

as of November 28, 2023. Consequently, beginning January 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024, the GOM Cod Trimester TAC Area is closed. The closure applies to all common pool vessels fishing with gear capable of catching that stock, and remains in effect for the remainder of the trimester. During the closure, affected common pool vessels may not fish for, harvest, possess, or land regulated multispecies or ocean pout in or from the Trimester TAC Area for the stock.

The common pool fishery is currently in Trimester 2, which runs from September 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. Current Trimester 1 and 2 catch amounts leave no Trimester 3 TAC available to catch. Regulations at § 648.82(n)(2)(iii) state that any average or overage of common pool Trimester TACs in Trimesters 1 and 2 must be accounted for in the Trimester 3 TAC by deducting overages and adding underages to the Trimester 3 TAC. Common pool catch of GOM cod in Trimester 1 resulted in an overage of 3.3 mt, leaving only 1.9 mt available catch for the remainder of the year and Trimester 2. Deducting the Trimester 1 overage from the current Trimester 2 underage results in an overall overage of 1.9 mt that must be deducted from the Trimester 3 TAC. The Trimester 3 TAC is 1.9 mt, so this deduction results in a Trimester 3 TAC of 0 mt.

With a Trimester 3 TAC of 0 mt, any amount of catch in Trimester 3 would result in the common pool exceeding the Trimester 3 TAC and the common pool sub-ACL for GOM cod. Additionally, 90 percent of 0 is 0. As a result, we conclude that on January 1, 2024, the common pool fishery will have caught 90 percent of the Trimester 3 TAC.

Based on the above, effective on January 1, 2024, the Gulf of Maine Cod Trimester TAC Area is closed for Trimester 3, through April 30, 2024. The Gulf of Maine Cod Trimester TAC Area consists of statistical areas 513 and 514. During the closure, common pool vessels fishing with trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear, may not fish for, harvest, possess, or land regulated multispecies or ocean pout in or from this area. This closure of the GOM Cod TAC Area ends at the beginning of Trimester 1 of fishing year 2024 on May 1, 2024.

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 it would be impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest.

The regulations require the Regional Administrator to close a trimester TAC area to the common pool fishery when 90 percent of the Trimester TAC for a stock has been caught. Updated catch information through November 28, 2023, only recently became available indicating that the common pool fishery is projected to have caught 90 percent of its Trimester 3 TAC for GOM cod, and 100 percent of its GOM cod sub-ACL. The time necessary to provide for prior notice and comment, and a 30-day delay in effectiveness, would prevent the timely closure of the GOM Cod Trimester TAC Area on January 1, 2024, and immediate prohibition of possession of the stock. Delay in closure would be contrary to the regulatory requirements and, with a delay in implementation of the possession prohibition would increase the likelihood that the common pool fishery would exceed its annual quota of GOM cod.

Any overage of the annual quota would be deducted from common pool's quota for the next fishing year, to the detriment of this stock. This could undermine conservation and management objectives of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Prior notice and comment and a 30-day delay in effectiveness are unnecessary because fishermen were provided ample notice and opportunity to comment on the regulations that require this immediate closure. Fishermen expect these closures to occur in a timely way to prevent overages and their payback requirements. Overages of the trimester or annual common pool quota could cause negative economic impacts to the common pool fishery as a result of overage paybacks deducted from a future trimester or fishing year.

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

Dated: December 13, 2023.

Everett Wayne Baxter,

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

RIN 0648-BM29

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Program; Service Provider Revisions; Correction

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

ACTION: Final rule; correction.

SUMMARY: NMFS published a final rule on November 22, 2023, announcing changes to Federal requirements for service providers in the Pacific Coast Groundfish electronic monitoring program and other minor corrections to the groundfish regulations. This correction is necessary to modify regulatory instructions so that the implementing regulations are accurate.

DATES: Effective December 22, 2023.

ADDRESSES:

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/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS published a final rule on November 22, 2023, announcing changes to Federal requirements for service providers in the Pacific Coast Groundfish electronic monitoring program. This final rule also made minor administrative changes to other groundfish regulations to correct typos and update web addresses and other outdated references (88 FR 81354). This rule is effective December 22, 2023.

This action corrects the amendatory instructions to 50 CFR part 660 to correct additional typos that were left out of the original final rule; specifically changing the word "coop" to "co-op" when referring to harvest cooperatives. This correction is necessary to modify the incorrect regulatory instruction so that the implementing regulations are accurate.

Correction

PART 660 [Corrected]

Effective December 22, 2023, in FR Doc. 2023–25703 at 88 FR 81354 in the issue of November 22, 2023, on page 81358, in the first column, in amendatory instruction 2, the following correction is made:

■ 2. Amend part 660 by:

- a. Removing the word “coop” and adding in its place the word “co-op” wherever it appears;
- b. Removing the word “Coop” and adding in its place the word “Co-op” wherever it appears;
- c. Removing the word “coops” and adding in its place the word “co-ops” wherever it appears;
- d. Removing the word “inter-coop” and adding in its place the word “inter-co-op” wherever it appears; and

- e. Removing the word “Inter-coop” and adding in its place the word “Inter-co-op.”

Dated: December 12, 2023.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.*

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