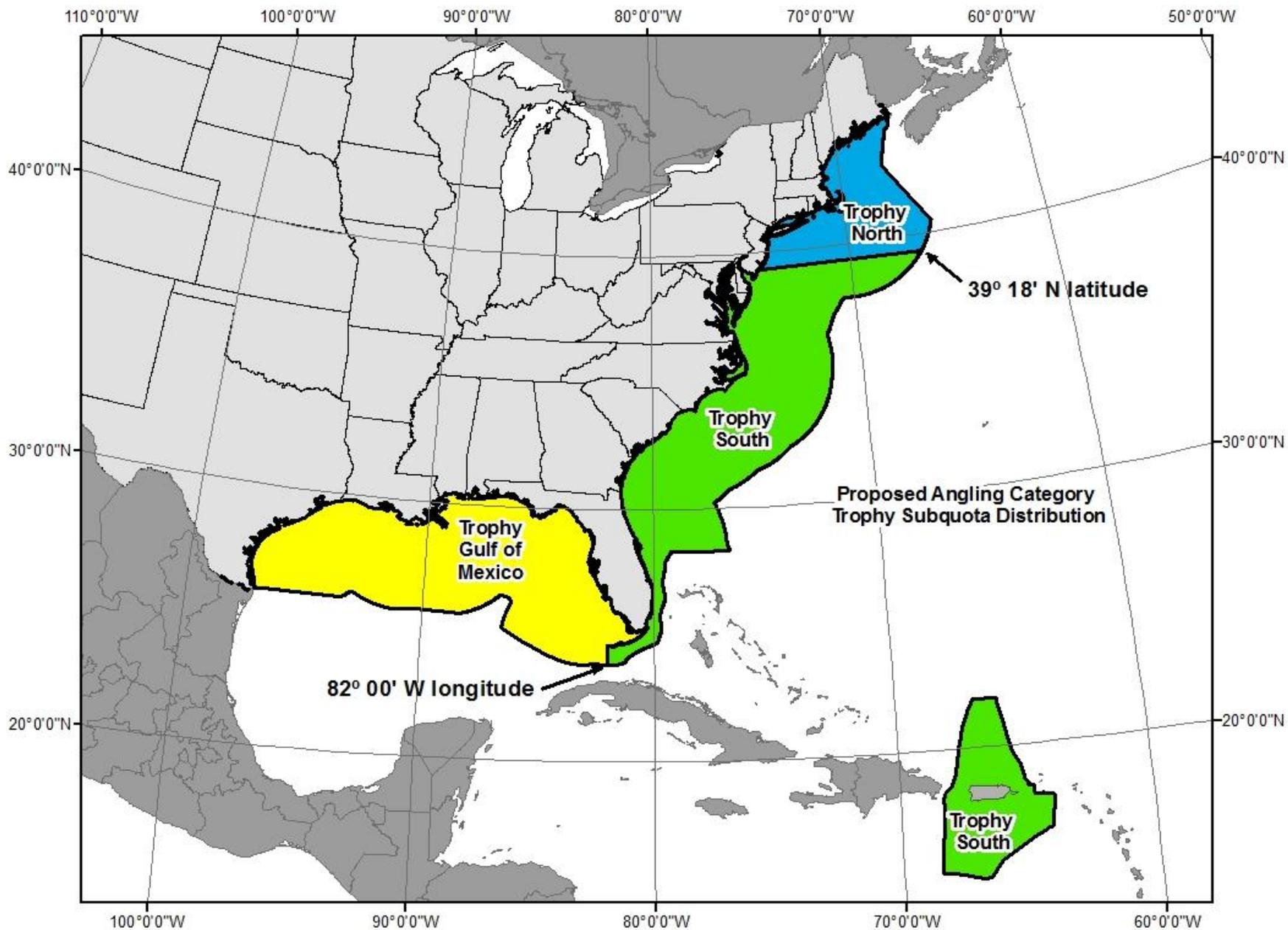
# NMFS Authority to Adjust Harpoon Category Retention Limits of Large Medium Bluefin (73 to < 81")



Limit of Giants ( $\geq 81$ ") would remain the same

# Angling Category Trophy Subquota Distribution:





# Proposed Change the Start Date of the Purse Seine Category

- Current: July 15 (or NMFS may delay until Aug 15)
- Proposed: **June 1** (or NMFS may delay until Aug 15)

# Modify Rules Regarding Permit Category Changes

- Would allow a vessel owner to **modify the category** of an Atlantic Tunas or HMS permit issued **for up to 45 days** from date of issuance, **provided the vessel has not landed bluefin tuna** as verified via landings data.

# North Atlantic Albacore Tuna Quota

- Implement the U.S. annual quota of northern albacore tuna recommended by ICCAT
- Carry-forward of unused quota from one year to the next would be limited to 25 percent of the initial quota
- Account for overharvest and underharvest of the quota adjusted as appropriate for prior year catch, including delayed adjustment (that would skip a year) or adjustments over several years

## Amendment 7 - Next Steps

- Comment period – Through October 23, 2013; NMFS conducting public hearings
- Consider comments, finalize Environmental Impact Statement, publish final rule (estimated for Spring-2014)
- Effective date of most measures: 30 days after final rule publishes
- Effective date of delayed measures (e.g. electronic monitoring for Longline category): January 2015

# How to Submit Comments

Send Comments to NMFS until October 23, 2013

- Electronically: <http://www.regulations.gov>  
“submit a comment” ; “NOAA-NMFS-2013-0101”
- Fax: 978-281-9340, Attn: Tom Warren
- Mail: Tom Warren,

Highly Migratory Species Management Division,  
NMFS – Northeast Regional Office  
55 Great Republic Drive,  
Gloucester, MA 01930



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

**Questions?**



**NOAA FISHERIES**