

DATES: The closure is effective 12 noon, local time, November 10, 2001, through June 30, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mark Godcharles, telephone 727-570-5305, fax 727-570-5583, e-mail Mark.Godcharles@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fishery for coastal migratory pelagic fish (king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, cero, cobia, little tunny, dolphin, and, in the Gulf of Mexico only, bluefish) is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils) and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

Based on the Councils' recommended total allowable catch and the allocation ratios in the FMP, on April 30, 2001 (66 FR 17368, March 30, 2001) NMFS implemented a commercial quota of 2.25 million lb (1.02 million kg) for the eastern zone (Florida) of the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel. That quota is further divided into separate quotas for the Florida east coast subzone and the northern and southern Florida west coast subzones. On April 27, 2000, NMFS implemented the final rule (65 FR 16336, March 28, 2000) that divided the Florida west coast subzone of the eastern zone into northern and southern subzones, and established their separate quotas. The quota newly implemented for the northern Florida west coast subzone is 168,750 lb (76,544 kg) (50 CFR 622.42 (c)(1)(i)(A)(2)(ii)).

Under 50 CFR 622.43 (a)(3), NMFS is required to close any segment of the king mackerel commercial fishery when its quota has been reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification at the Office of the Federal Register. NMFS has determined that the commercial quota of 168,750 lb (76,544 kg) for Gulf group king mackerel in the northern Florida west coast subzone was reached on November 9, 2001. Accordingly, the commercial fishery for king mackerel in the northern Florida west coast subzone is closed at 12 noon, local time, November 10, 2001, through June 30, 2002, the end of the fishing year.

The Florida west coast subzone is that part of the eastern zone south and west of 25°20.4' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Miami-Dade County, FL, boundary). The Florida west coast subzone is further divided into northern

and southern subzones. The northern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone that is between 26°19.8' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Lee/Collier County, FL boundary) and 87°31'06' W. long. (a line directly south from the Alabama/Florida boundary).

Except for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat, during the closure, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for Gulf group king mackerel in the EEZ in the closed zones or subzones. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed zones or subzones under the bag and possession limits set forth in 50 CFR 622.39 (c)(1)(ii) and (c)(2), provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. A charter vessel or headboat that also has a commercial king mackerel permit is considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or when there are more than three persons aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, king mackerel from the closed zones or subzones taken in the EEZ, including those harvested under the bag and possession limits, may not be purchased or sold. This prohibition does not apply to trade in king mackerel from the closed zones or subzones that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to the closure and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The closure must be implemented immediately to prevent an overrun of the commercial quota (50 CFR 622.42 (c)(1)) of Gulf group king mackerel, given the capacity of the fishing fleet to harvest the quota quickly. Overruns could potentially lead to further overfishing and unnecessary delays in rebuilding this resource. Therefore, any delay in implementing this action would be impractical and contradictory to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the FMP, and the public interest. NMFS finds, for good cause, that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553 (d), a delay in the effective date is waived.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.43 (a) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: November 8, 2001.

Richard W. Surdi,

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 635

[I.D. 110601A]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

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

ACTION: Quota transfers; fishery reopening.

SUMMARY: NMFS adjusts the October-December subquota for the General category Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fishery by transferring 40 metric tons (mt) from the Longline South subcategory quota, 50 mt from the Angling category (25 mt from the school size class North and 25 mt from the school size class South subcategories), and 3 mt from the Trap category for a revised coastwide General category subquota of approximately 431.9 mt for October-December, including the addition of underharvest from previous time periods. NMFS reopens the coastwide BFT General category until the adjusted October-December subquota has been filled. These actions are being taken to allow for maximum utilization of the U.S. landings quota of BFT while maintaining a fair distribution of fishing opportunities, preventing overharvest of the adjusted subquotas for the affected fishing categories, helping to achieve optimum yield in the General category fishery, and allowing the collection of a broad range of data for stock monitoring purposes, consistent with the objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks (HMS FMP).

DATES: The quota transfers are effective November 9, 2001, through December 31, 2001. The General category reopening is effective November 12, 2001, through December 31, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brad McHale or Pat Scida, 978-281-9260.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations implemented under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas

Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) governing the harvest of BFT by persons and vessels subject to U.S. jurisdiction are found at 50 CFR part 635. Section 635.27 subdivides the U.S. BFT quota recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas among the various domestic fishing categories.

Quota Transfers

Under the implementing regulations at 50 CFR 635.27 (a)(8), NMFS has the authority to transfer quotas among categories, or, as appropriate, subcategories, of the fishery, after considering the following factors: (1) The usefulness of information obtained from catches in the particular category for biological sampling and monitoring of the status of the stock; (2) the catches of the particular category quota to date and the likelihood of closure of that segment of the fishery if no allocation is made; (3) the projected ability of the vessels fishing under the particular category quota to harvest the additional amount of BFT before the end of the fishing year; (4) the estimated amounts by which quotas established for other gear segments of the fishery might be exceeded; (5) the effects of the transfer on BFT rebuilding and overfishing; and (6) the effects of the transfer on accomplishing the objectives of the HMS FMP.

If it is determined, based on the factors listed here and the probability of exceeding the total quota, that vessels fishing under any category or subcategory quota are not likely to take that quota, NMFS may transfer inseason any portion of the remaining quota of that fishing category to any other fishing category or to the Reserve quota.

Quota Adjustments

Annual BFT quota specifications issued under § 635.27 provide for a quota of 666.7 mt of large medium and giant BFT to be harvested from the regulatory area by vessels fishing under the General category quota during the 2001 fishing year. The General category BFT quota is further subdivided into time period subquotas to provide for broad temporal and geographic distribution of scientific data collection and fishing opportunities. The October-December subquota was initially set at 65.7 mt for the 2001 fishing year, and is currently 338.9 mt, after the addition of approximately 113.2 mt of unharvested subquota from previous periods and a previous quota transfer of 160 mt (66 FR 53346, October 22, 2001).

As of October 26, 2001, General category landings against this adjusted October-December subquota have totaled approximately 402.1 mt, exceeding the available coastwide quota by 64.5 mt. An additional 10 mt has been set aside for the traditional fall New York Bight fishery.

After considering the factors for making transfers between categories, NMFS has determined that 40 mt of the remaining adjusted Longline South subcategory quota of approximately 116.6 mt should be transferred to the General category quota. While substantial quota remains in the Longline category, NMFS is in the process of developing proposed regulations to adjust the target catch requirements for pelagic longline vessels retaining bluefin tuna, and is therefore not transferring additional quota from the Longline category. NMFS has also determined that 50 mt of the remaining Angling school subcategory quota of approximately 118.7 mt (25 mt of the remaining Angling school north subcategory quota of approximately 74.7 mt, and 25 mt of the remaining Angling school south subcategory quota of approximately 59 mt) should be transferred to the General category. Finally, NMFS has determined to transfer 3 mt of the remaining Trap category quota of 3.9 mt into the General category quota. The adjusted subquota for the coastwide General category fishery for the October-December period is 431.9 mt. Landings of Trap category BFT have been nonexistent in recent years and this transfer should not adversely impact this category.

Once the adjusted General category subquota for the October-December period has been attained, the coastwide fishery will be close. Announcement of the closure will be filed with the Office of the Federal Register, stating the effective date of closure, and further communicated through the Highly Migratory Species Fax Network, the Atlantic Tunas Information Line, NOAA weather radio, and Coast Guard Notice to Mariners. Although notification of closure will be provided as far in advance as possible, fishermen are encouraged to call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) USA-TUNA or (978) 281-9305, to check the status of the fishery before leaving for a fishing trip.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 635.23 and 635.27, is consistent with the management measures contained in the HMS FMP, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 9, 2001.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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. 010208032-1109-02; I.D. 110701E]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Commercial Quota Transfer

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

ACTION: Commercial quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Commonwealth of Virginia has transferred a total of 100,000 lb (45,372 kg) of commercial bluefish quota to the State of New York for 2001. NMFS has adjusted the quotas and announces the revised commercial quotas for Virginia and New York. This action is permitted under the regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for the Bluefish Fishery (FMP) and is intended to reduce discards and prevent negative economic impacts to the New York commercial bluefish fishery.

DATES: Effective November 15, 2001 through December 31, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Myles Raizin, Fishery Policy Analyst, (978) 281-9104, fax (978) 281-9135, e-mail Myles.A.Raizin@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through Florida. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state are described in § 648.160.

The initial total commercial quota for bluefish for the 2001 calendar year was set equal to 9,583,010 lb (4,348,008 kg) (66 FR 23625, May 9, 2001). The resulting quota for New York was 995,204 lb (451,544 kg), and for Virginia was 1,138,412 lb (516,521 kg). Effective August 2, 2001, (66 FR 41151) Virginia transferred 300,000 lb (136,116 kg) of its