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Dated: December 18, 2024.

Evan Howell,

Director, Office of Science and Technology, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2024–30664 Filed 12–23–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XE538]

Determination of Overfishing or an Overfished Condition

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This action serves as a notice that NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary of

Commerce (Secretary), has found that Puerto Rico Caribbean spiny lobster and Mid-Atlantic Coast golden tilefish are now subject to overfishing, Klamath River fall Chinook salmon and Queets Spring/Summer Chinook salmon continue to be overfished, and the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean Striped Marlin continues to be subject to overfishing. NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary, is required to provide this notice whenever it determines that a stock or stock complex is subject to overfishing, overfished, or approaching an overfished condition.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Diana Perry, (301) 427–7863.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to section 304(e)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1854(e)(2), NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary, must notify councils, and publish a notice in the **Federal Register**, whenever it determines that a stock or stock complex is subject to overfishing, overfished, or approaching an overfished condition.

NMFS has determined that Puerto Rico Caribbean spiny lobster is now subject to overfishing. This determination is based on the most recent assessment completed in 2022 and using data through 2021 that found that the fishing mortality rate (F) exceeds the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT). NMFS has notified the Caribbean Fishery Management Council of its requirement to end overfishing on this stock.

NMFS has determined that Mid-Atlantic Coast golden tilefish is now subject to overfishing. This determination is based on the most recent assessment completed in 2024 using data through 2023, which found that the F exceeds the MFMT. NMFS has notified the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council of its requirement to end overfishing.

NMFS has determined that Klamath River fall-run Chinook salmon and Queets Spring/Summer Chinook salmon continue to be overfished. These determinations are based on the 3-year geometric mean of the annual spawning escapement for each stock completed in 2024, and using data from 2021–2023 for the Klamath River fall-run Chinook salmon stock and data from 2020–2022 for the Queets spring/summer Chinook salmon stock which fall below their respective minimum stock size threshold. NMFS continues to work with the Pacific Fishery Management Council to rebuild the Klamath River fall-run Chinook and Queets spring/summer Chinook salmon stocks.

NMFS has determined that Western and Central North Pacific Ocean Striped Marlin continues to be subject to overfishing. This determination is based on the most recent international stock assessment, completed in 2023 and using data through 2020, which indicates that F exceeds the MFMT. NMFS continues to work with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission to end overfishing.

Dated: December 18, 2024.

Kelly Denit,

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

[FR Doc. 2024-30640 Filed 12-23-24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XE516]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; North Pacific Observer Program Standard Ex-Vessel Prices

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

ACTION: Notification of standard ex-vessel prices.

SUMMARY: NMFS publishes standard ex-vessel prices for groundfish and halibut for the calculation of the observer fee under the North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program). This notice is intended to provide information to vessel owners, processors, registered buyers, and other Observer Program participants about the standard ex-vessel prices that will be used to calculate the Observer Program fee associated with landings of groundfish and halibut made in 2025. NMFS will send invoices to processors and registered buyers subject to the fee by January 15, 2026. Fees are due to NMFS on or before February 15, 2026.

DATES: The standard prices take effect on January 1, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Additional information about the Observer Program is available on NMFS Alaska Region's website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general questions about the observer fee and standard ex-vessel prices, contact Amy Hadfield at (907) 586-7376. For questions about the fee billing process,

contact Charmaine Weeks at (907) 586-7231.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Regulations at 50 CFR part 679, subpart E, governing the Observer Program, require the deployment of NMFS-certified observers (observers) and electronic monitoring (EM) systems to collect information necessary for the conservation and management of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish and halibut fisheries. Fishery managers use information collected by observers and EM to monitor quotas, manage groundfish and prohibited species catch, and document and reduce fishery interactions with protected resources. Scientists use observer-collected information for stock assessments and marine ecosystem research.

The Observer Program includes two observer coverage categories: the partial coverage category and the full coverage category. All groundfish and halibut vessels and processors subject to observer coverage are included in one of these two categories. Defined at § 679.51, the partial coverage category includes vessels and processors that are not required to have an observer or EM at all times when fishing, and the full coverage category includes vessels and processors required to have all of their fishing and processing activity observed. Vessels and processors in the full coverage category arrange and pay for observer services from a permitted observer provider. Observer coverage and EM for the partial coverage category is funded through a system of fees based on the ex-vessel value of groundfish and halibut. Throughout this notice, the term "processor" refers to shoreside processors, stationary floating processors, and catcher/processors in the partial coverage category.

Landings Subject to Observer Coverage Fee

Pursuant to section 313 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NMFS is authorized to assess a fee on all landings accruing against a Federal total allowable catch (TAC) for groundfish or commercial halibut quota landings made by vessels that are subject to Federal regulations and not included in the full coverage category. A fee is only assessed on landings of groundfish from vessels designated on a Federal Fisheries Permit or from vessels landing individual fishing quota (IFQ) or community development quota (CDQ) halibut or IFQ sablefish. Within the subset of vessels subject to the

observer fee, only landings accruing against an IFQ allocation or a Federal TAC for groundfish are included in the fee assessment. A table with additional information about which landings are subject to the observer fee is at § 679.55(c) and on page 2 of an informational bulletin titled "Observer Fee Collection" that can be downloaded from the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/observer-fee-collection-north-pacific-groundfish-and-halibut-fisheries-observer>.

Fee Determination

A fee equal to 1.65 percent of the ex-vessel value is assessed on the landings of groundfish and halibut subject to the fee. Ex-vessel value is determined by multiplying the standard price for groundfish by the round weight equivalent for each species, gear, and port combination, and the standard price for halibut by the headed and gutted weight equivalent. Standard prices are determined by aggregating prices by species, gear, and area grouping to arrive at an average price per pound for each grouping. NMFS reviews each vessel landing report and determines whether the reported landing is subject to the observer fee and, if so, which groundfish species in the landing are subject to the observer fee. All IFQ or CDQ halibut in a landing subject to the observer fee will be included in the observer fee calculation. For any landed groundfish or halibut subject to the observer fee, NMFS will apply the appropriate standard ex-vessel prices for the species, gear type, and port and calculate the observer fee associated with the landing.

Processors and registered buyers can access the landing-specific, observer fee information through the NMFS Web Application (<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/webapps/efish/login>) or eLandings (<https://elandings.alaska.gov/>). Landing-specific observer fee information is either available immediately or within 24 hours after a landing report is submitted electronically. A time lag occurs for some landings because NMFS must process each landing report through the catch accounting system to determine which groundfish in a landing accrues against a Federal TAC and are subject to the observer fee.

Under the fee system, catcher vessel owners split the fee with the registered buyers or owners of shoreside or stationary floating processors. While the owners of catcher vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are each responsible for paying their portion of the fee, the owners of