

# ATLANTIC HMS EM PROGRAM SUMMARY

Prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nation EM Workshop, Nov 30 – Dec 1, 2016, Seattle, WA

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

The Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) pelagic longline fishery is managed under several U.S. laws and treaties, including the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA) which implements the U.S. treaty obligations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Due to the international nature of these fish stocks, the Magnuson-Stevens Act provides that management authority for Atlantic HMS species to be implemented by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), who has delegated it to the Atlantic HMS Management Division of NOAA Fisheries. Although this fishery is managed by the Secretary, it does take place in the geographic areas managed by a number of the Fishery Management Councils (EEZ), such as New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean'. Fishing also takes place beyond the EEZ in international waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The pelagic longline fishery harvests swordfish, several species of tunas including bigeye, albacore, and yellowfin, pelagic sharks and dolphin fish (mahi-mahi) but also has an incidental catch of bluefin tuna. The Electronic Monitoring (EM) program for this fishery is intended to be used to verify preexisting reports of bluefin tuna bycatch as part of an Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) program that was introduced as part of an amendment to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (Consolidated HMS FMP).

The Amendment process, finalized in December of 2014, and the EM portion of that amendment was implemented on June 1, 2015. For months prior to the implementation date, EM system installations were conducted at over a dozen specific ports throughout the range of the fishery to balance efficiency for the EM service provider (Saltwater Inc.) and minimize the distance travelled for vessels in the fleet.

The service provision in this EM program is split between two contacts. EM systems, installation, and maintenance of those systems is currently performed by Saltwater Inc. Audits, analyses and custody of the EM video footage is conducted and maintained by Earth Resources Technology (ERT).

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of the Atlantic HMS EM program is to verify the accuracy of counts and identification of bluefin tuna recorded through other means, for example, VMS reports, fishery depended logbooks, dealer reports, as well as Pelagic Observer reports.

**VESSELS IN FLEET:** 136

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## PERCENT COVERAGE OF EM PROGRAM:

100% of active vessels, currently 112 vessels.

Some vessels do not have EM systems on board because the permit holders are not active participants in the fishery.

## EM PROGRAM FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The Atlantic HMS pelagic longline fishery EM program is currently funded by NMFS, including EM system acquisition and installation, ongoing maintenance, interpretation of EM video, and data storage costs.

FY 2016 summary costs

- |                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Equipment installation and support | ~ \$410,000 |
| • Data storage                       | ~ \$194,000 |
| • Data Processing and Review         | ~ \$322,000 |

## SUCCESS FACTORS OF EM PROGRAM:

- Government funding of program development and implementation
- Industry acceptance of program
- Mandatory program as part of FMP requirements
- Flexibility in implementation date
- Trial period in advance of mandatory program to work with selected volunteer vessels intending to resolve problems that could have hampered the system's efficacy
- Development of EM interpretation software by ERT is finding computer vision solutions for searching EM video for fish catch events

## CHALLENGES OF EM PROGRAM:

- Custom installation required for each unique vessel
- Species-specific identification of similar-looking fish (e.g. tunas)
- Data storage costs