

actions in this final rule would have any additional impact on sea turtles as these actions would not likely increase or decrease pelagic longline effort, nor are they expected to shift effort into other fishing areas. No impacts are expected from this final action that would adversely affect the implementation of the requirements of the BiOp.

NMFS has determined that the final regulations would be implemented in a manner consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of those Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean coastal states that have approved coastal zone management programs. The proposed regulations were submitted to the responsible state agencies for their review under Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. As of May 15, 2003, NOAA Fisheries has received 11 responses, all concurring with NOAA Fisheries' consistency determination. Because no responses were received from other states, their concurrence is presumed.

The area in which this final action is planned has been identified as essential fish habitat (EFH) for species managed by the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, and the Highly Migratory Species Management Division of NOAA Fisheries. It is not anticipated that this action will have any adverse impacts to EFH and, therefore, no consultation is required.

#### List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 635

Fisheries, Fishing, Fishing vessels, Foreign relations, Intergovernmental relations, Penalties, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Statistics, Treaties.

Dated: May 23, 2003.

**William T. Hogarth,**

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

■ For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 635 is amended as follows:

#### PART 635—ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

1. The authority citation for part 635 continues to read as follows:

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

■ 2. In § 635.23, paragraph (f) is revised to read as follows:

##### § 635.23 Retention limits for BFT.

\* \* \* \* \*

(f) *Longline category.* Persons aboard a vessel permitted in the Atlantic Tunas Longline category may retain, possess, land, and sell large medium and giant BFT taken incidentally when fishing for other species. For vessels fishing North or South of 31°00' N. lat., limits on retention, possession, landing and sale are as follows:

(1) One large medium or giant BFT per vessel per trip may be landed, provided that at least 2,000 lb (907 kg) of species other than BFT are legally caught, retained, and offloaded from the same trip and are recorded on the dealer weighout slip as sold. Two large medium or giant BFT per vessel per trip may be landed, provided that at least 6,000 lb (2,727 kg) of species other than BFT are legally caught, retained, and offloaded from the same trip and are recorded on the dealer weighout slip as sold. Three large medium or giant BFT per vessel per trip may be landed, provided that at least 30,000 lb (13,620 kg) of species other than BFT are legally caught, retained, and offloaded from the same trip and are recorded on the dealer weighout slip as sold.

(2) NMFS may increase or decrease the Longline category retention limit of large medium and giant BFT over a

range from zero to a maximum of three per trip, or, for a given BFT retention limit, increase or decrease the target catch requirement by 25 percent from the level specified in paragraph (f)(1) of this section. Such increase or decrease in the BFT retention limit or target catch requirement will be based on a review of dealer reports, observer reports, vessel logbooks, landing trends, availability of the species on the fishing grounds, and any other relevant factors, and will consider the likelihood of increasing dead discards of BFT and/or exceeding the incidental landings quota established for the pelagic longline fishery. Such adjustments may be made separately for vessels fishing North or South of 31°00' N. lat. NMFS will adjust the retention limits and target catch requirements specified in paragraph (f)(1) of this section by filing the adjustment with the Office of the **Federal Register** for publication. In no case shall such adjustment be effective less than 21 calendar days after the adjustment is filed with the Office of the **Federal Register** for publication.

\* \* \* \* \*

■ 3. In § 635.27, paragraph (a)(3) is revised to read as follows:

##### § 635.27 Quotas.

(a) \* \* \*

(3) *Longline category quota.* The total amount of large medium and giant BFT that may be caught incidentally and retained, possessed, or landed by vessels for which Longline category Atlantic tunas permits have been issued is 8.1 percent of the overall U.S. BFT quota. In the initial quota specifications issued under paragraph (a) of this section, no more than 60.0 percent of the Longline category quota may be allocated for landing in the area south of 31°00' N. lat.

\* \* \* \* \*

[FR Doc. 03-13556 Filed 5-29-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S