

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

[Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097;
4500030114]

RIN 1018-AY17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Threatened Status for the Rufa Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; reopening of comment period; public hearings announcement.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the reopening of the public comment period on our September 30, 2013, proposal to list the rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). In accordance with section 4(b)(5) of the Act, during the reopened public comment period we will hold two public hearings, one in North Carolina and one in Texas, with public informational sessions immediately preceding the public hearings. This comment period will allow all interested parties an opportunity to attend the public hearings and provide testimony and additional comments on the proposed rufa red knot listing. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered in preparation of the final rule.

DATES: For the proposed rule published September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024), we will consider comments received or postmarked on or before May 19, 2014. Comments submitted electronically using the Federal eRulemaking Portal (see **ADDRESSES** section, below) must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.

Public Informational Sessions and Public Hearings: We will hold two public informational sessions and two public hearings on this proposed rule on the following dates and times; see **ADDRESSES** for locations:

- Morehead City, NC: Public informational session from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by a public hearing from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., May 6, 2014.
- Corpus Christi, TX: Public informational session from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., followed by a public hearing

from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., May 6, 2014.

Persons wishing to present oral comments on the proposed rule at the public hearing may register beginning at the start of the informational session.

ADDRESSES: *Document availability:* You may obtain copies of the September 30, 2013, proposed rule and supporting material on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097. Documents may also be obtained by mail from the New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Written comments: You may submit written comments by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097, which is the docket number for the proposed rulemaking. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"

(2) *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

We request that you send comments only by the methods described above. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Comments section below for more details).

Public Informational Sessions and Public Hearings: The informational sessions and public hearings will take place at:

- North Carolina—Crystal Coast Civic Center, 3505 Arendall Street, Morehead City, NC 28557.
- Texas—Harte Research Institute, Conference Room 127, 6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric Schradung, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main Street, Building D, Pleasantville, New Jersey 08232, by telephone 609-383-3938 or by facsimile 609-646-0352. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Comments

We will accept written comments and information during this reopened comment period on our proposal to list the rufa red knot as a threatened species

that was published in the **Federal Register** on September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024). We will consider information we receive from all interested parties. We intend that any final action resulting from this proposal will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available and be as accurate and as effective as possible.

If you submitted comments or information on the proposed rule (78 FR 60024) during the initial comment period from September 30, 2013, to November 29, 2013, please do not resubmit them. We have incorporated them into the public record as part of the previous comment period, and we will fully consider them in the preparation of our final determination.

If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov> as well. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing the proposed rule, are available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Background

In our September 30, 2013, proposed rule (78 FR 60024), we proposed to list the rufa red knot as threatened due to loss of both breeding and nonbreeding habitat; potential for disruption of natural predator cycles on the breeding grounds; reduced prey availability throughout the nonbreeding range; and increasing frequency and severity of asynchronies ("mismatches") in the timing of the birds' annual migratory cycle relative to favorable food and weather conditions.

For more information on previous Federal actions concerning the rufa red knot, or information regarding its biology, status, distribution, and habitat, refer to the proposed rule published in the **Federal Register** on September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024) and its four supplemental documents, all of which are available online at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No.

FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097 or by mail from the New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Authors

The primary authors of this notice are the staff members in the Endangered Species Program, Northeast Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 19, 2014.

Stephen Guertin,

Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 635

[Docket No. 140115049-4273-01]

RIN 0648-XD092

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; 2014 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quota Specifications

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments; notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes 2014 quota specifications for the Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) fisheries and seeks comments from the public on the allocation of available underharvest among the fishing categories under certain circumstances. This action is necessary to implement binding recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), as required by the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA), and to achieve domestic management objectives under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before May 5, 2014. NMFS will host an operator-assisted public hearing conference call and webinar on April 16, 2014, from 2 to 4 p.m. EDT, providing an opportunity for individuals from all geographic areas to

participate. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by “NOAA-NMFS-2014-0008,” by either of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submissions:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0008, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- **Mail:** Submit written comments to Sarah McLaughlin, Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division, Office of Sustainable Fisheries (F/SF1), NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.
- **Instructions:** Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and generally will be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

The public hearing conference call information is phone number 1-800-619-7481; participant passcode 5246202. Participants are strongly encouraged to log/dial in 15 minutes prior to the meeting. NMFS will show a brief presentation via webinar followed by public comment. To join the webinar, go to: <https://noaa-meets.webex.com/noaa-meets/j.php?MTID=m1c122efdcf020f0807ff335b43858362>, enter your name and email address, and click the “JOIN” button. Participants that have not used WebEx before will be prompted to download and run a plug-in program that will enable them to view the webinar.

Supporting documents such as the Environmental Assessments and Fishery Management Plans described below may be downloaded from the HMS Web site at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/. These documents also are available by sending your request to Sarah McLaughlin at the mailing address specified above.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Atlantic bluefin tuna, bigeye tuna, albacore tuna, yellowfin tuna, and skipjack tuna (hereafter referred to as “Atlantic tunas”) are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and ATCA. As an active member of ICCAT, the United States implements binding ICCAT recommendations. ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to promulgate regulations, as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out ICCAT recommendations. The authority to issue regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and ATCA has been delegated from the Secretary to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Background

On May 28, 1999, NMFS published in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 29090) final regulations, effective July 1, 1999, implementing the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks (1999 FMP). The 1999 FMP included a framework process to promulgate annual specifications for the BFT fishery, in accordance with ATCA and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and to implement the annual recommendations of ICCAT. Since 1982, ICCAT has recommended a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of western Atlantic BFT, and since 1991 ICCAT has recommended specific limits (quotas) for the United States and other Contracting Parties with BFT fisheries.

On October 2, 2006, NMFS published a final rule in the **Federal Register** (71 FR 58058), effective November 1, 2006, implementing the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (Consolidated HMS FMP), which consolidated management of all Atlantic HMS (i.e., sharks, swordfish, tunas, and billfish) into one comprehensive FMP. The implementing regulations for Atlantic HMS are at 50 CFR part 635. Among other things, the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP maintained an allocation scheme, established in the 1999 FMP, for dividing the baseline annual U.S. BFT quota among several domestic quota categories based on gear type (i.e., Harpoon, Purse Seine, Angling, General, Longline, and Trap categories).

The baseline quota has remained unchanged from 2013, and the 2014 BFT quota specifications are necessary to adjust the annual U.S. baseline BFT quota to account for any underharvest or overharvest of the adjusted 2013 U.S. BFT quota. Preliminary information