

directed fishing for arrowtooth flounder in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

#### Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 2000 TAC of arrowtooth flounder for the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 31, 2000.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*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. 000211039-0039-01; I.D. 073100B]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting retention of Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). NMFS is requiring that catch of Pacific cod in this area be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the amount of the 2000 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod in this area has been achieved.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 31, 2000, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Andrew N. Smoker, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (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 amount of the 2000 TAC of Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA was established as 20,625 metric tons by the Final 2000 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (65 FR 8298, February 18, 2000) and subsequent reserve release (65 FR 20919, April 19, 2000). See § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the amount of the 2000 TAC for Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA has been achieved. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA be

treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

#### Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the amount of the 2000 TAC for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet has taken the amount of the 2000 TAC for Pacific cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 31, 2000.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
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