

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 § 622.41, revise paragraph (q)(2)(iii)(B) to read as follows:

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

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(q) * * *
(2) * * *
(iii) * * *

(B) *Federal charter vessel/headboat component ACT.* The Federal charter vessel/headboat component ACT applies to vessels that have been issued a valid Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish any time during the fishing year. A person aboard a vessel that has been issued a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish any time during the fishing year may not harvest or possess red snapper in or from the Gulf EEZ when the Federal charter vessel/headboat component is closed. The component ACT is 2.848 million lb (1.292 million kg), round weight.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 180713633-9174-02]

RTID 0648-XY078

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2020 Pacific cod total allowable catch allocated to catcher vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 16, 2020, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., April 1, 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The A season apportionment of the 2020 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) allocated to catcher vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI is 22,723 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2019 and 2020 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (84 FR 9000, March 13, 2019) and inseason adjustment (85 FR 19, January 2, 2020).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the A season apportionment of the 2019 Pacific cod TAC allocated to trawl catcher vessels in the BSAI will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 20,723 mt and is setting aside the remaining 2,000 mt as incidental catch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) as such requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest as it would prevent NMFS from

responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the closure of directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of February 13, 2020.

The AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: February 14, 2020.

Karyl K. Brewster-Geisz,
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 679

[Docket No. 200205-0047]

RIN 0648-BJ03

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Rockfish Management in the Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS revises regulations to implement Amendment 119 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP) and Amendment 107 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA FMP). This final rule requires that the operator of a federally permitted catcher vessel using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska retain and land all rockfish (*Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species) caught while fishing for groundfish or Pacific halibut. This action is necessary to improve identification of rockfish species catch by vessels using electronic monitoring,