**Marine Region Highlights**

**November 2024**

Large bluefin tuna settled into South Jersey nearshore waters last month and as such came numerous landings by recreational anglers. A mandatory Federal reporting requirement exists within 24 hours of landing a bluefin tuna to ensure long term sustainability and to demonstrate the recreational stake in the fishery. Lieutenant Petruccelli and CPO Tomlin followed up on numerous landings and found significant non-compliance with the reporting. These cases will be referred to NMFS for Federal enforcement action. The first offence for failing to report a bluefin tuna is a $1,000 fine.

Lieutenant Petruccelli inspected a vessel that returned from a day of recreational angling for bluefin tuna, but did not have any catch onboard. The Lieutenant found the individuals had a commercial highly migratory species (HMS) permit, which limits them to bluefin tuna 73” or greater when the commercial fishery is open. After a brief investigation, it was determined that the same individuals on the same vessel had landed a 49” bluefin tuna the day before. The case was referred to NMFS for possible enforcement action.

**December 2024**

CPO Tomlin charged a North Carolina-based commercial fishing vessel operator for engaging in directed landings of summer flounder and black sea bass without the required New Jersey permits. The vessel landed and sold thousands of pounds of flounder and black sea bass to a permitted dealer on three separate occasions in November. The vessel was charged with making the landings without a permit and the dealer was also charged for receiving the fish from an unpermitted vessel.

Lieutenant Petruccelli found an Avalon-based recreational charter fishing vessel in unlawful possession of striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Lieutenant Petruccelli conducted an inspection of the vessel approximately nine miles offshore where it was actively fishing for and in possession of six striped bass. The first offense for possession of striped bass in the EEZ is a fine of $250 per fish. The case was referred to the National Marine Fisheries Service for enforcement action.