

(2) *Scallop dredges.* (i) The towing wire is detached from the scallop dredge, the towing wire is completely reeled up onto the winch, the dredge is secured, and the dredge or the winch is covered so that it is rendered unusable for fishing; or

(ii) The towing wire is detached from the dredge and attached to a bright-colored poly ball no less than 24 inches (60.9 cm) in diameter, with the towing wire left in its normal operating position (through the various blocks) and either is wound back to the first block (in the gallows) or is suspended at the end of the lifting block where its retrieval does not present a hazard to the crew and where it is readily visible from above.

(3) *Hook gear (other than pelagic).* All anchors and buoys are secured and all hook gear, including jigging machines, is covered.

(4) *Sink gillnet gear.* All nets are covered with canvas or other similar material and lashed or otherwise securely fastened to the deck or rail, and all buoys larger than 6 inches (15.24 cm) in diameter, high flyers, and anchors are disconnected.

(5) *Other methods of stowage.* Any other method of stowage authorized in writing by the Regional Administrator and subsequently published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) *Mesh obstruction or constriction.* The owner or operator of a fishing vessel shall not use any mesh construction, mesh configuration, or other means that effectively decreases the mesh size below the minimum mesh size, except that a liner may be used to close the opening created by the rings in the aftermost portion of the net, provided the liner extends no more than 10 meshes forward of the aftermost portion of the net. The inside webbing of the codend shall be the same circumference or less than the outside webbing (strengthened). In addition, the inside webbing shall not be more than 2 ft (61 cm) longer than the outside webbing.

[76 FR 60618, Sept. 29, 2011, as amended at 77 FR 16479, Mar. 21, 2012; 77 FR 51865, Aug. 27, 2012; 78 FR 3354, Jan. 16, 2013]

#### § 648.24 Fishery closures and accountability measures.

(a) *Fishery closure procedures—(1) Longfin squid.* NMFS shall close the directed fishery in the EEZ for longfin squid when the Regional Administrator projects that 90 percent of the longfin squid quota is harvested before April 15 of Trimester I and/or August 15 of Trimester II, and when 95 percent of the longfin squid DAH has been harvested in Trimester III. On or after April 15 of Trimester I and/or August 15 of Trimester II, NMFS shall close the directed fishery in the EEZ for longfin squid when the Regional Administrator projects that 95 percent of the longfin squid quota is harvested. The closure of the directed fishery shall be in effect for the remainder of that fishing period, with incidental catches allowed as specified at § 648.26.

(2) *Illex.* NMFS shall close the directed *Illex* fishery in the EEZ when the Regional Administrator projects that 95 percent of the *Illex* DAH is harvested. The closure of the directed fishery shall be in effect for the remainder of that fishing period, with incidental catches allowed as specified at § 648.26.

(b) *Mackerel AMs—(1) Mackerel commercial sector EEZ closure.* NMFS shall close the commercial mackerel fishery in the EEZ when the Regional Administrator projects that 95 percent of the mackerel DAH is harvested, if such a closure is necessary to prevent the DAH from being exceeded. The closure of the commercial fishery shall be in effect for the remainder of that fishing year, with incidental catches allowed as specified in § 648.26. When the Regional Administrator projects that the DAH for mackerel will be landed, NMFS shall close the commercial mackerel fishery in the EEZ, and the incidental catches specified for mackerel in § 648.26 will be prohibited.

(2) *Mackerel commercial landings overage repayment.* If the mackerel ACL is exceeded, and commercial fishery landings are responsible for the overage, then landings in excess of the DAH will be deducted from the DAH the following year, as a single-year adjustment to the DAH.

(3) *Mackerel recreational sector EEZ closure.* NMFS shall close the recreational mackerel fishery in the EEZ

when the Regional Administrator determines that recreational landings have exceeded the RHL. This determination shall be based on observed landings and will not utilize projections of future data.

(4) *Mackerel recreational landings overage repayment.* If the mackerel ACL is exceeded, and the recreational fishery landings are responsible for the overage, then landings in excess of the RHL will be deducted from the RHL for the following year, as a single-year adjustment.

(5) *Non-landing AMs, by sector.* In the event that the ACL is exceeded, and that the overage has not been accommodated through other landing-based AMs, but is attributable to either the commercial or recreational sector (such as research quota overages, dead discards in excess of those otherwise accounted for in management uncertainty, or other non-landing overages), then the exact amount, in pounds, by which the sector ACT was exceeded will be deducted from the following year, as a single-year adjustment.

(6) *Mackerel ACL overage evaluation.* The ACL will be evaluated based on a single-year examination of total catch (landings and discards). Both landings and dead discards will be evaluated in determining if the ACL has been exceeded. NMFS shall make determinations about overages and implement any changes to the ACL, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, through notification in the FEDERAL REGISTER, by May 15 of the fishing year in which the deductions will be made.

(c) *Butterfish AMs—(1) Butterfish three-phase management system.* The butterfish fishery operates under a three-phase management system. Phase 1 begins annually at the start of the fishing year on January 1. Trip limit reductions are implemented in phase 2 and 3 dependent upon the amount of butterfish harvest and the trip limit reduction thresholds set during the specification process as described in § 648.22.

(i) *Phase 1.* During phase 1, vessels issued a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit (as specified at § 648.4(a)(5)(i)) fishing with a minimum mesh size of 3 inches (76 mm) have an

unlimited trip limit and vessels issued a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit fishing with mesh less than 3 inches (76 mm) are prohibited from landing more than 2,500 lb (1.13 mt) of butterfish per trip.

(ii) *Phase 2.* NMFS shall reduce the trip limit for vessels issued longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permits (as specified at § 648.4(a)(5)(i)) fishing with a minimum mesh size of 3 inches (76 mm) to 5,000 lb (2.27 mt), when butterfish harvest reaches the relevant phase 2 trip limit reduction threshold. Trip limits for vessels issued longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permits fishing with mesh less than 3 inches (76 mm) will remain at 2,500 lb (1.13 mt) of butterfish per trip.

(iii) *Phase 3.* NMFS shall subsequently reduce the trip limit for vessels issued longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permits to 500 lb (0.23 mt), regardless of minimum mesh size, when butterfish harvest is projected to reach the relevant phase 3 trip limit reduction threshold. The NMFS Regional Administrator may adjust the butterfish trip limit during phase 3 of the directed butterfish fishery anywhere from 250 lb (0.11 mt) to 750 lb (0.34 mt) to ensure butterfish harvest does not exceed the specified DAH.

(2) *Butterfish ACL overage repayment.* If the butterfish ACL is exceeded, then catch in excess of the ACL will be deducted from the ACL the following year, as a single-year adjustment.

(3) *Butterfish mortality cap on the longfin squid fishery.* NMFS shall close the directed fishery in the EEZ for longfin squid when the Regional Administrator projects that 80 percent of the Trimester I butterfish mortality cap allocation has been harvested in Trimester I, when 75 percent of the annual butterfish mortality cap has been harvested in Trimester II, and/or when 90 percent of the butterfish mortality cap has been harvested in Trimester III.

(4) *Butterfish ACL overage evaluation.* The ACL will be evaluated based on a single-year examination of total catch (landings and discards). Both landings and dead discards will be evaluated in determining if the ACL has been exceeded. NMFS shall make determinations about overages and implement

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any changes to the ACL, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, through notification in the FEDERAL REGISTER, by May 15 of the fishing year in which the deductions will be made.

(d) *Notification.* Upon determining that a closure or trip limit reduction is necessary, the Regional Administrator will notify, in advance of the closure, the Executive Directors of the MAFMC, NEFMC, and SAFMC; mail notification of the closure or trip limit reduction to all holders of mackerel, squid, and butterfish fishery permits at least 72 hr before the effective date of the closure; provide adequate notice of the closure or trip limit reduction to recreational participants in the fishery; and publish notification of the closure or trip limit reduction in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[76 FR 60619, Sept. 29, 2011, as amended at 76 FR 68656, Nov. 7, 2011; 77 FR 16480, Mar. 21, 2012; 78 FR 3354, Jan. 16, 2013]

### **§ 648.25 Atlantic Mackerel, squid, and butterfish framework adjustments to management measures.**

(a) *Within season management action.* The MAFMC may, at any time, initiate action to add or adjust management measures within the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP if it finds that action is necessary to meet or be consistent with the goals and objectives of the FMP.

(1) *Adjustment process.* The MAFMC shall develop and analyze appropriate management actions over the span of at least two MAFMC meetings. The MAFMC must provide the public with advance notice of the availability of the recommendation(s), appropriate justification(s) and economic and biological analyses, and the opportunity to comment on the proposed adjustment(s) at the first meeting and prior to and at the second MAFMC meeting. The MAFMC's recommendations on adjustments or additions to management measures must come from one or more of the following categories: Adjustments within existing ABC control rule levels; adjustments to the existing MAFMC risk policy; introduction of new AMs, including sub-ACTs; minimum fish size; maximum fish size; gear restrictions; gear requirements or

prohibitions; permitting restrictions, recreational possession limit; recreational seasons; closed areas; commercial seasons; commercial trip limits; commercial quota system, including commercial quota allocation procedure and possible quota set-asides to mitigate bycatch; recreational harvest limit; annual specification quota setting process; FMP Monitoring Committee composition and process; description and identification of EFH (and fishing gear management measures that impact EFH); description and identification of habitat areas of particular concern; overfishing definition and related thresholds and targets; regional gear restrictions; regional season restrictions (including option to split seasons); restrictions on vessel size (LOA and GRT) or shaft horsepower; any other management measures currently included in the FMP, set aside quota for scientific research, regional management, and process for inseason adjustment to the annual specification. Measures contained within this list that require significant departures from previously contemplated measures or that are otherwise introducing new concepts may require amendment of the FMP instead of a framework adjustment.

(2) *MAFMC recommendation.* After developing management actions and receiving public testimony, the MAFMC shall make a recommendation to the Regional Administrator. The MAFMC's recommendation must include supporting rationale, if management measures are recommended, an analysis of impacts, and a recommendation to the Regional Administrator on whether to issue the management measures as a final rule. If the MAFMC recommends that the management measures should be issued as a final rule, the MAFMC must consider at least the following factors, and provide support and analysis for each factor considered:

(i) Whether the availability of data on which the recommended management measures are based allows for adequate time to publish a proposed rule, and whether the regulations would have to be in place for an entire harvest/fishing season.