

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 622 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 622--FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

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

2. In § 622.12, paragraphs (b) and (c) are added to read as follows:

§ 622.12 Annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for Caribbean island management areas/Caribbean EEZ.

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(b) Closure provisions.

(i) Restrictions applicable after a Puerto Rico commercial ACL closure. (A) When a commercial ACL specified in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section is estimated by the SRD to have been exceeded, the Assistant Administrator will file a notification as specified in paragraph (a) with the Office of the Federal Register. Outside of the season announced in the notification, the commercial sector is closed and both harvest and possession of such species or species groups in or from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ are restricted to the recreational bag and possession limits and both the sale and purchase of such species or species groups taken from the applicable portion of

the Caribbean EEZ are prohibited.

(B) If the seasons for both the commercial and recreational sectors for a species or species group are closed, all harvest or possession in or from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ for that species or species group is prohibited.

(ii) Restrictions applicable after a Puerto Rico recreational ACL closure. (A) When a recreational ACL specified in paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator will file a notification as specified in paragraph (a) with the Office of the Federal Register. Outside of the season announced in the notification, the recreational sector is closed and the recreational bag and possession limits for the applicable species or species group in or from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ are zero.

(B) If the seasons for both the commercial and recreational sectors for a species or species group are closed, all harvest or possession in or from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ for that species or species group is prohibited.

(iii) Restrictions applicable after a St. Croix, St. Thomas/St. John, or Caribbean EEZ species or species group ACL closure. (A) When a species or species group ACL specified in either paragraph (a)(2), (3), or (4) of this section is estimated by the SRD to have been exceeded, the Assistant Administrator will file a notification as specified in paragraph

(a) with the Office of the Federal Register. Outside of the season announced in the notification, all harvest or possession in or from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ of the indicated species or species group is prohibited and the sale and purchase of such species or species group taken from the applicable portion of the Caribbean EEZ is prohibited.

(c) Reopening provisions and adjustments to fishing seasons. When a species or species group season has been announced, based on when an ACL is projected to be reached and subsequent data indicate that the ACL will be reached at a different projected date, the Assistant Administrator may file a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. Such notification may adjust the season length as specified in the Federal Register to provide an opportunity for the ACL to be harvested.

3. Section 622.457 is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.457 Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and accountability measures (AMs).

See § 622.12 for applicable Caribbean spiny lobster ACLs, AMs, and ACL closure and reopening provisions.

4. In § 622.491, a sentence is added to the end of paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 622.491 Seasonal and area closures.

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(b) * * * See § 622.12(b) for additional Caribbean queen
conch ACL closure and reopening provisions.