

Dated: February 28, 2002.

Steve Williams,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 001005281-0369-02; I.D. 022502C]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction

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

ACTION: Trip limit reduction.

SUMMARY: NMFS reduces the commercial trip limit of Atlantic group Spanish mackerel in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the southern zone to 1,500 lb (680 kg) per day. This trip limit reduction is necessary to maximize the socioeconomic benefits of the quota.

DATES: Effective 6 a.m., local time, March 4, 2002, through March 31, 2002, unless changed by further notification in the **Federal Register**.

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 August 2, 2000 (65 FR 41015, July 3, 2000), NMFS implemented an annual commercial quota of 3.87 million lb (1.76 million kg) for the Atlantic migratory group of

Spanish mackerel. For the southern zone, NMFS specified an adjusted quota of 3.62 million lb (1.64 million kg) calculated to allow continued harvest at a set rate for the remainder of the year in accordance with 50 CFR 622.44(b)(2). In accordance with 50 CFR 622.44(b)(1)(ii)(C), after 75 percent of the adjusted quota of Atlantic group Spanish mackerel from the southern zone is taken until 100 percent of the adjusted quota is taken, Spanish mackerel in or from the EEZ in the southern zone may be possessed on board or landed from a permitted vessel in amounts not exceeding 1,500 lb (680 kg) per day. The southern zone for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel extends from 30°42'45.6" N. lat., which is a line directly east from the Georgia/Florida boundary, to 25°20.4' N. lat., which is a line directly east from the Miami-Dade/Monroe County, FL, boundary.

NMFS has determined that 75 percent of the adjusted quota for Atlantic group Spanish mackerel from the southern zone has been taken. Accordingly, the 1,500-lb (680-kg) per day commercial trip limit applies to Spanish mackerel in or from the EEZ in the southern zone effective 6:00 a.m., local time, March 4, 2002, through March 31, 2002, unless changed by further notification in the **Federal Register**.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to reduce the trip limit constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553 (b)(3)(B), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to allow. 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 622.44(b)(1)(ii)(C) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 1, 2002.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 02-5350 Filed 3-1-02; 2:58 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 030102A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Species in the Rock sole/Flathead sole/"Other flatfish" Fishery Category by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing directed fishing for species in the rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the first seasonal apportionment of the 2002 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 1, 2002, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., April 1, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 907-586-7228.

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

The first seasonal apportionment of the 2002 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the BSAI trawl rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category, which is defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(B)(2), is 448 metric tons (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002).

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(v), the Administrator, Alaska Region,