

(c) *Supplemental Compensation for CA-assisted IP CTS.* For the period from November 1, 2024, through June 30, 2029, Supplemental Compensation for CA-assisted IP CTS may be paid in accordance with this paragraph (c) to any of the following four IP CTS providers currently certified to provide CA-assisted IP CTS: CaptionCall, ClearCaptions, Hamilton, InnoCaption (Certified Providers).

(1) *Initial rate.* For the period from November 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, the Supplemental Compensation Rate for CA-assisted IP CTS shall be \$0.21 per minute. This rate shall be paid, in addition to the compensation defined in paragraph (b) of this section, for all compensable minutes of CA-assisted service provided by a Certified Provider for which the communications assistant producing captions was paid an hourly wage of at least \$17.20 (the Minimum Hourly Wage).

(2) *Succeeding years.* (i) For each succeeding TRS Fund Year through June 30, 2027, the per-minute Supplemental Compensation Rate for CA-assisted IP CTS shall be determined in accordance with the following equation:

$$\text{Equation 2 to Paragraph (c)(2)(i)} \\ L_{FY} = L_{FY-1} * (1 + AF_{FY})$$

Where  $L_{FY}$  is the CA-assisted Compensation Level for the new Fund Year,  $L_{FY-1}$  is the CA-assisted Compensation Level for the previous Fund Year, and  $AF_{FY}$  is the Adjustment Factor for the new Fund Year, as defined by paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(ii) The rate in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section shall be paid, in addition to the compensation defined in paragraph (b) of this section, for all compensable minutes of CA-assisted service provided by a Certified Provider for which the communications assistant producing captions was paid a Minimum Hourly Wage of at least the amount determined by the following equation:

$$\text{Equation 3 to Paragraph (c)(2)(ii)}$$

$$W_{FY} = W_{FY-1} * (1 + AF_{FY})$$

Where  $W_{FY}$  is the Minimum Hourly Wage for the new Fund Year,  $W_{FY-1}$  is the Minimum Hourly Wage for the previous Fund Year, and  $AF_{FY}$  is the Adjustment Factor for the new Fund Year, as defined by paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(3) *Verification and offset.* The initial payment of Supplemental Compensation for CA-assisted IP CTS is a preliminary payment only and is conditional on subsequent verification by audit that the CAs producing captions for those minutes for which the supplement was paid actually were paid the hourly rate claimed by the provider. The Certified Provider is responsible for

ensuring and documenting the accuracy of its representations to the TRS Fund administrator regarding the wages paid to each affected CA, whether such wages were paid by the Certified Provider or by a subcontractor. In such subsequent audit, if a Certified Provider fails to produce documentation, satisfactory to the TRS Fund administrator, verifying the hourly rate paid to affected CAs—whether employed by the Certified Provider or a subcontractor—then the administrator is entitled to immediately reclaim any prior payments of Supplemental Compensation for minutes handled by such CAs, by offsetting such prior payments against any amounts claimed in the provider's next monthly compensation request.

(d) *Exogenous cost adjustments.* In addition to the applicable per-minute Compensation Level, an IP CTS provider shall be paid a per-minute exogenous cost adjustment if claims for exogenous cost recovery are submitted by the provider and approved by the Commission on or before June 30. Such exogenous cost adjustment shall equal the amount of such approved claims divided by the provider's projected IP CTS minutes for the Fund Year. An exogenous cost adjustment shall be paid if an IP CTS provider incurs well-documented costs that:

- (1) Belong to a category of costs that the Commission has deemed allowable;
- (2) Result from new TRS requirements or other causes beyond the provider's control;
- (3) Are new costs that were not factored into the applicable compensation formula(s); and
- (4) If unrecovered, would cause a provider's current allowable-expenses-plus-allowed-operating margin to exceed its revenues.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 200124–0029; RTID 0648–XE221]

#### Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; 2024 Red Snapper Private Angling Component Closure in Federal Waters off Texas

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

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces a closure for the 2024 fishing season for the red snapper private angling component in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Texas in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) through this temporary rule. The red snapper recreational private angling component in the Gulf EEZ off Texas closes on September 7, 2024, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025. This closure is necessary to prevent the private angling component from exceeding the Texas regional management area annual catch limit (ACL) and to prevent overfishing of the Gulf red snapper resource.

**DATES:** This closure is effective from 12:01 a.m., local time, on September 7, 2024, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Daniel Luers, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727–824–5305, email: [daniel.luers@noaa.gov](mailto:daniel.luers@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Gulf reef fish fishery, which includes red snapper, is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, approved by the Secretary of Commerce, 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 final rule implementing Amendment 40 to the FMP established two components within the recreational sector fishing for Gulf red snapper: the private angling component, and the Federal for-hire component (80 FR 22422, April 22, 2015). Amendment 40 also allocated the red snapper recreational ACL (recreational quota) between the components and established separate seasonal closures for the two components. On February 6, 2020, NMFS implemented Amendments 50 A–F to the FMP, which delegated authority to the Gulf states (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Texas) to establish specific management measures for the harvest of red snapper in Federal waters of the Gulf by the private angling component of the recreational sector (85 FR 6819, February 6, 2020). These amendments allocated a portion of the private angling ACL to each state, and each state is required to constrain landings to its allocation.

As described at 50 CFR 622.23(c), a Gulf state with an active delegation may request that NMFS close all, or an area of, Federal waters off that state to the harvest and possession of red snapper by private anglers. The state is required to request the closure by letter to NMFS, providing dates and geographic coordinates for the closure. If the request is within the scope of the analysis in Amendment 50A, NMFS publishes a notice in the **Federal Register** implementing the closure for the fishing year. Based on the analysis in Amendment 50A, Texas may request a closure of all Federal waters off the state to allow a year-round fishing season in state waters. As described at 50 CFR 622.2, “off Texas” is defined as the waters in the Gulf west of a rhumb line from 29°32.1′ N lat., 93°47.7′ W long., to 26°11.4′ N lat., 92°53′ W long., which line is an extension of the boundary between Louisiana and Texas.

On November 8, 2023, NMFS received a request from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to close the EEZ off Texas to the red snapper private angling component for the first part of the 2024 fishing year. Texas requested that the closure be effective from January 1, 2024, until June 1, 2024. NMFS determined that the TPWD request was within the scope of analysis contained within Amendment 50A, and subsequently published a temporary rule in the **Federal Register** implementing that closure request (88 FR 83041, November 28, 2023). In that temporary rule, NMFS noted that TPWD would monitor private recreational landings, and if necessary, request that NMFS again close the EEZ in 2024 to ensure the Texas regional management area ACL is not exceeded.

On August 26, 2024, NMFS received a new request from the TPWD to close the EEZ off Texas to the red snapper private angling component for the remainder of the 2024 fishing year. Texas requested that the closure be effective on September 7, 2024, through the end of the 2024 fishing year. NMFS has determined that this request is within the scope of analysis contained within Amendment 50A, which analyzed the potential impacts of a closure of all Federal waters off Texas when a portion of the Texas quota has been landed. As explained in Amendment 50A, Texas intends to maintain a year-round fishing season in state waters, during which the remaining part of Texas’ ACL could be caught.

Therefore, the red snapper recreational private angling component in the Gulf EEZ off Texas will close from 12:01 a.m., local time, on

September 7, 2024, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025. This closure applies to all private-anglers (those on board vessels that have not been issued a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish) regardless of which state they are from or where they intend to land.

On and after the effective dates of the closure in the EEZ off Texas, the harvest and possession of red snapper in the EEZ off Texas by the private angling component is prohibited and the bag and possession limits for the red snapper private angling component in the closed area is zero.

#### Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.23(c), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 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 are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest.

Such procedures are unnecessary because the rule implementing the area closure authority and the state-specific private angling ACLs has 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 a failure to implement the closure immediately would be inconsistent with Texas’s state management plan and may result in less access to red snapper in state waters.

For the aforementioned reasons, there is 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: August 28, 2024.

**Kelly Denit,**

*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. 240304–0068; RTID 0648–XE227]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod 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; modification of a closure; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line or pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI). This action is necessary to fully use the 2024 total allowable catch of Pacific cod allocated to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI.

**DATES:** *Effective date:* Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 1, 2024, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2024.

*Comments due date:* Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., September 19, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on this document, identified by docket number NOAA–NMFS–2023–0124, by any of the following methods:

*Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and enter NOAA–NMFS–2023–0124 in the Search box. Click on the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

*Mail:* Submit written comments to Gretchen Harrington, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region NMFS. Mail comments to P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802–1668.

*Instructions:* Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on <https://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, *etc.*), confidential business information, or