

agreement” and thus exempts certain amendments having technical or operational effects from the Shipping Act’s filing requirement. 46 CFR 535.408. While not part of Docket No. 09–02, the Commission is open to reviewing this latter section to determine if additional flexibility can be provided for amendments addressing technical or operational matters of marine terminal operator agreements.

In accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601–612, the Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission certifies that this rule, if promulgated, would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The regulated entities that would be affected by the rule are limited to marine terminal operators and ocean common carriers. Pursuant to the guidelines of the Small Business Administration, the Commission has determined that these entities do not qualify as small for the purpose of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. The rule would simply require that agreements between marine terminal operators, or between or among marine terminal operators and ocean common carriers, become effective subject to the requirements of section 6 of the Shipping Act of 1984, 46 U.S.C. 40304, and Commission agreement rules, 46 CFR Part 535.

This regulatory action is not a “major rule” under 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects in 46 CFR Part 535

Administrative practice and procedure, Maritime carriers, Terminal operators, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

■ For the reasons set forth above, the Federal Maritime Commission amends 46 CFR Part 535 Subpart C as follows:

PART 535—[AMENDED]

Subpart C—Exemptions

■ 1. The authority citation for Part 535 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 553; 46 U.S.C. 305, 40101–40104, 40301–40307, 40501–40503, 40901–40904, 41101–41109, 41301–41302, and 41305–41307.

§ 535.308 [Removed]

■ 2. Remove § 535.308.

■ 3. In § 535.309, revise paragraph (b)(1) to read as follows:

§ 535.309 Marine terminal services agreements—exemption.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) They do not include rates, charges, rules, and regulations that are determined through a marine terminal conference agreement. *Marine terminal conference agreement* means an agreement between or among two or more marine terminal operators and/or ocean common carriers for the conduct or facilitation of marine terminal operations that provides for the fixing of and adherence to uniform maritime terminal rates, charges, practices and conditions of service relating to the receipt, handling, and/or delivery of passengers or cargo for all members; and

■ 4. In § 535.604, revise paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 535.604 Waiting period.

* * * * *

(b) Unless suspended by a request for additional information or extended by court order, the waiting period terminates and an agreement becomes effective on the later of the 45th day after the filing of the agreement with the Commission or on the 30th day after publication of notice of the filing in the **Federal Register**.

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By the Commission.

Karen V. Gregory,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. E9–29369 Filed 12–8–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6730–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 300

RIN 0648–XT20

Notification of U.S. Fish Quotas and an Effort Allocation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area

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

ACTION: Final rule; notification of U.S. fish quotas and an effort allocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that fish quotas and an effort allocation are

available for harvest by U.S. fishermen in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area. This action is necessary to make available to U.S. fishermen a fishing privilege on an equitable basis.

DATES: Effective January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2010. Expressions of interest regarding U.S. fish quota allocations for all species except 3L shrimp will be accepted throughout 2010. Expressions of interest regarding the U.S. 3L shrimp quota allocation, the 3M shrimp effort allocation, and the 3LNO yellowtail flounder to be transferred by Canada will be accepted through December 24, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Expressions of interest regarding the U.S. effort allocation and quota allocations should be made in writing to Patrick E. Moran in the NMFS Office of International Affairs, at 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301–713–2276, fax: 301–713–2313, e-mail: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov).

Information relating to NAFO fish quotas, NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, and the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA) Permit is available from Allison McHale, at the NMFS Northeast Regional Office at 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930 (phone: 978–281–9103, fax: 978–281–9135, e-mail: allison.mchale@noaa.gov) and from NAFO on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nafo.int>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick E. Moran, 301–713–2276.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

NAFO has established and maintains conservation measures in its Regulatory Area that include one effort limitation fishery as well as fisheries with total allowable catches (TACs) and member nation quota allocations. The principal species managed are cod, flounder, redfish, American plaice, halibut, capelin, shrimp, and squid. The United States received fish quota allocations for three NAFO stocks and an effort allocation for one NAFO stock to be fished during 2010. The species, location, and allocation (in metric tons or effort) of these U.S. fishing opportunities, as found in Annexes I.A, I.B, and I.C of the 2009 NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, are as follows:

(1) Redfish	NAFO Division 3M	69 mt
(2) Squid (<i>Illex</i>)	NAFO Subareas 3 & 4	453 mt
(3) Shrimp	NAFO Division 3L	334 mt

(4) Shrimp	NAFO Division 3M	1 vessel/50 days
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Additionally, the United States may be transferred up to 1,000 mt of 3LNO yellowtail flounder from Canada's quota allocation for express use by U.S. vessels if the United States requests a transfer before January 1 of 2010 or any succeeding year through 2017. If such a request is made, an additional 500 mt of 3LNO yellowtail flounder could be made available on the condition that the United States transfers its shrimp allocation to Canada or through some other arrangement. Participants in this fishery will be restricted to an overall bycatch harvest limit for American plaice equal to 15% of the total yellowtail fishery.

Further, U.S. vessels may be authorized to fish any available portion of the 385 mt allocation of oceanic redfish in NAFO Subarea 2 and Divisions 1F and 3K available to NAFO members that are not also members of the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission. Fishing opportunities may also be authorized for U.S. fishermen in the "Others" category for: Division 3LNO yellowtail flounder (85 mt); Division 3NO white hake (353 mt); Division 3LNO skates (444 mt); Division 3M cod (22 mt), 3LN redfish (21mt), and Division 3O redfish (100 mt). Procedures for obtaining NMFS authorization are specified below.

U.S. Fish Quota Allocations

Expressions of interest to fish for any or all of the 2010 U.S. fish quota allocations, including the up to 1,500 mt of yellowtail flounder to be transferred by Canada under the circumstances described above, and "Others" category allocations in NAFO will be considered from U.S. vessels in possession of, or eligible for, a valid HSFCA permit, which is available from the NMFS Northeast Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). All expressions of interest should be directed in writing to Patrick E. Moran (see **ADDRESSES**). Letters of interest from U.S. vessel owners should include the name, registration, and home port of the applicant vessel as required by NAFO in advance of fishing operations. In addition, any available information on intended target species and dates of fishing operations should be included. To ensure equitable access by U.S. vessel owners, NMFS may promulgate regulations designed to choose one or more U.S. applicants from among expressions of interest.

Note that vessels issued valid HSFCA permits under 50 CFR part 300 are exempt from multispecies permit, mesh

size, effort-control, and possession limit restrictions, specified in 50 CFR 648.4, 648.80, 648.82 and 648.86, respectively, while transiting the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with multispecies on board the vessel, or landing multispecies in U.S. ports that were caught while fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area, provided:

(1) The vessel operator has a letter of authorization issued by the Regional Administrator on board the vessel;

(2) For the duration of the trip, the vessel fishes, except for transiting purposes, exclusively in the NAFO Regulatory Area and does not harvest fish in, or possess fish harvested in, or from, the U.S. EEZ;

(3) When transiting the U.S. EEZ, all gear is properly stowed in accordance with one of the applicable methods specified in 50 CFR 648.23(b); and

(4) The vessel operator complies with the HSFCA permit and all NAFO conservation and enforcement measures while fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area.

U.S. 3M Effort Allocation

Expressions of interest in harvesting the U.S. portion of the 2010 NAFO 3M shrimp effort allocation (1 vessel/50 days) will be considered from owners of U.S. vessels in possession of a valid HSFCA permit. All expressions of interest should be directed in writing to Patrick E. Moran (see **ADDRESSES**).

Letters of interest from U.S. vessel owners should include the name, registration and home port of the applicant vessel as required by NAFO in advance of fishing operations. In the event that multiple expressions of interest are made by U.S. vessel owners, NMFS may promulgate regulations designed to choose one U.S. applicant from among expressions of interest.

NAFO Conservation and Management Measures

Relevant NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures include, but are not limited to, maintenance of a fishing logbook with NAFO-designated entries; adherence to NAFO hail system requirements; presence of an on-board observer; deployment of a functioning, autonomous vessel monitoring system; and adherence to all relevant minimum size, gear, bycatch, and other requirements. Further details regarding these requirements are available from the NMFS Northeast Regional Office, and can also be found in the current NAFO Conservation and Enforcement

Measures on the Internet (see **ADDRESSES**).

Chartering and Transfer of Quota Arrangements

In the event that no adequate expressions of interest in harvesting the U.S. portion of the 2010 NAFO 3L shrimp quota allocation and/or 3M shrimp effort allocation are made on behalf of U.S. vessels, expressions of interest will be considered from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels of other NAFO Parties through a transfer of quota allocated to the U.S. or under chartering arrangements to fish the 2010 U.S. quota allocation for 3L shrimp and/or the effort allocation for 3M shrimp. Under NAFO rules in effect through 2010, a vessel registered to another NAFO Contracting Party may be chartered to fish the U.S. shrimp quota and effort allocations provided that written consent for the charter is obtained from the vessel's flag state and the U.S. allocation is transferred to that flag state. NAFO Parties must be notified of such a chartering operation through a mail notification process.

A NAFO Contracting Party wishing to enter into a chartering arrangement with the United States must be in full current compliance with the requirements outlined in the NAFO Convention and Conservation and Enforcement Measures including, but not limited to, submission of the following reports to the NAFO Executive Secretary: provisional monthly catches within 30 days following the calendar month in which the catches were made; provisional daily catches of shrimp taken from Division 3L; provisional monthly fishing days in Division 3M within 30 days following the calendar month in which the catches were made; observer reports within 30 days following the completion of a fishing trip; and an annual statement of actions taken in order to comply with the NAFO Convention, and notification to NMFS of any interruption in or the termination of the charter fishing activities. Furthermore, the United States may also consider a Contracting Party's previous compliance with the NAFO bycatch provisions, as outlined in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, before entering into a chartering arrangement.

Expressions of interest from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels from another NAFO Contracting Party under chartering

arrangements should include information required by NAFO regarding the proposed chartering operation, including: the name, registration and flag of the intended vessel; a copy of the charter; the fishing opportunities granted; a letter of consent from the vessel's flag state; the date from which the vessel is authorized to commence fishing on these opportunities; and the duration of the charter (not to exceed six months). More details on NAFO requirements for chartering operations are available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**). In addition, expressions of interest for chartering operations should be accompanied by a detailed description of anticipated benefits to the United States. Such benefits might include, but are not limited to, the use of U.S. processing facilities/personnel; the use of U.S. fishing personnel; other specific positive effects on U.S. employment; evidence that fishing by the chartered vessel actually would take place; and documentation of the physical characteristics and economics of the fishery for future use by the U.S. fishing industry.

In the event that multiple expressions of interest are made by U.S. fishing interests proposing the transfer of quota allocated to the U.S. or chartering operations to fish quota allocated to the United States, the information submitted regarding benefits to the United States will be used in making a selection. In the event that applications by U.S. fishing interests proposing the use of chartering operations are considered, all applicants will be made aware of the allocation decision as soon as possible. Once the allocation has been awarded for use in a chartering operation, NMFS will immediately take appropriate steps to notify NAFO and transfer the U.S. 3L shrimp quota allocation and/or the 3M shrimp effort allocation to the appropriate Contracting Party.

After reviewing all requests for allocations submitted, NMFS may decide not to grant any allocations if it is determined that no requests meet the criteria described in this notice. All individuals/companies submitting expressions of interest to NMFS will be contacted if an allocation has been awarded. Please note that if the U.S. portion of any 2010 NAFO quota allocation and/or effort allocation, or the 3LNO yellowtail flounder transferred from Canada is awarded to a U.S. vessel or a specified chartering operation, it may not be transferred without the express, written consent of NMFS.

Dated: December 3, 2009.

Rebecca Lent,

*Director, Office of International Affairs,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 040205043-4043-01]

RIN 0648-XS56

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; Closure of the 2009-2010 Commercial Fishery for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS closes the commercial fishery for black sea bass in the portion of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic through 35° 15.19' N. lat., the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina. NMFS has determined that the quota for the commercial fishery for black sea bass will have been reached by December 20, 2009. This closure is necessary to protect the black sea bass resource.

DATES: Closure is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, December 20, 2009, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Catherine Bruger, telephone 727-824-5305, fax 727-824-5308, e-mail Catherine.Bruger@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) 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. Those regulations set the commercial quota for black sea bass in the South Atlantic at 309,000 lb (140,160 kg) for the current fishing year, June 1, 2009, through May 31, 2010.

Black sea bass are managed throughout their range. In the South Atlantic EEZ, black sea bass are

managed by the Council from 35° 15.19' N. lat., the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina, south. From Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina, through Maine, black sea bass are managed jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Therefore, the closure provisions contained in this notice are applicable to those vessels harvesting or possessing black sea bass from Key West, Florida, through Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina.

Under 50 CFR 622.43(a), NMFS is required to close the commercial fishery for a species or species group when the quota for that species or species group is reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. Based on current statistics, NMFS has determined that the available commercial quota of 309,000 lb (140,160 kg) for black sea bass will be reached on or before December 20, 2009.

Accordingly, NMFS is closing the commercial fishery for black sea bass in the portion of the South Atlantic EEZ through Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina, from 12:01 a.m., local time, on December 20, 2009, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2010. The operator of a vessel that is landing black sea bass for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such black sea bass prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, December 20, 2009, and all sea bass pots must be removed from the EEZ as of that time and date.

During the closure, the applicable bag and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.39(d) apply to all harvest or possession of black sea bass in or from the portion of the South Atlantic EEZ through Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina; and the sale or purchase of black sea bass taken from the EEZ is prohibited. In addition, those bag and possession limits and the prohibition on sale or purchase of black sea bass apply regardless of where the black sea bass were harvested, i.e., in state waters or in the portion of the South Atlantic EEZ through Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina, on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of black sea bass that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, December 20, 2009, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.