



Our reference:

3 June 2004

Name
Address
Address
State

Dear Permit Holder

**Identification guide for Northern Bluefin Tuna
Variation to Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery Permit Number #**

I am writing to advise you of three very important issues which will have an impact on your Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) permit number # _____ :

1. new process introduced by AFMA for identifying Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna, and in particular the process that AFMA has developed to recognise this species from Southern Bluefin Tuna; and
2. the introduction of core and buffer zone restricted Southern Bluefin Tuna zones.

Identification Guide for Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna

AFMA recognises that it is relatively straightforward for an experienced/trained observer to identify an Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna (NBT) (*Thunnus orientalis*) from a Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) (*Thunnus maccoyii*) on the basis of meristics (counting fin rays, gill rakers), colouration (caudal keel, flank mottling etc) and internal morphology. AFMA further recognises that the current permit conditions requires genetic testing to determine genetic differentiation between these species and that this is quite costly. For this reason, the attached decision tree has been developed by AFMA in consultation with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, ETMAC and the SBTMAC to allow NBT to be distinguished from SBT on the basis of geographical, size and meristic data within the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery.

This decision tree is designed to allow you and compliance officers in the ETBF to objectively determine between these species and avoid the use of genetic testing where ever possible.

Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna variation

In adopting this new identification method, conditions 4 and 23 of your ETBF fishing permit have been amended to remove the current mandatory genetic testing requirement. Accordingly these conditions now read as follows (changes are in **bold** and *italics*):

4. NORTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA

*If the fishing permit holder, or an authorised representative takes a Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) or Southern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) then he/she must:*

- (a) *report to AFMA at email northernbluefin@afma.gov.au (or to fax 02 6272 3265 if email is not possible) at least four hours prior to the boat mooring or anchoring at port the following information:*
 - i. *NBT/SBT report;*
 - ii. *the name of the boat;*
 - iii. *distinguishing symbol of the boat;*
 - iv. *port of landing;*
 - v. *date and time of landing;*
 - vi. *number and weight of Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna on board;*
 - vii. *number and weight of Southern Bluefin Tuna on board; and*
- (b) *comply with condition 23 (b); and*
- (c) *if it is not clear if the tuna taken is an Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) or Southern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) supply a sample of the fish to an AFMA approved testing agency. The sample must comprise of an intact tail section of the fish (small part of the keel and caudal finlets). The kept part should contain a small section of muscle and caudal fins may be trimmed for transport purposes;*
- (d) *comply with condition 5 should the landed tuna be deemed a southern bluefin tuna through identification and not a northern pacific bluefin tuna.*

24. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- (a) The holder of this fishing permit must ensure that relevant information about ALL fish taken in the area of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery is accurately and fully recorded and submitted in each of the following logbooks in accordance with the General Information and Instructions for completion of each logbook dated June 2003;

If Attachment A authorises the use of pelagic longlines:

- (i) the logbook titled the Australian Pelagic Longline Daily Fishing Log (AL05) for every day of pelagic longline fishing; and

If Attachment A authorises the use of minor line and pole equipment:

- (ii) the logbook titled the Australian Tuna Minor Line Daily Fishing Log (OT03) for every day of troll, rod and reel, handline and pole fishing; and
- (b) *The holder of this fishing permit, or authorised representative, must ensure that relevant information about any Northern Pacific Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) taken in the area of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery is recorded on the Southern Bluefin Tuna Catch Disposal Record (CR4A) form in accordance with the General Information and Instructions for completion of the record;*

Southern Bluefin Tuna core & buffer zone variation

At the end of May 2004 SBT were taken by ETBF operators off the east coast of Australia. These captures have activated the imposition of the core and buffer zones in the ETBF. The approach taken in 2004 to determine core and buffer zones is the same as that used in 2003. That is, CSIRO scientific oceanographic, sea surface temperature and sea surface height data is collated and used by AFMA to define the area of these zones through the precise depiction of conditions suited to SBT habitation.

To reflect the current habitation of SBT condition 5 of your ETBF fishing permit has been varied to define a core and buffer zone (changes are in **bold** and *italics*).

5. SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA

This fishing permit does not allow fishing for southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*). Any take of southern bluefin tuna is to be in accordance with the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Plan 1995.

If Attachment A of this fishing permit authorises the use of pelagic longlines, then, as a conservation measure, from **8 June 2004** if the fishing permit holder, *or authorised representative*, is intending to fish with pelagic longlines:

- (a) *south of the parallel of latitude 33 degrees 30 minutes South (Buffer Zone – Northern Boundary), he/she must hold Southern Bluefin Tuna Statutory Fishing Rights to a minimum equivalent live weight untaken value of 500kg assigned to the boat nominated on this permit, before leaving to fish; and*
- (b) *on first entry to the area south of the parallel of latitude 34 degrees 30 minutes South (Core Zone – Northern Boundary) he/she must hold Southern Bluefin Tuna Statutory Fishing Rights to a minimum equivalent live weight untaken value of 4000 kg assigned to the boat nominated on this permit; and*
- (c) *on every subsequent entry to the area south of the parallel of latitude 34 degrees 30 minutes South (Core Zone – Northern Boundary) he/she must:*
 - i. *either hold Southern Bluefin Tuna Statutory Fishing Rights to a minimum equivalent live weight untaken value of at least 4000kg assigned to the boat nominated on this permit;*
 - ii. *or continue to hold used plus unused Southern Bluefin Tuna Statutory Fishing Rights to a minimum equivalent live weight value of at least 4000kg assigned to the boat nominated on this permit.*

If Attachment A of this fishing permit authorises the use of a method other than pelagic longlines and, if from **Tuesday 8 June 2004** the fishing permit holder intends to fish in either of the areas defined in (a) and (b) above with a method other than pelagic longlines, he/she may do so only if any longline drum and longline beacons are removed from the boat before leaving port.

Under the SBT Plan you are required to hold sufficient unused SBT quota to cover your take of SBT prior to those SBT being taken.

In relation to condition 5(b) above AFMA will take account of Southern Bluefin Tuna Statutory Fishing Rights you held prior to this amendment to your permit.

If you wish to move north or south along the New South Wales coastline without being constrained by the above conditions you may do so by steaming within 3nm of the coastline, subject to any conditions imposed by NSW Fisheries. This area lies outside the area of the ETBF.

Please attach a copy of this letter to your ETBF permit and comply with these conditions accordingly. For your information a copy of this letter has been provided to AFMA's Compliance Section.

Under fisheries management law, there are steps you can take if you do not agree with my decision to vary your ETBF fishing permit:

- Write down the reasons why you do not agree.
- Send them to AFMA within 21 days from the time you get this letter and ask AFMA to reconsider the decision.
- AFMA will then reconsider your situation.

You may apply to extend the 21 day period by writing to:

The Manager
Licensing & Quota Management
AFMA
PO Box 7051
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610
[fax (02) 6272 5426]

If you are still not satisfied after AFMA has reviewed its decision, you may then ask the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to review the decision.

If you have any questions regarding the attached identification guide please contact Mr Dave Alden, Manager, ETBF on telephone (02) 6272 5282 or email dave.alden@afma.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Richardson
Senior Licensing Officer
Licensing & Quota Management