

TABLE 1—2025 QUOTAS FOR THE ATLANTIC SHARK MANAGEMENT GROUPS—Continued

Region or sub-region	Management group	2024			2025		
		Adjusted quota (A)	Landings (B)	Quota utilization % (C)	Base annual quota (D)	Adjustments (E)	Adjusted quota (F)
	Sandbar Shark Research.	90.7 mt (199,943 lb).	56 mt (123,059 lb)	62	90.7 mt (199,943 lb).	90.7 mt (199,943 lb)
	Blue Sharks	273.0 mt (601,856 lb).	<1 mt (<2,205 lb)	<1	273.0 mt (601,856 lb).	273.0 mt (601,856 lb)
	Porbeagle Sharks	1.7 mt (3,748 lb) ..	<1 mt (<2,205 lb)	<30	1.7 mt (3,748 lb)	1.7 mt (3,748 lb)
	Pelagic Sharks	488.0 mt	16.3 mt (35,963 lb).	3	488.0 mt	488.0 mt
	Other Than Porbeagle or Blue.	(1,075,856 lb).			(1,075,856 lb).		(1,075,856 lb)

NMFS can only apply underharvest adjustments to stocks or management groups that are declared not overfished and have no overfishing occurring. The underharvest adjustments cannot exceed 50 percent of the base quota. NMFS calculated the adjusted quotas (Column F) are by adding the underharvest amount, up to the carryover limit (Column E), to the base annual commercial quota (Column D).

Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The reason for using this regulatory authority is: in a previous action taken pursuant to section 304(c), NMFS designed the HMS FMP to authorize the Department of Commerce to take this action pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act section 305(d). The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this temporary final rule is consistent with the HMS FMP, its amendments, and other applicable law.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest. The rulemaking processes for Amendment 2 to the HMS FMP (73 FR 35778, June 24, 2008; corrected 73 FR 40658, July 15, 2008), Amendment 5a to the HMS FMP (78 FR 40318, July 3, 2013), Amendment 6 to the HMS FMP (80 FR 50073, August 18, 2015), Amendment 9 to the HMS FMP (80 FR 73128, November 24, 2015), and the 2024 Atlantic shark commercial fishing year rule (88 FR 77039, November 8, 2023) specifically provided prior notice of, and accepted public comment on, the base quotas that are being adjusted and the formulaic quota adjustment processes to carry over overharvests and underharvests for the commercial Atlantic shark fishery. These processes have not changed, and the application of these formulas to the relevant quotas in this temporary final rule is a routine action that does not have discretionary aspects requiring additional consideration. There are no new base annual quotas for the relevant species for 2025. Additionally, similar actions to adjust the quotas based on the previous year's underharvest occur annually. NMFS has carried over underharvested quota from the previous

fishing year to the maximum extent allowed since 2020. Thus, it is unnecessary to provide prior notice and an additional opportunity for public comment on this rule.

There is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in effective date. This rule is an annual, routine action that the regulated community does not need time to prepare for. The 2025 Atlantic shark commercial fishery opened on January 1, 2025. NMFS monitors Atlantic shark annual catch and uses the previous year's catch data to calculate the legally allowable quotas for the current year. However, these adjustments to the 2025 quotas could not occur earlier in the year because the final 2024 landings data were not available until early 2025. Given that these fisheries are currently open and permit-holders are actively fishing, delaying the effective date of this rule's quota adjustments could in turn lead to premature closure of one or more affected fisheries if the unadjusted quota limit is reached within the next 30 days. Such an event would negatively affect the regulated fisheries' reasonable opportunity to catch the available quotas, contrary to Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements and overall purpose of sound conservation and management of fisheries—including Atlantic sharks—in a manner that achieves optimum yield.

This temporary final rule is exempt from review under E.O. 12866. This temporary final rule is not a regulatory action under E.O. 14192.

NMFS has determined that this action would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian Tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes; therefore, consultation with Tribal officials under E.O. 13175 is not

required, and the requirements of sections (5)(b) and (5)(c) of E.O. 13175 also do not apply. A Tribal summary impact statement under section (5)(b)(2)(B) and section (5)(c)(2)(B) of E.O. 13175 is not required and has not been prepared.

Because prior notice and opportunity for public comment are not required for this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*, are inapplicable.

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Dated: April 10, 2025.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,
Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 240314-0080; RTID 0648-XE842]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; 2025 Closure of the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area to the Limited Access General Category Fishery

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the closure of the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM)

Scallop Management Area for the remainder of the 2025 fishing year. After reviewing final harvest information, the area may be reopened by Framework 39, if approved, for Limited Access General Category vessels. Subject to specific enumerated exceptions, possession, retention, or landing of scallops is prohibited in the NGOM Scallop Management Area once the Regional Administrator publishes a notification in the **Federal Register** that the NGOM Set-Aside has been reached. This action is intended to prevent the overharvest of the 2025 NGOM Set-Aside.

DATES: Effective 1800 hour local time, April 16, 2025, through March 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ashley Trudeau, Fishery Resource Management Specialist, (978) 281-9252.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations governing fishing activity in the NGOM Scallop Management Area are located in 50 CFR 648.54 and 648.62. These regulations authorize vessels issued a valid Federal scallop permit to fish in the NGOM Scallop Management Area under specific conditions, including the NGOM Set-Aside for the 2025 fishing year, and a State Waters Exemption Program for the State of Maine and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Section 648.62(b)(2) requires the NGOM Scallop Management Area to be closed to scallop vessels issued Federal Limited Access General Category (LAGC) scallop permits, except as provided below, once the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator provides notice that 100 percent of the NGOM Set-Aside has been harvested. Any vessel that holds a Federal NGOM (LAGC B) or Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) (LAGC A) permit may continue to fish in the Maine or Massachusetts state waters portion of the NGOM Scallop Management Area under the State Waters Exemption Program found in § 648.54 provided it has a valid Maine or Massachusetts state scallop permit and fishes only in that state's respective waters.

Based on trip declarations by federally permitted LAGC scallop vessels fishing in the NGOM Scallop Management Area and analysis of fishing effort, NMFS projects that the default 2025 NGOM Set-Aside has been harvested. Thus, in accordance with § 648.62(b)(2), the NGOM Scallop Management Area is closed to all federally permitted LAGC scallop vessels as of the effective date and time of this action, the quickest date NMFS was able to close. As of this date, no vessel issued a Federal LAGC scallop permit may fish for, possess, or land scallops in or from the NGOM Scallop

Management Area after the effective date and time of this action, unless the vessel is fishing exclusively in state waters and is participating in an approved state waters exemption program as specified in § 648.54. Any federally permitted LAGC scallop vessel that has declared into the NGOM Scallop Management Area, complied with all trip notification and observer requirements, and crossed the vessel monitoring system demarcation line on the way to the area before the effective date and time of this action, may complete its trip and land scallops. This closure is in effect until the end of the 2025 scallop fishing year, through March 31, 2026, or until replaced by Framework 39, if approved and appropriate.

The proposed rule for Framework Adjustment 39 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (90 FR 12510) published on March 18, 2025, and the public comment period ended on April 2, 2025. Framework 39 would increase the NGOM set-aside from the current default allocation of 315,449 lb (143 mt) to 675,563 lb (306 mt). If Framework 39 is approved, the final rule implementing final 2025 scallop fishery specification would subtract NGOM harvest made under the default specifications from the Framework 39 2025 NGOM Set-Aside amount and reopen the NGOM Management Area, if appropriate given the landings already accrued, with the remaining NGOM Set-Aside for the remainder of fishing year 2025.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment because it would be contrary to the public interest and impracticable. NMFS also finds, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period. Exigent circumstances necessitate this closure action and any delay would harm the public interest. The NGOM Scallop Management Area opened for the 2025 fishing year on April 1, 2025, under default measures implemented under Framework Adjustment 38 (89 FR 20341, March 22, 2024). Applicable regulations at § 648.60(b)(2) require this closure to ensure that federally permitted scallop vessels do not harvest more than the allocated NGOM Set-Aside. However, NMFS can only make projections for the NGOM closure date as trips into the area occur on a real-

time basis and as activity trends appear. As a result, accurate projections are only available shortly before the set-aside is harvested. Since the April 1, 2025, opening, scallops have been harvested at an average rate of 33,800 lb (1533 kg) per day with a resulting estimated harvest of 198,000 lb (89,811 kg), 63 percent of the NGOM Set-Aside. The rapid harvest rate that has occurred does not allow for projections far enough in advance that would allow for notice of a proposed rule, a comment period, or a delay in rule effectiveness. Accordingly, earlier rule publication was not possible. Allowing federally permitted LAGC scallop vessels to continue taking trips in the NGOM Scallop Management Area during the period necessary to publish and receive comments on a proposed rule, or delay rule effectiveness, would result in vessels harvesting more than the 2025 NGOM Set-Aside for the NGOM Scallop Management Area. This would result in excessive fishing effort in the area thereby undermining conservation and management objectives of the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan and requiring more restrictive future management measures to make up for the excessive harvest. Applicable regulations at § 648.62(b)(3) require that overages of the NGOM set-aside are subject to pound-for-pound payback in a subsequent fishing year. In addition, reductions in NGOM scallop biomass associated with excessive harvest would result in lower NGOM total allowable landings in future years. As such, delaying this closure action to afford the public with a comment period or a delay in effectiveness would harm the public. The public had prior notice and full opportunity to comment on this closure process during notice and comment rulemaking for Framework 38. Stakeholders are also aware that NMFS closes the NGOM Scallop Management Area when it projects the NGOM Set-Aside is fully harvested. This process occurs annually dating back to the adoption of Amendment 11 to the Scallop FMP in 2007. As stated above, any scallop vessel that has declared into the NGOM Scallop Management Area, complied with all trip notification and observer requirements, and crossed the vessel monitoring system demarcation line on the way to the area before the effective date of this closure, may complete its trip and land scallops. Therefore, those affected by this regulation are given the reasonable opportunity to complete a trip in progress and those who have not begun any such trip do not need 30 days in which to comply with the effective date

of this closure, because the rule prohibits them from taking action they have not yet taken.

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

Dated: April 11, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

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 660

[Docket No. 241022-0278]

RIN 0648-BN72

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; 2025-2026 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments

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

ACTION: Final rule; inseason adjustments to biennial groundfish management measures.

SUMMARY: This final rule announces routine inseason adjustments to management measures in commercial and recreational groundfish fisheries. This action is intended to allow commercial and recreational fishing vessels to access more abundant groundfish stocks while protecting overfished and depleted stocks.

DATES: This final rule is effective April 16, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher Biegel, 503-231-6291, christopher.biegel@noaa.gov.

Electronic Access

This rule is accessible via the internet at the Office of the Federal Register website at <https://www.federalregister.gov>. Background information and documents are available at the Pacific Fishery Management Council's website at <https://www.pcouncil.org/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (PCGFMP) and its implementing regulations at title 50 in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR),

part 660, subparts C through G, regulate fishing for over 90 species of groundfish off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) develops groundfish harvest specifications and management measures for 2-year periods (*i.e.*, a biennium). NMFS published the final rule to implement harvest specifications and management measures for the 2025-2026 biennium for most species managed under the PCGFMP on December 16, 2024 (89 FR 101514). In general, the management measures set at the start of the biennial harvest specifications cycle help the various sectors of the fishery attain, but not exceed, the catch limits for each stock. The Council, in coordination with Pacific Coast Treaty Indian Tribes and the States of Washington, Oregon, and California, recommends adjustments to the management measures during the fishing year to achieve this goal.

At its March 4-11, 2025 meeting, the Council recommended two inseason actions for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. The first involves the recreational groundfish limit in the long-leader fishery off Oregon and the second involves the trip limit of incidental halibut caught in the sablefish fishery.

Long-Leader Fishery

During the 2025-26 biennial process, the Council adopted a five-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish in the Oregon recreational long-leader fishery. Since the completion of the biennial process, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff examined data through 2023 and most of 2024. Based on catch rates of canary rockfish in the long-leader gear fishery, the sub-bag limit needs to be decreased to reduce the chance of the Oregon recreational share of canary rockfish being exceeded. In December 2024, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a one-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish in the recreational long-leader gear fishery off Oregon beginning January 1, 2025. The ODFW requested conforming Federal action to reduce the sub-bag limit from five fish to one fish for canary rockfish, as effort in the long-leader gear fishery occurs primarily in Federal waters.

The Council moved, and NMFS is implementing, a decrease in the sub-bag limit for canary rockfish from five fish to one fish in the recreational Oregon long-leader gear fishery as recommended by ODFW.

Incidental Halibut

At the March Council meeting, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP)

recommended the Pacific halibut incidental landing limit for the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis be 75 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of dressed sablefish plus two halibut. This is a reduction from the 150 pounds of halibut per 1,000 pounds of dressed sablefish in 2024. The reduction was recommended due to the large increase in sablefish harvest limits of about 238 percent. The 2025 allotment of Pacific halibut for this sector is 70,000 pounds which could be quickly harvested by just a few top primary tier vessels if a reduction in incidental halibut is not implemented. Lowering the halibut limit will allow more vessels to participate in the fishery and for the fishery to continue throughout the year without exceeding the halibut allocation. Therefore, the Council moved and NMFS is implementing a trip limit of 75 pounds of Pacific halibut per 1,000 pounds of sablefish plus two additional Pacific halibut for the primary fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington, as recommended in the supplementary GAP Report 1, March 2025.

Classification

This final rule makes routine inseason adjustments to groundfish fishery management measures, based on the best scientific information available, consistent with the PCGFMP and its implementing regulations.

This action is taken under the authority of 50 CFR 660.60(c) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The aggregate data upon which these actions are based are available for public inspection by contacting Christopher Biegel in NMFS West Coast Region (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section above), or view at the NMFS West Coast Groundfish website: <https://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish/index.html>.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b), NMFS finds good cause to waive prior public notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The adjustments to management measures in this document are designed to keep catch within allocations established by the 2025-2026 harvest specifications. No aspect of this action is controversial, and changes of this nature were anticipated in the final rule for the 2025-2026 harvest specifications and management measures, which published on December 16, 2024 (89 FR 101514).

The Council recommended, and NMFS is implementing, a decrease to