

for increased opportunity to harvest haddock from the Eastern U.S./Canada Area. If the larger GB cod TAC results in a longer period of time that the Eastern U.S./Canada Area is open, and if vessels attempt to, and are successful in avoidance of cod, the Eastern Area may be opened for a longer period of time in fishing year 2006 than it was in 2005, resulting in additional revenue from haddock.

Although unlikely, a downward adjustment to the hard TACs specified for FY 2006 could occur after the start of the fishing year, if it is determined that the U.S. catch of one or more of the shared stocks during the 2005 fishing year exceeded the relevant TACs specified for FY 2005.

Three alternatives for hard TACs were considered for FY 2006: The proposed TACs, the status quo TACs, and the no action alternative. No other TAC alternatives were considered. The process for establishing TACs is based on the best scientific information available designed to yield only one proposed set of TACs. The proposed TACs would have a similar economic impact as the status quo TACs. Adoption of the status quo TACs, however, would not be consistent with the FMP because the status quo TACs do not represent the best available scientific information. Although the no action alternative (no TACs) would not constrain catch in the U.S./Canada Management Area, and therefore would likely provide some additional fishing opportunity, the no action alternative is not a reasonable alternative because it is inconsistent with the FMP in both the short and long term. The FMP requires specification of hard TACs in order to limit catch of shared stocks to the appropriate level (i.e., consistent with the Understanding and the FMP). As such, the no action alternative would likely provide less economic benefits to the industry in the long term than the proposed alternative.

The proposed hard TACs do not modify any collection of information, reporting, or recordkeeping requirements. The proposed hard TACs do not duplicate, overlap, or conflict with any other Federal rules.

Three alternatives were considered for the target TACs for FY 2006: The proposed TACs, the status quo TACs, and the no action alternative (previously specified TACs, based on previous scientific information). No other target TAC alternatives were considered for the same reason that no other TAC alternatives were considered for the 2006 U.S./Canada Management Area TACs described above. The economic impacts of the target TACs are minimal.

The most substantive impact on potential fishing effort would be to allow the possibility of a larger TAC allocated to the GB Cod Hook Sector than under the Status Quo Alternative. The amount of cod allocated to the GB Cod Hook Sector is directly affected by the size of the GB cod target TAC, and therefore has the potential for an economic impact on the Sector. Based on the amount of GB cod TAC caught by the Sector in 2004 and 2005 (less than the TAC), an increase in the amount of cod allocated to the Sector is not likely to impact the amount of cod landed by the Sector. Factors other than the size of the Sector's cod allocation appear to be limiting the amount of catch and revenue. In 2004, the Sector caught approximately 20 percent of their allocation. During the 2005 fishing year, through December, the Sector caught 25 percent of their allocation.

The economic impacts of the Incidental Catch TACs are more notable than the impact of the target TACs because the Incidental Catch TACs may cause the closure of a SAP or prohibition on the use of Regular B DAS in particular stock areas in the Regular B DAS Program. The harvest of Incidental Catch TACs curtail the opportunities to use Category B DAS. Six of the ten Incidental Catch TACs will decrease in 2006, compared to the 2005, Status Quo TACs. The small size of some of the Incidental Catch TACs may have a negative economic impact. Most of the Incidental Catch TACs under the Status Quo and No Action Alternatives would have less of a negative economic impact because they are larger and would be less constraining to the fishery. Based on the proposed 2006 Incidental Catch TACs and the 2004 catch (Quarter 1) in the Regular B DAS Pilot Program, it is likely that five of the quarterly Incidental Catch TACs will be reached, causing a closure of the program prior to the end of the quarter. During 2005, the catch under the Regular B DAS Pilot Program represented substantial percentages of the amount of cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder caught in the U.S./Canada Area. It is difficult to determine whether the changes in Incidental Catch TACs will result in reduced revenue or whether vessels will be able to compensate for such changes by modifying their fishing strategies. It is possible that the proposed 2006 Incidental Catch TACs may result in a decline in revenue by reducing fishing opportunity. However, it is possible that vessels that participate in the Regular B DAS Pilot Program would make up for any losses in fishing opportunity in the

Regular B DAS Pilot Program by instead fishing under a Category A DAS. Vessels that historically do not use their full allocation of Category A DAS could increase the relative percentage of DAS used, or lease additional DAS.

Dated: March 7, 2006.

James W. Balsiger,

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 060209031-6031-01; I.D. 020606C]

RIN 0648-AU09

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Emergency Secretarial Action; Correction

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; emergency action; correction.

SUMMARY: On March 3, 2006, a proposed rule to implement an emergency action for the Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was published in the **Federal Register**. The proposed rule was published with an incorrect end date for receipt of public comments. This document corrects that error.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 3, 2006 (71 FR 11060), a proposed rule was published that would implement measures intended to immediately reduce the fishing mortality rate (F) on specific groundfish species, include differential days-at-sea (DAS) counting, reduce trip limits for specific species and recreational possession restrictions, continue two programs that would otherwise expire by the end of the 2005 fishing year on April 30, 2006, and implement other provisions. Due to confusion over the date the proposed rule was to be filed for public inspection at the Office of the Federal Register, the proposed rule was published with an incorrect comment period end date.

Correction

In the proposed rule FR Doc. 06-1911, in the issue of Friday, March 6, 2006 (71 FR 11060), make the following correction.

On page 11060, in column 2, the DATES section is corrected to read “**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 9, 2006.”

Dated: March 7, 2006.

James W. Balsiger,

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

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