

suitability for reduction in the production of a stamp.

(b) *The 2018 Contest*. In 2018 only, entries will also be judged on how well they illustrate the theme of “celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage.”

Dated: February 27, 2018.

Jason Larrabee,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, exercising the authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 120404257-3325-02]

RIN 0648-XF971

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2018 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Golden Tilefish

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS implements an accountability measure for the commercial longline component for golden tilefish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. Commercial longline landings for golden tilefish are projected to reach the longline component's commercial quota on March 25, 2018. Therefore, NMFS closes the commercial longline component of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ on March 25, 2018. This closure is necessary to protect the golden tilefish resource.

DATES: This rule is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 25, 2018, until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Vara, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, email: mary.vara@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic includes golden tilefish and 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 by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens

Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

Amendment 18B to the FMP established a longline endorsement program for the commercial golden tilefish component of the snapper-grouper fishery and allocated the commercial golden tilefish annual catch limit (ACL) between two gear groups, as commercial quota: The longline and hook-and-line components (78 FR 23858; April 23, 2013). On January 2, 2018, NMFS published a final temporary rule to implement interim measures to reduce overfishing of golden tilefish in Federal waters of the South Atlantic (83 FR 65). As a result of the interim measures, the total ACL for golden tilefish for the 2018 fishing year is 323,000 lb (146,510 kg), gutted weight, and the commercial ACL is 313,310 lb (142,115 kg), gutted weight. The current commercial quota for the 2018 fishing year for the longline component is 234,982 lb (106,586 kg), gutted weight. The interim measures implemented through the temporary final rule are effective through July 1, 2018. NMFS is evaluating extension of the interim measures for up to an additional 186 days.

Under 50 CFR 622.193(a)(1)(ii), NMFS is required to close the commercial longline component for golden tilefish when the longline component's commercial quota has been reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. After the commercial quota for the longline component is reached or projected to be reached, golden tilefish may not be commercially fished or possessed by a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement. Based on projected landings, NMFS has determined that the commercial quota for the golden tilefish longline component in the South Atlantic will be reached on March 25, 2018. Accordingly, the commercial longline component of South Atlantic golden tilefish is closed effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 25, 2018.

During the commercial longline closure, golden tilefish may still be harvested commercially using hook-and-line gear. However, a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement is not eligible to fish for or possess golden tilefish using hook-and-line gear under the hook-and-line commercial trip limit, as specified in 50 CFR 622.191(a)(2)(ii). The operator of a vessel with a valid Federal commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper and a valid commercial longline endorsement for golden tilefish with golden tilefish on board must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such golden

tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 25, 2018. During the commercial longline closure, the recreational bag limit and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.187(b)(2)(iii) and (c)(1), respectively, apply to all harvest or possession of golden tilefish in or from the South Atlantic EEZ by a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement. The sale or purchase of longline-caught golden tilefish taken from the EEZ is prohibited during the commercial longline closure. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of longline-caught golden tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 25, 2018, and those that were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. Additionally, the recreational bag and possession limits and the sale and purchase provisions of the commercial closure apply to a person on board a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement, regardless of whether the golden tilefish are harvested in state or Federal waters, as specified in 50 CFR 622.190(c)(1).

Classification

The Regional Administrator for the NMFS Southeast Region has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of South Atlantic golden tilefish and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.193(a)(1)(v) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries (AA) finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the commercial longline component for golden tilefish constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), as such procedures for this temporary rule would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary, because the regulations at 50 CFR 622.193(a)(1)(v) have already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this action are contrary to the public

interest, because there is a need to immediately implement this action to protect the golden tilefish resource since the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the commercial quota for the longline component. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established commercial quota for the longline component.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

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

Dated: March 16, 2018.

Emily H. Menashes,
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 622

[Docket No. 130403320-4891-02]

RIN 0648-XG056

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic; 2018–2019 Recreational Fishing Season for Black Sea Bass

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; recreational season length.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the length of the recreational fishing season for black sea bass in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic will extend throughout the species' 2018–2019 fishing year. Announcing the length of recreational season for black sea bass is one of the accountability measures (AMs) for the recreational sector. This announcement allows recreational fishers to maximize their opportunity to harvest the recreational annual catch limit (ACL) for black sea bass during the fishing season while managing harvest to protect the black sea bass resource.

DATES: This rule is effective from 12:01 a.m., local time, April 1, 2018, until 12:01 a.m., local time, April 1, 2019, unless changed by subsequent notification in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nikhil Mehta, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, email: nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery includes black sea bass and is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council prepared the FMP and the FMP is implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

The final rule implementing Regulatory Amendment 14 to the FMP revised the recreational fishing year for black sea bass to be April 1 through March 31 (79 FR 66316; November 7, 2014). The final rule also revised the recreational AMs for black sea bass. Prior to the April 1 start of each recreational fishing year, NMFS projects the length of the upcoming recreational fishing season based on when NMFS projects the recreational ACL will be met and announces the recreational season end date in the **Federal Register** (50 CFR 622.193(e)(2)). The purpose of this AM is to have a more predictable recreational season length while still constraining harvest at or below the recreational ACL to protect the stock from experiencing adverse biological consequences.

NMFS estimates that recreational landings for the 2018–2019 fishing year will be less than the 2018–2019 recreational ACL. To make this determination, NMFS compared landings in the last 3 fishing years to the recreational ACL for the 2018–2019 black sea bass fishing year of 848,455 lb (384,853 kg), gutted weight, 1,001,177 lb (454,126 kg), round weight. The recreational ACL was set through the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 19 to the FMP (78 FR 58249; September 23, 2013). Landings in each of the past 3 fishing years have been substantially below the 2018–2019 recreational ACL; therefore, recreational landings in 2018–2019 are projected to be below the 2018–2019 recreational ACL. Accordingly, the recreational sector for black sea bass is not expected to close as a result of reaching its ACL, and the season end date for recreational fishing for black sea bass in the South Atlantic EEZ south of 35°15.9' N lat. is March 31, 2019.

Classification

The Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, has determined this temporary rule is

necessary for the conservation and management of South Atlantic black sea bass and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.193(e)(2) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement the notice of the recreational season length constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3), because prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this temporary rule is unnecessary. Such procedures are unnecessary, because the rule establishing the AM has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the recreational season length.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

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

Dated: March 16, 2018.

Emily H. Menashes,
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 679

[Docket No. 170816769-8162-02]

RIN 0648-XF906

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Hook-and-Line Catcher/Processors in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by hook-and-line