

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

An Atlantic tunas permit is required to fish commercially (EXCEPT FOR Charter/Headboats) for bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye, albacore, and skipjack tunas. All owners/operators of charter/headboat and 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, must obtain an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Charter/Headboat or a HMS Angling category permit. This HMS Angling category permit has replaced the Atlantic tunas Angling category permit, and incorporates those vessels targeting other regulated HMS. 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) 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:

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| Maine to New York | (617) 223-8315 | South Carolina to Florida | (305) 536-5091 |
| New Jersey to North Carolina | (757) 398-6304 | Gulf of Mexico | (504) 589-4999 |
- You may select only ONE permit category. After you choose your category, you are allowed to make ONE change to your category (at an additional fee), as long as the change is made before June 1. You may make a category change after June 1, however, so long as it occurs with the renewal or initial application for the current fishing year, to take effect for the beginning of the fishing year, June 1. You may check your permit's current category by calling (888) 872-8862 and following the instructions.

INFORMATION REGARDING CATEGORIES:

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

Minimum sizes for sale: **Atlantic bluefin tuna:** ≥ 73 inches total curved fork length (CFL)

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna: ≥ 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. Tuna taken under the Angling category size and retention limits MAY NOT be sold.

Minimum sizes for possession: **Atlantic bluefin tuna:** ≥ 27 inches CFL

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna: ≥ 27 inches CFL **Other tunas:** no minimum sizes

ATLANTIC HMS ANGLING: Private recreational vessel owners who harvest HMS must obtain this permit. Angling category permit holders may retain one large medium or giant “trophy” BFT per year. 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 Atlantic HMS Angling permits or regulations 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. 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.