

Lastly, one commenter suggested updating the new paragraph (d), which is a redesignation of existing paragraph (c). The commenter recommended that LSC revise the list of individuals who may not be able to seek legal assistance on their own to include persons who are incarcerated, unhoused, living in institutions or correctional facilities, or living with a physical or mental disability.

*Response:* LSC agrees it is important for this rule to be flexible enough for recipients to apply the rule to new technologies and circumstances not contemplated at the time of these changes. Therefore, the section will be revised to indicate the listed methods are examples of permissible activities.

Further, LSC agrees that a recipient may have a difficult time proving they were in a courthouse “at the invitation of the court” particularly because the rule does not indicate what constitutes an “invitation.” Although not contemplated in the NPRM, LSC believes that removal of “at the invitation of the court” is a logical outgrowth of the proposed rule changes. The purpose of this rulemaking was to clarify and simplify part 1638. Removal of this language is not a substantive change, rather it is a technical change to remove ambiguity. As mentioned during the January 21, 2024, Committee meeting, section 504(a)(18) does not require this language. In fact, the statute does not discuss a recipient’s activities in courthouses at all. Further, as the written comments note, a recipient’s ongoing presence in a courthouse is sufficient to establish the court’s approval of the recipient being in the courthouse. Therefore, the term will be removed for the sake of clarity.

Lastly, to achieve active voice, LSC will amend the last clause of § 1638.4(d) to read as “including institutionalized individuals or individuals living with a physical or mental disability.”

#### Section 1638.5 Recipient Policies

LSC proposed no changes to this section. LSC received no comments on this section.

#### List of Subjects in 45 CFR Part 1638

Grant programs—law, Legal services. For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Legal Services Corporation amends 45 CFR part 1638 as follows:

#### PART 1638—RESTRICTION ON SOLICITATION

■ 1. The authority citation for part 1638 is revised to read as follows:

**Authority:** 42 U.S.C. 2996g(e).

■ 2. Revise § 1638.2 to read as follows:

#### § 1638.2 Definitions.

(a) *Communicate* or *communication* means to share information. Permissible forms of communication include, but are not limited to, sending information via mailings, text message, email, or other methods of voice or electronic communication.

(b) *In-person* means a face-to-face encounter, including virtual clinics or other encounters via videoconference.

(c) *Unsolicited advice* means advice to obtain counsel or take legal action given by a recipient or its employee to an individual who did not seek the advice and with whom the recipient does not have an attorney-client relationship.

■ 3. Revise § 1638.3 to read as follows:

#### § 1638.3 Prohibition.

(a) Recipients and their employees shall not represent a client as a result of in-person unsolicited advice.

(b) Recipients and their employees shall not refer to other recipients individuals to whom they have given in-person unsolicited advice.

■ 4. Revise § 1638.4 to read as follows:

#### § 1638.4 Permissible activities.

A recipient may:

(a) Communicate about legal rights and responsibilities or the recipient’s services and intake procedures or provide the same information through community legal education activities. Recipients may engage in various activities including, but not limited to, outreach, public service announcements, maintaining an ongoing presence in a courthouse to provide advice, disseminating community legal education publications, and giving presentations to groups that request them.

(b) Communicate to parties in civil cases to notify them that a case has been filed against them; to inform them of upcoming court dates; to inform them that counsel may be available to represent them; and to provide information about intake.

(c) Represent an otherwise eligible individual requesting legal assistance from the recipient as a result of a communication or information provided as described in paragraph (a) of this section, provided that the request has not resulted from in-person unsolicited advice.

(d) Represent or refer clients pursuant to a statutory or private ombudsman program that provides investigatory and referral services and/or legal assistance on behalf of persons who are unable to seek assistance on their own, including institutionalized individuals or

individuals living with a physical or mental disability.

(e) Represent an individual with whom the recipient initiated contact over the phone or via an electronic platform so long as the communication provides only generic information that is not tailored to the individual or the specific facts of the individual’s legal issues.

Dated: April 8, 2024.

**Stefanie Davis,**

*Deputy General Counsel, Legal Services Corporation.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 240318–0082; RTID 0648–XD843]

#### Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Common Pool Fishery and Other Measures for Fishing Year 2024

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

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; possession and trip limit implementation.

**SUMMARY:** This action implements measures for the Northeast multispecies common pool fishery and other measures under Regional Administrator authority for the 2024 fishing year. This action is necessary to ensure that the Northeast multispecies common pool fishery may achieve the optimum yield for the relevant stocks, while controlling catch to help prevent in-season closures or quota overages. These measures include possession and trip limits, the allocation of zero trips into the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program for common pool vessels to target yellowtail flounder, and the closure of the Regular B Days-at-Sea Program.

**DATES:** Effective at 0001 hours on May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Spencer Talmage, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978–281–9232.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) regulations allow the Regional Administrator to implement possession limits for the common pool fishery, the U.S./Canada

Management Area, and Special Management Programs. This action implements a number of these management measures for the 2024 fishing year, effective May 1, 2024.

**Common Pool Trip Limits**

Regulations at 50 CFR 648.86(o) provide that the Regional Administrator may implement or adjust a per-Day-at-Sea (DAS) possession limit and/or a maximum trip limit in order to prevent exceeding the common pool sub-annual catch limit (sub-ACL) in that fishing year. The possession and trip limits for the start of the 2024 fishing year are included in tables 1 and 2 below. These possession and trip limits were developed based on the common pool sub-ACLs that will be in effect on May 1, 2024, including those set by Framework Adjustment 65 to the FMP and those that are in place as default specifications consistent with the current regulations at § 648.90(a)(3). NMFS considered preliminary 2024 sector rosters, expected common pool participation, and common pool fishing activity in previous fishing years. NMFS will continue to monitor common pool catch through vessel trip reports, dealer-reported landings, vessel monitoring system catch reports, and other available information and, if necessary, will make further adjustments to common pool management measures based on common pool catch.

During its December 2023 meeting, the New England Fishery Management Council adopted Framework Adjustment 66 to the Northeast

Multispecies FMP, which, if approved, would modify the common pool sub-ACLs for several stocks. On March 22, 2024, NMFS published a proposed rule for Framework 66, with a comment period ending on April 8, 2024 (89 FR 20412). It is possible that the final rule for that action is not in effect until after the beginning of the fishing year. In that case, default specifications for white hake and redfish would be in place until that rule is final. When developing the trip limits in this action, NMFS considered the Council-recommended sub-ACLs that may be implemented in Framework 66. Framework 66’s proposed sub-ACLs are not sufficiently different from the Framework 65’s sub-ACLs to alter NMFS’ projections and recommendations. Thus, in addition to appropriately addressing specifications that would be in place on May 1, 2024, the trip limits in this action are expected to avoid exceeding, but not to overly constrain catch in a manner that would prevent achieving, any sub-ACLs or trimester total allowable catch (TAC) that may be implemented by Framework 66. Based on this information, NMFS projects that these adjustments will facilitate optimized harvest of the common pool quotas, while preventing early trimester closures, and preventing catch from exceeding the 2024 fishing year sub-ACLs.

For Handgear A and Handgear B vessels, possession and trip limits for Georges Bank (GB) and Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod are dependent on the possession and trip limits for groundfish DAS vessels. The default cod trip limit

is 300 pounds (lb) (136 kilograms (kg)) for Handgear A vessels and 75 lb (34 kg) for Handgear B vessels. If the GOM or GB cod limit for vessels fishing on a groundfish DAS drops below 300 lb (136 kg), then the respective Handgear A cod trip limit must be reduced to the same limit. Similarly, the Handgear B trip limit must be adjusted proportionally to the DAS limit (rounded up to the nearest 25 lb (11 kg)). In accordance with this process, the Handgear A and Handgear B possession and trip limits for GB and GOM cod are as listed below in table 2.

Vessels with a Small Vessel category permit can possess up to 300 lb (136 kg) of cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder, combined, per trip. Additionally, for these vessels, the trip limit for all stocks is equal to the landing limits per DAS applicable to multispecies DAS vessels. This is necessary to ensure that the trip limit applicable to the Small Vessel category permit is consistent with the trip limits for other common pool vessels, as described above.

Weekly quota monitoring reports for the common pool fishery can be found on NMFS’ website at: <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/h/nemultispecies.html>. NMFS will continue to monitor common pool catch through vessel trip reports, dealer-reported landings, vessel monitoring system catch reports, and other available information and, if necessary, will make additional adjustments to common pool management measures.

TABLE 1—2024 FISHING YEAR COMMON POOL POSSESSION AND TRIP LIMITS

Stock	2024 trip limit
GB Cod (outside Eastern U.S./Canada Area)	100 lb (45.4 kg) per DAS, up to 200 lb (90.7 kg) per trip.
GB Cod (inside Eastern U.S./Canada Area)	
GB Cod [Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program(SAP) (for targeting haddock)].	500 lb (226.8 kg) per trip.
GOM Cod	150 lb (68 kg) per DAS, up to 300 lb (136.1 kg) per trip.
GB Haddock	50,000 lb (22,679.6 kg) per trip.
GOM Haddock	1,000 lb (453.6 kg) per DAS, up to 2,000 lb (907.2 kg) per trip.
GB Yellowtail Flounder	100 lb (45.4 kg) per trip.
Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) Yellowtail Flounder	200 lb (90.7 kg) per DAS, up to 400 lb (181.4 kg) per trip.
Cape Cod (CC)/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	1,500 lb (680.4 kg) per DAS, up to 3,000 lb (1,360.8 kg) per trip.
American plaice	3,000 lb (1,360.8 kg) per DAS, up to 6,000 lb (2,721.6 kg) per trip.
Witch Flounder	1,500 lb (680.4 kg) per trip.
GB Winter Flounder	500 lb (226.8 kg) per trip.
GOM Winter Flounder	2,000 lb (907.2 kg) per trip.
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	2,000 lb (907.2 kg) per DAS, up to 4,000 lb (1,814.4 kg) per trip.
Redfish	Unlimited.
White hake	750 lb (340.2 kg) per trip.
Pollock	Unlimited.
Atlantic Halibut	1 fish per trip.
Windowpane Flounder	Possession Prohibited.
Ocean Pout.	
Atlantic Wolffish.	

**Note:** Minimum fish sizes apply for many groundfish species, but are not included in this rule. Please see 50 CFR 648.83 for applicable minimum fish sizes.

TABLE 2—2024 FISHING YEAR COD TRIP LIMITS FOR HANDGEAR A, HANDGEAR B, AND SMALL VESSEL CATEGORY PERMITS

Permit	Initial 2024 trip limit
Handgear A GOM Cod .....	150 lb (68 kg) per trip.
Handgear A GB Cod .....	100 lb (45.4 kg kg) per trip.
Handgear B GOM Cod .....	25 lb (11 kg) per trip.
Handgear B GB Cod .....	25 lb (11 kg) per trip.
Small Vessel Category .....	300 lb (136.1 kg) of cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder combined; additionally, vessels are limited to the common pool DAS limit for all stocks.

Table 3 includes the initial common pool trimester TACs for fishing year 2024. These trimester TACs are based on preliminary sector rosters. However, individual permit holders have until the end of the 2023 fishing year (April 30,

2024) to drop out of a sector and fish in the common pool fishery for the 2024 fishing year. Therefore, it is possible that the sector and common pool catch limits, including the trimester TACs, may change due to changes in sector

rosters. If changes to sector rosters occur that require updated catch limits and/or possession and trip limits, these will be announced as soon as practicable in the 2024 fishing year to reflect the final sector rosters as of May 1, 2024.

TABLE 3—INITIAL COMMON POOL TRIMESTER TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES FOR FISHING YEAR 2024 [Mt, live weight]

Stock	Trimester total allowable catches		
	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
GB Cod .....	3.0	3.7	4.1
GOM Cod .....	4.7	3.2	1.7
GB Haddock .....	68.1	83.3	100.9
GOM Haddock .....	6.9	6.7	12.1
GB Yellowtail Flounder .....	0.9	1.5	2.5
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder .....	1.6	2.1	3.9
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder .....	22.5	10.2	6.7
American Plaice .....	105.3	11.4	25.6
Witch Flounder .....	22.3	8.1	10.2
GB Winter Flounder .....	3.5	10.6	29.9
GOM Winter Flounder .....	29.1	29.9	19.7
Redfish .....	17.3	21.5	30.5
White Hake .....	4.9	4.0	4.0
Pollock .....	34.2	42.8	45.2

**Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program**

The regulations at § 648.85(b)(vii) allow the Regional Administrator to determine the total number of common pool trips that may be declared into the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP to target yellowtail flounder. This action allocates zero trips for common pool vessels to target yellowtail flounder within the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP for fishing year 2024. As a result, this SAP is only open to target haddock, from August 1, 2024, through January 31, 2025. Northeast multispecies vessels fishing in the SAP must fish with a haddock separator trawl, a Ruhle trawl, or hook gear.

The Regional Administrator determines the allocation of the total number of trips into the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP based on several criteria, including the GB yellowtail flounder catch limit and

the amount of GB yellowtail flounder caught outside of the SAP. Allocating trips to target yellowtail flounder in the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP is discretionary if the available GB yellowtail flounder catch is insufficient to support at least 150 trips with a 15,000-lb (6,804-kg) trip limit, for a total catch of 2,250,000 lb (1,020,600 kg). This calculation considers projected catch from all vessels from the area outside the SAP. Based on the fishing year 2024 GB yellowtail flounder groundfish sub-ACL implemented by Framework Adjustment 65 of 185,845.7 lb (84,298.2 kg), there is insufficient GB yellowtail flounder to allocate any trips to the SAP. Further, given the low GB yellowtail flounder catch limit, catch rates outside of this SAP are more than adequate to fully harvest the 2024 GB yellowtail flounder allocation.

If approved, Framework Adjustment 66 would reduce the 2024 GB yellowtail flounder sub-ACL. As a result, NMFS does not expect the final rule

implementing Framework 66, if approved, would change the determination to allocate no trips to the SAP to target yellowtail flounder.

**Regular B DAS Program**

The regulations at § 648.85(b)(6)(vi) authorize the Regional Administrator to close the Regular B DAS program by prohibiting the use of Regular B DAS when the continuation of the program would undermine the achievement of the objectives of the Northeast Multispecies FMP or the Regular B DAS Program. One reason for terminating the program is an inability to constrain common pool catches to the Incidental Catch TACs.

Framework Adjustment 65 implemented Common Pool Incidental Catch TACs for the Regular B DAS Program for the 2024 fishing year (table 4). These TACs are further divided into Quarterly Incidental Catch TACs to be monitored and managed during each calendar quarter.

TABLE 4—FISHING YEAR TOTAL AND QUARTERLY INCIDENTAL CATCH TACS FOR THE REGULAR B DAS PROGRAM  
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	Total incidental catch TAC (mt)	Quarterly incidental catch TAC (mt)			
		1st quarter (13 percent)	2nd quarter (29 percent)	3rd quarter (29 percent)	4th quarter (29 percent)
	2024				
GB Cod .....	0.11	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03
GOM Cod .....	0.11	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03
GB Yellowtail Flounder .....	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder .....	0.48	0.06	0.14	0.14	0.14
American Plaice .....	7.27	0.94	2.11	2.11	2.11
Witch Flounder .....	2.06	0.27	0.60	0.60	0.60
SNE/MA Winter Flounder .....	0.53	0.07	0.15	0.15	0.15

Given that the Incidental Catch TACs allocated to the Regular B DAS Program for several stocks are very small, in-season management of the Regular B DAS Program is likely to be extremely difficult and impractical.

Implementation of an in-season action to close the Regular B DAS Program once a Quarterly Incidental Catch TAC for a stock has been reached would not be possible to complete quickly enough to prevent further catch of that stock.

As a result, it is unlikely that catch can be effectively limited to the Incidental Catch TACs during fishing year 2024, and we project that continuation of the program would undermine the achievement of the objectives of the Northeast Multispecies FMP and the Regular B DAS Program. The Regular B DAS Program will be closed and use of Regular B DAS is prohibited for the 2024 fishing year, through April 30, 2025. This applies to all vessels issued a limited access Northeast multispecies permit.

#### Classification

This action is authorized by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) and 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment and the 30-day delayed effectiveness period because it would be contrary to the public interest and is unnecessary.

Regulations at § 648.86(o) provide that the Regional Administrator may adjust the Northeast multispecies possession and trip limits for common pool vessels in order to prevent the overharvest or under-harvest of the pertinent common pool quotas. This action sets the initial common pool possession and trip limits on May 1, 2024, for the 2024 fishing year. The possession and trip limits implemented through this action help to ensure that the Northeast multispecies

common pool fishery may achieve the optimum yield for the relevant stocks, while controlling catch to help prevent in-season closures or quota overages. Delay of this action would leave the common pool fishery with the possession and trip limits found in § 648.86, which are too high to control catch. This would likely lead to early closure of a trimester and quota overages. Any overage of the quota for either of the first two trimesters must be deducted from the Trimester 3 quota, which could substantially disrupt the trimester structure and intent to distribute the fishery across the entire fishing year. An overage reduction in Trimester 3 would further reduce fishing opportunities for common pool vessels and likely result in early closure of Trimester 3. Additionally, any overage of the annual quota would be deducted from common pool's quota for the next fishing year, to the detriment of this stock and diminishing fishing opportunities in the following fishing year.

To ensure proper carrying out of the FMP's Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP, regulations at § 648.85(b)(3)(vii) provide that the Regional Administrator is responsible for announcing the appropriate total number of allowed trips by common pool vessels that may be declared into the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock SAP on or about June 1. The Regional Administrator's announcement ensures that the fishing industry has sufficient notice in order to plan their activities in the new fishing year. This action occurs annually. Industry participants are accustomed to it and expect its timely implementation. No trips have been allocated to this SAP from fishing year 2010 to fishing year 2023.

Regulations at § 648.85(b)(6)(vi) provide that the Regional Administrator may close the Regular B DAS program by prohibiting the use of Regular B DAS

when the Regional Administrator projects that continuation of the program would undermine the achievement of the objectives of the Northeast Multispecies FMP or the Regular B DAS Program. The Regular B DAS program closure implemented through this action will prevent an overage of the Incidental Catch TACs. Delay of this action would provide vessel owners an opportunity to participate in the Regular B DAS Program, but participation and catch in the program may likely exceed the allocation. Exceeding the allocation is against the public's interest of achieving optimum yield.

In addition to the adverse consequences of exceeding the allocation, delaying implementation of this action for prior notice and opportunity for comment is unnecessary. These processes and criteria for determinations were established with prior notice and opportunity for comment. They were established to provide for regular and timely implementation of necessary catch limits to avoid adverse economic or ecological consequences that are not in the public interest. Further, adjusting catch limits in accordance with current conditions and limits provides participants with the maximum fishing opportunities practicable that avoid excess catch and potential overfishing. Fishing industry participants and other stakeholders expect these actions to occur annually and in-season. These actions are regular occurrences to which participants have become accustomed. This action must be implemented prior to May 1, 2024, to avoid adverse impacts on common pool fishery stocks and participants by ensuring that the fishery's catch limits are not exceeded. This action was originally intended to be included in the Final Rule for Framework 66. The agency only recently had sufficient information to determine that Framework 66 may not

be in effect prior to May 1, 2024, and that publication of this notice as a separate in-season action was necessary to ensure that these measures are implemented at the start of fishing year 2024 on May 1, 2024.

For the reasons above, delay of this action for additional prior notice and the opportunity for public comment and the 30-day delayed effectiveness period are unnecessary and against the public interest because they would undermine management objectives of the FMP and cause unnecessary negative economic impacts to the common pool fishery.

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

Dated: April 8, 2024.

**Everett Wayne Baxter,**

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 648**

[Docket No. 240405-0100]

RIN 0648-BM84

**Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; 2024 and Projected 2025 Specifications for the Atlantic Mackerel Fishery**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS approves and implements the 2024 specifications and projected 2025 specifications for Atlantic mackerel as recommended by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. These specifications establish allowable harvest levels that will prevent overfishing, consistent with the most recent scientific information.

**DATES:** Effective April 12, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** A Supplemental Information Report (SIR) was prepared for these specifications. Copies of the SIR are available on request from Dr. Christopher M. Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Suite 201, 800 North State Street, Dover, DE 19901. The SIR is also accessible via the internet at <https://www.mafmc.org/supporting-documents>.

Copies of the small entity compliance guide are available from Michael

Pentony, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298, or available on the internet at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Carly Bari, Fishery Policy Analyst, (978) 281-9150, or [carly.bari@noaa.gov](mailto:carly.bari@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**General Background**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) manages the Atlantic mackerel fishery under the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The regulations implementing the FMP require the Council's Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Monitoring Committee to develop specification recommendations based upon the acceptable biological catch (ABC) advice of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Specifications are the combined suite of commercial and recreational catch levels and management measures necessary to prevent such catch levels from being exceeded. As part of this process, the Council sets specifications for up to 3 years. These specifications are reviewed annually and may be revised by the Council based on updated information.

The Council's final action on these specifications was delayed to its December 2023 meeting because the 2023 Atlantic mackerel stock assessment required additional peer review in late fall 2023 after the assessment indicated a change in the stock status. The stock status changed from experiencing overfishing to not experiencing overfishing. Although this change in stock status may appear to reflect an improvement in stock condition, the change is the result of significant catch reductions that were implemented in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

The preliminary stock assessment, which was still subject to peer review, showed an unexpected failure of the Atlantic mackerel stock to rebuild, and updated projections suggested that Atlantic mackerel overfishing could occur in 2023 if the full Atlantic mackerel commercial quota (*i.e.*, 3,639 metric tons (mt)) was harvested. However, because the peer review of the assessment was not complete, the SSC was unable to provide its ABC recommendation and the Council was unable to make its recommendations on the 2024 specifications. Based on the preliminary assessment information, however, the Council requested at its August 2023 meeting that NMFS take emergency action to limit the directed

Atlantic mackerel fishery for the remainder of 2023 and until these specifications are implemented. On October 13, 2023, NMFS published an interim rule that reduced the Atlantic mackerel catch by instituting trip limits of 20,000 pounds (lb) (9.08 mt) for limited access permits and 5,000 lb (2.27 mt) for open access permits (see 88 FR 70909). These interim measures expire upon publication of this rule or on April 10, 2024, whichever is sooner.

**2024 and Projected 2025 Specifications**

The Council's SSC met in October 2023 to review the peer-reviewed management track assessment, which showed an unexpected failure of the Atlantic mackerel stock to rebuild. Based on this information, the SSC recommended an averaged 2024-2025 ABC of 3,200 mt. These specifications also include deductions for the expected Canadian catch of 74 mt, estimated recreational catch of 2,143 mt, and estimated commercial discards of 115 mt to set a commercial quota of 868 mt. This commercial quota is a 76-percent decrease from the original 2023 commercial quota.

TABLE 1—SUMMARY OF 2024 AND PROJECTED 2025 ATLANTIC MACKEREL FISHERY SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications	Metric tons
ABC/ACL .....	3,200
Canadian Catch Deduction ..	74
Recreational Catch Deduction .....	2,143
Commercial Discards .....	115
Commercial Quota .....	868

Because of the low-resulting commercial quota, these specifications also implement reduced Atlantic mackerel catch by instituting trip limits of 20,000 lb (9.08 mt) for all limited access permits and 5,000 lb (2.27 mt) for open access permits. These trip limits are unchanged from those in the interim rule. When 80 percent of the commercial quota is harvested, the trip limits will be further reduced to 10,000 lb (4.54 mt) for all limited access permits and 2,500 lb (1.13 mt) for open access permits. The recreational possession limit will remain status quo at 20 fish per person.

On February 1, 2023, NMFS approved Amendment 23 to the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP and implemented a revised rebuilding plan for the Atlantic mackerel stock (see 88 FR 6665). The reductions in ABC and trip limits included in this rule were determined to be necessary to maintain the timeline by which the Atlantic mackerel stock is