

tilefish is closed effective at 12:01 a.m., local time, July 23, 2019.

The commercial longline component for South Atlantic golden tilefish closed on March 14, 2019, and will remain closed for the remainder of the fishing year, until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2020 (84 FR 8997; March 13, 2019). Additionally, the recreational sector for South Atlantic golden tilefish closed on June 17, 2019, and will remain closed for the remainder of the fishing year, until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2020 (84 FR 27479; June 16, 2019). Therefore, because the recreational sector and the commercial longline component is already closed, and NMFS is closing the commercial hook-and-line component through this temporary rule, all fishing for South Atlantic golden tilefish in the EEZ will be closed effective at 12:01 a.m., local time, July 23, 2019, until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2020.

The operator of a vessel with a valid Federal commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper having golden tilefish on board must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such golden tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, July 23, 2019. During the closure, the harvest or possession and sale or purchase of golden tilefish taken from the EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of golden tilefish that were harvested by hook-and-line, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, July 23, 2019, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. For a person on board a vessel for which a Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery has been issued, the prohibitions on harvest or possession and sale and purchase provisions of the commercial closure for golden tilefish would 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, Southeast Region, NMFS, has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of South Atlantic golden tilefish and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.193(a)(1) 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 Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the commercial hook-and-line component for golden tilefish 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 itself has 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 the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the commercial ACL for the hook-and-line component, and there is a need to immediately implement this action to protect golden tilefish. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and could potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established commercial ACL.

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: July 18, 2019.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 635

[Docket No. 180117042-8884-02]

RIN 0648-XT008

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS is transferring 30 metric tons (mt) of Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) quota from the Reserve category to the Harpoon category. With this transfer, the adjusted Harpoon category

quota for the 2019 fishing season is 76 mt. The 2019 Harpoon category fishery is open until November 15, 2019, or until the Harpoon category quota is reached, whichever comes first. The action is based on consideration of the regulatory determination criteria regarding inseason adjustments, and applies to Atlantic tunas Harpoon category (commercial) permitted vessels.

DATES: Effective July 18, 2019, through November 15, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah McLaughlin, 978-281-9260, or Larry Redd, 301-427-8503.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations implemented under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA; 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) governing the harvest of BFT by persons and vessels subject to U.S. jurisdiction are found at 50 CFR part 635. Section 635.27 subdivides the U.S. BFT quota recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and as implemented by the United States among the various domestic fishing categories, per the allocations established in Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (2006 Consolidated HMS FMP) (Amendment 7) (79 FR 71510, December 2, 2014), and in accordance with implementing regulations. NMFS is required under ATCA and the Magnuson-Stevens Act to provide U.S. fishing vessels with a reasonable opportunity to harvest the ICCAT-recommended quota.

The current baseline quotas for the Harpoon and Reserve categories are 46 mt and 29.5 mt, respectively. See § 635.27(a). To date for 2019, NMFS has published two actions that have adjusted the available 2019 Reserve category quota, which currently is 143 mt (84 FR 3724, February 13, 2019, and 84 FR 6701, February 28, 2019). The 2019 Harpoon category fishery opened June 1 and is open through November 15, 2019, or until the Harpoon category quota is reached, whichever comes first.

Quota Transfer

Under § 635.27(a)(9), NMFS has the authority to transfer quota among fishing categories or subcategories, after considering regulatory determination criteria provided under § 635.27(a)(8). NMFS has considered the relevant determination criteria and their applicability to the Harpoon category

fishery. These considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Regarding the usefulness of information obtained from catches in the particular category for biological sampling and monitoring of the status of the stock (§ 635.27(a)(8)(i)), biological samples collected from BFT landed by Harpoon category fishermen and provided by BFT dealers continue to provide valuable data for ongoing scientific studies of BFT age and growth, migration, and reproductive status. Additional opportunity to land BFT in the Harpoon category would support the continued collection of a broad range of data for these studies and for stock monitoring purposes.

NMFS also considered the catches of the Harpoon category quota to date and the likelihood of closure of that segment of the fishery if no adjustment is made (§ 635.27(a)(8)(ii) and (ix)). As of July 17, 2019, the Harpoon category has landed 38.5 mt. Commercial-size BFT are currently readily available to vessels fishing under the Harpoon category quota. Without a quota transfer at this time, Harpoon category participants would have to stop BFT fishing activities with very short notice, while commercial-sized BFT remain available in the areas Harpoon category permitted vessels operate. Transferring 30 mt of BFT quota from the Reserve category would result in a total of 76 mt being available for the Harpoon category for the 2019 Harpoon category fishing season.

Regarding the projected ability of the vessels fishing under the particular category quota (here, the Harpoon category) to harvest the additional amount of BFT before the end of the fishing year (§ 635.27(a)(8)(iii)), NMFS considered Harpoon category landings over the last several years. Landings are highly variable and depend on access to commercial-sized BFT and fishing conditions, among other factors. NMFS anticipates that the Harpoon category could harvest the transferred 30 mt prior to the end of the Harpoon category season, subject to weather conditions and BFT availability. NMFS may transfer unused Harpoon category quota to other quota categories, as appropriate. NMFS also anticipates that some underharvest of the 2018 adjusted U.S. BFT quota will be carried forward to 2019 and placed in the Reserve category, in accordance with the regulations. Thus, this quota transfer would allow fishermen to take advantage of the availability of fish on the fishing grounds, consider the expected increases in available 2019 quota, and provide a reasonable

opportunity to harvest the full U.S. BFT quota.

NMFS also considered the estimated amounts by which quotas for other gear categories of the fishery might be exceeded (§ 635.27(a)(8)(iv)) and the ability to account for all 2019 landings and dead discards. In the last several years, total U.S. BFT landings have been below the available U.S. quota such that the United States has carried forward the maximum amount of underharvest allowed by ICCAT from one year to the next. NMFS will need to account for 2019 landings and dead discards within the adjusted U.S. quota, consistent with ICCAT recommendations, and anticipates having sufficient quota to do that.

NMFS also considered the effects of the adjustment on the BFT stock and the effects of the transfer on accomplishing the objectives of the FMP (§ 635.27(a)(8)(v) and (vi)). This transfer would be consistent with the current quotas, which were established and analyzed in the 2018 BFT quota final rule (83 FR 51391, October 11, 2018), and with objectives of the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and amendments and is not expected to negatively impact stock health or to affect the stock in ways not already analyzed in those documents. Another principal consideration is the objective of providing opportunities to harvest the full annual U.S. BFT quota without exceeding it based on the goals of the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and amendments, including to achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis and to optimize the ability of all permit categories to harvest their full BFT quota allocations (related to § 635.27(a)(8)(x)).

Based on the considerations above, NMFS is transferring 30 mt of the available 143 mt of Reserve category quota to the Harpoon category. Therefore, NMFS adjusts the Harpoon category quota to 76 mt for the 2019 Harpoon category fishing season (*i.e.*, through November 15, 2019, or until the Harpoon category quota is reached, whichever comes first), and adjusts the Reserve category quota to 113 mt.

Monitoring and Reporting

NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fishery closely. Dealers are required to submit landing reports within 24 hours of a dealer receiving BFT. Late reporting by dealers compromises NMFS' ability to timely implement actions such as quota adjustments and closures, and may result in enforcement actions. Additionally, and separate from the dealer reporting requirement, Harpoon category vessel owners are

required to report their own catch of all BFT retained or discarded dead, within 24 hours of the landing(s) or end of each trip, by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov, using the HMS Catch Reporting app, or calling (888) 872-8862 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.).

Depending on the level of fishing effort and catch rates of BFT, NMFS may determine that additional action (*i.e.*, quota and/or daily retention limit adjustment, or closure) is necessary to ensure available quota is not exceeded or to enhance scientific data collection from, and fishing opportunities in, all geographic areas. If needed, subsequent adjustments will be published in the **Federal Register**. In addition, fishermen may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (978) 281-9260, or access hmspermits.noaa.gov, for updates on quota monitoring and inseason adjustments.

Classification

The Assistant Administrator for NMFS (AA) finds that it is impracticable and contrary to the public interest to provide prior notice of, and an opportunity for public comment on, this action for the following reasons:

The regulations implementing the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and amendments provide for inseason retention limit adjustments to respond to the unpredictable nature of BFT availability on the fishing grounds, the migratory nature of this species, and the regional variations in the BFT fishery. Affording prior notice and opportunity for public comment to implement the quota transfer for the remainder of 2019 is also contrary to the public interest as such a delay would likely result in closure of the Harpoon fishery when the baseline quota is met and the need to re-open the fishery, with attendant administrative costs and costs to the fishery. The delay would preclude the fishery from harvesting BFT that are available on the fishing grounds and that might otherwise become unavailable during a delay. Therefore, the AA finds good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment. For these reasons, there also is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d) to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness.

This action is being taken under § 635.27(a)(9), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: July 18, 2019.
Alan D. Risenhoover,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 180831813-9170-02]

RIN 0648-XH099

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reapportionment of the 2019 Gulf of Alaska Pacific Halibut Prohibited Species Catch Limits for the Trawl Deep-Water and Shallow-Water Fishery Categories

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; reapportionment.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reapportioning the seasonal apportionments of the 2019 Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for the trawl deep-water and shallow-water species fishery categories in the Gulf of Alaska. This action is necessary to account for the actual halibut PSC use by the trawl

deep-water and shallow-water species fishery categories from May 15, 2019 through June 30, 2019. This action is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 18, 2019 through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The final 2019 and 2020 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (84 FR 9416, March 14, 2019) apportion the 2019 Pacific halibut PSC limit for trawl gear in the GOA to two trawl fishery categories: A deep-water species fishery and a shallow-water species fishery. The halibut PSC limit for these two trawl fishery categories is further apportioned by season, including four seasonal apportionments to the shallow-water species fishery and four seasonal apportionments to the deep-water species fishery. The two

fishery categories also are apportioned a combined, fifth seasonal halibut PSC limit. Unused seasonal apportionments are added to the next season apportionment during a fishing year.

Regulations at § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(D) require NMFS to combine management of the available trawl halibut PSC limits in the second season (April 1 through July 1) deep-water and shallow-water species fishery categories for use in either fishery from May 15 through June 30 of each year. Furthermore, NMFS is required to reapportion the halibut PSC limit between the deep-water and shallow-water species fisheries after June 30 to account for actual halibut PSC use by each fishery category during May 15 through June 30. As of July 17, 2019, NMFS has determined that the trawl deep-water and shallow-water fisheries used 51 metric tons (mt) and 32 mt of halibut PSC, respectively, from May 15 through June 30. Accordingly, pursuant to § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(D), the Regional Administrator is reapportioning the combined first and second seasonal apportionments (860 mt) of halibut PSC limit between the trawl deep-water and shallow-water fishery categories to account for the actual PSC use (428 mt) in each fishery from January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019. Therefore, Table 15 of the final 2019 and 2020 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (84 FR 9416, March 14, 2019) is revised consistent with this adjustment.

TABLE 15—FINAL 2019 AND 2020 APPORTIONMENT OF PACIFIC HALIBUT PSC TRAWL LIMITS BETWEEN THE TRAWL GEAR DEEP-WATER SPECIES FISHERY AND THE SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES FISHERY CATEGORIES

[Values are in metric tons]

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water ¹	Total
January 20–April 1	19	141	160
April 1–July 1	42	226	268
Subtotal, combined first and second season limit (January 20–July 1)	61	367	428
July 1–August 1	287	607	894
August 1–October 1	53	75	128
Subtotal January 20–October 1	401	1,049	1,450
October 1–December 31 ²	256
Total	1,706

¹ Vessels participating in cooperatives in the Central GOA Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 through September 1) deep-water species fishery halibut PSC apportionment.

² There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fishery categories during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds good cause to waive the

requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) as such requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public

interest as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would allow for harvests that exceed the originally specified apportionment of the halibut PSC limits to the deep-water and shallow-water fishery categories.