

shareholders based on shareholdings on the date the withheld IFQ allocation is distributed.

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(6) *Returning IFQ shares.* Any shares contained in IFQ accounts that have never been activated since January 1, 2010, in the IFQ program are returned permanently to NMFS on July 12, 2018.

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■ 3. In § 622.22, revise paragraph (a)(4) and add paragraph (a)(9) to read as follows:

§ 622.22 Individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for Gulf groupers and tilefishes.

(a) * * *

(4) *IFQ allocation.* IFQ allocation is the amount of Gulf groupers and tilefishes, in pounds gutted weight, an IFQ shareholder or allocation holder is authorized to possess, land, or sell during a given fishing year. IFQ allocation is derived at the beginning of each year by multiplying a shareholder's IFQ share times the annual commercial quota for Gulf groupers and tilefishes. If the quota is increased after the beginning of the fishing year, then IFQ allocation is derived by multiplying a shareholder's IFQ share at the time of the quota increase by the amount the annual commercial quota for groupers and tilefishes is increased. If a reduction in the applicable commercial quota specified in § 622.39(a)(1) is expected to occur after January 1, the beginning of the fishing year, but before June 1 in that same fishing year, NMFS will withhold distribution of IFQ allocation of the applicable groupers and tilefishes commercial quota on January 1 in the amount equal to that reduction. If a final rule to implement the commercial quota reduction is not published in the **Federal Register** and effective by June 1, NMFS will distribute withheld IFQ allocation of the applicable groupers and tilefishes commercial quota to current shareholders based on the date the withheld IFQ allocation is distributed.

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(9) *Returning IFQ shares.* Any shares contained in IFQ accounts that have never been activated since January 1, 2010, in the IFQ program are returned permanently to NMFS on July 12, 2018.

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■ 4. In § 622.26, revise paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 622.26 Recordkeeping and reporting.

(a) *Commercial vessel owners and operators.* (1) The owner or operator of a vessel for which a commercial permit for Gulf reef fish has been issued, as required under § 622.20(a)(1), or whose

vessel fishes for or lands reef fish in or from state waters adjoining the Gulf EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must maintain a fishing record on a form available from the SRD. These completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each fishing trip. If no fishing occurred during a calendar month, a report so stating must be submitted on one of the forms postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of that month. Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

(2) *Advance notice of landing—(i) General requirement.* For the purpose of this paragraph (a)(2), landing means to arrive at a dock, berth, beach, seawall, or ramp. The owner or operator of a vessel landing Gulf reef fish not managed under an IFQ program or Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish harvested in the Gulf is responsible for ensuring that NMFS is contacted at least 3 hours, but no more than 24 hours, in advance of landing to report the time, date, and location of landing, and the vessel identification number (e.g., Coast Guard registration number or state registration number). The vessel must land at an approved landing location and within 1 hour after the time given in the landing notification, except as provided in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section. A vessel landing Gulf reef fish managed under an IFQ program must also comply with the requirements in §§ 622.21 and 622.22, as applicable.

(ii) *Submitting an advance landing notification.* Authorized methods for contacting NMFS and submitting a completed landing notification include the VMS unit, or another contact method approved by NMFS.

(iii) *Landing prior to the notification time.* The owner or operator of a vessel that has completed a landing notification and submitted it to NMFS may land prior to the notification time, only if an authorized officer is present at the landing site, is available to meet the vessel, and has authorized the owner or operator of the vessel to land prior to the notification time.

(iv) *Changes to a landing notification.* The owner or operator of a vessel who has submitted a landing notification to NMFS may make changes to the notification by submitting a superseding notification. If the initial superseding notification makes changes to the time of landing that is later than the original time in the notification, the vessel does not need to wait an additional 3 hours to land. If the initial superseding notification makes changes to the landing location, the time of landing is earlier than previously specified, or

more than one superseding notification is submitted on a trip, the vessel must wait an additional 3 hours to land, except as provided in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section.

(v) *Approved landing locations.* Gulf reef fish not managed under an IFQ program, and Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish harvested in the Gulf, must be landed at an approved landing location. Landing locations must be approved by the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement prior to a vessel landing these species at these sites. Proposed landing locations may be submitted to NMFS; however, new landing locations will be approved only at the end of each calendar-year quarter. To have a landing location approved by the end of the calendar-year quarter, it must be submitted at least 45 days before the end of the calendar-year quarter. NMFS will evaluate the proposed sites based on, but not limited to, the criteria at §§ 622.21(b)(5)(v) and 622.22(b)(5)(v).

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 141107936–5399–02]

RIN 0648–XG286

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2018 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Gray Triggerfish; January Through June Season

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS implements accountability measures for commercial gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. NMFS projects commercial landings for gray triggerfish will reach the commercial annual catch limit (ACL) for the January through June period by June 13, 2018. Therefore, NMFS is closing the commercial sector for gray triggerfish in the South Atlantic EEZ on June 13, 2018. This closure is necessary to protect the gray triggerfish resource.

DATES: This rule is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, June 13, 2018, until July 1, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Vara, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, email: mary.vara@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic includes gray triggerfish and is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and is implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

The commercial ACL (equal to the commercial quota) for gray triggerfish in the South Atlantic is divided into two 6-month fishing seasons and allocates 50 percent, 156,162 lb (70,834 kg), round weight, of the total commercial ACL of 312,324 lb (141,668 kg), round weight, to each fishing season, January through June, and July through December, as specified in 50 CFR 622.190(a)(8)(i) and (ii).

Under 50 CFR 622.193(q)(1)(i), NMFS is required to close the commercial sector for gray triggerfish when either commercial quota specified in § 622.190(a)(8)(i) or (ii) is reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. NMFS has determined that the commercial quota for South Atlantic gray triggerfish for the January through June fishing season will be reached by June 13, 2018. Accordingly, the commercial sector for South Atlantic gray triggerfish is closed effective at 12:01 a.m., local time, June 13, 2018, until the start of the July

through December fishing season on July 1, 2018.

The operator of a vessel with a valid Federal commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper having gray triggerfish on board must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such gray triggerfish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, June 13, 2018. During the closure, the bag limit specified in 50 CFR 622.187(b)(8), and the possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.187(c), apply to all harvest or possession of gray triggerfish in or from the South Atlantic EEZ. Also, during the closure, the sale or purchase of gray triggerfish taken from the South Atlantic EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on the sale or purchase does not apply to gray triggerfish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, June 13, 2018, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

For a person on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery has been issued, the bag and possession limits and sale and purchase provisions of the commercial closure for gray triggerfish apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or Federal waters, as specified in 50 CFR 622.190(c)(1)(ii).

Classification

The Regional Administrator, NMFS Southeast Region, has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of gray triggerfish and the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.193(q)(1)(i) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the commercial sector for gray triggerfish constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), as such procedures are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the rule that established the split commercial season for gray triggerfish and the rule that established the closure provisions have already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure. Such procedures are contrary to the public interest because of the need to immediately implement this action to protect gray triggerfish since the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the commercial quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established commercial quota.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 7, 2018.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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