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U.S.A. PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERIES IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

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UNITES STATES OF AMERICA

U.S.A. Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Description of U.S. Commercial Fisheries for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

Two U.S. fishery sectors target Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO): (1) small coastal purse seine[1] and (2) hook-and-line. Both sectors fish within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. PBF is also caught incidentally in longline, drift gillnet, and troll fisheries. Historically, only purse seine gear is likely to catch greater than 3 metric tons (mt) of PBF in a single trip. The large majority of PBF is caught off of and landed in California, with small quantities landed in Oregon and Washington.

Requirements to Harvest PBF

All U.S. vessels that harvest PBF in the EPO and land on the U.S. West Coast are required to have a U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Permit. Purse seine vessels must also be listed on the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)'s Active Purse Seine Regional Vessel Register (RVR). As of April 17, 2026, there are 19 small U.S. purse seine vessels listed on the purse seine RVR.

Management and Monitoring of Commercial PBF Catch Limit

IATTC Resolution C-24-02 established a 1,822 metric ton (mt) limit for the United States in 2025-2026, not to exceed 1,285 mt in a single year. In 2025 and 2026, the catch limit was 1,285 mt. Similar to management in 2023-2024, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) imposed trip limits that would reduce throughout the year as cumulative catch thresholds were met. There was an initial trip limit of 60 mt, which would first reduce to an intermediate trip limit of 40 mt and then a lower trip limit of 5 mt. This management framework of reducing the trip limit when catch thresholds were met is intended to avoid a complete fishery closure as a result of meeting the catch limit, which could result in regulatory discards. Lastly, to have near real-time catch reporting, buyers of PBF in California must report the purchase of PBF in an electronic database within 24 hours of each landing.

Table 1. United States commercial catch and number of vessels for 2023-2025. Some gear-types have been aggregated for confidentiality reasons under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Source: Pacific Fisheries Information Network HMS 552

Gear		2023	2024	2025
Drift Gillnet	*Catch (mt)*	16	4	4
	No. of Vessels	5	4	4
Hook-and-Line	*Catch (mt)*	163	130	110
	No. of Vessels	178	129	127
Purse seine, albacore surface hook-and-line, longline, unknown or non-highly migratory species gear	*Catch (mt)*	12	1	4
	No. of Vessels	19	12	20

[1] Note this fleet is different from the large purse seine fleet fishing for tropical tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

RECREATIONAL (SPORTFISHING) FISHERIES

Description of U.S. Recreational Fisheries for PBF

Recreational anglers in California use rod-and-reel gear to fish for PBF. Low amounts of PBF are caught occasionally by anglers in Oregon and Washington. Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels (CPFVs) also make trips from Southern California ports into Mexico's waters to target PBF.

Requirements to catch PBF Recreationally

Similar to commercial fisheries, a West Coast HMS permit is required for CPFVs to fish for PBF recreationally.

Management and Monitoring of Recreational PBF Catch

Since 2015, recreational fishermen have been limited to retaining two PBF per day and up to six PBF on multi-day trips. Catch and effort data are collected through state-administered sampling programs or through federal logbooks. California data are provided by the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) program. The state of California's mandatory logbook program provides a record of fishing activity for CPFVs. Logbooks also provide catch information on PBF taken in Mexican waters.

In addition to logbooks, CRFS data are collected through dockside interviews, as well as telephone surveys in most years. These dockside interviews and telephone surveys are used to estimate PBF catch by private boats. Field surveys or interviews are also conducted onboard CPFVs at sea or dockside to check catch and effort.

In Oregon, statistics for recreational fisheries, including private boats and CPFVs, are available from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ocean Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS) program. The ORBS program collects catch and effort data primarily through field and telephone surveys. In Washington, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's mandatory charter boat tuna logbook program in place since 2005 captures information on CPFV fishing location and effort. Washington's Ocean Sampling Program also captures catch and effort information for recreational fisheries, including private boats and CPFVs.

These recreational catch and effort data on the West Coast are compiled into a single Recreational Fisheries Information Network[2] database and/or are available in the highly migratory species Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation[3] documents, available to fisheries scientists, managers and the public.

Estimating Weight of Recreationally-caught PBF

The monitoring above results in a detailed understanding of the number of fish caught by recreational vessels. The United States then converts the number of fish into weight before

[2] https://www.recfin.org/

[3] https://www.pcouncil.org/safe-documents-2/

reporting catch estimates to the regional fisheries management and science organizations using the method described in Teo et al., 2015.[4]

Table 2. United States recreational catch 2021-2025. Sources: National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Year	**Catch (mt)**
2021	1,293
2022	1,585
2023	2,012
2024	1,219
2025	1,278

[4] Teo, S., Suter, J., Childers, J. and Aires-da-Silva, A. 2015. Revision of estimates of catch in weight from the US recreational fishery from 1993-2014. International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean Report ISC/15/PBFWG-103.