

individual commercial quota allocation in comparison to their respective 2006 individual state allocations. However, the magnitude of that increase varies depending on the state's respective percent share in the total commercial quota, as specified in the FMP, and depending on if the state had any additional overages from FY 2005 that needed to be adjusted for in this final rule (e.g., New York). NMFS considered a TAL that would have allowed a higher allocation of quota to the commercial sector, but this alternative, proposed by the Council, would have been inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the FMP and the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The new alternative, which will transfer less quota from the recreational sector to the commercial sector than the alternative contained in the proposed rule (see

Table 2), is being implemented consistent with recent recreational landings trends and should ensure that the 2007 RHL is not exceeded. Furthermore, the RHL being implemented in this final rule is 14.3 percent higher than the RHL specified in FY 2006. In conclusion, because both the 2007 commercial quota and RHL being implemented in this final rule represent increases over the 2006 specifications, and because the revised 2007 RHL is consistent with recent trends in recreational landings, no negative economic impacts are expected relative to the status quo and the Council's preferred alternative.

The impacts on revenues of the proposed RSA were analyzed. The social and economic impacts of this proposed RSA are expected to be minimal. Assuming the full RSA is

allocated for bluefish, the set-aside amount could be worth as much as \$120,013 dockside, based on an average 2005 ex-vessel price of \$0.33 per pound for bluefish. Assuming an equal reduction among all 745 active dealer reported vessels, this could mean a reduction of about \$161 per individual vessel. Changes in the recreational harvest limit would be insignificant (less than a 2- percent decrease), if 1.3 percent of the TAL is used for research. There are no anticipated adverse impacts associated with the RSA. In general, RSAs are expected to yield important long-term benefits associated with improved data upon which to base management decisions.

Table 2. Comparison of New Alternative to Council Preferred and 2006 Specifications

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF NEW ALTERNATIVE TO COUNCIL PREFERRED AND 2006 SPECIFICATIONS

	Initial TAL	Post-Transfer Commercial Quota	Post-Transfer Recreational Quota	Research Set-Aside	Adjusted Commercial Quota	Adjusted Recreational Harvest Limit
2007 Final Bluefish Specifications						
Final Rule Preferred Alternative	27,762,000 lb (12,593 mt)	8,688,760 lb (3,941 mt)	19,073,240 lb (8,651 mt)	363,677 lb (165 mt)	8,574,939 lb (3,890 mt)	18,823,384 lb (8,538 mt)
Council's Preferred Alternative for 2007 Bluefish Specifications						
Proposed Rule Preferred Alternative	27,762,000 lb (12,593 mt)	9,499,540 lb (4,309 mt)	18,262,460 lb (8,284 mt)	363,677 lb (165 mt)	9,375,098 lb (4,252 mt)	18,023,225 lb (8,175 mt)
2006 Final Bluefish Specifications						
Preferred Alternative	24,798,836 lb (11,249 mt)	8,081,096 lb (3,666 mt)	16,717,740 lb (7,583 mt)	363,677 lb (165 mt)	7,962,586 lb (3,612 mt)	16,472,573 lb (7,472 mt)

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule, and shall designate such publications as "small entity compliance guides." The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule or group of rules. As part of this rulemaking process, a small entity compliance guide will be sent to all holders of Federal permits issued for the bluefish fishery. In addition, copies of this final rule and guide (i.e., permit holder letter) are available from NMFS (see ADDRESSES) and at the following website: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/nr/index.html>.

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

Dated: January 24, 2007.

William T. Hogarth,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 061003253-7008-02; I.D. 092606A]

RIN 0648-AU27

Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Annual Specifications

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this final rule to implement the annual harvest guideline for Pacific mackerel in the U.S. exclusive economic zone off the Pacific

coast for the fishing season of July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007. This harvest guideline has been calculated according to the regulations implementing the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and establishes allowable harvest levels for Pacific mackerel off the Pacific coast.

DATES: Effective March 2, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the report *Pacific Mackerel (Scomber japonicus) Stock Assessment for U.S. Management in the 2006–2007 Fishing Year* may be obtained by contacting Rodney R. McInnis, Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joshua B. Lindsay, Southwest Region, NMFS, (562) 980–4034.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CPS FMP, which was implemented by publication of a final rule in the **Federal Register** on December 15, 1999 (64 FR 69888), divides management unit species into two categories: actively managed and monitored. Harvest guidelines for actively managed species (Pacific sardine and Pacific mackerel) are based on formulas applied to current biomass estimates. Biomass estimates are not calculated for species that are only monitored (jack mackerel, northern anchovy, and market squid).

At a public meeting each year, the biomass for each actively managed species is reviewed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) CPS Management Team (Team). The biomass, harvest guideline, and status of the fisheries are then reviewed at a public meeting of the Council's CPS Advisory Subpanel (Subpanel). This information is also reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The Council reviews the reports from the Team, Subpanel, and SSC, provides opportunity for public comment, and then makes its recommendation to NMFS. The annual harvest guideline and season structure are then written and published by NMFS in the **Federal Register**. The Pacific mackerel season begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of each year.

Public meetings of the Team and Subpanel, as well as a subcommittee of the SSC, were held at NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), in La Jolla, CA on May 16, 17, and 18, 2006 (April 28, 2006; 71 FR 25152). During

these meetings the current stock assessment update for Pacific mackerel, which included a preliminary biomass estimate and harvest guideline, were reviewed in accordance with the procedures of the FMP. These meetings are designed to allow a review of the biomass and harvest guideline, and are required by the FMP.

The formula in the FMP uses the following factors to determine the harvest guideline:

1. *The biomass of Pacific mackerel.* For 2006, this estimate is 112,700 metric tons (mt).

2. *The cutoff.* This is the biomass level below which no commercial fishery is allowed. The FMP established the cutoff level at 18,200 mt. The cutoff is subtracted from the biomass, leaving 94,500 mt.

3. *The portion of the Pacific mackerel biomass that is in U.S. waters.* This estimate is 70 percent, based on the historical average of larval distribution obtained from scientific cruises and the distribution of the resource obtained from logbooks of fish-spotters. Therefore, the harvestable biomass in U.S. waters is 70 percent of 94,500 mt, or 66,150 mt.

4. *The harvest fraction.* This is the percentage of the biomass above 18,200 mt that may be harvested. The FMP established the harvest fraction at 30 percent. The harvest fraction is multiplied by the harvestable biomass in U.S. waters (66,150 mt), which results in 19,845 mt.

The Team supported the conclusions from the Pacific mackerel stock assessment and recommended to the Council at its June 2006 Council meeting that the Council adopt a harvest guideline (HG) for the 2006/2007 management season (i.e., July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007) of 19,845 mt. The Council adopted this HG, as well as the Subpanel's recommendation on the management of the fishery by dividing the harvest guideline into a directed fishery with a guideline of 13,845 mt and set-aside of 6,000 mt to accommodate incidental landings of Pacific mackerel in other CPS fisheries. The set-aside is intended to prevent a reoccurrence of the 2000/2001 Pacific mackerel season where early attainment of the entire harvest guideline in the directed fishery curtailed the Pacific sardine fishery which incidentally lands mackerel.

The incidental fishery would be constrained to a 40-percent incidental catch rate when Pacific mackerel are

landed with other CPS, except that up to one metric ton of Pacific mackerel can be landed without landing any other CPS. The Council recommended a review of the Pacific mackerel fishery at the March 2007 Council meeting with the understanding that NMFS will consider releasing some or all of the incidental fishery set-aside if a sufficient amount of the guideline remains available for harvest.

Based on the estimated biomass of 112,700 mt and the formula in the FMP, a harvest guideline of 19,845 mt will be in effect for the fishery which began on July 1, 2006. This harvest guideline applies to Pacific mackerel harvested in the U.S. EEZ off the Pacific coast from 12:01 a.m. on July 1, 2006, through 11:59 pm on June 30, 2007, unless the harvest guideline is attained and the fishery is closed before June 30, 2007. All landings made after July 1, 2006, will be counted toward the 2006–2007 harvest guideline of 19,845 mt. There shall be a directed fishery of 13,845 mt, followed by an incidental fishery of 6,000 mt. An incidental allowance of 40 percent of Pacific mackerel in landings of any CPS will become effective after the date when 13,845 mt of Pacific mackerel is estimated to have been harvested. A landing of 1 mt of Pacific mackerel per trip will be permitted during the incidental fishery for trips in which no other CPS is landed.

Classification

This final rule is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule (October 20, 2006; 71 FR 61944) and is not repeated here.

No comments were received regarding this certification or the economic impact of this rule. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

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

Dated: January 26, 2007.

William T. Hogarth,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. E7–1546 Filed 1–30–07; 8:45 am]

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