

process changes; and changes that are within the range on which the original determination was based.

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Table 9—[Amended]

■ 6. Table 9 to subpart G of part 63 is amended by removing the entry for “Methyl ethyl ketone (2-Butanone).”

Table 34—[Amended]

■ 7. Table 34 to subpart G of part 63 is amended by removing the entry for “Methyl ethyl ketone (2-Butanone).”

Table 36—[Amended]

■ 8. Table 36 to subpart G of part 63 is amended by removing the entry for “Methyl ethyl ketone (2-Butanone).”

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 635

[I.D. 121206B]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason retention limit adjustment.

SUMMARY: NMFS has determined that the daily Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT)

retention limits for the Atlantic tunas General category should be adjusted to provide reasonable opportunity to harvest the General category January time-period subquota. Therefore, NMFS increases the daily BFT retention limits for the entire month of January, including previously scheduled Restricted Fishing Days (RFDs), to provide enhanced commercial General category fishing opportunities in all areas while minimizing the risk of an overharvest of the General category BFT quota.

DATES: The effective dates for the BFT daily retention limits are provided in Table 1 under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brad McHale, 978-281-9260.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations implemented under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) governing the harvest of BFT by persons and vessels subject to U.S. jurisdiction are found at 50 CFR part 635.

The 2006 BFT fishing year began on June 1, 2006, and ends May 31, 2007. The final initial 2006 BFT specifications and General category effort controls were published on May 30, 2006 (71 FR 30619). These final specifications divided the General category quota among three subperiods (June through August, the month of September, and October through January) in accordance with the 1999 Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (1999 FMP)

(May 29, 1999; 64 FR 29090), and implementing regulations at § 635.27. The final initial 2006 BFT specifications increased the General category retention limit to three fish for the June through August time-period, as well as established the following General category RFD schedule: all Saturday and Sundays from November 18, 2006, through January 31, 2007, and Thursday November 23, 2006, and Monday December 25, 2006, inclusive.

Due to the large amount of available quota and the low catch rates, NMFS extended the three-fish retention limit through September (71 FR 51529, August 30, 2006), October (71 FR 58287, October 3, 2006), November (71 FR 64165, November 1, 2006), and December (71 FR 68752, November 28, 2006) to enhance fishing opportunities while minimizing the risk of exceeding available quota. On October 2, 2006, NMFS published a final rule (71 FR 58058) implementing the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (HMS FMP). The HMS FMP revised the General category time-period subquota allocation scheme by dividing the coastwide General category into the following five distinct time-periods; June through August, September, October through November, December, and January of the following year. The effective date of these time-periods and their associated subquota was November 1, 2006.

Daily Retention Limits

Pursuant to this action and the final initial 2006 BFT specifications, noted above, the daily BFT retention limits for Atlantic tunas General category are as follows:

TABLE 1. EFFECTIVE DATES FOR RETENTION LIMIT ADJUSTMENTS

Permit Category	Effective Dates	Areas	BFT Size Class Limit
General	December 1 - 31, 2006, inclusive	All	Three BFT per vessel per day/trip, measuring 73 inches (185 cm) curved fork length (CFL) or larger
	January 1 - 31, 2007, inclusive	All	Three BFT per vessel per day/trip, measuring 73 inches (185 cm) CFL or larger
	February 1 through May 31, 2007, inclusive	All	CLOSED

Adjustment of General Category Daily Retention Limits

Under § 635.23(a)(4), NMFS may increase or decrease the General category daily retention limit of large medium and giant BFT over a range from zero (on RFDs) to a maximum of three per vessel to allow for a reasonable opportunity to harvest the quota for

BFT. As part of the final specifications on May 30, 2006 (71 FR 30619), NMFS adjusted the commercial daily BFT retention limit, in all areas, for those vessels fishing under the General category quota, to three large medium or giant BFT, measuring 73 inches (185 cm) or greater curved fork length (CFL), per vessel per day/trip. This retention

limit, which was to remain in effect through August 31, 2006, inclusive, was extended through September, October, November, and December via separate actions published in the **Federal Register**. From January 1 - 31, 2007, inclusive, the General category daily BFT retention limit was scheduled to

revert to one large medium or giant BFT per vessel per day/trip.

The total General category time-period subquota allocations for the 2006 fishing year equal 1,163.3 metric tons (mt). As of December 11, 2006, 114.9 mt has been landed in the General category, resulting in an available balance of 1048.4 mt, and catch rates remain at less than 1.0 mt per day. If catch rates remain at current levels and January RFDs remain as scheduled, approximately 43.0 mt would be landed through January 31, 2007. This projection would bring the cumulative time-period subquota landings to approximately 157.9 mt, resulting in an underharvest of approximately 1,005.4 mt. The October 2, 2006, final rule (71 FR 58058) established stand-alone General category time-periods for the months of December and January. Each of these time-periods are allocated a portion of the coastwide General category, thereby ensuring fishing opportunities are provided in years where high catch rates are experienced. In combination with the subquota rollover from previous time-periods, scheduled RFDs, current catch rates, and the daily retention limit reverting to one large medium or giant BFT per vessel per day on January 1, 2007, NMFS anticipates the full January time-period subquota will not be harvested. In the past, however, the fishery has had the capability of increasing landings rates dramatically in winter months, particularly off southern states. If the fishery was to perform at these past levels with high landings rates (although not witnessed during the winter of 2005/2006), it may alleviate concern of excessive roll-overs from one fishing year to the next, but raises the possibility of unprecedented, and potentially unsustainable, catch rates during the winter fishery.

The final initial 2006 BFT specifications scheduled a number of RFDs for the month of January, including all Saturdays and Sundays. These RFDs were designed to provide for an extended late season, south Atlantic BFT fishery for the commercial handgear fishermen in the General category. For the reasons referred to above, NMFS has determined that the scheduled January RFDs are no longer required to meet their original purpose, and may in fact exacerbate low catch rates. Therefore, NMFS determined that an increase in the General category daily BFT retention limit on those previously established RFDs for the month of January is warranted. NMFS has selected these days in order to give adequate advance notice to fishery participants. While catch rates have

continued to be low so far this season, NMFS recognizes that they may increase at any time late in the season.

Therefore, based on a review of dealer reports, daily landing trends, available quota, revised time-periods, and the availability of BFT on the fishing grounds, NMFS has determined that an increase in the General category daily BFT retention limit effective from January 1 through January 31, 2007, inclusive of previously scheduled RFDs for the month of January, is warranted. Thus, the General category daily retention limit of three large medium or giant BFT per vessel per day/trip (see Table 1) is extended through January 31, 2007, including all Saturdays and Sundays of January as well.

Under the current regulations for the Atlantic HMS, the 2006 General category BFT season will close on January 31, 2007. Therefore, fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing large medium or giant BFT, measuring 73 inches curved fork length, or greater, under the General category quota, must cease at 11:30 p.m., local time, January 31, 2007. Persons aboard vessels permitted in the Atlantic Tunas General category may catch and release or tag and release BFT of all size classes while the General category is closed. All BFT should be released, or tagged and released, with a minimum of injury.

This adjustment is intended to provide a reasonable opportunity to harvest the U.S. landings quota of BFT while maintaining an equitable distribution of fishing opportunities, to help achieve optimum yield in the General category BFT fishery, to collect a broad range of data for stock monitoring purposes, and to be consistent with the objectives of the HMS FMP.

Monitoring and Reporting

NMFS selected the daily retention limits and their duration after examining current and previous fishing year catch and effort rates, taking into consideration public comment on the annual specifications and inseason management measures for the General category received during the 2006 BFT quota specifications rulemaking process, and analyzing the available quota for the 2006 fishing year. NMFS will continue to monitor the BFT fishery closely through dealer landing reports, the Automated Landings Reporting System, state harvest tagging programs in North Carolina and Maryland, and the Large Pelagics Survey. Depending on the level of fishing effort, NMFS may determine that additional retention limit adjustments are necessary prior to January 31, 2007.

Closures or subsequent adjustments to the daily retention limits, if any, will be published in the **Federal Register**. In addition, fishermen may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) 872-8862 or (978) 281-9260, or access the internet at www.hmspermits.gov, for updates on quota monitoring and retention limit adjustments.

Classification

The Assistant Administrator for NMFS (AA), finds that it is impracticable and contrary to the public interest to provide prior notice of, and an opportunity for public comment on, this action for the following reasons:

NMFS has recently become aware of increased availability of large medium and giant BFT in close proximity to shores of southern Atlantic states, as derived from fishing reports and landings data from dealers. This increase in abundance provides the potential to increase General category landings rates if fishery participants are authorized to harvest three large medium or giant BFT per day. Although landings to date have been low (i.e., averaging less than one mt per day) there is the potential for increased availability of BFT during the winter to allow for an increase in fishery landing rates. The regulations implementing the HMS FMP 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. Adjustment of retention limits, including waiving previously scheduled RFDs in the month of January, is also necessary to avoid excessive quota underharvests. Affording prior notice and opportunity for public comment to implement these retention limits is impracticable as it would preclude NMFS from acting promptly to allow harvest of BFT that are still available on the fishing grounds. Analysis of available data shows that the General category BFT retention limit may be increased for the Atlantic tuna General and HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders with minimal risks of exceeding the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas allocated quota.

Delays in increasing the retention limits would be contrary to the public interest. Limited opportunities to harvest the respective quotas may have negative social and economic impacts to U.S. fishermen that either depend on catching the available quota designated in the HMS FMP, or depend on multiple BFT retention limits to attract individuals to book charters. For both

the General and the HMS Charter/Headboat sectors, the retention limits must be adjusted as expeditiously as possible so the impacted sectors can benefit from the adjustment.

Therefore, the AA finds good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment. For all of the above reasons, and because this action relieves a restriction (i.e., current default retention limit is one fish per vessel/trip but this action increases that limit and allows retention of more fish), there is also good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d) to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness.

This action is being taken under 50 CFR 635.23(a)(4) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: December 15, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 051104293-5344-02; I.D. 111406C]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for New Jersey

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

ACTION: Closure of commercial fishery.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the summer flounder commercial quota

available to New Jersey has been harvested. Vessels issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the summer flounder fishery may not land summer flounder in New Jersey for the remainder of calendar year 2006, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notification to advise New Jersey that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in New Jersey.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours, December 21, 2006, through 2400 hours, December 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Potts, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9341

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis among the coastal states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.100.

The initial total commercial quota for summer flounder for the 2006 calendar year was set equal to 14,154,000 lb (6,420 mt) (70 FR 77061, December 29, 2005). The percent allocated to vessels landing summer flounder in New Jersey is 16.72499 percent, resulting in a commercial quota of 2,367,255 lb (1,073,787 kg). The 2006 allocation was reduced to 2,331,554 lb (1,057,593 kg) due to research set-aside.

Section 648.101(b) requires the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) to monitor state commercial quotas and to determine when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS then

publishes a notification in the **Federal Register** to advise the state and to notify Federal vessel and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in that state. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that New Jersey has harvested its quota for 2006.

The regulations at § 648.4(b) provide that Federal permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land summer flounder in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours, December 21, 2006, further landings of summer flounder in New Jersey by vessels holding summer flounder commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 2006 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours, December 21, 2006, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in New Jersey for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state.

Classification

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

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

Dated: December 15, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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