

observers¹ on all fishing trips in the Convention Area. However, the regulations at 50 CFR 300.215(c)(1) that require all vessels with WCPFC Area Endorsements or for which WCPFC Area Endorsements are required to carry WCPFC observers when directed by NMFS remain in effect.

Revocation of Temporary Specification

NMFS is using the framework as set forth at 50 CFR 300.228 to revoke the temporary specification that implemented the WCPFC decision dated May 13, 2020, to waive the regulations on at-sea transshipment observer coverage at 50 CFR 300.215(d) and 50 CFR 300.216(b)(2).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to the WCPFC Implementation Act and the regulations at 50 CFR 300.228. This action is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

There is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment on the temporary measures included in this action, because prior notice and the opportunity for public comment is unnecessary and would be contrary to the public interest. Opportunity for public comment is unnecessary because the regulations establishing the framework and providing notice of the Commission's decisions described above have already been subject to notice and public comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the extension of the Commission decision. NMFS has responded to public comments received on the interim final rule to establish the framework and those Commission decisions in a separate final rule (87 FR 34580; June 7, 2022). NMFS will be responding to any public comments received on the interim final rule to extend the time period to implement WCPFC decision related to the COVID-19 pandemic in a separate final rule (see 87 FR 34584; June 7, 2022).

¹ A WCPFC Observer means a person authorized by the Commission in accordance with any procedures established by the Commission to undertake vessel observer duties as part of the Commission's Regional Observer Programme, including an observer deployed as part of a NMFS-administered observer program or as part of another national or sub-regional observer program, provided that such program is authorized by the Commission to be part of the Commission's Regional Observer Programme. See 50 CFR 300.211.

For the reasons articulated above, there is also good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in effective dates for the temporary measures.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*

Dated: July 8, 2022.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
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. 220216-0049; RTID 0648-XC095]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of Pacific cod by catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the 2022 total allowable catch of Pacific cod allocated to catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 8, 2022, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 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 2022 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod allocated to catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 616 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (87 FR 11599, March 2, 2022).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2022 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that Pacific cod caught by catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(a)(2).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 prohibiting the retention of Pacific cod by catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 7, 2022.

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.

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

Dated: July 8, 2022.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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