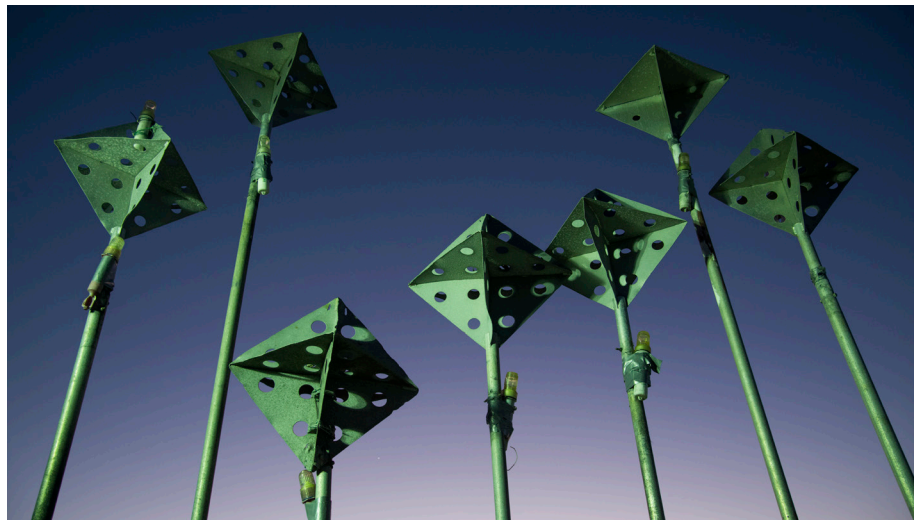


## Document 2 of 6:

These materials include important information for participating in the repose and preparing a quote. Please review them carefully. This document only pertains to eligible vessel owners that did not participate in the 2021 repose or who did not renew their participation in the project. Vessel owners that participated in the 2021 repose had an opportunity to apply to renew existing contracts.



NFWF



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### Have questions about the project?

Please contact the community liaison assigned to your region if you need assistance.

#### Community Liaison in Louisiana:

**Coastal Community Consulting, Inc.**

Phone: 504-393-0066

Email: [christina@ccc-nola.org](mailto:christina@ccc-nola.org)

#### Community Liaison in other Gulf States or on the Atlantic Coast:

**Gary Graham**

Phone: 979-292-6120

Email: [glgshrimp@embarqmail.com](mailto:glgshrimp@embarqmail.com)

To view and download the materials in either English or Vietnamese, please go to [www.nfwf.org/programs/deepwater-horizon-oceanic-fish-restoration-project](http://www.nfwf.org/programs/deepwater-horizon-oceanic-fish-restoration-project).

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## 2022 DEEPWATER HORIZON OCEANIC FISH RESTORATION PROJECT

### Frequently Asked Questions

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## Project Overview

### COVID-19

#### How will COVID-19 impact the 2022 repose?

The safety and health of participants remains our top priority. NFWF and NOAA are continually monitoring data about the pandemic and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to make decisions about how the project operates. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your liaison.

#### Why was the *Deepwater Horizon* Oceanic Fish Restoration Project launched?

Many species of oceanic (or pelagic) fish in the Gulf of Mexico were injured during the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, including tuna, billfish, and mackerel, as well as deepwater fish such as lancetfish. The goal of this project is to help restore a portion of the pelagic fish injured by the oil spill. It is funded from the early restoration funds provided by BP as part of the legal settlement for the spill.

The project was developed by federal and Gulf state natural resource Trustees, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), according to the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) and with opportunities for public review and comment. NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) are working with the pelagic longline fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, which targets species such as yellowfin tuna and swordfish, to implement this temporary (originally projected to be in place five to 10 years) restoration project. This project includes a voluntary repose — a period during which participating vessel owners will receive financial compensation to refrain from pelagic longline fishing.

To help restore the injured species, in 2016 NOAA and NFWF began working directly with regional fishing vessel owners to get their feedback before implementing this temporary restoration project that launched as a pilot in 2017 and began its first full season in 2018. Throughout the project, representatives from NFWF and NOAA have met with participants and other industry stakeholders to hear their feedback and determine adjustments and enhancements for future project years.

The project is the first of multiple projects developed by the *Deepwater Horizon* Trustees to focus on working directly with fishing communities who are helping to restore fish species injured as a result of the spill. In coming years, the Trustees will launch other projects in which the fishing community may have options to participate. The settlement with BP allocated funding for restoration projects for fish and marine invertebrates, including the *Deepwater Horizon* Oceanic Fish Restoration Project. The Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group (OO TIG) is the decision body that develops, selects, and oversees projects being implemented with the fish and marine invertebrate funds. The OO TIG is made up of four federal Trustees and is actively developing restoration plans for resources that were injured during the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, including fish and marine invertebrates. Please go to the NOAA Gulf Spill Restoration website for more information: [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean).

## What are the benefits to participating in the project?

**You can help improve the Gulf.** Restoring pelagic fish that were injured by the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill will benefit the Gulf of Mexico in the short- and long-term and will help compensate for a portion of the injuries to fish caused by the spill. Reducing fish mortality will allow fish to grow and reproduce, helping support healthier populations of fish throughout the Gulf.

**You can contribute to the vibrancy of the pelagic longline fishery.** Pelagic longline fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico have a long history of helping to ensure their fisheries are sustainable, from utilizing new types of fishing hooks to adhering to fishing area closures. Through this project, fishermen are playing a vital role in the restoration of oceanic fish species injured after the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. Vessel owner feedback and participation in the project is an important step in helping to ensure healthy and robust fish populations remain for future generations of fishermen.

**You can still fish.** You have the option to continue to fish during the repose period using up to two of three alternative gear types provided by the project: **greenstick gear** for BAYS tunas (bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack); **buoy gear** for swordfish and BAYS tunas; and, **deep drop rod and reel gear** for swordfish. (Please see more information in the “Project Details and Eligibility Requirements” document.) Participants with proper permits and the Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) can use a power-hauler for buoy gear. Offering you multiple gear options is intended to provide alternative harvest opportunities and help offset economic impacts of the repose. These alternative fishing gears result in lower bycatch mortality but are relatively underutilized in the Gulf of Mexico. Bycatch mortality occurs when nontarget species are accidentally caught and die. This portion of the project will provide an opportunity to study and improve proficiency with new gear types. Furthermore, participants with the proper permits and who have removed their pelagic longline gear can use alternative gear to fish in areas that are closed to fishing with pelagic longline gear.

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<sup>1</sup> Pending application and approval of an Exempted Fishing Permit from NOAA; for more information: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-exempted-fishing-permits>.

**You will be compensated.** There are two different and separate forms of compensation available to project participants: (1) **repose compensation** to offset revenue lost as a result of participating in the repose period, and (2) **alternative gear compensation** to help offset the costs of alternative gear fishing trips during the repose period. Each will have its own, uniquely determined level of compensation and payment schedule.

### How long will the project run? Is it permanent?

No, it's not permanent. The project, which began in 2017, is temporary, voluntary, and tailored to restore a portion of the fish species that were injured by the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. NOAA and NFWF anticipate that the 2022 repose will likely be the project's last year, although a final decision has not yet been reached. That decision will consider the level of participation needed to meet restoration goals.

## Background

### How did this project come about?

Federal and state agencies are authorized under the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) to act as Trustees on behalf of the public, to assess injuries to natural resources and their services that result from an oil spill, and to plan for restoration to compensate the public for those injuries. Under the OPA, natural resource Trustees develop and implement plans for restoring natural resources under their trusteeship. NOAA is authorized to conduct the OPA Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process as a federal Trustee and to carry out restoration efforts to implement the project. The project was included and evaluated in the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill Draft Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments, which was subject to public review and comment. In September 2015, in the Final Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments, the Trustees selected this project for implementation to help restore oceanic fish injured by the spill.

### Why did the project start so long after the oil spill?

The project was developed under the *Deepwater Horizon* early restoration framework between BP and the natural resource Trustees, as part of a suite of projects for which BP agreed to provide funding before the full settlement was reached. The *Deepwater Horizon* early restoration funding approach was novel and unprecedented. It allowed projects to commence when there was an agreement between BP and the Trustees, prior to finalizing the Natural Resource Damage Assessment or reaching a settlement. *Deepwater Horizon* early restoration projects commenced sooner than Trustees are normally able to start projects in most oil spills. Since the settlement was reached in 2016, the Trustees have been actively planning additional restoration activities for fish and marine invertebrates and it is expected that project planning and implementation will continue over the duration of the 15-year settlement payout period, and beyond.

### What impacts did the spill have on pelagic fish?

In addition to killing fish outright, the 2010 oil spill had detrimental effects to those fish that survived the initial spill and cleanup. At various depths of Gulf of Mexico waters, scientists found toxic effects on fish, including cardiac (heart) toxicity and other developmental deformities such as a curved spine, reduced growth rates, impaired immune function, reduced swimming performance, and inhibited reproduction. The *Deepwater Horizon* Oceanic Fish Restoration Project reduces fish mortality to allow fish to grow and reproduce, helping support healthier populations of fish injured by the spill throughout the Gulf.

## Project Success and Enhancements

### Were previous project years successful?

Yes, the project has been successful in achieving reduced bycatch compared to pelagic longline gear. (Please see more information on the following page.) For the 2017 pilot year, seven vessel owners from Louisiana participated in

## Has data shown that the project is meeting restoration goals?

**YES.** Data collected by NOAA from the 2017-2019 project years shows that the project is on track to meet restoration goals to reduce fish mortality and help restore more than 60 species of pelagic fish in the Gulf. Other results of note include the following:

- During the 2017-2019 project years, yellowfin tuna and swordfish were the biggest beneficiaries of the repose. They accounted for the most avoided catches — or fish that were not caught due to the repose. A total of more than 10,600 individual tuna and swordfish were avoided by participating vessels. In addition to restoring commercial fish, such as tuna and swordfish, species like lancetfish that are not commercial species but are important to the Gulf ecosystem also benefited from the project — bycatch of more than 2,100 individual lancetfish was avoided by participating vessels.
- Vessel owners' participation allowed approximately one million pounds (or 23,000 individual fish) of pelagic fish, including yellowfin tuna, swordfish, and bluefin tuna, to remain in the Gulf from 2017-2019 alone. This includes target fish that were not caught due to the repose and reduced bycatch from alternative gear.
- Although alternative gear was found to have lower catch rates than pelagic longline gear, almost 90% of all fish discarded from alternative gear were released alive.
- The fishermen's participation and testing of gear has helped NOAA and NFWF better understand the use of alternative gear and gives fishermen the opportunity to fish with these gear types, while being compensated.

a four-month pelagic longline repose and fished using greenstick gear for a collective total of 280 sea-days. In 2018 through 2020, the repose period took place from January 1 through June 30. In the 2018 project year, seven vessel owners from Louisiana and three vessel owners from Florida participated in the repose. In the 2019 project year, eight vessel owners from Louisiana and two vessel owners from Florida participated in the repose. In the 2020 project year, repose participants included seven vessel owners from Louisiana and five vessel owners from Florida. Participants used greenstick, buoy, and deep drop rod and reel gear for almost 500 sea-days in 2018, more than 500 sea-days in 2019, and over 650 sea-days in 2020. In the 2021 project year, seven vessel owners from Louisiana and four vessel owners from Florida participated in a six-month pelagic longline repose and these participants used greenstick, buoy, and deep drop rod and reel gear for 651 sea-days.

## What project enhancements have been made since 2017?

The project has regularly sought out, listened to, and benefited from the expertise of pelagic longline vessel owners. Discussions with vessel owners have shaped adjustments and enhancements to the project, which have resulted in a clear restoration benefit for oceanic fish in the Gulf.

Based on your recommendations, NFWF and NOAA have:

- Expanded the types of alternative gear for use in the project
- Established two separate regional auctions to allow for broader geographic participation
- Adjusted the payment schedule to better meet the needs of vessel owners

- Amended the EFP to allow the use of a power haul-back for buoy gear, which increased the utility of the gear in the Gulf of Mexico
- For participants who use buoy gear, offered partial reimbursement for the purchase of buoy gear tracking technology (not to exceed \$5,000)
- Offered enhanced flexibility in the use of terminal tackle
- Gave participants the option to renew their participation for the next year without reapplying, giving vessel owners greater continuity in using alternative gear from year to year
- Provided additional training and resources to participants and converted in-person training to virtual training during the pandemic to safeguard participants

## Participation

### Do I have to participate in the project?

No. The project is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you are not required to respond to the Request for Quotation.

### If I wish to participate, what level of commitment is required?

Selected offerors will be provided with a one-year contract for participation in the 2022 project year. The contract will explain the terms and conditions of participation and will include a participation period from October 15, 2021 through December 31, 2022.

## Project Details

### If I choose to participate, can I still fish during the pelagic longline repose?

Yes, but not with pelagic longline gear. You may fish in other fisheries if you have the required permits and are in compliance with the terms of your Participant Agreement and any Exempted Fishing Permits. You may fish in other fisheries using bottom longline or any other gear associated with other active permits. (Constraints may

apply, please see below.)

During the pelagic longline repose period (January 1 - June 30, 2022), participating vessels will be encouraged to use alternative gear<sup>2</sup> — greenstick, buoy, and deep drop rod and reel gear — to harvest BAYS tunas and swordfish. No bluefin tuna may be retained with any gear at any time during the repose period. This portion of the project provides an opportunity for you to study and improve your proficiency with new gear types. You can assess the alternative gear, at no cost, and be at the forefront of developing strategies to fish using these gear types in the Gulf of Mexico.

### Can I fish with bottom longline during the repose?

Yes, you can fish with bottom longline during the repose provided you have the required permits; however, you cannot have buoy gear on board at the same time. Removal of one of the four components that constitutes pelagic longline gear (power-operated hauler, mainline, floats capable of supporting the mainline, and gangions with hooks) is a requirement to participate in the project. Highly migratory species (HMS) regulations do not distinguish between the mainlines of bottom longline and pelagic longline; therefore, since bottom longline requires a power-operated hauler, mainline, and gangions with hooks to operate, the only remaining option is to remove the floats capable of supporting the mainline (i.e., buoy gear).

### Why can't I fish with pelagic longline in other areas beyond the Gulf of Mexico if I participate in the project?

Species injured by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill include those that are highly migratory — moving over very long distances within and outside of the Gulf of Mexico. Participants agree not to fish with pelagic longline gear during the repose inside or outside of the Gulf, because fishing for these species outside of the Gulf would reduce the benefits of the project and its goal to allow fish to grow, reproduce, and contribute to the Gulf ecosystem.

<sup>2</sup> NFWF maintains the right to distribute gear according to availability.



### Are there new fishing regulations for the pelagic longline fishery in the Gulf of Mexico because of this project?

No. The project is voluntary, temporary, and tailored to restore a portion of the fish resources impacted by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. The project does not affect existing management practices or regulations. As a voluntary project, no new regulations are being issued by NOAA or any other government agency.

### Will all vessels in the pelagic longline fishery participate?

No. Participation in the repose is limited and voluntary — only a portion of the overall Gulf of Mexico pelagic longline fishing fleet (estimated around 30 active vessels) will be selected to participate in any given year. Limiting participation will help to minimize potential impacts to the shoreside economy, and it will ensure that the Gulf of Mexico pelagic longline fishery continues to produce high-quality products for both domestic and international markets.

### Will fishing with the greenstick, buoy, and deep drop rod and reel gear impact the quality of the fish that are caught?

Using buoy gear or deep drop rod and reel gear to catch swordfish does not result in lower quality product. The quality of yellowfin tuna caught with buoy gear in the Gulf has not yet been evaluated. While greenstick gear may yield tuna of lesser quality, the project is exploring ways to enhance product quality. Alternative gear trainings and other resources for participants are expected to help improve proficiency with new gear types.

### Can I use my pelagic longline gear to harvest mahi in the South Atlantic during the repose period?

No. Pelagic longline vessels participating in the project's voluntary six-month repose agree not to fish with pelagic longline gear inside or outside of the Gulf of Mexico; many of the fish that this gear might catch outside the Gulf may be the same fish or from the same stocks that live within the Gulf. Fishing outside of the Gulf would reduce the benefits of the repose for these species since fishing mortality reduction would not occur. If fishing with alternative gear as part of the project, you are permitted to retain mahi if possession is legal.

### What will happen with the alternative gear when the project ends?

Project participants may be eligible to take permanent possession of alternative gear following the final repose year. NFWF and NOAA will provide more information to eligible vessel owners in spring 2022.

## Compensation

There are two different and separate forms of compensation available to project participants: (1) **repose compensation** to offset revenue lost as a result of participating in the repose period, and (2) **alternative gear compensation** to help offset the costs of alternative gear fishing trips during the repose period. Each will have its own, uniquely determined level of compensation and payment schedule. Compensation for participation in the repose will be determined through two separate auctions, one in each of two regions in the Gulf of Mexico — one in the western Gulf (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas) and one in the eastern Gulf (Florida and the Atlantic Coast).

(For more information on compensation for the repose and using alternative gear, please see the “Compensation and Auction Details” document.)

### What is the 2022 auction format?

In 2022, compensation will be determined once again by a Pay-As-Bid reverse auction. This means that your compensation for participation in the repose will be equal to your quote, if selected.

### What should I consider in preparing my quotation?

Repose compensation is to offset revenue lost as a result of participating in the repose period. Vessel owners should consider general operating costs associated with participation, including but not limited to insurance premiums, in preparing their quotation. Vessel owners should also take into account uncertainty associated with COVID-19 and how it may affect your business. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your liaison.

### Why are there separate regional auctions?

Holding the auction in two regions accounts for operational differences between the two areas and encourages broad geographic distribution of participants.

### If I am selected in 2022, and I choose to renew, what will my compensation be in future years?

Based on participation to date, the 2022 repose will likely be the last year of the project; however, if the project continues beyond the 2022 repose, your compensation in future years will be based upon the quote provided in response to the 2022 Request for Quotation and/or renewal process, if eligible. NFWF may consider modest increases to repose compensation.

### What if I want additional compensation for renewing the contract?

Participants are not required to renew their contracts. Participants may choose to respond with a new quotation to a future Request for Quotation, if offered. However, your quote will be considered and evaluated relative to quotes received from all eligible vessel owners.

## Eligibility

### What are the eligibility criteria for participating in the project?

To be eligible to participate in the project, you must:

- Be actively fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. This means you have made at least one pelagic longline set in the Gulf of Mexico during the last two years (January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020).
- Own a pelagic longline fishing vessel that is seaworthy and operational.
- Possess all three limited access permits necessary to engage in pelagic longline fishing in the Gulf of Mexico: (1) a directed or incidental swordfish permit, (2) a directed or incidental shark permit and (3) an Atlantic Tuna Longline category permit.
- Have sufficient Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) allocation to make a pelagic longline set in the Gulf of Mexico.

### When evaluating whether a pelagic longline fishing vessel has made at least one pelagic longline set in the Gulf of Mexico in the last two years, what timeframe will be used?

To be eligible to participate in the 2022 repose, NOAA will consider any trips taken in the Gulf of Mexico between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2020 where at least one pelagic longline set was made. If you are interested in the project but are unsure if you meet the eligibility criteria, please contact Gray Redding at NFWF ([gray.redding@nfwf.org](mailto:gray.redding@nfwf.org); 202-595-2438).

### I recently obtained a new pelagic longline vessel. Am I eligible?

NFWF and NOAA will determine eligibility dependent on your fishing history and/or that of the vessel. If you are interested in the project, but are unsure if you meet the eligibility criteria, please contact Gray Redding at NFWF ([gray.redding@nfwf.org](mailto:gray.redding@nfwf.org); 202-595-2438).

### Can I choose to use a smaller or different vessel to fish with the alternative gear?

Yes. You may choose to use an alternative vessel to fish with greenstick, buoy, or deep drop rod and reel gear in accordance with the fishing gear authorizations of your permits. If interested in this option, you are subject to additional terms and conditions:

- You are responsible for applying to NOAA for an EFP to use an alternative vessel. You will be responsible for providing NFWF with proof of EFP approval.
- Your pelagic longline vessel cannot be used to fish for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) species at any time or in any location during the repose period.
- Alternative vessels will be subject to initial inspection. If the vessel is found to not meet eligibility requirements, any offer of participation may be null and void.
- If the alternative vessel is not equipped with a VMS unit, one will be provided for use during the project; service fees are the responsibility of the participant.

## Do I need insurance to be eligible to submit a quotation?

No, you will not be asked to submit any proof of insurance with your quotation. If selected for the project, you will be required to provide proof of insurance at specified coverage levels prior to installation and use of alternative gear. (See below for more information on insurance requirements.)

## Participation Requirements

### What are the key requirements to participate in the project?

- By agreeing to participate in the project, you will refrain from all pelagic longline fishing during the repose period from January 1 through June 30, 2022.
- Landing of bluefin tuna on any alternative gear is not allowed by participating vessels from January 1 through June 30, 2022.
- You will be required to remove pelagic longline gear from your vessel(s) and will be subject to periodic inspection to ensure no pelagic longline trips are taken during the repose. (Please see more detail below.)
- **You must keep your Vessel Monitoring System unit on at all times during the repose.**
- You must familiarize yourself and comply with all applicable regulations, including the project's Participant Agreement and any NOAA HMS Exempted Fishing Permit terms.
- If you are properly permitted to fish in nonpelagic longline fisheries, you can continue fishing during the repose using those permits, provided you comply with the terms of your Participant Agreement and any NOAA HMS Exempted Fishing Permit terms.
- If you elect to participate in the alternative gear portion of the project, in addition to the above requirements:
  - You must complete all logbooks and documentation in a timely manner.
  - You must notify the NOAA Observer Program prior to departure and take observers on board during alternative gear trips when requested.

- Participants who use alternative gear must have the minimum insurance coverage and proof of insurance must be provided prior to gear installation and use.

(Read more in the "Project Details and Eligibility Requirements" document.)

### What insurance coverage do I need to participate in the project?

All participants in the project must secure adequate insurance. In order to participate in the alternative gear portion of the project, participants will be required to provide proof of insurance prior to installation and use of alternative gear. These required coverages include: (i) hull and machinery insurance to cover the value of your vessel; (ii) Protection and Indemnity (including Jones Act/crew cover), wreck removal, and collision with a minimum limit of \$500,000; and (iii) pollution coverage with a minimum limit of \$1 million.

## Annual Renewal

To participate in the 2022 Oceanic Fish Restoration Project, all interested and eligible vessel owners that have not renewed their contract must submit a quotation. Based on participation to date, the 2022 repose will likely be the last year of the project; however, if the project continues beyond the 2022 repose, participants will have the option to request renewal of their participation in 2023.

### Can I change my alternative gear selection if I renew my contract in future years?

We cannot guarantee that the alternative gear you want to use will be available if the project continues in future years. While NFWF will cover cost of terminal gear for the 2022 repose, they do not expect to purchase additional sets of alternative gear.

### What if I decide I no longer want to use alternative gear during or after 2022?

You are not required to use the gear at any time during the repose period, but you will not receive alternative gear compensation. You remain responsible for maintaining the gear in working condition throughout your participation in the project and will be expected to comply with periodic gear inspections. Project participants may be eligible to



take permanent possession of alternative gear following the final repose year. NFWF and NOAA will provide more information to eligible vessel owners in spring 2022.

## Gear

### Do I have to remove the mainline of my pelagic longline gear?

It depends on the alternative gear that you choose. Removal of one of the four components that constitutes pelagic longline gear (power-operated hauler, mainline, floats capable of supporting the mainline, and gangions with hooks) is a requirement to participate in the project. The easiest way to accomplish this is to remove the floats. However, buoy gear includes floats that can support the mainline — so if buoy gear is on board, the only option is to remove the mainline of the longline gear. Therefore, you DO need to remove the longline if you have buoy gear on board, but you DO NOT need to remove the mainline if you have deep drop rod and reel gear and/or greenstick gear on board, and you remove the floats. You should consider costs of removal and storage of gear when planning your participation in the project.

### Will I be responsible for maintaining the alternative gear?

Yes. Once the gear is transferred to you, you are responsible for keeping the gear in working condition and subject to inspection to confirm that gear is properly maintained. You are also responsible to notify NFWF as soon as possible if gear is lost, damaged, or stolen. Project participants may be eligible to take permanent possession of alternative gear following the final repose year. NFWF and NOAA will provide more information to eligible vessel owners in spring 2022.

### Will I own the alternative gear after installation?

You will hold conditional title to all equipment provided through the project, subject to federal procurement regulation (see 2 CFR 200.313). Until NFWF provides disposition instructions, you are responsible for the proper use, maintenance, record, and storage of it, including replacing any component of the gear or rigging that is broken or lost, or otherwise bringing the gear back to fully functioning condition. You should consider costs that may be incurred due to this requirement when planning your

participation in the project. Project participants may be eligible to take permanent possession of alternative gear following the final repose year. NFWF and NOAA will provide more information to eligible vessel owners in spring 2022.

### If I select buoy gear, what options are there to help me keep track of the gear while fishing?

Under federal law, automatic identification systems (AIS) may not be used to track fishing gear. Participants may use buoy gear without AIS. Past project participants have used various approaches to tracking the gear while fishing and future participants will be encouraged to experiment. For new participants who use buoy gear, partial reimbursement is available for the purchase of buoy gear tracking technology (not to exceed \$5000).

## Observers/Alternative Gear

### Will I be required to take an observer when fishing during the 2022 repose?

When requested, you must take observers on board during alternative gear trips. This project will have enhanced onboard observer coverage compared to the HMS pelagic observer program. Observers may be placed on board participating vessels for every trip. Actual coverage will be based on availability of observers.

### Who is responsible for the costs of meals for observers?

You are responsible for the costs of food and drink for observers and must ensure observers are provided living quarters and amenities comparable to crew members. You should consider these costs when planning your participation in the project. Participants will not be reimbursed for these costs.

### How do I get reimbursed for other costs of participating in the project?

Alternative gear compensation is provided to help offset the costs of alternative gear fishing trips during the repose period. NFWF will cover the cost of the gear components and costs associated with installation of and training on the alternative gears. You will be responsible for maintenance of the alternative gear. NFWF will cover cost of terminal gear for the 2022 repose. You may purchase,

at your own cost, other items to supplement the gear you have been provided. NFWF will not provide reimbursement for costs unless approved in writing prior to purchase.

## Retaining Fish

### Can I fish for bluefin tuna during the project?

No. Bluefin tuna may not be retained with any gear at any time during the repose.

### What if I accidentally catch a bluefin tuna using the alternative gear?

A bluefin tuna that is caught and released alive with alternative gear is not counted against your IBQ allocation. A bluefin tuna that is dead when retrieved cannot be retained and is counted against your IBQ allocation. No bluefin, nor any part of a bluefin, can be retained on any gear type or in any condition during the repose.

### Can I retain BAYS tuna with buoy gear during the project?

During the repose, if you are interested in using buoy gear to retain BAYS tuna, you must apply to NOAA for an Exempted Fishing Permit. The project Exempted Fishing Permit is only valid during the repose period — from January 1 through June 30. No fishing under the Exempted Fishing Permit is authorized on or after July 1, 2022.

- After the repose, participants may continue to fish using alternative gear, but they may not use buoy gear to retain BAYS tuna since the Exempted Fishing Permit expires after the repose.
- No bluefin tuna may be retained with any gear at any time during repose.

## Completing a Request for Quotation Form

### How do I participate in the project?

To participate in the project, you MUST submit the project's Request for Quotation (RFQ) form to arrive by mail to NFWF no later than **October 12, 2021**. Community liaisons (contact info listed on page 1) are available to assist with the forms. Completed RFQ forms must be submitted via mail directly to NFWF at:

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
c/o Gray Redding  
1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, D.C. 20005

The RFQ form may be delivered via U.S. Mail or by an express mail service, but you bear the sole responsibility of ensuring the package arrives to NFWF by the designated date and any risk associated with the delivery method chosen. NFWF is not responsible for mail or deliveries that are lost or misdirected.

You should review your quote carefully before submitting; incomplete, illegible, or unsigned forms may be deemed ineligible for consideration. NFWF will deem the RFQ form to be "submitted" only upon receiving the fully completed form. Quotes will be evaluated, and you should expect to be notified by early November 2021 about whether you have been selected to participate in the 2022 repose.

### What information will be requested in the Request for Quotation form?

The form asks for contact information, vessel ID number, and basic financial documents. In addition, you must indicate your interest in using alternative fishing gear and interest in using an alternative fishing vessel. The rate of compensation for participation in the repose will be determined through a separate auction in two regions — the western Gulf of Mexico and the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

You must name your price for taking part in the project by submitting a quote. (For a detailed description of the auction, please see the “Compensation and Auction Details” document.) If you intend to participate in the alternative gear portion of the project, you should consider the expected cost of your insurance premium when developing your quote. If selected, participants who wish to participate in the alternative gear portion of the project must provide NFWF with proof of adequate insurance before the installation and use of alternative gear.

### **What if I own multiple vessels?**

You will need to submit a separate RFQ form, including a separate quote, for each individual vessel that you propose to use as part of this project.

### **How will the Requests for Quotation forms be evaluated?**

All received RFQ forms will be evaluated to determine eligibility. In addition to the eligibility criteria outlined above, NOAA will evaluate enforcement history. Past or outstanding violations may preclude participation in

the project; however, minor violations that have been resolved are not expected to have any bearing on eligibility. All offerors will be vetted through the General Services Administration’s government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions. NFWF and NOAA will evaluate all quotes received. Quotes received from the western Gulf of Mexico auction and those received from the eastern Gulf of Mexico auction will be evaluated separately but using the same criteria. Offerors will be ranked based on the lowest cost quotes received; quotes will not be compared between regions.

### **What if there are two identical quotes for compensation in the same region?**

If there are two identical quotes for compensation in the same region, NFWF and NOAA will give preference to participants who have not participated in past project years and those who are willing to use the alternative gear. The type(s) of alternative gear you choose will not determine your prioritization or selection to participate in the project.

