

# QUOTA MANAGEMENT POLICY

<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>QUOTA MANAGEMENT POLICY</b>		<b>POLICY NO.</b>	P-02-2020
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	1 <sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2021	<b>DATE OF LAST REVISION</b>	<b>VERSION NO.</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICE</b>	BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHERIES UNIT	<b>RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE</b>	DIRECTOR FOR HIGH SEAS FISHERIES	
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## 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy outlines the fundamental guidelines for the allocation and management of quotas and catch limits for species regulated by a Regional Fisheries Management Organization through the auspices of the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit for which specific quota limits has been established or for which a specific management measure exists.

## 2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all vessel owners and operators whose vessels will operate under the Belize flag and will fish for tuna and tuna like species

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit is responsible for the implementation, compliance, monitoring and review of this Policy.

## 4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This Policy is implemented pursuant to Part II, Sec. 5(3)(b) of the High Seas Fisheries Act, 2013 and its supporting regulations.

## 5.0 BACKGROUND

To reduce the overall total catch of managed and regulated species to a level consistent with biologically and economically sustainable advice, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations frequently introduces **Total Allowable Catches (TACs)** for certain vulnerable species as a management measure to ensure that the catches of these species remain within sustainable limits. Ideally, the TACs are set just below a level that allows the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) to be achieved in the long term. These TACs are then allocated to the member countries of these organizations in accordance with specific allocation criteria and other management measures to ensure compliance with the TAC.

It is the responsibility of the Contracting Parties of these organizations to ensure that the quota allocated to them are properly distributed and managed, in accordance with applicable conservation and management measures and that its distribution is carried out in a fair and equitable process.

Belize through this Policy introduces its Quota Management System (QMS). For the purpose of this document, the QMS shall be defined as the allocation of quotas and catch limits for specific species managed and regulated by a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO).

## **6.0 QUOTA MANAGED SPECIES**

Quota managed species are determined based on the conservation and management measures set by a Regional Fisheries Management Organization for specific fisheries. However, for the purpose of this Policy, these species include but are not limited to all tuna and tuna like species. At the discretion of the BHSFU, catch limits and allocation may also be applied to other non-tuna species.

For species that are regulated by a quota allocation and where that TAC has been set as unlimited, this Administration, in fulfilment of its legal and fiduciary responsibilities, reserves the right to implement its own management measures. Such measures may include the quantities of designated species that may be allocated to a vessel on an annual basis irrespective of its unlimited status by an RFMO.

## **7.0 QUOTA ALLOCATION CRITERIA**

Allocation of individual quotas to vessels are carried out taking into consideration, *inter alia*, the following factors:

- The quota or catch limit per species allocated to Belize by the RFMO
- The Conservation and Management Measure applicable to the species
- The number of existing and estimated applicants
- The allocation process established
- Historical catches of the vessel
- Compliance history of the vessel
- Ensuring that options are available for new vessels
- The validity of a high seas fishing license authorizing the vessel to target such species; or the receipt of application and payment for a new license for a vessel to target such species.

## **8.0 QUOTA ALLOCATION PROCESS**

There are two forms of allocation possibilities under this QMS which are further explained in this Policy:

1. the allocation of quotas, and
2. the allocation of catch limits.

Belize's quotas are subject to RFMO allocations which are based on the following scientific considerations outlined below:

- The Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) is the maximum sustainable annual catch that is designated for a species based on scientific advice

- A total allowable catch (TAC) is set by the RFMO for each managed fish stock based on the MSY
- The TAC is normally set to a specified percentage of the MSY in order to achieve the management objectives and maintain the stock at an optimally sustainable level of recruitment and production
- The TAC is allocated between the different gear types
- The TAC is supported by rules regarding fishing areas, seasons, size limits, FAD limits, inter alia

### 8.1 Species Regulated by International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

The following species regulated by ICCAT are subject to quota restrictions and are allocated to Member countries based on a specific allocation criterion:

- Northern Albacore
  - Southern Albacore
  - Northern Swordfish
  - Southern Swordfish
  - Bigeye Tuna
  - Yellowfin Tuna
  - Skipjack
  - Blue Marlin
  - White Marlin/Round scale Spearfish
- } **TROPICAL TUNA STOCK**

All species except for Yellowfin and Skipjack have a specific quota limit that has been allocated to Belize. These limits are set annually by ICCAT. Belize's allocation is dependent on the overall usage by its vessels, as well as the current scientific assessment of the fish species or stock. This is to ensure that catch levels remain sustainable. As a result, allocations may vary on an annual basis.

### 8.2 Catch Allocation of Tuna and Tuna Like Species Regulated by Other RFMOs

Species regulated by other RFMOs that are not restricted to a quota allocation process by the RFMO will be subject to a catch allocation process. A vessel owner may request a catch allocation for those species for which a specific conservation and management measure exist within the RFMO.

**The BHSFU reserves the right to implement quota and catch limits for other species not captured in this Policy. This will be carried out similar to the process established in this Policy for the managed and regulated species and will be notified to stakeholder in advance of implementation through the issue of a Fishing Vessel Circular.**

### 8.3 How Quotas are Allocated

This section applies to species regulated by ICCAT and are a part of a Quota Management System enforced by this RFMO.



Belize receives a quota allocation annually for specific tuna species managed by ICCAT. These species are listed in Section 8.1 above. To ensure a fair and equitable allocation process, the TAC granted for each species will be managed on the following basis and based on the vessel's gear type as follows:

#### **Tropical Tuna Stock (Yellowfin, Bigeye Tuna, Skipjack)**

- 70% of TAC is allocated to the purse seine fleet
- 10% of TAC is allocated to the long line fleet
- 10% of TAC is allocated to new vessels
- 10% of TAC is allocated for bycatch and contingency.

#### **Other Tuna Species (Albacore, Swordfish)**

- 80% of TAC is allocated to the long line fleet
- 10% of TAC is allocated for new vessels
- 10% of TAC is allocated for bycatch and contingency

#### **Other Species (Marlins, Round scale Spearfish)**

- 100% of TAC is reserved for bycatch and contingency due to very low allocations.

### **8.4 Process**

The allocation of the quotas and catch limits will be done based on a Permit Allocation system as follows:

- Quotas or catch limits shall only be allocated to those vessels that hold a valid High Seas Fishing License.
- Quotas shall only be allocated after proper verification is done by this Administration to ensure that Belize has not reached its quota allocation threshold with ICCAT.
- A request for quota or catch allocation shall be made to the BSHFU on the prescribed form as shown in *Annex 1*.
- All request for quota or catch allocation shall be reviewed on an individual basis and granted only after evaluation of the vessel's catch and compliance history and quota or catch allocation usage over the previous year.
- Allocations to new vessels will be considered based on the quantity available for allocation, the quantity being requested by the vessel owner, the type and size of the vessel.
- A Quota or Catch Allocation Permit shall be issued to the vessel detailing the quantity of each species that have been allocated to the vessel for the calendar year.

### **8.5 Catch Allocation Process**

This section applies to species that are not regulated by a quota allocation process by a RFMO but are managed by a conservation and management measures within that specific RFMO. A vessel that will target species regulated by an

RFMO other than ICCAT will be subject to a catch limit. Catch limits may be requested at the time of issue of a high seas fishing license.

The same process indicated in Section 8.4 shall be followed.

## **8.6 Validity of Quota Allocation**

Quota allocations and catch limits are valid for one calendar year (January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>) only, from the time of approval to the end of the current calendar year. If a request or allocation is granted mid-year the validity will start from the date on which the allocation is approved to the end of the year.

## **8.7 Overharvest of Quota Allocation and Catch Limits**

Where negligible catches are taken in excess of quota allocation or catch limits assigned, the vessel operator shall be subject to a financial payback scheme of the total quota or catch overharvested. Excessive and continued overharvest will be sanctioned in accordance with the [Sanctions Regulation](#). Where a vessel's initial allocation or catch limit has been utilized before the end of the allocation period or prior to completion of its annual fishing activities, that vessel owner may request additional allocations, subject to availability. Where there is no availability, the vessel may be requested to cease operation or refrain from targeting said species. The decision of implementing the former or latter options rests with the BHSFU and will be notified officially to the vessel owners and operators.

## **8.2 Quota Transfers**

Any unused quotas or catch limits by a vessel cannot be transferred to the following year, therefore operators should ensure full utilization.

Quotas and catch limits may be transferred between vessels of like ownership and are subject to the approval of the BHSFU.

## **9.0 PAYMENT FOR ALLOCATION**

Quotas may be purchased at the beginning of each year and will be invoiced once allocation is approved. The cost of the catch limits will be invoiced at the time of request or subsequent to the issue of the HSFL. Applicable fees for the allocation of quotas or catch limits shall be in accordance with our High Seas Fisheries Management Fees Policy.

## **10.0 MONITORING OF QUOTA ALLOCATIONS AND CATCH LIMITS**

For the purpose of this Policy, the monitoring process shall ensure that actual landed catches are always managed against a vessel's quota allocation. Catch reports will also be used as a preliminary source of data before the landing reports are submitted.

### **10.1 Reporting of Allocation and Catch Limits**

To help us monitor and manage the fisheries under the QMS, it requires regular reporting from vessel owners and operators. Vessel operators must submit their catch and effort and landing reports for each trip. These reports are required to be submitted monthly or at other intervals as appropriate.

An analysis of the catch records is carried out by the BHSFU to ensure that catches are always matched against the allocation provided and to ensure that overharvesting does not occur.

**10.2 Vessel Monitoring**

A vessel that has been allocated quotas shall ensure to operate only within the area stipulated on their High Seas Fishing License. Owners and Operators shall ensure that their vessel monitoring equipment is always functional and that where possible, they should utilize their electronic catch reporting device for the timely submission of catch data.

**10.3 Compliance with Conservation and Management Measures**

Vessel operators shall ensure that they comply with the measures as contained in the applicable recommendation relevant to the species for which they have received an allocation. The Allocation Permit issued to the vessel will be supported by a copy of any relevant conservation and management measures.

**11.0 FINANCIAL PENALTIES FOR OVERHARVESTING OF ALLOCATED QUOTAS**

The financial penalties for the overharvest of a quota allocation or catch limit is indicated in our [High Seas Fisheries Management Fees Policy](#).

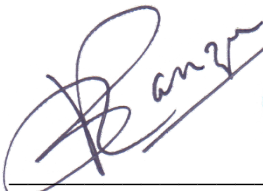
**12.0 REVIEW**


This Policy will be reviewed annually, and any changes made thereto will be notified to the relevant parties prior to the implementation.

Approved this 23rd day of December, in the year 2020 at BELMOPAN, Belize

  
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 Claude B.F. Haylock  
 Registrar of Merchant Shipping



  
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 Valarie Lanza  
 Director for High Seas Fishing





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**APPLICATION FOR QUOTA ALLOCATION**

Name of Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate below under each species the quantities being requested in Metric Tons						
<i>North Albacore</i>	<i>South Albacore</i>	<b>North Swordfish</b>	<i>South Swordfish</i>	<i>Bigeye Tuna</i>	<i>Yellowfin Tuna</i>	<i>Skipjack</i>
State below previous allocations granted to vessel for each species indicated above (to be completed when requesting quota renewal)						

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Official Use only:**

Available quotas:	
Vessel type (gear):	
Compliance issues/conditions:	
EEZ Licenses:	
Area of operation of vessel:	
Notes:	

Application approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Director for High Seas Fisheries)