

**PART 648—FISHERIES OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES**

■ 1. The authority citation for part 648 continues to read as follows:

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

■ 2. In § 648.2, revise the “Fishing year” definition to read as follows:

**§ 648.2 Definitions.**

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fishing year* means:

(1) For the Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery, from March 1 through the last day of February of the following year.

(2) Beginning in 2018, for the Atlantic sea scallop fishery, from April 1 through March 31 of the following year (for 2017, the Atlantic sea scallop fishing year will be from March 1, 2017, through March 31, 2018).

(3) For the NE multispecies, monkfish and skate fisheries, from May 1 through April 30 of the following year.

(4) For all other fisheries in this part, from January 1 through December 31.

\* \* \* \* \*

■ 3. In § 648.292, revise paragraph (a) introductory text and paragraph (a)(1) to read as follows:

**§ 648.292 Tilefish specifications.**

(a) *Golden Tilefish.* The golden tilefish fishing year is the 12-month period beginning with January 1, annually.

(1) *Annual specification process.* The Tilefish Monitoring Committee shall review the ABC recommendation of the SSC, golden tilefish landings and discards information, and any other relevant available data to determine if the golden tilefish ACL, ACT, or total allowable landings (TAL) for the IFQ and/or incidental sectors of the fishery require modification to respond to any changes to the golden tilefish stock’s biological reference points or to ensure any applicable rebuilding schedule is maintained. The Monitoring Committee will consider whether any additional management measures or revisions to existing measures are necessary to ensure that the IFQ and/or incidental TAL will not be exceeded. Based on that review, the Monitoring Committee will recommend the golden tilefish ACL, ACTs, and TALs to the Tilefish Committee of the MAFMC. Based on these recommendations and any public comment received, the Tilefish Committee shall recommend to the MAFMC the appropriate golden tilefish ACL, ACT, TAL, and other management measures for both the IFQ and the incidental sectors of the fishery for a single fishing year or up to the maximum number of years needed to be

consistent with the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council-approved stock assessment schedule. The MAFMC shall review these recommendations and any public comments received, and recommend to the Regional Administrator, at least 120 days prior to the beginning of the next fishing year, the appropriate golden tilefish ACL, ACT, TAL, the percentage of TAL allocated to research quota, and any management measures to ensure that the TAL will not be exceeded, for both the IFQ and the incidental sectors of the fishery, for the next fishing year, or up to the maximum number of fishing years consistent with the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council-approved stock assessment schedule. The MAFMC’s recommendations must include supporting documentation, as appropriate, concerning the environmental and economic impacts of the recommendations. The Regional Administrator shall review these recommendations and, after such review, NMFS will publish a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** specifying the annual golden tilefish ACL, ACT, TAL, and any management measures to ensure that the TAL will not be exceeded for the upcoming fishing year or years for both the IFQ and the incidental sectors of the fishery. After considering public comments, NMFS will publish a final rule in the **Federal Register** to implement the golden tilefish ACL, ACTs, TALs and any management measures. The previous year’s specifications will remain effective unless revised through the specification process and/or the research quota process described in paragraph (a)(5) of this section. NMFS will issue notification in the **Federal Register** if the previous year’s specifications will not be changed.

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 220223-0054; RTID 0648-XC322]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; reallocation.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amount of the 2022 Atka mackerel incidental catch allowance (ICA) for the Bering Sea subarea and Eastern Aleutian district (BS/EAI) to the Amendment 80 cooperative allocation for the BS/EAI in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the 2022 total allowable catch of Atka mackerel in the BSAI to be fully harvested.

**DATES:** Effective 12:00 p.m. Alaska local time (A.l.t.), November 7, 2022, through 12:00 a.m., A.l.t., January 1, 2023.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steve Whitney, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (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 2022 Atka mackerel ICA for the BS/EAI is 800 metric tons (mt) and the 2022 Atka mackerel total allowable catch allocated to the Amendment 80 cooperative for the BS/EAI is 21,083 mt as established by the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that 609 mt of the Atka mackerel ICA for the BS/EAI will not be harvested. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.91(f), NMFS reallocates 609 mt of Atka mackerel from the BS/EAI ICA to the BS/EAI Amendment 80 cooperative allocation in the BSAI. In accordance with § 679.91(f), NMFS will reissue cooperative quota permit for the reallocated Atka mackerel following the procedures set forth in § 679.91(f)(3).

The harvest specifications for Atka mackerel included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022) are revised as follows: 191 mt of Atka mackerel for the BS/EAI ICA and 21,692 mt of Atka mackerel for the Amendment 80 cooperative allocation for the BS/EAI. Table 6 is revised and republished in its entirety as follows:

TABLE 6—FINAL 2022 SEASONAL AND SPATIAL ALLOWANCES, GEAR SHARES, CDQ RESERVE, INCIDENTAL CATCH ALLOWANCE, AND AMENDMENT 80 ALLOCATIONS OF THE BSAI ATKA MACKEREL TAC  
[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector <sup>1</sup>	Season <sup>2 3 4</sup>	2022 Allocation by area		
		Eastern Aleutian district/Bering Sea	Central Aleutian district <sup>5</sup>	Western Aleutian district
TAC .....	n/a .....	27,260	16,880	22,341
CDQ reserve .....	Total .....	2,917	1,806	2,390
	A .....	1,458	903	1,195
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	542	717
	B .....	1,458	903	1,195
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	542	717
Non-CDQ TAC .....	n/a .....	24,343	15,074	19,951
ICA .....	Total .....	191	75	20
Jig <sup>6</sup> .....	Total .....	118		
BSAI trawl limited access .....	Total .....	2,343	1,500	
	A .....	1,171	750	
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	450	
	B .....	1,171	750	
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	450	
Amendment 80 sector .....	Total .....	21,692	13,499	19,931
	A .....	10,846	6,749	9,965
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	4,050	5,979
	B .....	10,846	6,749	9,965
	Critical Habitat .....	n/a	4,050	5,979

<sup>1</sup> Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs, and jig gear allocation, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in Table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (see §§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C) and 679.31).

<sup>2</sup> Sections 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery.

<sup>3</sup> The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

<sup>4</sup> Section 679.23(e)(3) authorizes directed fishing for Atka mackerel with trawl gear during the A season from January 20 to June 10 and the B season from June 10 to December 31.

<sup>5</sup> Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(i) limits no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543 to be caught inside of Steller sea lion critical habitat; section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(i) equally divides the annual TACs between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3); and section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(2) requires that the TAC in Area 543 shall be no more than 65 percent of ABC in Area 543.

<sup>6</sup> Sections 679.2 and 679.20(a)(8)(i) require that up to 2 percent of the Eastern Aleutian Islands District and the Bering Sea subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtracting the CDQ reserve and the ICA. NMFS sets the amount of this allocation for 2022 at 0.5 percent. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season.

**Note:** Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

This will enhance the socioeconomic well-being of harvesters dependent upon Atka mackerel in this area. The Regional Administrator considered the following factors in reaching this decision: (1) the current catch of Atka mackerel ICA in the BS/EAI, (2) the harvest capacity and stated intent on future harvesting patterns of the Amendment 80 cooperative that participates in this BS/EAI fishery.

**Classification**

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to

section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 delay the harvest of Atka mackerel in the BE/EAI fishery. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of November 4, 2022.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice.

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

Dated: November 7, 2022.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

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

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