

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 648**

[Docket No. 010319075–1217–02; I.D. 073106E]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Tilefish Fishery; Quota Harvested for Full-time Tier 2 Category

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the percentage of the tilefish annual total allowable landings (TAL) available to the Full-time Tier 2 permit category for the 2006 fishing year has been harvested. In response, commercial vessels fishing under the Full-time Tier 2 tilefish category may not harvest tilefish from within the Golden Tilefish Management Unit for the remainder of the 2006 fishing year (through October 31, 2006). Regulations governing the tilefish fishery require publication of this notification to advise the public of this closure.

DATES: Effective 0001 hrs local time, August 2, 2006, through 2400 hrs local time, October 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian R. Hooker, Fishery Policy Analyst, at (978) 281–9220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the tilefish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a TAL for federally permitted tilefish vessels harvesting tilefish from within the Golden Tilefish Management Unit. The Golden Tilefish Management Unit is defined as an area of the Atlantic Ocean from the latitude of the VA/NC border (36°33.36' N. lat.), extending eastward from the shore to the outer boundary of the exclusive economic zone, and northward to the U.S./Canada border. After 5 percent of the TAL is deducted to reflect landings by vessels issued an open-access Incidental permit category, and after up to 3 percent of the TAL is set aside for research purposes, should research TAL be set aside, the remaining TAL is distributed among the following three tilefish limited access permit categories: Full-time Tier 1 category (66 percent), Full-time Tier 2 category (15 percent), and the Part-time category (19 percent).

The TAL for tilefish for the 2006 fishing year was set at 1.995 million lb

(905,172 kg) and then adjusted downward by 5 percent to 1,895,250 lb (859,671 kg) to account for incidental catch. There was no research set-aside for the 2006 fishing year. Thus, the Full-time Tier 2 permit category quota for the 2006 fishing year, which is equal to 15 percent of the TAL, is 284,288 lb (128,951 kg).

The Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) monitors the commercial tilefish quota for each fishing year using dealer reports, vessel catch reports, and other available information to determine when the quota for each limited access permit category is projected to have been harvested. NMFS is required to publish notification in the **Federal Register** notifying commercial vessels and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the tilefish TAL for the specific limited access category has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for harvesting tilefish by that category for the remainder of the fishing year, from within the Golden Tilefish Management Unit.

The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that the 2006 tilefish TAL for the Full-time Tier 2 category has been harvested. Therefore, effective 0001 hrs local time, August 2, 2006, further landings of tilefish harvested from within the Golden Tilefish Management Unit by tilefish vessels holding Full-time Tier 2 category Federal fisheries permits are prohibited through October 31, 2006. The 2007 fishing year for commercial tilefish harvest will open on November 1, 2006. Federally permitted dealers are also advised that, effective August 2, 2006, they may not purchase tilefish from Full-time Tier 2 category federally permitted tilefish vessels who land tilefish harvested from within the Golden Tilefish Management Unit for the remainder of the 2006 fishing year (through October 31, 2006).

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: July 31, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
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. 060216045–6045–01; I.D. 073106B]

Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 Feet (18.3 Meters) Length Overall Using Hook-and-Line or Pot 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; modification of a closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line or pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI to harvest their Pacific cod allocation.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 15, 2006, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 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.

NMFS closed directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI under § 679.21(d)(1)(iii) on May 23, 2006 (71 FR 30300, May 26, 2006).

NMFS has determined that as of July 25, 2006, approximately 60 metric tons of Pacific cod remain in the 2006 Pacific cod TAC specified for catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. Therefore, in accordance with §§ 679.25(a)(2)(i)(C) and (a)(2)(iii)(D),

and to allow the catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI to harvest their Pacific cod allocation, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is reopening directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. The reopening is effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 15, 2006, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2006.

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 reallocation of Pacific cod specified for jig vessels to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 25, 2006.

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 § 679.25 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: July 31, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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. 060216045-6045-01;
I.D.073106A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod 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; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amount of Pacific cod from vessels using jig gear to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using pot or hook-and-line gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). These actions are necessary to allow the 2006 A and B season total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective August 3, 2006, through 2400 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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 2006 A and B season allowance of the Pacific cod TAC specified for vessels using jig gear in the BSAI totals 389 metric tons (mt) for the period 1200 hrs, A.l.t., April 30, 2006, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., August 31, 2006. This amount is established by the 2006 and 2007 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 10894, March 3, 2006); the adjustment of the Pacific cod TACs in the BSAI on March 14, 2006 (71 FR 13777, March 17, 2006), and reallocations on March 24, 2006 (71 FR 14825, March 24, 2006) and May 1, 2006 (71 FR 25508, May 1, 2006). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), § 679.20(c)(5), and § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A).

The Acting Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that jig

vessels will not be able to harvest 296 mt of the A and B season apportionment of Pacific cod allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A) and § 679.20(a)(7)(iii)(A)(3). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C)(1), NMFS apportions 296 mt of Pacific cod from the A and B season jig gear apportionment to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear.

The harvest specifications for Pacific cod included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 10894, March 3, 2006) are revised as follows: 93 mt to the B season apportionment for vessels using jig gear and 3,232 mt to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear.

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 reallocation of Pacific cod specified for jig vessels to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery; allow the industry to plan for the fishing season and avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet as well as processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 25, 2006.

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.*