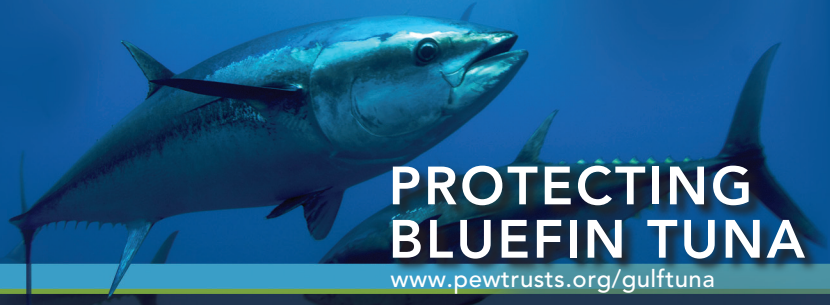


THE
PEW
ENVIRONMENT GROUP



PROTECTING BLUEFIN TUNA

www.pewtrusts.org/gulftuna

Oceana/Keith Ellenbogen

PROPOSED REGULATIONS THREATEN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA

Join Chairman Rahall in Asking NMFS to Extend the Comment Period

In November 2009, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed an adjustment to Atlantic bluefin tuna fishing regulations that would increase the number of bluefin tuna caught. The comment period on this proposal is set to end on December 21, 2009. The proposed rule would make three changes to existing regulations:

1. Increase the General category catch upper limit from three bluefin tuna to five per vessel per day.
2. Extend the time that General category fishermen can catch their January sub-quota to May 31 or until the quota is filled, whichever comes first. Under current regulations, the January sub-quota ends January 31 regardless of whether the quota is caught.
3. Raise the retention limit of immature bluefin tuna unintentionally caught by harpoon category fishermen to four per vessel per day from the current limit of two.

These proposed changes are premature because of several developments likely in the next few months, including:

1. A new peer-reviewed scientific study from the University of British Columbia on the current population of Atlantic bluefin tuna and their future status will be released soon.
2. A proposal to list bluefin tuna on Appendix I of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is under consideration. The vote on an Appendix I listing, which would prohibit the international trade of commercially caught bluefin tuna is scheduled for the March 2010 meeting of CITES.
3. The completion of a new bluefin tuna stock assessment by scientists with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is due in 2010. The outcome of that assessment could lead ICCAT to recommend lower catch levels in 2011. If NMFS makes regulatory changes in 2010, it may have to reverse them in 2011 to account for a lower U.S. bluefin tuna annual quota.

Tell NMFS 'What's the rush?' Extend the comment period for at least 90 days to ensure that all of the facts are known before the agency allows more bluefin tuna to be caught and killed in U.S. waters. Please join Chairman Nick Rahall in asking NMFS to extend the public comment period.

To sign Chairman Rahall's letter please contact Julia Hathaway at **202-225-9969** or julia.hathaway@mail.house.gov.