

fisheries within Panel Area waters during the 2024 fishing season, consistent with the order adopted by the Panel. This order ended the period in which the Fraser Panel exerted regulatory jurisdiction. The in-season action was effective upon announcement on telephone hotline numbers as specified at 50 CFR 300.97(b)(1) and in 89 FR 44553 (May 21, 2024); those dates and times are listed herein. The times listed are in Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) and the areas designated are Puget Sound Management and Catch Reporting Areas as defined in the Washington State Administrative Code at Chapter 220–301–030.

Fraser River Panel Order Number 2024–01: Issued 12 p.m. PDT, August 30, 2024

Treaty Tribal Fishery

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C: Relinquish regulatory control effective 11:59 p.m. PDT, Monday, September 2, 2024.

Treaty Tribal and All Citizen Fishery

Areas 6, 7, and 7A: Relinquish regulatory control effective 11:59 p.m. PDT, Wednesday, September 4, 2024.

Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries NOAA (AA), finds that good cause exists for the in-season orders to be issued without affording the public prior notice and opportunity for comment under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) as such prior notice and opportunity for comments is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment is impracticable because of insufficient time between the time the stock abundance information is available to determine how much fishing can be allowed and the time the fishery must open or close in order to harvest the appropriate amount of fish while they are available.

The AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date, required under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), of the in-season orders. A delay in the effective date of the in-season orders would not allow fishers appropriately controlled access to the available fish at that time they are available.

This action is authorized by 50 CFR 300.97, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3636(b).

Dated: December 10, 2024.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

[FR Doc. 2024–29383 Filed 12–12–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 200124–0029; RTID 0648–XE487]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; 2025 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 2025 fishing season for the red snapper recreational 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 will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 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 at 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank Helies, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727–824–5305, email: Frank.Helies@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) and through 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 12, 2024, NMFS received a request from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to close the EEZ off Texas to the red snapper recreational private angling component during the 2025 fishing year. Texas requested that the closure be effective from January 1 through May 31, 2025. NMFS has determined that this request is within the scope of the analysis contained within Amendment 50A, which analyzed the potential impacts of a closure of all Federal waters off Texas, consistent with Texas’s intent to maintain a year-round fishing season in state waters during which a part of Texas’ ACL could be caught.

Therefore, the red snapper recreational private angling component in the Gulf EEZ off Texas will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2025, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2025. This closure applies to all private-anglers (those on board vessels that have not been issued a valid Federal charter vessel/headboat permit

for Gulf reef fish) regardless of which state they are from or where they intend to land. Once the EEZ off Texas opens on June 1, 2025, TPWD will continue to monitor private recreational landings, and if necessary, will request that NMFS again close the EEZ in 2025 to ensure the Texas regional management area ACL is not exceeded.

On and after the effective dates of this 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 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866, and other applicable laws.

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 by January 1, 2025, 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 also 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: December 9, 2024.

Karen H. Abrams,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2024–29391 Filed 12–12–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 241210–0319; RTID 0648–XE309]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab Fishery; 2025 Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab Specifications

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS is finalizing specifications for the 2025 Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery, including an annual catch limit and total allowable landings limit. This action is necessary to fully implement previously projected allowable red crab harvest levels that will prevent overfishing and allow harvesting of optimum yield. This action is intended to establish the allowable 2025 harvest levels, consistent with the Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

DATES: The final specifications for the 2025 Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery are effective from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caroline Potter, Fishery Resource Management Specialist, (978) 281–9325.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Atlantic deep-sea red crab fishery is managed by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council). The Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab FMP includes a specification process that requires the Council to recommend an acceptable biological catch (ABC), an annual catch limit (ACL), and total allowable landings (TAL) every 4 years. Collectively, these are the red crab specifications. Prior to the start of fishing year 2024, the Council recommended specifications for the 2024–2027 fishing years (table 1).

TABLE 1—COUNCIL-APPROVED 2024–2027 RED CRAB SPECIFICATIONS

	Metric tons	Millions of pounds (lb)
Acceptable Biological Catch	2,000	4.41
Annual Catch Limit	2,000	4.41
Total Allowable Landings	2,000	4.41

On February 8, 2024, NMFS published a final rule implementing the Council-recommended specifications for the 2024 fishing year, effective through February 28, 2025, and projecting the fishery’s specifications for 2025 through 2027 (89 FR 8557). At the end of each fishing year, we evaluate catch information and determine if the quota has been exceeded. If a quota is exceeded, the regulations at 50 CFR 648.262(b) require a pound-for-pound reduction in a subsequent fishing year. We have reviewed available 2023 and 2024 fishery information against the projected 2025 specifications. There have been no quota overages, nor is there any new biological information that would require altering the projected

2025 specifications published in 2024. Based on this information, we are finalizing specifications for fishing year 2025, as projected in the 2024 specifications rule, and outlined above in table 1. These specifications are not expected to result in overfishing and adequately account for scientific uncertainty. NMFS will provide notice of the final 2026–2027 specifications, and any necessary reductions, prior to the start of each respective fishing year.

Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), which authorizes the Secretary to implement management measures necessary to carry out an approved

fishery management plan. Red crab specifications are implemented pursuant to the regulations at 50 CFR 648.260 that were approved and implemented by NMFS in Amendment 3 to the FMP (76 FR 60379; September 29, 2011). The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with the Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab FMP, the 2024–2027 Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab specifications, and other applicable law.

This final rule is exempt from review under Executive Order (E.O.) 12866.

NMFS has determined that this action would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian Tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes, or on