



**NOAA
FISHERIES**



Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Handgear Fisheries

Year in Review - 2020



**HMS Advisory Panel Meeting
September 2020**

Shifts that Occurred in 2020 (to Date) relative to 2019

In this presentation, we provide a look back at the bluefin fishery thus far this year. Notably, information to date shows:

- Increase in recreational landings
- Decrease in commercial landings
- Increase in number of bluefin tuna dealers



2020 Inseason Actions – Quota Transfers and Adjustments

- 19.5 mt within General category from December 2020 quota period to January-March 2020 quota period (published December 2019)
- 164.5 mt from Purse Seine category to Reserve category, and in same notice transferred 51 mt from Reserve category to General category (February)
- 30 mt from Reserve category to Harpoon category (July)



2019 and 2020 Inseason Actions – Angling Category Retention Limits (Recreational)

Default daily limit (private and charter vessels) effective January 1 each year until changed:
1 school, large school, or small medium BFT/vessel/day

	2020	2019
Permit Category (Vessel Type)	Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip	Retention Limit per Vessel per Day/Trip
HMS Angling (Private)	2 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT	2 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT
HMS Charter/Headboat (Charter boat)	3 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT	3 school BFT and 1 large school/small medium BFT
HMS Charter/Headboat (Headboat)	6 school BFT and 2 large school/small medium BFT	6 school BFT and 2 large school/small medium BFT

Trophy category: 1 large medium/giant (73"+) BFT/vessel/year

- Southern area closed February 20, 2020 and March 14, 2019
- Gulf of Mexico closed April 16, 2020 and May 31, 2019
- Northern area closed May 21, 2020 and June 27, 2019



2020 Inseason Actions – Commercial Retention Limits

General category

January 1 - February 24	1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day
February 25 - March 31	CLOSED
June 1 - August 31	1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day
September 1 - December 31	1 large medium or giant BFT/vessel/day* *or until changed

Harpoon category

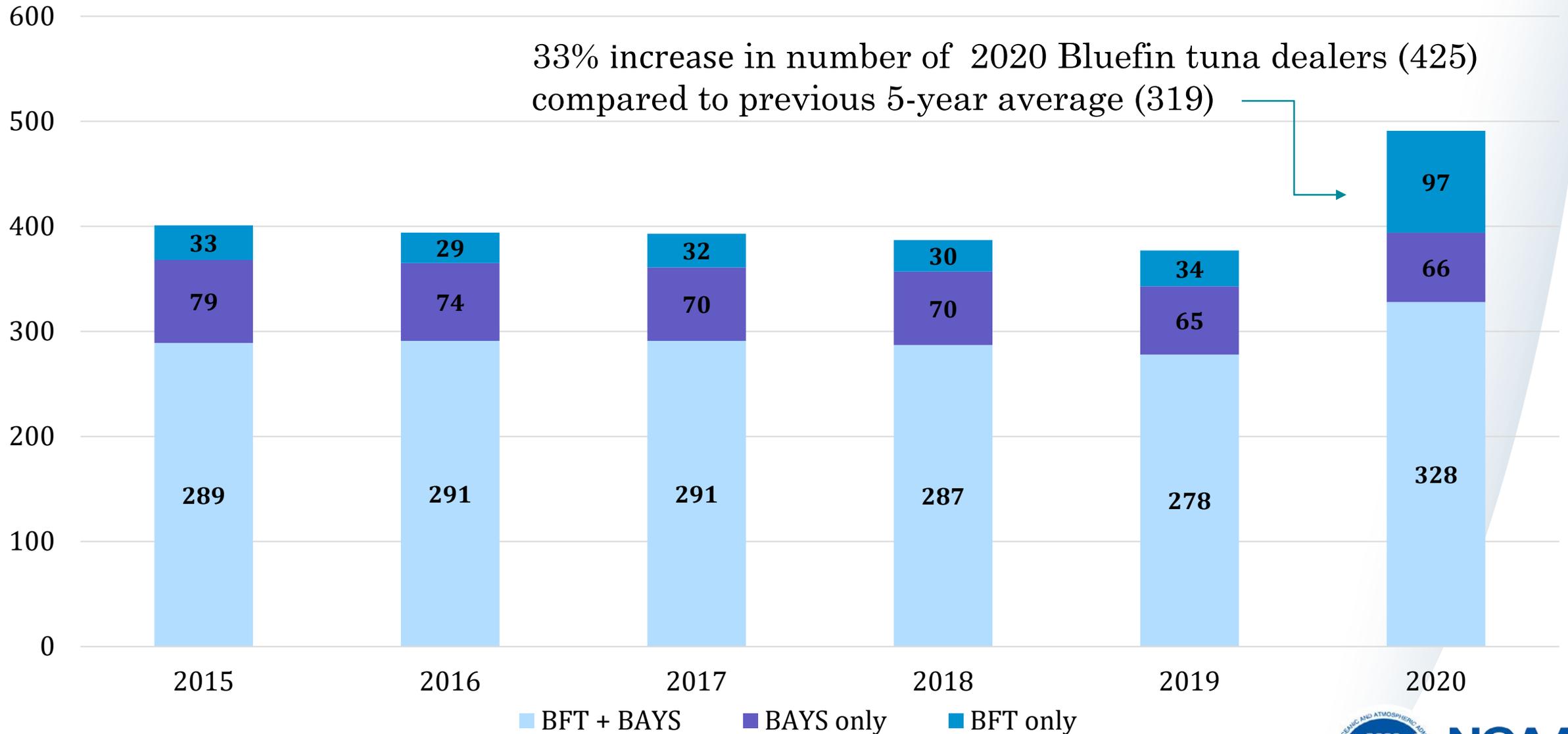
June 1 - August 5	2 large medium & unlimited giant BFT/vessel/day
August 5 - November 15	CLOSED (due to available quota being met)
November 16 - December 31	CLOSED (every year)



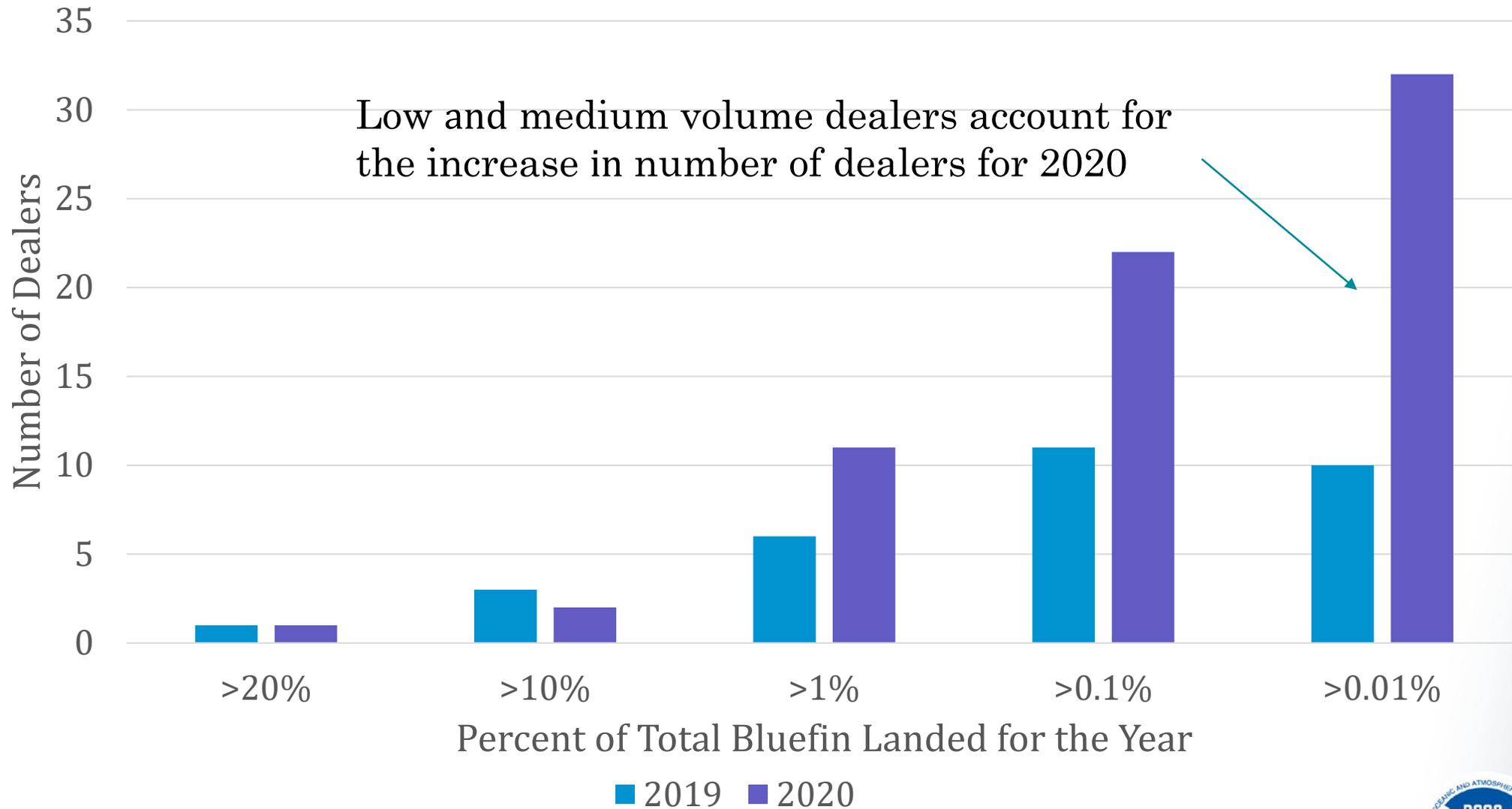
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Atlantic Tunas Dealers Permits

33% increase in number of 2020 Bluefin tuna dealers (425) compared to previous 5-year average (319)



% Bluefin Tuna Commercial Landings by Dealer



2020 Harpoon Category Landings Information

	Daily Retention Limit	Landings (mt)	Notes
Large Medium (73 - < 81")	2	19.6	25% of Harpoon category landings
Giant (81" +)	unlimited	59.1	75% of Harpoon category landings
Annual Total		78.7	171% of the 46-mt baseline Harpoon category quota; 104% of the 76-mt adjusted quota

Of those trips landing at least one BFT, ___% landed:
Only Lg. Med: 13% Lg. Med and Giant: 42% Only Giant: 45%

Of those trips landing at least one BFT, ___% landed :
 1 Fish: 36% 2 Fish: 14% 3 Fish: 14% 4-8 Fish: 35% 9+ Fish: 0%

Preliminary data through August 14, 2020

Harpoon (Gear) Landings by the General and Harpoon Categories

	2019			2020		
	Number of vessels with landings	Number of Fish	Weight (mt)	Number of vessels with landings	Number of Fish	Weight (mt)
General category	29	125	15.9	16	42	6.5
Harpoon category	21	737	102.4	22	546	78.7
TOTALS	50	862	118.3	39	588	85.2

Preliminary data through August 14, 2020



2020 Harpoon Category BFT Success Rate Matrix

Table shows percentage of trips landing the various possible size combinations of BFT (for successful trips, i.e., at least one BFT landed).

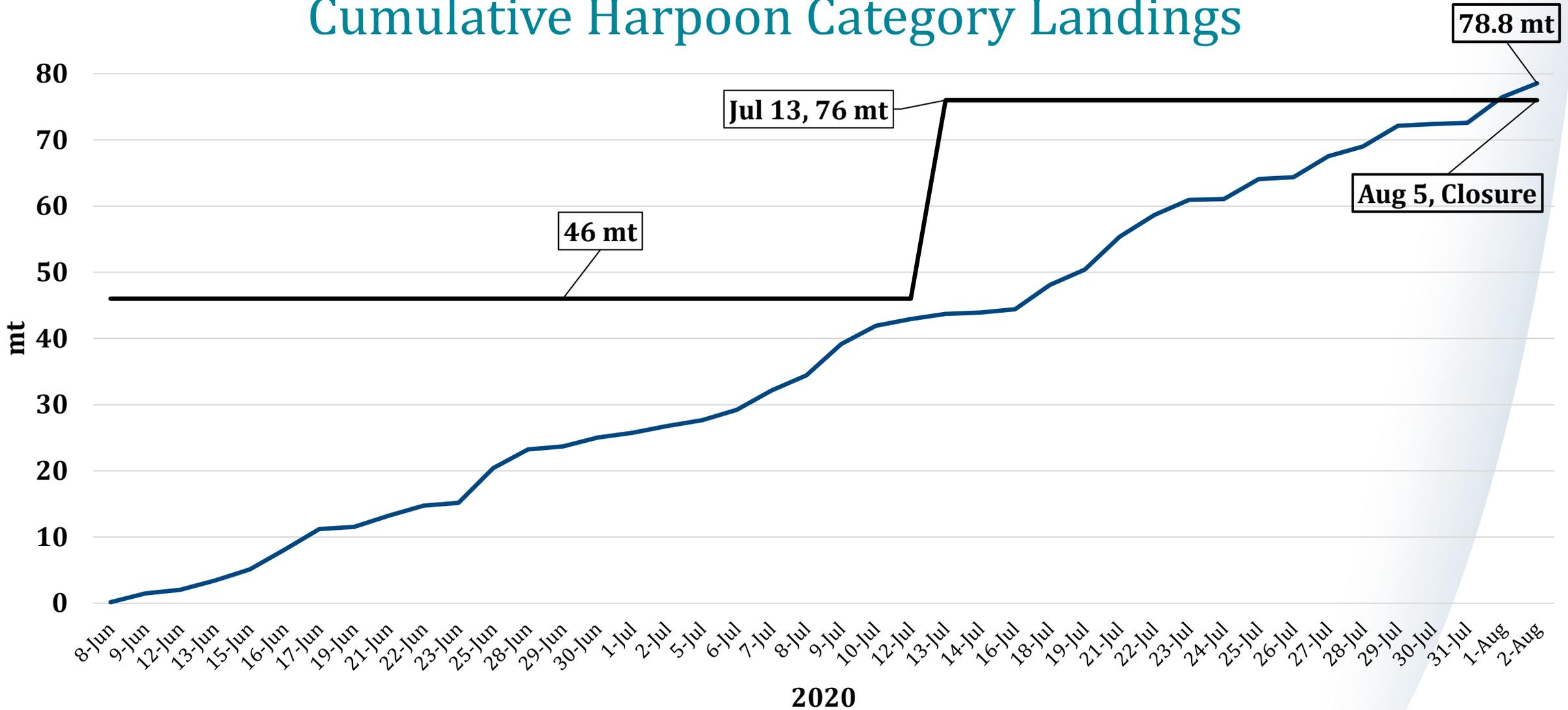
Most successful trips (26%) landed 0 large-mediums and 1 giant BFT. These findings may relate to BFT dealer-imposed limits (e.g., number of fish purchased per vessel or per day)

		Giants (81''+)					
Number of fish		0	1	2	3	4+	TOTAL
Large mediums (73-<81'')	0		26%	6%	5%	8%	45%
	1	10%	6%	4%	8%	1%	29%
	2	2%	5%	16%	2%	1%	26%
TOTAL		13%	36%	26%	16%	9%	100%

Preliminary data through August 14, 2020



Cumulative Harpoon Category Landings



Preliminary Data through Aug 14, 2020

— Cumulative Catch — Quota



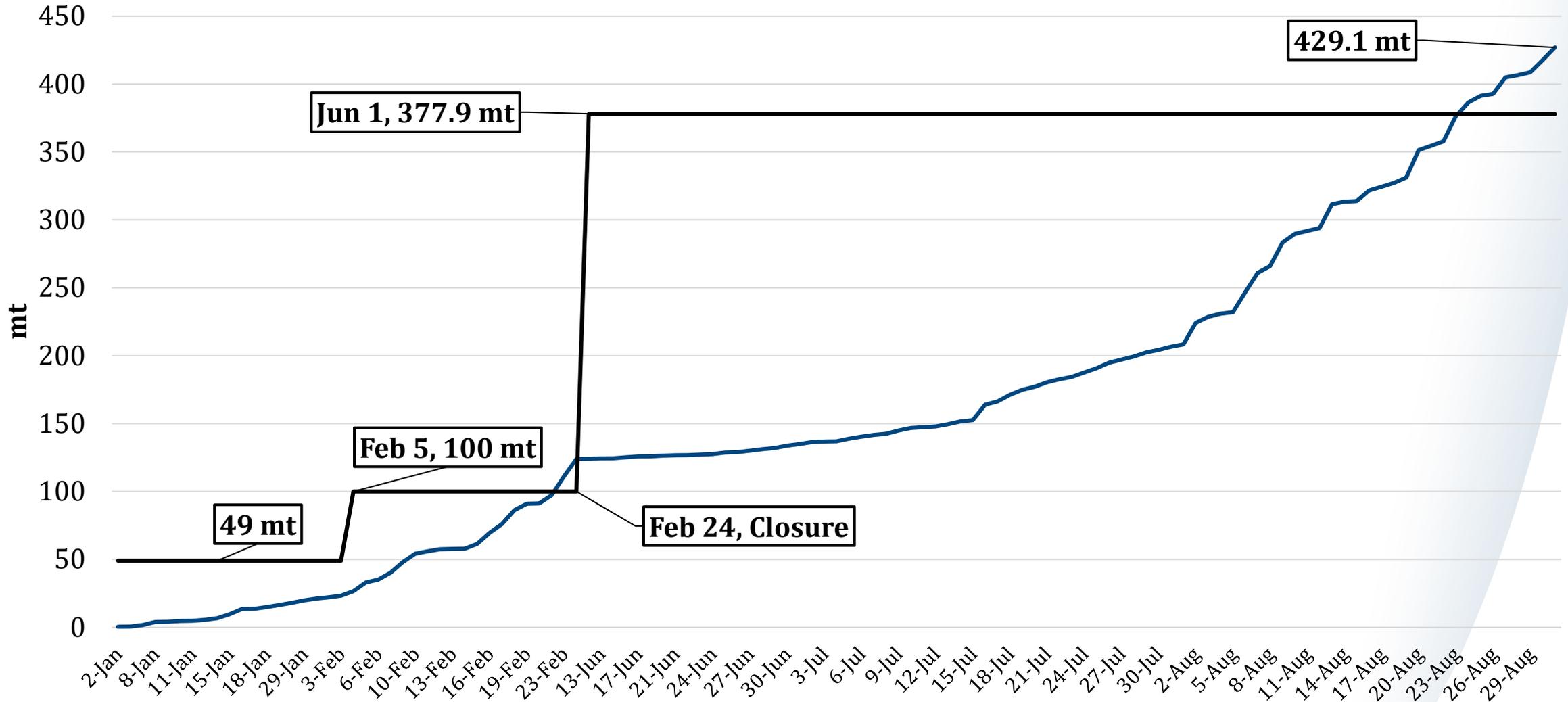
2020 General Category Landings

	Daily Retention Limit	Landings (mt)	Notes
January 1 – February 28 <i>(closed March 1-31)</i>	1	124.1	“January” period subquota of 29.5 adjusted to 100 mt. <u>Highest landings ever during January fishery.</u>
June 1 – August 31	1	305	Base June-August subquota of 277.9 mt
Subtotal		429.1	Cumulative adjusted quota, after inseason transfers is 377.9 mt Through August 31, 2020, 110% of the 277.9-mt subquota quota landed

Preliminary data through August 31, 2020



Cumulative General Category Landings



Preliminary Data through Aug 31, 2020

2020

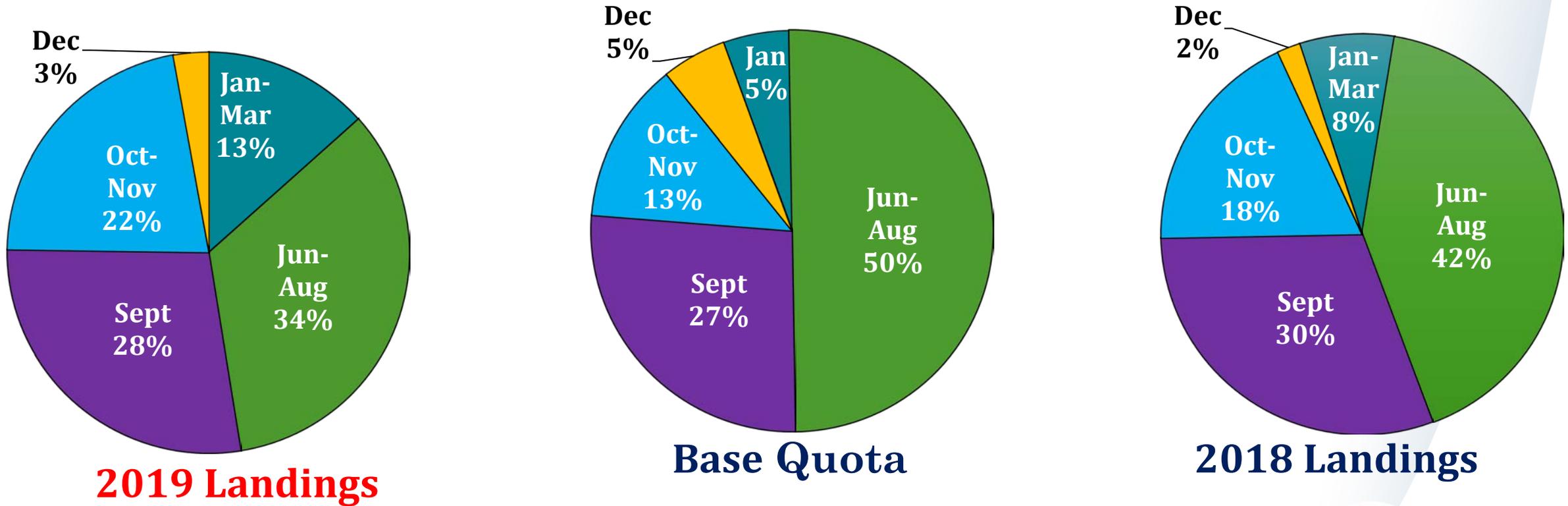
— Cumulative Catch — Quota



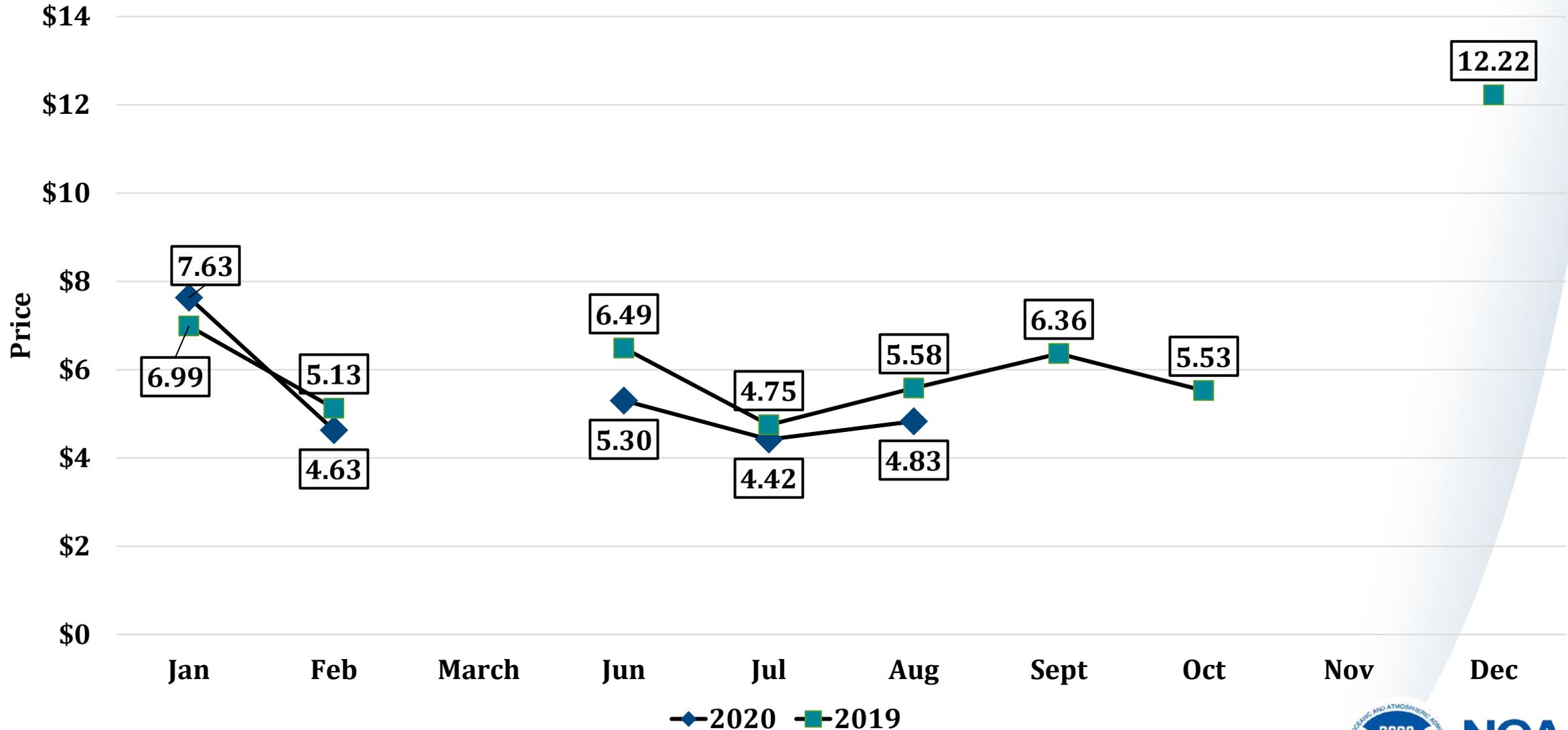
Bluefin Landings by General Category

Time-Period Subquota 2018-2019

Recent annual landings breakdown by time period similar to FMP-based subquotas; manage through inseason actions



General Category Average Price/lb, 2019-2020

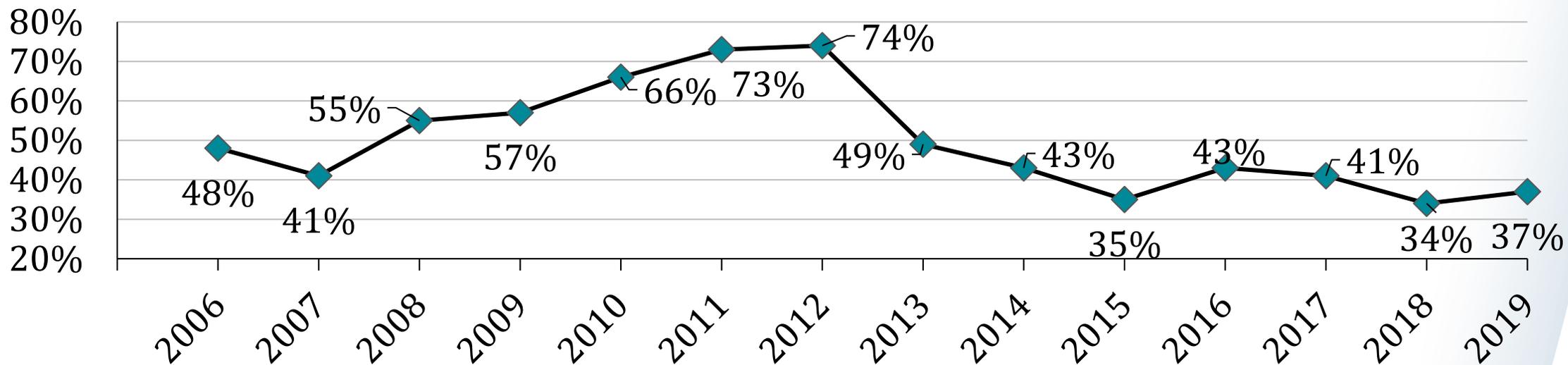


Preliminary Data through August 31, 2020



Exported vs. Domestic Landings

Percent of BFT Landings that are Exported



2019	Exports	Domestic
Average Price per lb.	\$6.43	\$5.19
Total Ex-Vessel Value	\$4,201,701	\$5,720,539



2020 BFT Dead Discards

- Currently, the best available annual estimate of U.S. dead discards for 2019 is the preliminary 2019 estimate of 8.1 mt for the pelagic longline fishery.
- The United States accounts for dead discards annually and reports them to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The final 2019 estimate and a preliminary 2020 estimate will be available by July 2021.
- NMFS continues to refine reporting methodologies for commercial handgear dead discards.



BFT Reporting Requirement for General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat Categories

- Vessels are required to report the catch of all BFT retained or discarded dead, within 24 hours of landing or end of each trip, by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov or by using the HMS Catch Reporting app. A report confirmation number is provided upon successful reporting.
- If a commercial fish cannot be sold, the vessel operator MUST contact NOAA Fisheries at 978-281-9213 and report the fish immediately upon landing. If requested, the fish must be made available to enforcement for tagging.
- Outreach to the fishery continues, including by NOAA Office of Law Enforcement; citations being issued.



BFT Vessel Reporting Compliance for General, Harpoon Quota Categories

Comparison of dealer & vessel BFT reports for 2020; % compliance 2017-2020 *to date*:

Quota Category	Dealer Reports		Vessel Reports		% Vessel Reporting Compliance							
	# Fish	# Fishermen	# Fish	# Fishermen	% Fish Reported				% Fishermen Reporting			
					2020	2019	2018	2017	2020	2019	2018	2017
General	1,730	539	1,206	383	70	66	61	45	71	58	52	43
Harpoon	547	23	505	18	92	93	91	96	78	100	85	75
Total	2,277	562	1,711	401	75	72	63	49	71	59	52	43

- General category (includes charter/headboat) vessel reporting compliance started low and is improving each year.
- Harpoon category compliance is generally high but variable each year.

Preliminary data through August 14, 2020



Restricted-fishing Days (RFDs)

- NMFS is considering resumed use of RFDs, last used in the early 2000s.
- Intent of RFDs: improve distribution of fishing opportunities within each General category subperiod.
- Current regulations state that:
 - On an RFD, no person aboard a vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category permit may fish for, possess, retain, land, or sell a BFT of any size class, and catch-and-release or tag-and-release fishing for BFT under § 635.26(a) is not authorized from such vessel.
 - NMFS will annually publish a schedule of RFDs in the Federal Register.
- RFDs can be waived (retention limit increased from 0) in order to allow for maximum utilization of the quota (or subquota)
- **We welcome your thoughts on RFDs:
which months? # of days/week? which days of week?**



Questions? Comments?

For further information on Atlantic tunas
management, contact (978) 281-9260

