opportunity to harvest available U.S. BFT quota.

NMFS also considered the estimated amounts by which quotas for other gear categories of the BFT fishery might be exceeded (§ 635.27(a)(7)(iv)) and the ability to account for all 2026 landings and dead discards (§ 635.27(a)(7)(xii) and (a)(7)(xi)). In most of the past several years, total U.S. BFT landings have been below the available U.S. quota such that the United States has carried forward the maximum amount of underharvest allowed by ICCAT from one year to the next. When total U.S. BFT landings are above the available U.S. quota, the United States reduces the next year's quota by the overharvest amount (including reducing the various fishing category quotas and subquotas by their respective overharvest amounts), as was necessary in 2025 to account for the 2024 adjusted U.S. quota, consistent with ICCAT recommendations. NMFS will need to account for 2026 landings and dead discards within the adjusted U.S. quota, consistent with ICCAT recommendations, and anticipates having sufficient quota to do so.

NMFS also considered the effects of the transfer and quota adjustment on the BFT stock and on accomplishing the objectives of the HMS FMP (§ 635.27(a)(7)(v) and (vi)). This action would be consistent with ICCAT Recommendations, ATCA, and the objectives of the HMS FMP and amendments. In establishing these quotas and subquotas and associated management measures, ICCAT and NMFS considered the best scientific information available, objectives for stock management and status, and effects on the stock. This action is in line with the established management measures and stock status determinations. Another principal consideration is the objective of providing opportunities to harvest the available General category quota without exceeding the annual quota. This consideration is based on the objectives of the HMS FMP and its amendments, and it includes achieving optimum yield on a continuing basis and optimizing the ability of all permit categories to harvest available BFT quota allocations (related to § 635.27(a)(7)(x)). Specific to the General category, this includes providing opportunities equitably across all time periods. Finally, we note that the amount remaining in the Reserve category is sufficient for anticipated needs.

In summary, this action adjusts the General category December subquota and Reserve category quota to 42.4 mt and 1 mt, respectively. This action provides additional fishing opportunities to harvest the General category quota and subquotas, without exceeding them, while maintaining equitable fishing opportunities for General category fishermen.

Monitoring and Reporting

NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fisheries closely. Per § 635.5(b)(2)(i)(A), dealers are required to submit landing reports within 24 hours of receiving BFT. Late reporting by dealers compromises NMFS' ability to timely implement actions such as quota and retention limit adjustments, as well as closures, and may result in enforcement actions. Additionally, and separate from the dealer reporting requirement, General and HMS Charter/Headboat category vessel owners are required per § 635.5(a)(4) to report their own catch of all BFT retained or discarded dead within 24 hours of the landing(s) or end of each trip, by accessing *https://hmspermits.noaa.gov,* using the HMS Catch Reporting app, or calling 888–872–8862 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. E.T.).

Depending on catch rates of BFT and any updated landings information at that time, and after consideration of all the criteria specified at § 635.27(a)(7), NMFS may determine that additional adjustments are necessary to ensure available subquotas are not exceeded or to enhance scientific data collection from, and fishing opportunities in, all geographic areas. If needed, subsequent adjustments will be published in the **Federal Register**. In addition, fishermen may access *https://hmspermits.noaa.gov,* for updates on quota monitoring and inseason adjustments.

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1855(d)) and regulations at 50 CFR part 635, and this action is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for NMFS (AA) finds that pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 533(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice of, and opportunity for public comment on, this action because it is impracticable and contrary to the public interest for the following reasons. Specifically, the regulations implementing the HMS FMP and amendments provide for inseason retention limit adjustments to respond to the unpredictable nature of BFT availability on the fishing grounds, the migratory nature of this species, and the regional variations in the BFT fishery. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Based on the most recent landings information, and historical landings trends, NMFS anticipates that the 2026 General category December subquota would likely be reached very soon after the time period opens. For instance, in 2025, NMFS closed the General category December time period on December 5, 2025, as the subquota of 16.5 mt was reached and exceeded (90 FR 56695). Similar to 2025, delaying this action could also result in BFT landings that exceed the General category December subquota shortly after the fishery opened. Additionally, a delay in implementing this action would preclude the fishery from harvesting BFT that are currently available on the fishing grounds and that might otherwise become unavailable. This action does not raise conservation and management concerns and would support effective management of the BFT fishery. This action does not affect the overall ICCAT-allocated U.S. BFT quota. NMFS notes that the public had an opportunity to comment on the underlying rulemakings that established the U.S. BFT quota and the inseason adjustment criteria.

For all of the above reasons, the AA finds that pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), there is good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effective date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 16, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

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 665

[Docket No. 260910–0004]

RTID 0648–XG151

Pacific Island Fisheries; Longline Retention Prohibition; Striped Marlin in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean North of the Equator

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; retention prohibition.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*) by vessels registered for use under a Hawaii longline limited access permit for the remainder of 2026 because the longline fishery has reached the 2026 longline retention limit. WCNPO stiped marlin are those caught in the Pacific Ocean north of the Equator (0° latitude) and west of 150° W longitude. This prohibition is intended to prevent the U.S. catch limit for WCNPO striped marlin from being exceeded and ensure compliance with NMFS regulations that implement decisions of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

DATES: The non-retention date is November 23, 2026. The retention prohibition begins 12:01 a.m. local time November 23, 2026 and will extend through December 31, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region (FEP) are available from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, telephone 808–522–8220, fax 808–522–8226, or *https://www.wpcouncil.org.* Copies of the final rule, environmental analyses, and other supporting documents for this action are available from *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2025-0045,* or from Sarah J. Malloy, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David O'Brien, NMFS PIRO Sustainable Fisheries, 808–725–5038.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS and the Council manage fishing for Western Pacific pelagic management unit species, including striped marlin, under the FEP and implementing Federal regulations (50 CFR 665 subpart F). The WCPFC is the regional fisheries management organization that manages WCNPO striped marlin internationally. In December 2024, the WCPFC adopted a Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for WCNPO striped marlin (CMM 2024–06) (available at *https://cmm.wcpfc.int/measure/cmm-2024-06*) that includes a catch limit for the United States.

NMFS established a calendar year 2026 limit of 393.4 metric tons (mt) (867,300 pounds (lb)) of striped marlin that may be caught and retained in the Pacific Ocean north of 0° latitude and west of 150° W longitude (91 FR 58382, September 15, 2026).

Hawaii-based longline fisheries catch approximately 97 percent or more of the total U.S. striped marlin catch annually and report catch to NMFS daily. U.S. troll and handline fisheries account for the remaining catch and report catch monthly. Therefore, near-real-time catch monitoring in the troll and handline sector is not possible. To ensure that the catch limit is not exceeded, the Council recommended, and NMFS implemented a retention limit of 97 percent of the catch limit, for any U.S. fishing vessel registered for use under a Hawaii longline limited access permit issued under 50 CFR 665.801(b). This longline retention limit, set at 381.6 mt (841,300 lb), ensures that when troll and handline catches are determined after the season ends, the total U.S. catch of WCNPO striped marlin will not exceed the catch limit.

NMFS monitored the retained catches of WCNPO striped marlin using logbook data submitted by vessel captains and other available information, and determined that the longline retention limit will be reached on or about November 17, 2026. In accordance with 50 CFR 665.813(l)(4), this temporary rule serves as notification to fishermen, the fishing industry, and the public that the retention of WCNPO striped marlin caught by vessels registered for use under a Hawaii longline limited access permit is prohibited during the dates provided in the **DATES** heading. This retention prohibition applies to striped marlin alive or dead when fishing gear is recovered.

All striped marlin captured by longline gear in the Pacific Ocean north of 0° latitude and west of 150° W longitude on or after the non-retention date shall be immediately released.

Any striped marlin captured by longline gear in the Pacific Ocean north of 0° latitude and west of 150° W longitude already on board a fishing vessel registered for use with a Hawaii longline limited access permit before the non-retention date may be retained on board, transshipped, and/or landed, to the extent authorized by applicable laws and regulations, provided that the striped marlin is landed within 14 days after the non-retention date.

You may find additional background information on this action in the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 23387, May 1, 2026).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 665.318(l), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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 or unnecessary because the public had prior notice and comment on this management approach when the proposed rule associated with this action was published in the **Federal Register** (91 FR 23387, May 1, 2026); and delaying this retention prohibition would likely result in exceedance of the 2026 U.S. catch limit for WCNPO striped marlin resulting in noncompliance with federal regulations and CMM 2024–06.

Dated: November 16, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

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

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