

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 648**

[Docket No. 231129–0282; RTID 0648–XD485]

Adjustment to Sector Annual Catch Entitlements Under the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan

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

ACTION: Temporary final rule; adjustment to specifications.

SUMMARY: This final rule announces allocation carryover from fishing year 2022 into fishing year 2023 for the Northeast Multispecies sectors program. This action is necessary to distribute carryover quota to sectors. The carryover adjustments in this rule are routine and formulaic, and industry expects them each year.

DATES: Effective January 4, 2024, through April 30, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Liz Sullivan, Fishery Policy Analyst, (978) 282–8493.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 18, 2023, NMFS published a final rule approving Framework Adjustment 65 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery

Management Plan (FMP) (88 FR 56527), which revised the rebuilding plan for Gulf of Maine cod, set annual catch limits (ACL) for 16 of the 20 groundfish stocks and 2023 ACLs for 3 shared U.S./Canada stocks, and made a temporary modification to the accountability measures for Georges Bank cod. This rule distributes unused sector quota carried over from fishing year 2022 to fishing year 2023.

Sector Carryover Allocations From Fishing Year 2022

Carryover regulations at 50 CFR 648.87(b)(1)(i)(C) allow each groundfish sector to carry over an amount of unused annual catch entitlement (ACE) up to 10 percent of the sector's original ACE for each stock (except for Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder) that is unused at the end of the fishing year into the following fishing year. NMFS is required to adjust ACE carryover to ensure that the total unused ACE combined with the overall sub-ACL does not exceed the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the fishing year in which the carryover may be harvested. NMFS completed the 2022 fishing year data reconciliation with sectors and determined final 2022 fishing year sector catch and the amount of allocation that sectors may carry over from the 2022 to the 2023 fishing year. Accordingly, the available carryover of unused ACE from fishing year 2022 to fishing year 2023 has been reduced for

the following stocks: GB cod; GB haddock; Gulf of Maine (GOM) haddock; Cape Cod/GOM yellowtail flounder; witch flounder; GB winter flounder; Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder; redfish; white hake; and pollock. The stocks for which carryover is the full 10 percent of the original quota allocation from fishing year 2022 are GOM cod, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder, plaice, and GOM winter flounder. Complete details on carryover reduction percentages can be found at: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/h/groundfish_catch_accounting.

Table 1 includes the maximum amount of allocation that sectors may carry over from the 2022 to the 2023 fishing year. Table 2 includes the *de minimis* amount of carryover for each sector for the 2023 fishing year. If the overall ACL for any allocated stock is exceeded for the 2023 fishing year, the allowed carryover harvested by a sector, minus the pounds in the sector's *de minimis* amount, will be counted against its allocation to determine whether an overage subject to an accountability measure occurred. Tables 3 and 4 list the final ACE available to sectors for the 2023 fishing year, including finalized carryover amounts for each sector, as adjusted down when necessary to equal each stock's ABC.

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Table 1 -- Finalized Carryover ACE from Fishing Year 2022 to Fishing Year 2023 (lb)

| Sector | GB Cod East | GB Cod West | GOM Cod | GB Haddock East | GB Haddock West | GOM Haddock | GB Yellowtail Flounder | SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder | CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder | Plaice | Witch Flounder | GB Winter Flounder | GOM Winter Flounder | SNE/MA Winter Flounder | Redfish | White Hake | Pollock |
|---------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| FGS | 0 | 5,375 | 417 | 0 | 20,944 | 259 | 0 | 7 | 2,138 | 2,916 | 1,514 | 24 | 4,976 | 592 | 6,011 | 27 | 48,653 |
| MCCS | 0 | 1,002 | 9,498 | 0 | 41,080 | 17,594 | 0 | 84 | 8,029 | 90,193 | 16,987 | 917 | 4,933 | 1,094 | 99,870 | 365 | 197,929 |
| MOON | 0 | 5,578 | 3,013 | 0 | 51,761 | 5,291 | 0 | 30 | 3,779 | 4,981 | 2,500 | 1,163 | 1,765 | 1,477 | 53,185 | 282 | 165,061 |
| NEFS 2 | 0 | 2,982 | 14,232 | 0 | 142,736 | 29,549 | 0 | 42 | 28,430 | 55,488 | 17,803 | 3,936 | 13,443 | 2,449 | 167,020 | 121 | 215,813 |
| NEFS 4 | 0 | 1,990 | 6,644 | 0 | 78,611 | 12,732 | 0 | 78 | 8,015 | 55,244 | 12,217 | 852 | 4,607 | 599 | 74,790 | 103 | 107,635 |
| NEFS 5 | 0 | 221 | 192 | 0 | 10,908 | 163 | 0 | 607 | 1,189 | 2,530 | 851 | 525 | 523 | 6,235 | 205 | 2 | 705 |
| NEFS 6 | 0 | 1,452 | 1,741 | 0 | 48,462 | 6,307 | 0 | 177 | 5,250 | 26,424 | 8,285 | 2,120 | 2,946 | 1,152 | 76,336 | 57 | 57,457 |
| NEFS 8 | 0 | 4,705 | 1,487 | 0 | 131,910 | 8,130 | 0 | 261 | 8,715 | 45,372 | 9,133 | 36,938 | 2,460 | 6,150 | 63,633 | 126 | 65,395 |
| NEFS 10 | 0 | 246 | 1,556 | 0 | 2,388 | 1,907 | 0 | 20 | 5,570 | 7,071 | 2,926 | 13 | 5,843 | 367 | 3,774 | 17 | 12,105 |
| NEFS 11 | 0 | 184 | 6,753 | 0 | 468 | 3,994 | 0 | 0 | 2,859 | 9,072 | 2,145 | 3 | 1,241 | 13 | 21,050 | 84 | 137,466 |
| NEFS 12 | 0 | 293 | 1,606 | 0 | 1,267 | 1,563 | 0 | 1 | 6,534 | 4,563 | 860 | 0 | 6,380 | 156 | 2,554 | 7 | 12,199 |
| NEFS 13 | 0 | 4,322 | 383 | 0 | 287,161 | 1,296 | 0 | 830 | 8,063 | 49,654 | 12,473 | 23,877 | 1,104 | 10,526 | 49,298 | 59 | 42,043 |
| SHS1 | 0 | 3,424 | 2,831 | 0 | 129,067 | 18,952 | 0 | 66 | 6,142 | 80,413 | 16,651 | 14,156 | 2,092 | 3,479 | 155,021 | 371 | 159,850 |
| SHS2 | 0 | 2,242 | 898 | 0 | 28,922 | 2,063 | 0 | 157 | 7,094 | 14,522 | 3,088 | 3,829 | 2,596 | 3,997 | 12,484 | 44 | 22,747 |
| SHS3 | 0 | 7,864 | 3,974 | 0 | 347,081 | 29,083 | 0 | 287 | 12,826 | 108,847 | 24,835 | 24,072 | 1,926 | 12,413 | 312,663 | 534 | 278,330 |
| Total | 0 | 41,880 | 55,225 | 0 | 1,322,766 | 138,883 | 0 | 2,647 | 114,633 | 557,290 | 132,268 | 112,425 | 56,835 | 50,699 | 1,097,894 | 2,199 | 1,523,388 |

Georges Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector (FGS), Maine Coast Community Sector (MCCS), Mooncusser Sector (MOON), Maine Permit Bank (MPB), New Hampshire Permit Bank (NHPB), Northeast Fishery Sectors (NEFS), and Sustainable Harvest Sector (SHS).

Table 2 -- *De Minimis* Carryover ACE from Fishing Year 2022 to Fishing Year 2023 (lb)

| Sector | GB Cod East | GB Cod West | GOM Cod | GB Haddock East | GB Haddock West | GOM Haddock | GB Yellowtail Flounder | SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder | CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder | Plaice | Witch Flounder | GB Winter Flounder | GOM Winter Flounder | SNE/MA Winter Flounder | Redfish | White Hake | Pollock |
|---------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------|------------|---------|
| FGS | 0 | 957 | 39 | 0 | 3,804 | 62 | 0 | 1 | 341 | 510 | 270 | 7 | 236 | 95 | 1,116 | 27 | 8,970 |
| MCCS | 0 | 187 | 967 | 0 | 8,302 | 4,236 | 0 | 19 | 1,357 | 18,404 | 3,108 | 291 | 1,053 | 217 | 19,219 | 365 | 36,637 |
| MOON | 0 | 1,009 | 390 | 0 | 9,584 | 1,313 | 0 | 6 | 659 | 1,079 | 463 | 343 | 382 | 246 | 10,256 | 282 | 31,988 |
| NEFS 2 | 0 | 531 | 1,471 | 0 | 25,921 | 7,123 | 0 | 9 | 4,974 | 11,306 | 3,244 | 1,160 | 2,940 | 401 | 31,133 | 121 | 39,851 |
| NEFS 4 | 0 | 615 | 685 | 0 | 14,276 | 3,069 | 0 | 17 | 1,394 | 11,152 | 2,228 | 251 | 994 | 98 | 13,875 | 103 | 19,844 |
| NEFS 5 | 0 | 39 | 20 | 0 | 1,694 | 39 | 0 | 117 | 201 | 366 | 128 | 116 | 113 | 974 | 27 | 2 | 217 |
| NEFS 6 | 0 | 244 | 167 | 0 | 8,384 | 1,519 | 0 | 36 | 840 | 5,170 | 1,470 | 413 | 592 | 182 | 14,219 | 57 | 10,597 |
| NEFS 8 | 0 | 1,278 | 167 | 0 | 34,762 | 2,468 | 0 | 84 | 1,929 | 11,935 | 2,195 | 13,722 | 563 | 1,584 | 15,965 | 126 | 17,585 |
| NEFS 10 | 0 | 44 | 153 | 0 | 434 | 459 | 0 | 4 | 900 | 1,421 | 537 | 4 | 1,220 | 60 | 704 | 17 | 2,235 |
| NEFS 11 | 0 | 33 | 696 | 0 | 83 | 948 | 0 | 0 | 497 | 1,788 | 390 | 0 | 268 | 2 | 3,902 | 84 | 25,363 |
| NEFS 12 | 0 | 41 | 185 | 0 | 229 | 372 | 0 | 0 | 1,822 | 941 | 158 | 0 | 1,365 | 26 | 476 | 7 | 2,053 |
| NEFS 13 | 0 | 1,027 | 40 | 0 | 49,733 | 314 | 0 | 169 | 1,408 | 10,148 | 2,227 | 6,941 | 243 | 1,695 | 9,082 | 59 | 7,745 |
| SHS1 | 0 | 560 | 364 | 0 | 23,558 | 4,388 | 0 | 19 | 784 | 19,857 | 3,489 | 3,708 | 393 | 437 | 37,103 | 371 | 30,039 |
| SHS2 | 0 | 211 | 117 | 0 | 7,056 | 1,527 | 0 | 20 | 1,155 | 4,194 | 850 | 977 | 621 | 496 | 9,558 | 44 | 8,901 |
| SHS3 | 0 | 1,242 | 295 | 0 | 50,820 | 5,651 | 0 | 57 | 2,185 | 15,173 | 3,406 | 7,001 | 392 | 2,026 | 38,168 | 534 | 39,376 |
| Total | 0 | 8,018 | 5,756 | 0 | 238,640 | 33,488 | 0 | 558 | 20,446 | 113,444 | 24,163 | 34,934 | 11,375 | 8,539 | 204,803 | 2,199 | 281,401 |

Table 3 -- Total ACE Available to Sectors in Fishing Year 2023 including Final Carryover (mt)

| Sector | GB Cod East | GB Cod West | GOM Cod | GB Haddock East | GB Haddock West | GOM Haddock | GB Yellowtail Flounder | SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder | CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder | Plaice | Witch Flounder | GB Winter Flounder | GOM Winter Flounder | SNE/MA Winter Flounder | Redfish | White Hake | Pollock |
|---------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------|------------|---------|
| FGS | 16 | 30 | 2 | 24 | 158 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 24 | 13 | 0 | 13 | 5 | 53 | 19 | 429 |
| MCCS | 3 | 6 | 48 | 52 | 344 | 200 | 2 | 1 | 65 | 876 | 149 | 14 | 50 | 10 | 917 | 253 | 1,752 |
| MOON | 16 | 32 | 19 | 60 | 399 | 62 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 51 | 22 | 16 | 18 | 12 | 489 | 204 | 1,526 |
| MPB | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 63 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 78 | 30 | 223 |
| NEFS 2 | 9 | 17 | 73 | 161 | 1,079 | 337 | 1 | 0 | 238 | 538 | 155 | 54 | 139 | 19 | 1,488 | 149 | 1,905 |
| NEFS 4 | 10 | 19 | 34 | 89 | 594 | 145 | 2 | 1 | 67 | 531 | 107 | 12 | 47 | 5 | 663 | 151 | 949 |
| NEFS 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 71 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 18 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 47 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| NEFS 6 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 52 | 350 | 72 | 2 | 2 | 40 | 246 | 70 | 20 | 28 | 9 | 680 | 83 | 507 |
| NEFS 8 | 21 | 39 | 8 | 216 | 1,420 | 116 | 23 | 4 | 91 | 562 | 104 | 639 | 27 | 75 | 753 | 120 | 827 |
| NEFS 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 18 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 68 | 26 | 0 | 58 | 3 | 34 | 12 | 107 |
| NEFS 11 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 1 | 3 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 85 | 19 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 187 | 73 | 1,213 |
| NEFS 12 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 45 | 8 | 0 | 65 | 1 | 23 | 5 | 99 |
| NEFS 13 | 17 | 32 | 2 | 309 | 2,077 | 15 | 30 | 8 | 68 | 483 | 107 | 326 | 12 | 82 | 434 | 40 | 370 |
| NHPB | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| SHS 1 | 9 | 18 | 18 | 147 | 981 | 208 | 4 | 1 | 38 | 937 | 166 | 175 | 19 | 21 | 1,753 | 332 | 1,435 |
| SHS 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 44 | 289 | 70 | 2 | 1 | 56 | 197 | 40 | 46 | 29 | 24 | 439 | 63 | 414 |
| SHS 3 | 20 | 40 | 15 | 316 | 2,146 | 270 | 12 | 3 | 105 | 738 | 166 | 328 | 19 | 98 | 1,873 | 271 | 1,912 |
| Total | 131 | 252 | 293 | 1,486 | 9,944 | 1,600 | 80 | 27 | 983 | 5,463 | 1,164 | 1,636 | 545 | 410 | 9,867 | 1,809 | 13,692 |

Table 4 -- Total ACE Available to Sectors in Fishing Year 2023 including Final Carryover (1,000 lb)

| Sector | GB Cod East | GB Cod West | GOM Cod | GB Haddock East | GB Haddock West | GOM Haddock | GB Yellowtail Flounder | SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder | CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder | Plaice | Witch Flounder | GB Winter Flounder | GOM Winter Flounder | SNE/MA Winter Flounder | Redfish | White Hake | Pollock |
|---------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------|------------|---------|
| FGS | 34 | 67 | 4 | 52 | 349 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 54 | 29 | 1 | 29 | 10 | 118 | 41 | 946 |
| MCCS | 7 | 13 | 106 | 114 | 757 | 441 | 4 | 2 | 144 | 1,931 | 328 | 30 | 110 | 23 | 2,022 | 557 | 3,862 |
| MOON | 36 | 70 | 42 | 131 | 879 | 137 | 2 | 1 | 70 | 113 | 49 | 35 | 40 | 26 | 1,079 | 451 | 3,364 |
| MPB | 0 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 138 | 18 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 172 | 67 | 491 |
| NEFS 2 | 19 | 37 | 161 | 356 | 2,379 | 742 | 3 | 1 | 526 | 1,186 | 342 | 120 | 307 | 43 | 3,280 | 329 | 4,201 |
| NEFS 4 | 22 | 41 | 75 | 196 | 1,310 | 320 | 4 | 2 | 147 | 1,170 | 235 | 26 | 104 | 10 | 1,462 | 332 | 2,092 |
| NEFS 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 23 | 157 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 21 | 39 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 104 | 3 | 3 | 22 |
| NEFS 6 | 9 | 17 | 18 | 115 | 772 | 158 | 4 | 4 | 89 | 543 | 155 | 43 | 62 | 19 | 1,498 | 182 | 1,117 |
| NEFS 8 | 46 | 86 | 18 | 477 | 3,131 | 255 | 51 | 9 | 202 | 1,239 | 229 | 1,409 | 59 | 165 | 1,660 | 265 | 1,824 |
| NEFS 10 | 2 | 3 | 17 | 6 | 40 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 96 | 149 | 57 | 0 | 128 | 6 | 74 | 27 | 236 |
| NEFS 11 | 1 | 2 | 76 | 1 | 8 | 99 | 0 | 0 | 53 | 188 | 41 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 411 | 162 | 2,674 |
| NEFS 12 | 1 | 3 | 20 | 3 | 21 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 189 | 99 | 17 | 0 | 143 | 3 | 50 | 12 | 218 |
| NEFS 13 | 37 | 70 | 4 | 682 | 4,578 | 33 | 66 | 18 | 149 | 1,064 | 235 | 718 | 25 | 180 | 958 | 89 | 817 |
| NHPB | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 32 |
| SHS 1 | 20 | 39 | 39 | 323 | 2,162 | 458 | 8 | 2 | 85 | 2,066 | 366 | 385 | 41 | 47 | 3,865 | 732 | 3,164 |
| SHS 2 | 8 | 16 | 13 | 97 | 638 | 155 | 5 | 2 | 123 | 434 | 88 | 101 | 65 | 54 | 968 | 139 | 913 |
| SHS 3 | 45 | 87 | 33 | 697 | 4,732 | 594 | 26 | 6 | 231 | 1,626 | 365 | 724 | 41 | 215 | 4,130 | 598 | 4,216 |
| Total | 289 | 556 | 645 | 3,275 | 21,922 | 3,528 | 176 | 58 | 2,166 | 12,043 | 2,567 | 3,606 | 1,201 | 905 | 21,754 | 3,988 | 30,186 |

BILLING CODE 3510-22-C

Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery

Conservation and Management Act (MSA), which provides specific authority for implementing this action.

Section 305(d) authorizes NMFS to take action to carry out provisions in FMPs and of the MSA. In a previous action taken pursuant to section 304(b), NMFS approved the Council designed provisions in the FMP to authorize NMFS to annually adjust and distribute sector carryover consistent with MSA requirements to prevent overfishing and achieve optimum yield. See § 648.87(b)(1)(i)(C). The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with the Northeast Multispecies FMP, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and other applicable laws.

This final rule is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B), NMFS finds good cause to waive prior public notice and opportunity for public comment on the allocation adjustments because allowing time for notice and comment is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest.

Notice and comment would be impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest, as the distribution of unused quota carried over from the previous fishing year is an annual adjustment action that is expected by industry. These adjustments increase available catch, and sector vessels will be able to fish for this additional catch as soon as this action is in effect, which will provide increased operational flexibility and ability to catch its available allocation. They are routine, formulaic, and authorized by regulation. The public had prior notice and opportunity to participate in the development of and comment on the regulations implementing this process and expects this adjustment each year. Delaying these adjustments would result in a delay in the distribution of unused carryover to sectors, and could negate or reduce the intended economic benefits and increased operational flexibility provided by these adjustments. Carryover from 2022 was only recently finalized because it is based on data that was not available until the fall upon the conclusion of the catch accounting process for fishing year 2022.

Also, because advanced notice and the opportunity for public comment are not required for this action under the Administrative Procedure Act, or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.*, do not apply to this rule. Therefore, no final regulatory flexibility analysis is required and none has been prepared.

This final rule contains no information collection requirements

under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

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

Dated: November 30, 2023.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2023–26655 Filed 12–4–23; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 230224–0053; RTID 0648–XD343]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Hook-and-Line Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher/processors using hook-and-line (HAL) gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2023 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to catcher/processors using HAL gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 1, 2023, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abby Jahn, 907–586–7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subparts H of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

The 2023 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher/processors using HAL gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 562 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2023 and 2024

harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (88 FR 13238, March 2, 2023).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the 2023 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher/processors using HAL gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 552 mt and is setting aside the remaining 10 mt as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher/processors using HAL gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

While this closure is effective, the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

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 closure of Pacific cod by catcher/processors using HAL gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notification providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of November 29, 2023.

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 and opportunity for public comment.

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

Dated: November 30, 2023.

Michael P. Ruccio,

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

[FR Doc. 2023–26660 Filed 11–30–23; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P