

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 635**

[I.D. 100300B]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

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

ACTION: Adjustment of General category daily retention limit on previously designated restricted fishing days.

SUMMARY: NMFS has determined that the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) General category restricted fishing day (RFD) schedule should be adjusted; i.e., certain RFDs should be waived in order to allow for maximum utilization of the General category subquota for the October–December fishing period. Therefore, NMFS increases the daily retention limit from zero to one large medium or giant BFT on the following previously designated RFDs for 2000: October 7, 10, 14, and 15.

DATES: Effective October 4, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pat Scida or Brad McHale, 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 (Magnuson-Stevens 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. General category effort controls (including time-period subquotas and RFDs) are specified annually under 50 CFR 635.23(a) and 635.27(a). The 2000 General category effort controls were specified on July 7, 2000 (65 FR 42883, July 12, 2000).

Adjustment of Daily Retention Limit for Selected Dates

Under 50 CFR 635.23(a)(4), NMFS may increase or decrease the daily retention limit of large medium and giant BFT over a range from zero (on RFDs) to a maximum of three per vessel to allow for maximum utilization of the quota for BFT. Catch rates have continued to vary this season, and NMFS recognizes that at this time of year they can be very dependent on weather conditions. In addition, due to the temporal and geographical nature of the fishery, certain gear types and areas

are more productive at various times during the fishery. Based on a review of dealer reports, daily landing trends, the availability of BFT on the fishing grounds, and weather conditions, NMFS has determined that adjustment to the RFD schedule, and, therefore, an increase of the daily retention limit for certain previously designated RFDs, is necessary. Therefore, NMFS adjusts the daily retention limit for October 7, 10, 14, and 15, 2000, to one large medium or giant BFT per vessel. NMFS has selected these days in order to give adequate advance notice to fishery participants and NMFS enforcement.

The intent of this adjustment is to allow for maximum utilization of the General category subquotas for the October–December fishing period (specified under 50 CFR 635.27(a)) by General category participants in order to help achieve optimum yield in the General category fishery, to collect a broad range of data for stock monitoring purposes, and to be consistent with the objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish and Sharks. For these same reasons, NMFS has already adjusted the General category daily retention limit for ten previously scheduled RFDs in July and August (65 FR 46654, July 31, 2000), and six previously scheduled RFDs in September (65 FR 54970, September 12, 2000). The remaining previously scheduled RFD (which has not been waived) corresponds to a market closure in Japan, and could promote better ex-vessel prices.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 635.23(a)(4) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: October 4, 2000.

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. 991228354–0078–02; I.D. 100300A]

RIN 0648-AM49

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries; 2000 Specifications Adjustment

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

ACTION: Inseason adjustment of *Loligo* squid annual specifications; announcement of a limited directed fishery and subsequent closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), is increasing the annual specifications for *Loligo* squid, including allowable biological catch (ABC), initial optimum yield (IOY), domestic annual harvest (DAH) and domestic annual processing (DAP), from 13,000 metric tons (mt) to 15,000 mt. The regulations governing the Atlantic mackerel, squid and butterfish fisheries require notice to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on the adjustments. NMFS also announces that the Period III directed *Loligo* squid commercial fishery in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is reopened until 0001 hours October 26, 2000, as a result of this adjustment.

DATES: The Period III directed *Loligo* squid commercial fishery in the EEZ is reopened effective October 7, 2000, through October 25, 2000. Effective 0001 hours, October 26, 2000, the directed fishery for *Loligo* squid will close through December 31, 2000. Comments on the *Loligo* squid inseason adjustment notice must be received by November 9, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark on the outside of the envelope “Comments on Adjustment of *Loligo* Squid Annual Specifications.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul H. Jones, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978–281–9273, fax 978–281–9135, e-mail paul.h.jones@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 28, 2000, NMFS published final 2000