

that processed landings of BSAI or CDQ Pacific cod.

Using the fee percentage formula described generally above, the estimated percentage of direct program costs to fishery value for the 2023 calendar year is 1.37 percent for the Amendment 80 Program. For 2023, NMFS applied the fee percentage to each Amendment 80 species landing that was debited from an Amendment 80 cooperative quota allocation between January 1 and December 31 to calculate the Amendment 80 fee liability for each Amendment 80 cooperative. The 2023 fee payments must be submitted to NMFS on or before December 31, 2023. Payment must be made in accordance with the payment methods set forth in § 679.95(a)(3)(iv).

#### *AFA Standard Price and Fee Percentages*

The AFA Program allocates the Bering Sea directed pollock fishery TAC to three sectors: catcher/processor, mothership, and inshore. Each sector has established cooperatives to harvest the sector's exclusive allocation. In 2023, each cooperative for the inshore sector is responsible for paying the fee for Bering Sea pollock landed under the AFA Program. Cost recovery requirements for the AFA sectors are found at § 679.66.

NMFS calculates the standard price for pollock using the most recent annual value information reported to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the Commercial Operator's Annual Report and compiled in the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission Gross Earnings data. Due to the time required to compile the data, there is a 1-year delay between the gross earnings data year and the fishing year to which it is applied. For example, NMFS used 2022 gross earnings data to calculate the standard price for 2023 pollock landings.

Under the fee percentage formula described above, the estimated percentage of direct program costs to fishery value for the 2023 calendar year is 0.26 percent for the AFA inshore sector. To calculate the 2023 fee liabilities, NMFS applied the respective fee percentages to the landings of Bering Sea pollock debited from each cooperative's fishery allocation that occurred between January 1 and December 31. The 2023 fee payments must be submitted to NMFS on or before December 31, 2023. Payment must be made in accordance with the payment methods set forth in § 679.66(a)(4)(iv).

#### *AIP Program Standard Price and Fee Percentage*

The AIP Program allocates the Aleutian Islands directed pollock fishery TAC to the Aleut Corporation, consistent with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Pub. L. 108–109) and implementing regulations. Annually, prior to the start of the pollock season, the Aleut Corporation provides NMFS with the identity of its designated representative for harvesting the Aleutian Islands directed pollock fishery TAC. The same individual is responsible for the submission of all cost recovery fees for pollock landed under the AIP Program. Cost recovery requirements for the AIP Program are at § 679.67.

NMFS calculates the standard price for pollock using the most recent annual value information reported to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the Commercial Operator's Annual Report and compiled in the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission Gross Earnings data for Aleutian Islands pollock. As explained above, due to the time required to compile the data, there is a 1-year delay between the gross earnings data year and the fishing year to which it is applied.

For the 2023 fishing year, the Aleut Corporation did not select any participants to harvest or process the Aleutian Islands directed pollock fishery TAC, and most of that TAC was reallocated to the Bering Sea directed pollock fishery TAC. Since there was no fishery for the AIP Program in 2023, the fee percentage is zero.

#### *CDQ Standard Price and Fee Percentage*

The CDQ Program was implemented in 1992 to provide access to BSAI fishery resources to villages located in Western Alaska. Section 305(j) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act identifies 65 villages eligible to participate in the CDQ Program and the six CDQ groups to represent these villages. CDQ groups receive exclusive harvesting privileges of the TACs for a broad range of crab species, groundfish species, and halibut. NMFS implemented a CDQ cost recovery program for the BSAI crab fisheries in 2005 (70 FR 10174, March 2, 2005) and published the cost recovery fee percentage for the 2022/2023 crab fishing year on August 3, 2023 (88 FR 51301). This notice provides the cost recovery fee percentage for the CDQ Program with respect to groundfish and halibut. Each CDQ group is subject to cost recovery fee requirements and the designated representative of each CDQ group is responsible for submitting payment for their CDQ group. Cost

recovery requirements for the CDQ Program are at § 679.33.

For most CDQ groundfish species, NMFS annually summarizes volume and value information for landings of all fishery species subject to cost recovery in order to estimate a standard price for each fishery species. The volume and value information are obtained from the First Wholesale Volume and Value Report and the Pacific Cod Ex-Vessel Volume and Value Report. For CDQ halibut and fixed-gear sablefish, NMFS calculates the standard prices using information from the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Ex-Vessel Volume and Value Report, which collects information on both IFQ and CDQ volume and value.

Using the fee percentage formula described above, the estimated percentage of direct program costs to fishery value for the 2023 calendar year is 1.07 percent for the CDQ Program. For 2023, NMFS applied the calculated CDQ fee percentage to all CDQ groundfish and halibut landings made between January 1 and December 31 to calculate the CDQ fee liability for each CDQ group. The 2023 fee payments must be submitted to NMFS on or before December 31, 2023. Payment must be made in accordance with the payment methods set forth in § 679.33(a)(3)(iv).

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

Dated: November 20, 2023.

**Kelly Denit,**

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

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## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XD553]

### **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils (Councils) will hold a public meeting of their joint Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. EDT. For agenda details, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar. Connection information

will be posted to the calendar at [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org) prior to the meeting.

**Council address:** Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331; [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526-5255.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Councils' NTAP will meet to discuss the new Operational Manual and Orientation Document. The intent of this meeting is to discuss NTAP in detail, including background, organization, purpose, and member expectation. This meeting will be an opportunity for new and existing NTAP members to discuss and learn about the goals and purposes of NTAP.

**Special Accommodations**

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Shelley Spedden, (302) 526-5251 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: November 20, 2023.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648-XD225]

**2024 Annual Determination To Implement the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement**

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

**ACTION:** Notification of Annual Determination of fisheries.

**SUMMARY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is providing notification that the agency will not identify additional fisheries to observe on the 2024 Annual Determination (AD), pursuant to its authority under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Through the AD, NMFS identifies U.S. fisheries operating in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean that will be required to take observers upon NMFS'

request. The purpose of observing identified fisheries is to learn more about sea turtle bycatch in a given fishery, evaluate measures to prevent or reduce sea turtle bycatch, and implement the prohibition against sea turtle takes. Fisheries identified on the 2020 and 2023 ADs (see table 1) remain on the AD for a 5-year period and are required to carry observers upon NMFS' request until September 29, 2025, for the 2020 AD and December 31, 2027, for the 2023 AD.

**ADDRESSES:** Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Wendy Piniak, Office of Protected Resources, 301-427-8402; Ellen Keane, Greater Atlantic Region, 978-282-8476; Dennis Klemm, Southeast Region, 727-824-5312; Dan Lawson, West Coast Region, 206-526-4740; Irene Kelly, Pacific Islands Region, 808-725-5141. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the hearing impaired may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Purpose of the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement**

Under the ESA, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, NMFS has the responsibility to implement programs to conserve marine life listed as endangered or threatened. All sea turtles found in U.S. waters are listed as either endangered or threatened under the ESA. Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*; North Pacific distinct population segment (DPS)), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green (*Chelonia mydas*; Central West Pacific and Central South Pacific DPSs), and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) sea turtles are listed as endangered. Loggerhead (Northwest Atlantic Ocean DPS), green (North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Central North Pacific, and East Pacific DPSs), and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) sea turtles are listed as threatened, except for breeding colony populations of olive ridleys on the Pacific coast of Mexico, which are listed as endangered. Due to the inability to distinguish between populations of olive ridley turtles away from the nesting beach, NMFS considers these turtles endangered wherever they occur in U.S. Pacific waters. While some sea turtle populations have shown signs of

recovery, many populations continue to decline.

Bycatch in fishing gear is the primary anthropogenic source of sea turtle injury and mortality in U.S. waters. Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the take (defined to include harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting or attempting to engage in any such conduct), including incidental take, of endangered sea turtles. Pursuant to section 4(d) of the ESA, NMFS has issued regulations extending the prohibition of take, with exceptions, to threatened sea turtles (50 CFR 223.205 and 223.206). Section 11 of the ESA provides for civil and criminal penalties for anyone who violates the ESA or a regulation issued to implement the ESA. NMFS may grant exceptions to the take prohibitions with an incidental take statement or an incidental take permit issued pursuant to ESA section 7 or 10, respectively. To do so, NMFS must determine that the activity that will result in incidental take is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the affected listed species. For some Federal fisheries and most state fisheries, NMFS has not granted an exception for incidental takes of sea turtles primarily because we lack information about fishery-sea turtle interactions.

For most fisheries, the most effective way for NMFS to learn more about bycatch in order to implement the take prohibitions and prevent or minimize take is to place observers aboard fishing vessels. In 2007, NMFS issued a regulation (50 CFR 222.402) establishing procedures to annually identify, pursuant to specified criteria and after notice and opportunity for comment, those fisheries in which the agency intends to place observers (72 FR 43176; August 3, 2007). These regulations specify that NMFS may place observers on U.S. fishing vessels, commercial or recreational, operating in U.S. territorial waters, the U.S. exclusive economic zone, or on the high seas, or on vessels that are otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Failure to comply with the requirements under this regulation may result in civil or criminal penalties under the ESA.

NMFS will pay the direct costs for vessels to carry the required observers. These include observer salary and insurance costs. NMFS may also evaluate other potential direct costs, should they arise. Once selected, a fishery will be required to carry observers, if requested, for a period of 5 years without further action by NMFS. This will enable NMFS to develop appropriate observer coverage and