

January 1, 2024. Data from the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center informed NMFS' projection that recreational landings will reach the recreational ACL for 2024 by the end of February. Therefore, NMFS announces that the end date of the recreational season for golden tilefish is February 29, 2024, and the recreational sector for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ will be closed from March 1 through December 31, 2024. During the recreational closure, the bag and possession limits for golden tilefish in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero. The next recreational fishing year and season for golden tilefish begins on January 1, 2025.

#### Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.193(a)(2), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 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 are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the rule that established the recreational ACL and AM for golden tilefish has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the end date of the recreational season. Such procedures are contrary to the public interest because of the need to immediately implement this action to protect the golden tilefish stock. The recreational ACL will soon be reached and prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require additional time, potentially resulting in a harvest well in excess of the established ACL.

For the reasons just stated, there is also 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: February 22, 2024.

**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

[RTID 0648-XD471]

#### Fisheries Off West Coast States; West Coast Salmon Fisheries; Amendment 24 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan

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

**ACTION:** Notice of agency decision.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces the approval of amendment 24 to the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan (Salmon FMP). The intent of amendment 24 is to clarify the technical process for reviewing updates to the models used to determine the Chinook salmon abundance threshold that may trigger additional management measures to limit the impact of ocean salmon fisheries on Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW). The whales are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Chinook salmon, some of which are listed as threatened under the ESA, are their preferred prey. This action is administrative in nature and does not change the formula for calculating the threshold or the fishery management responses currently described in the Salmon FMP.

**DATES:** The amendment was approved on February 21, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** The amended Salmon FMP is available on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) website (<https://www.pcouncil.org>).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Shannon Penna at 562-980-4239, [Shannon.Penna@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannon.Penna@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### Background

The ocean salmon fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (3-200 nautical miles; 5.6-370.4 kilometers) seaward of Washington, Oregon, and California are managed under the Salmon FMP. Amendment 24 to the Salmon FMP will clarify the process for review of updates to the models used to determine the Chinook salmon

abundance threshold, and the recalculation of the threshold value based on updated model information, by revising Section 6.6.8 of the Salmon FMP. The revised text will not change the approach used to calculate the threshold. Amendment 24 also includes some minor housekeeping edits, such as updates to references and correction of a species name.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires that each regional fishery management council submit any fishery management plan (FMP) or plan amendment it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) (MSA 304(a)). The MSA also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an FMP or plan amendment, immediately publish a notice that the FMP or plan amendment is available for public review and comment.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for amendment 24 was published in the **Federal Register** on November 27, 2023 (88 FR 82819), with a 60-day comment period that ended on January 26, 2024.

NMFS determined that amendment 24 is consistent with the MSA and other applicable laws, and the Secretary of Commerce approved amendment 24 on February 21, 2024. The November 27, 2023, NOA contains additional information on this action. Amendment 24 will be implemented through the annual salmon management measures; no changes to existing Federal regulations are necessary.

#### Public Comment

We received one comment from the public in support of amendment 24.

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

Dated: February 21, 2024.

**Samuel D. Rauch, III,**

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

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