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 South Atlantic 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, on March 14, 2019, 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)(ii) 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)(ii) 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 8, 2019.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 2019–04605 Filed 3–8–19; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 151211999–6343–02]

RIN 0648–XG836

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Gulf of Maine Cod and Witch Flounder Trip Limit Increases for the Common Pool Fishery

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason adjustment.

SUMMARY: This action increases the possession and trip limits of Gulf of Maine cod and witch flounder for Northeast multispecies common pool vessels for the remainder of the 2019 fishing year, in order to provide the common pool fishery greater opportunity to harvest, but not exceed, its annual quota for these stocks.

DATES: These possession and trip limit adjustments are effective March 13, 2019, through April 30, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Spencer Talmage, Fishery Management Specialist, 978–281–9232.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Possession and Trip Limit Increase for Georges Bank Cod

The regulations at § 648.86(o) authorize the Regional Administrator to adjust the possession and trip limits for common pool vessels in order to help avoid overharvest or underharvest of the common pool quotas.

Based on most recent catch information, the common pool fishery has caught 5.3 mt of Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, or approximately 44.9 percent of its 11.9 mt annual quota. Additionally, the common pool fishery has caught 5.2 mt of witch flounder, or approximately 28.2 percent of its 18.3 mt annual quota. At the current rate of fishing, the common pool fishery is not projected to fully harvest its annual quota for either stock by the end of the 2019 fishing year. Providing vessels an opportunity to possess and land greater amounts of catch should provide greater incentive to fish and more opportunity to catch available quota. Based on our review of past fishing effort, we project that a moderate increase in the possession and trip limit for each stock should provide additional fishing opportunities and flexibility to catch available quota while ensuring that the common pool does not exceed its annual quotas.

Effective March 13, 2019, the possession and trip limits of GOM cod and witch flounder are increased, as summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1—CURRENT AND NEW POSSESSION AND TRIP LIMITS

Stock	Permit	Current	New
GOM cod	A DAS	50 lb (23 kg) per DAS, up to 100 lb (45 kg) per trip.	100 lb (45 kg) per DAS, up to 200 lb (91 kg) per trip.
	Handgear A	50 lb (23 kg) per trip	100 lb (45 kg) per trip.
	Handgear B	25 lb (11 kg) per trip	25 lb (11 kg) per trip.
	Small Vessel Category *	50 lb (23 kg) per trip	100 lb (45 kg) trip.
Witch flounder	A DAS	400 lb (181 kg) per trip	600 lb (272 kg) per trip.
	Handgear A.		
	Handgear B.		

TABLE 1—CURRENT AND NEW POSSESSION AND TRIP LIMITS—Continued

Stock	Permit	Current	New
	Small Vessel Category.		

* The Small Vessel Category trip limit of 300 lb (136 kg) of cod, yellowtail flounder, and haddock combined remains in place.

Weekly quota monitoring reports for the common pool fishery can be found on our website at: *http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/MultiMonReports.htm.* We will continue to monitor common pool catch through vessel trip reports, dealer-reported landings, VMS catch reports, and other available information and, if necessary, we will make additional adjustments to common pool management measures.

Classification

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

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) and 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment and the 30-day delayed effectiveness period because this action relieves possession and landing restrictions, and delayed implementation would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest.

The regulations at § 648.86(o) authorize the Regional Administrator to adjust the possession and trip limits for common pool vessels in order to help avoid overharvest or underharvest of the common pool quotas.

The catch data used as the basis for this action only recently became available. The available analysis indicates that the increased possession and trip limit adjustments for GOM cod and witch flounder should help the fishery achieve the optimum yield (OY) for this stock. Any delay in this action would limit the benefits to common pool vessels that the increased landing and possession limits are intended to provide.

The time necessary to provide for prior notice and comment, and a 30-day delay in effectiveness, would keep NMFS from implementing the necessary possession and trip limit before the end of the fishing year on April 30, 2019, which could prevent the fishery from achieving the OY and cause negative economic impacts to the common pool fishery. This would undermine management objectives of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and cause unnecessary negative economic impacts to the common pool fishery. The public received prior notice and an opportunity to comment on the Regional Administrator's exercise of this authority. The fishing industry participants have experienced these adjustments and have become accustomed to this process. There is additional good cause to waive the delayed effective period because this action relieves restrictions on fishing vessels by increasing a trip limit.

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

Dated: March 8, 2019.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 2019–04620 Filed 3–12–19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 151110999–5999–01]

RIN 648–XG866

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish; 2019 River Herring and Shad Catch Cap Reached for the Directed Atlantic Mackerel Commercial Fishery

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reducing the Atlantic mackerel possession limit for Federal limited access Atlantic mackerel permitted vessels based on a projection that the 2019 river herring and shad catch cap for that fishery has been reached. This action is necessary to comply with the regulations implementing the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan and is intended to limit the harvest of river herring and shad in the Greater Atlantic Region.

DATES: Effective 00:01 hr local time, March 12, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alyson Pitts, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281–9352.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic mackerel fishery can be found at 50 CFR part 648, including requirements for setting annual catch cap allocations for river herring and shad. NMFS set the 2018 river herring and shad catch cap for the directed Atlantic mackerel fishery at 82 mt as part of a final rule to implement the 2016 through 2018 Atlantic mackerel specifications (81 FR 24504, April 4, 2016). The 2019 river herring and shad catch cap will be adjusted in the final rule of Framework adjustment 13 to the Atlantic mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan, which is currently under development. NMFS will evaluate the mackerel fishery and landings relative to the new proposed cap, if approved.

The NMFS Administrator of the Greater Atlantic Region (Regional Administrator) monitors river herring and shad catch from the directed Atlantic mackerel fishery based on vessel and dealer reports, state data, and other available information. The regulations at § 648.24 require that when the Regional Administrator projects that when 95 percent of the river herring and shad catch cap has been caught by the directed Atlantic mackerel fishery (*i.e.,* trips that land more than 20,000 lb (9.08 mt) of Atlantic mackerel) will reach 95 percent of a catch cap, NMFS must prohibit, through notification in the **Federal Register**, Federal limited access permitted Atlantic mackerel vessels from fishing for, possessing, transferring, receiving, landing, or selling more than 20,000 lb (9.08 mt) of Atlantic mackerel per trip or landing more than once per calendar day for the remainder of the calendar year.

The Regional Administrator has determined, based on vessel and dealer reports, state data, and other available information, that Federal limited access Atlantic mackerel vessels will have caught 95 percent of the river herring and shad catch cap by March 12, 2019. The regulations at § 648.24(d) require NMFS to provide at least a 72 hour notice to the public before any Atlantic mackerel possession reduction or fishery closure. Therefore, effective 00:01 hr local time, March 12, 2019, federally permitted vessels targeting Atlantic mackerel may not fish for,