

# Questions and Answers HMS Permit and Reporting



**Q: What is the new HMS angling permit requirement?**

**A:** NOAA Fisheries now requires recreational vessel owners who target any regulated highly migratory fish species in federal waters of the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and U.S. Caribbean to get a federal vessel permit. The permit allows all anglers aboard to fish for highly migratory fish.

**Q: Which species does the permit cover?**

**A:** The HMS angling permit is required if fishing for any federally regulated highly migratory species: Atlantic tunas (bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, and albacore) and sharks, swordfish, white and blue marlin, sailfish and spearfish.

**Q: Do I have to get the HMS angling permit for catch and release?**

**A:** Yes. The regulation requires the permit to "fish for," highly migratory species, which includes the catch and release fishery. This information is valuable for stock assessments.

**Q: Does everyone on board need a permit?**

**A:** No. The permit is issued to the fishing vessel, so the vessel owner/operator's permit would cover all passengers on board.

**Q: I am a recreational fisherman and currently have the Atlantic tunas angling permit. Do I also need to get the new HMS angling permit if I also fish for swordfish and other HMS species?**

**A:** You do not need an additional permit because the tuna permit and the angling permit are merging to become one permit. Upon renewal of your current tuna permit, you will be issued the HMS angling permit.

**Q: I hold the General Category**

**Q: Why is NOAA Fisheries requiring recreational fishermen to get a permit for highly migratory species?**

**A:** Most of these fish stocks are overfished and undergoing rebuilding. Permitting and regulation of the commercial fishing industry has been an important part of this effort. However, the recreational sector also must help in the rebuilding of these stocks. The angling permit will assist NOAA Fisheries in gauging how many anglers are targeting highly migratory fish, the number of trips they take, and the amount of fish they land -- information that will be useful in identifying management & rebuilding needs.

**Q: Do charterboats and headboats need the HMS angling permit?**

**A:** No. The agency issues permits for the HMS charter/headboat fishery and manages the fleet as a unique sector due to its intrinsic mix of commercial and recreational operations. Charter and headboat operators will continue to apply for the HMS charter/headboat permit, which covers the same fish as the HMS angling permit.

**Q: How do I get the permit?**

**A:** You can apply and pay for the permit online at [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com), or by calling 1-888-872-8862.

*NOAA Fisheries is considering initiating administrative processes to extend the federal HMS angling permit to the shore in states that do not have a comparable system of identifying saltwater anglers who target HMS.*

**Q: What is the new requirement to report HMS landings?**

**A:** Within 24 hours of landing billfish (blue and white marlin and sailfish) and swordfish caught in federal waters of the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and U.S. Caribbean, holders of the HMS angling permit must call NOAA Fisheries to report what they landed.

**Q: Why is it necessary for**

**permit to sell tuna. Can I also get the HMS angling permit?**

**A:** No. The new HMS angling permit completes a process NOAA Fisheries initiated several years ago to separate commercial and recreational fishing activities for Atlantic highly migratory species. Since only one permit can be issued to a vessel, fishermen who have held general category permits in order to sell tunas will have to choose between the commercial and recreational fishing rules.

**Q: Where do federal waters begin?**

**A:** States have jurisdiction in marine waters from the shore to 3 miles in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, except Florida's West coast and Texas, whose jurisdictions extend to 9 miles offshore. Federal waters begin where state jurisdictions end and extend to 200 miles offshore.

**Q: How much does the permit cost? Where is the money going?**

**A:** The HMS angling permit costs \$22. All the money collected will offset administrative fees to run the HMS angling permit and reporting programs.

**Q: Do I need the federal HMS angling permit if I only fish for sharks, billfish, or swordfish in state waters?**

**A:** Presently, the federal HMS angling permit is not required to fish for HMS species, except tunas, in state waters. Fishermen should abide by state regulations when fishing in state waters.

**recreational fishermen to report HMS landings? How will this information be used?**

**A:** Knowledge about fish that anglers bring to shore will aid fisheries managers in monitoring catch levels for federal and international quotas and developing appropriate management programs.

**Q: Do I have to report landings I've made while participating in a tournament?**

**A:** Individual anglers participating in registered tournaments do not need to report landings if the tournament operator is already reporting to NOAA Fisheries.

**Q: How do I report my landings?**

**A:** Report your billfish and swordfish landings within 24 hours by calling 1-800-894-5528. Report your bluefin tuna landings to 1-888-872-8862 or online at [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com).

**Q: What is the definition of "landings?"**

**A:** Landings are considered those fish that are killed and brought to shore.



NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
ATLANTIC TUNAS & ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES
PERMIT APPLICATION



(READ INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE INITIAL APPLICATION)

SECTION 1 - OWNER INFORMATION

Owner Type (choose one): [ ] Individual [ ] Partnership [ ] Corporation

Owner or Corporation Name (if more than one individual, circle name of primary contact):

Street Address:

City: State Zip

Daytime Phone: Evening Phone: Fax:

SECTION 2 - VESSEL INFORMATION

Vessel Name (if vessel is unnamed, write "unnamed"):

Coast Guard Documentation Number: State Registration Number:

Home Port: Principal Port, if different:

Vessel Length: Year Built:

Crew Size: Construction: [ ] Wood [ ] Fiberglass [ ] Steel [ ] Other

Gross Tonnage: Propulsion: [ ] Gasoline [ ] Diesel [ ] Other

Main Engine Horsepower: Hold Capacity, if applicable:

Number of Passengers licensed to carry for Charter/Headboat: [ ] 6 or less OR Number, if more than 6:

SECTION 3 - ATLANTIC TUNAS & HMS CATEGORY INFORMATION

Category (check only one)

- [ ] Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat
[ ] Atlantic HMS Angling (Recreational)
[ ] Atlantic Tunas General
[ ] Atlantic Tunas Harpoon
[ ] Atlantic Tunas Longline
[ ] Atlantic Tunas Trap

Primary Gear Type (check only one)

- [ ] Rod & Reel [ ] Handline [ ] Bandit gear
[ ] Rod & Reel [ ] Handline
[ ] Rod & Reel [ ] Handline [ ] Harpoon [ ] Bandit gear
(Harpoon only)
(Limited Access: Longline only)
[ ] Pound Net [ ] Fish Weir

SECTION 4 - OWNER'S SIGNATURE The undersigned is the owner or legally-authorized agent of the owner of the vessel named in Section 1 above. Issuance of a permit in one of the commercial categories (categories other than Angling) subjects a vessel to applicable requirements of the Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988 (46 CFR 25.28). Call the U.S. Coast Guard for details (see instructions for phone numbers).

Signature:

Date: Print Name:

SECTION 5 - PAYMENT/DELIVERY INFORMATION: There is a \$22.00 fee for the Atlantic tunas & Atlantic HMS permits. Note delivery surcharge below. Mail this application and payment to: NOAA, 21056 Network Place, Chicago, IL 60673-1210

[ ] Check if paying by money order (payable to NMFS Permits)

[ ] Check if paying by credit card and fill out the information below:

Credit Card Type (check one): [ ] Visa [ ] MasterCard [ ] Discover [ ] American Express

Account Number: Expiration Date (MM/YY):

Card Holder Name: Signature:

Billing address for credit card, if different than address above: Date:

DELIVERY OPTIONS (CHECK ONE):

[ ] Send permit by Priority Mail at additional charge of \$3.90

[ ] Fax permit to number indicated in Section 1

[ ] Send permit by regular mail

[ ] I will print my permit from the Internet once processed

## FEDERAL ATLANTIC TUNAS & ATLANTIC HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT PERMIT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

An Atlantic tunas permit is required to fish commercially for bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye, albacore, and skipjack tunas. An Atlantic HMS Angling permit is required for all owners/operators of recreational vessels fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish and billfish) in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. An Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit is required for all charter or headboat vessels fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. Please complete the attached application/renewal form and return to the address indicated at the bottom of the form. If your application/renewal, including payment, is complete, your permit will be mailed, faxed, or available to print (depending on your preferred delivery method) within 3 business days. Questions on the permit application/renewal process, call (888) 872-8862; for tuna fisheries regulations: (978) 281-9260; for Fishing Vessel Safety Act regulations: (617) 223-8315.

The following information is provided to help you complete the application/renewal form.

- A permit may be owned by more than one person, but the owner information should match the owner information on the vessel's state registration or U.S. Coast Guard documentation. If more than one person is listed, please indicate the person who will be the primary point of contact for the permit.
- If you would like your permit faxed, please indicate the appropriate fax number in Section 1 and select the fax option in Section 5. If you would like to print your permit from your printer via the Internet ([www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com)) once the permit is processed (approximately 3 business days), select the print option in Section 5.
- If your vessel is unnamed, write "unnamed" in the space for Vessel Name in Section 2.
- The vessel's home port refers to the port where the vessel is located for most of the year. The principal port refers to the port where the majority of the vessel's landings occur. The vessel's home and principal port may be different.
- If your vessel is constructed of more than one material, choose "other". Please check only one box.
- You do not need to submit copies of state registration or U.S. Coast Guard documentation as NMFS no longer requires submission of copies with the permit application. However, a copy of the vessel's valid U.S. Coast Guard documentation or, if not documented, a copy of its valid state registration must be carried on board the vessel and must match the information on the Atlantic tunas or Atlantic HMS permit.
- For vessels owned by a partnership or corporation, you do not need to submit a copy of the letter of partnership or articles of incorporation, but you are advised to maintain the corporate or partnership document in your files and must furnish the document to NMFS upon request.
- For Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permits, you do not need to submit a copy of a captain's license as NMFS no longer requires submission of a copy with the permit application. However, while persons aboard a vessel that has been issued an Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit are fishing for or are in possession of Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, and/or billfish, the operator of the vessel must have a valid Merchant Marine License or Uninspected Passenger Vessel License, issued by the U.S. Coast Guard; this license must be carried on board the vessel.
- Commercial vessels are subject to the Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988. For information, contact the U.S. Coast Guard office in your district:
 

Maine to New York	(617) 223-8315	South Carolina to Florida	(305) 415-6867
New Jersey to North Carolina	(757) 398-6304	Gulf of Mexico	(504) 589-6271
- You may select only ONE permit category. Changes to permit categories must be made prior to the start of the fishing year or when you renew your permit for a particular fishing year..

### INFORMATION REGARDING CATEGORIES:

COMMERCIAL CATEGORIES: Commercial size tuna taken under any of these categories may be sold.

Minimum sizes for sale: Atlantic bluefin tuna:  $\geq 73$  inches total curved fork length (CFL)

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna:  $\geq 27$  inches CFL Other tunas: no minimum sizes

**ATLANTIC HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT:** Owners of charter boats or headboats used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, and billfish must obtain this permit. For bluefin tuna, anglers aboard Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat-permitted vessels may collectively fish under either the Angling or General category daily retention limit, but not both on the same day. Commercial size tunas taken aboard vessels permitted in the Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat category may be sold to licensed dealers only. Authorized gear: rod & reel (including downriggers), handline, and bandit gear. For further information regarding Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permits please call the Northeast Regional Office HMS Division at (978) 281-9260.

**ATLANTIC TUNAS LONGLINE:** Vessel owners conducting longline operations that may result in the incidental taking of large medium and giant BFT or in the directed/incidental taking of other Atlantic tunas must obtain this permit. The number of Longline permits is LIMITED, i.e., a vessel owner seeking to obtain a Longline permit must obtain a Longline permit from a qualified permit holder. **IMPORTANT:** A total of 3 permits must be obtained to use longlines to fish for tunas: swordfish, shark, and tuna Longline permits. The shark and swordfish permits may be either directed or incidental. Directed swordfish and shark permits are subject to upgrading and ownership restrictions. For further information on swordfish and shark regulations, please call the Highly Migratory Species Management Division at (301) 713-2347. For information on transfer and upgrading procedures, please call the Southeast Regional Office Permits Division at (727) 570-5236. Authorized gear: longline only.

**ATLANTIC TUNAS TRAP:** Vessel owners who conduct trap operations that may result in the incidental taking of large medium and giant BFT must obtain this permit. Note that only one BFT per year may be retained. Authorized gear: pound nets and fish weirs.

**ATLANTIC TUNAS GENERAL:** Vessel owners who harvest Atlantic tunas, including large medium and giant BFT, by handgear and plan to sell the tuna must obtain this permit. Authorized gear: rod & reel (including downriggers), handline, harpoon, and bandit gear. For further information regarding General category regulations please call the Northeast Regional Office HMS Division at (978) 281-9260.

**ATLANTIC TUNAS HARPOON:** Vessel owners who conduct a commercial harpoon fishery for Atlantic tunas, including large medium and giant BFT, must obtain this permit. Vessels permitted in the Harpoon category may not participate in the General category fishery. For further information regarding Harpoon category regulations please call the Northeast Regional Office HMS Division at (978) 281-9260. Authorized gear: Harpoon only.

**RECREATIONAL CATEGORY.** Atlantic HMS taken under the Angling category size and retention limits MAY NOT be sold.

Minimum sizes for possession:

Atlantic bluefin tuna:  $\geq 27$  inches CFL

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna:  $\geq 27$  inches CFL

Other tunas: no minimum sizes

Sharks:  $\geq 54$  inches FL

Swordfish:  $\geq 47$  inches LJFL

Blue marlin:  $\geq 99$  inches LJFL

White marlin:  $\geq 66$  inches LJFL

Sailfish:  $\geq 63$  inches LJFL

**ATLANTIC HMS ANGLING:** Private recreational vessels used to fish for, take, retain, or possess Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish, and billfish must obtain this permit. All BFT must be reported within 24 hours of landing to NMFS by calling (888) 872-8862. Authorized gear: rod & reel (including downriggers), handline. For further information regarding Angling category permits please call the Northeast Regional Office HMS Division at (978) 281-9260.

**PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:** Collection of information through annual permitting serves three purposes: (1) it provides current information on the vessel owners participating in the Atlantic tuna fisheries; (2) it provides an up-to-date sampling frame that is the basis for fleet size calculations used for catch and effort estimates in fisheries that do not require mandatory reporting, thus enabling the U.S. to meet international obligations to report catch statistics for Atlantic tunas; and (3) aids NMFS in the enforcement of fishery regulations. Public reporting burden for this initial permit application of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining data needed, and completed & reviewing the collection of information. Permit renewals are accomplished by using an automated phone system at (888) 872-8862 or by accessing the web site at [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com). Public reporting burden for renewal by telephone or web is estimated to average 6 minutes per response. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: National Marine Fisheries Service, F/SF1, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Providing the requested information in the permit application is mandatory for managing the Atlantic tuna fisheries in accordance with the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). It is agency policy not to release confidential information, other than in aggregate form, as the Magnuson-Stevens Act protects (in perpetuity) the confidentiality of those submitting information. Summaries of permit information by category may be released. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. This is an approved information collection under OMB #0648-0327 and expires June 30, 2005.