

Species	Common name	Appendix	First listing date (month/day/year)
* <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> populations in the Americas (including logs, sawn wood, and veneer sheets, but no other parts or derivatives, e.g., products).	* Bigleaf mahogany	* III (Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico) ...	* 11/16/95
*	*	*	*

Dated: June 3, 1999.

Donald J. Barry,

Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 285 and 635

[I.D. 060399A]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Retention limit adjustment.

SUMMARY: NMFS adjusts the daily retention limit for the Angling category fishery for Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) in all areas to two school BFT (measuring 27 to less than 47 inches curved fork length) and one large school or small medium BFT (measuring 47 to less than 73 inches curved fork length) per vessel. This daily retention limit adjustment is effective June 25 through July 25, 1999, after which it will revert to one large school or small medium BFT per vessel. This action is being taken to provide increased fishing opportunities in all areas without risking overharvest of this category.

DATES: The daily retention limit adjustment is effective 1 a.m., local time, June 25, 1999, until 11:30 p.m., local time, July 25, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pat Scida or Sarah McLaughlin, 978-281-9260.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations implemented under the authority of Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA; 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*), governing the harvest of Atlantic highly migratory species by persons and vessels subject to U.S. jurisdiction are

found at 50 CFR part 285 and are to be replaced by consolidated regulations at 50 CFR part 635 effective July 1, 1999 (64 FR 29090, May 28, 1999).

Implementing regulations for the Atlantic tuna fisheries at § 285.24 (consolidated at 50 CFR 635.23 effective July 1, 1999) allow for adjustments to the daily retention limits in order to provide for maximum utilization of the quota spread over the longest possible period of time. NMFS may increase or reduce the per angler retention limit for any size class BFT or may change the per angler limit to a per boat limit or the per boat limit to a per angler limit.

NMFS is responsible for implementing a recommendation of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to limit the catch of school BFT to no more than 8 percent by weight of the total domestic quota over each 4-consecutive-year period. NMFS is implementing this ICCAT recommendation through annual and inseason adjustments to the school BFT landings and school BFT reserve categories, as necessary, and through the establishment of a school BFT reserve (64 FR 29090, May 28, 1999; 64 FR 29806, June 3, 1999). The recent ICCAT recommendation allows NMFS more flexibility to make interannual adjustments for overharvests and underharvests, provided that the 8-percent landings limit is not exceeded over the applicable 4-consecutive-year-period. This approach provides NMFS with the flexibility to enhance fishing opportunities and the collection of information on a broad range of BFT size classes and responds to requests from the recreational fishing community for more advance notice of retention limit adjustments and greater certainty in planning for the fishing season.

This daily retention limit adjustment is effective June 25 through July 25, 1999, after which it will revert to one large school or small medium BFT per vessel. NMFS will consider adjusting the daily retention limit once again during late summer and early fall season if BFT have moved farther north to the

waters off Rhode Island, New York, and northern New Jersey, provided that BFT Angling category quota remains available.

The daily retention limit and the duration of daily retention limit adjustment have been selected based on an examination of past catch and effort rates. NMFS will continue to monitor the Angling category fishery closely through the Automated Catch Reporting System, the state harvest tagging programs in North Carolina and Maryland, and the Large Pelagic Survey. Depending on the level of fishing effort and catch rates of BFT, NMFS may determine that an interim closure or an additional retention limit adjustment is necessary to enhance scientific data collection from, and fishing opportunities in, all geographic areas. Additionally, NMFS may determine that an allocation from the school BFT reserve is warranted to further fishery management objectives.

Closures or subsequent adjustments to the daily retention limit, if any, shall be announced through publication in the **Federal Register**. In addition, anglers may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at 888-USA-TUNA (888-872-8862) or 978-281-9305 for updates on quota monitoring and retention limit adjustments. Anglers aboard Charter/Headboat category vessels, when engaged in recreational fishing for school, large school, and small medium BFT, are subject to the same rules as anglers aboard Angling category vessels. All BFT landed under the Angling category quota must be reported within 24 hours of landing to the NMFS Automated Catch Reporting System by calling 888-USA-TUNA (888-872-8862) or, if landed in the states of North Carolina or Maryland, to a reporting station prior to offloading. Information about these state harvest tagging programs, including reporting station locations, can be obtained in North Carolina by calling (800) 338-7804, and in Maryland by calling (410) 213-1531.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 285.24(d)(3), and, after June 30, 1999, shall continue in effect under 50 CFR 635.23(b)(3). This action is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 10, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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