

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679****[Docket No. 250312–0037; RTID 0648–XE592]****Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620 in 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 directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 620 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2025 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock for Statistical Area 620 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 1, 2025, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., May 31, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Olson, 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 (Magnuson-Stevens 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 allowance of the 2025 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA is 63,267 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i) and (d)(1)(ii)(B), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2025 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 62,767 mt and is setting aside the remaining 200 mt as bycatch 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA.

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

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 the closure of directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 620 in 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 March 31, 2025.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA 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: March 31, 2025.

Karen H. Abrams,

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. 250312–0037; RTID 0648–XE818]****Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2025 and 2026 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish; 2025 Rockfish Program Cooperative Allocations**

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

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS is providing notification of the Central Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Rockfish Program cooperative allocations that are based on final total allowable catch (TAC) limits in the final rule published on March 18, 2025, implementing the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications and prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for the groundfish fishery of the GOA. These allocations are necessary to provide the Rockfish Program cooperative amounts for 2025, thus allowing commercial fishermen to maximize their economic opportunities in this fishery, consistent with the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the GOA (FMP).

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 1, 2025, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abby Jahn, 907–586–7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the FMP prepared and recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens 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 parts 679 and 680.

As described in the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA, allocations among vessels belonging to catcher vessel (CV) cooperatives or catcher/processor (CP) cooperatives are not included in the final harvest specifications (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025). Rockfish Program applications for CV cooperatives and CP cooperatives are not due to NMFS until March 1 of each calendar year; therefore, NMFS cannot calculate 2025 and 2026 allocations in conjunction with the final harvest specifications (§ 679.81(f)). NMFS has received the 2025 Rockfish Program applications and has calculated the 2025 allocations for CV cooperatives and CP cooperatives as required by and consistent with § 679.81(b), (c), (d), and (e). NMFS is listing the 2025 allocations in table 1.

TABLE 1—2025 ROCKFISH PROGRAM COOPERATIVE ALLOCATIONS

Entry level	Group code	Species group	Metric tons		
Rockfish Program Entry Level	401	Pacific Ocean Perch	5		
		Northern Rockfish	5		
		Dusky Rockfish	50		
Catcher/Processor Cooperatives: Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative	412	Pacific Ocean Perch	9,683.29		
		Thornyhead Rockfish	156.35		
		Halibut PSC	74.1		
		Sablefish	342.014		
		Northern Rockfish	1,352.58		
		Rougheye/Blackspotted Rockfish	211.343		
		Shorthead Rockfish	75.6		
Catcher Vessel Cooperatives: Silver Bay Seafoods Rockfish Cooperative	407	Dusky Rockfish	2,081.69		
		Pacific Cod	145.774		
		Pacific Ocean Perch	3,978.24		
		Thornyhead Rockfish	11.507		
		Halibut PSC	29.182		
		Sablefish	164.359		
		Northern Rockfish	474.254		
		Dusky Rockfish	754.885		
		North Pacific Rockfish Cooperative	408	Pacific Cod	94.536
				Pacific Ocean Perch	2,527.06
				Thornyhead Rockfish	7.462
Halibut PSC	18.925				
Sablefish	106.588				
OBSI Rockfish Cooperative	409	Northern Rockfish	291.378		
		Dusky Rockfish	565.949		
		Pacific Cod	129.026		
		Pacific Ocean Perch	3,119.94		
		Thornyhead Rockfish	10.185		
		Halibut PSC	25.829		
		Sablefish	145.476		
Star of Kodiak Rockfish Cooperative	411	Northern Rockfish	467.725		
		Dusky Rockfish	834.738		
		Pacific Cod	216.602		
		Pacific Ocean Perch	5,395.46		
		Thornyhead Rockfish	17.099		
		Halibut PSC	43.361		
		Sablefish	244.218		
		Northern Rockfish	789.062		
Dusky Rockfish	1,280.74				

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Through previous actions, the FMP and regulations are designed to authorize NMFS to take this action pursuant to section 305(d). See 50 CFR part 679. This action is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, 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 unnecessary and

contrary to the public interest. This notification provides information on the 2025 Rockfish Program cooperative allocations, and does not change operating practices in the fisheries. This notification is consistent with the harvest specifications recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in December 2024 and implemented by NMFS in the final rule for the 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025). Those harvest specifications specify the final TAC limits from which NMFS calculates the Rockfish Program cooperative allocations based on existing regulations, which were

implemented through prior notice and comment rulemaking (§ 679.81(b), (c), (d), and (e)). The public was provided with notice and opportunity to comment on the TAC limits during the public comment period for the proposed harvest specifications (89 FR 94680, November 29, 2024) and has had notice of the final harvest specifications implementing the final TAC limits (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025). Because the public already had a meaningful opportunity to comment on the TAC limits from which these allocations are derived, further opportunity for public comment is unnecessary and would not be meaningful.

This notification announces the Rockfish Program cooperative allocations based on applications received after the publication of the 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications. If this notification is delayed to allow for notice and comment it could also result in confusion for participants in the Rockfish Program given that the final rule implementing the 2025 and 2026

harvest specifications is effective and the Rockfish Program fishery opens April 1, 2025. Therefore, the Assistant Administrator finds good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

For the reasons above, the Assistant Administrator also finds good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in effective date and make

this rule effective immediately upon publication.

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

Dated: March 31, 2025.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

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