

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 150316270–5270–01]

RIN 0648–XE054

Fisheries Off West Coast States; Modifications of the West Coast Commercial Salmon Fisheries; Inseason Actions #14 and #15

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

ACTION: Modification of fishing seasons; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces two inseason actions in the ocean salmon fisheries. These inseason actions modified the commercial salmon fisheries in the area from the U.S./Canada border to the Oregon/California border.

DATES: The effective dates for the inseason actions are set out in this document under the heading Inseason Actions. Comments will be accepted through August 6, 2015.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2015–0001, by any one of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/#!/docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2015-0001, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* William W. Stelle, Jr., Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Seattle, WA 98115–6349.

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peggy Mundy at 206–526–4323.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In the 2015 annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries (80 FR 25611, May 5, 2015), NMFS announced the commercial and recreational fisheries in the area from the U.S./Canada border to the U.S./Mexico border, beginning May 1, 2015, and 2016 salmon fisheries opening earlier than May 1, 2016. NMFS is authorized to implement inseason management actions to modify fishing seasons and quotas as necessary to provide fishing opportunity while meeting management objectives for the affected species (50 CFR 660.409). Inseason actions in the salmon fishery may be taken directly by NMFS (50 CFR 660.409(a)—Fixed inseason management provisions) or upon consultation with the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the appropriate State Directors (50 CFR 660.409(b)—Flexible inseason management provisions). The state management agencies that participated in the consultations described in this document were: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Management of the salmon fisheries is generally divided into two geographic areas: North of Cape Falcon (U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, OR) and south of Cape Falcon (Cape Falcon, OR, to the U.S./Mexico border). The inseason actions reported in this document affect fisheries north and south of Cape Falcon. Within the south of Cape Falcon area, the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) extends from Humbug Mountain, OR, to Humboldt South Jetty, CA, and is divided at the Oregon/California border into the Oregon KMZ to the north and California KMZ to the south. All times mentioned refer to Pacific daylight time.

Inseason Actions*Inseason Action #14*

Description of action: Inseason action #14 adjusted the July quota for the commercial salmon fishery in the Oregon KMZ. Unutilized quota from June was rolled over on an impact-neutral basis to July. The adjusted July quota is 1,184 Chinook salmon.

Effective dates: Inseason action #14 took effect on July 1, 2015, and remains in effect until the end of the season.

Reason and authorization for the action: The commercial salmon fishery in the Oregon KMZ had a June quota of 1,800 Chinook salmon. The State of Oregon reported that 1,528 Chinook salmon were landed in June, leaving quota of 272 Chinook salmon

unutilized. To address temporal differences in impacts to Klamath River fall and California coastal Chinook salmon stocks, the Council’s Salmon Technical Team (STT) calculated the impact-neutral rollover of 272 Chinook salmon from June to July. As a result, 184 Chinook salmon were added to the July quota of 1,000 Chinook, for an adjusted quota of 1,184 Chinook salmon. After consideration of Chinook salmon landings to date and the STT’s calculations, the Regional Administrator (RA) determined that it was appropriate to adjust the July quota for the commercial salmon fishery in the Oregon KMZ. This action was taken to allow access to available Chinook salmon quota, without exceeding conservation impacts to Klamath River fall and California coastal Chinook salmon stocks. Inseason action to modify quotas and/or fishing seasons is authorized by 50 CFR 660.409(b)(1)(i).

Consultation date and participants:

Consultation on inseason action #14 occurred on July 9, 2015. Participants in this consultation were staff from NMFS, Council, WDFW, and ODFW.

Inseason Action #15

Description of action: Inseason action #15 adjusted the landing and possession limit in the commercial salmon fishery north of Cape Falcon to 60 Chinook salmon and 50 marked coho per vessel per open period from the U.S./Canada border to Queets River, WA, or 75 Chinook salmon and 50 marked coho per vessel per open period from Queets River, WA to Cape Falcon, OR. This action superseded the landing limit set preseason at 50 Chinook salmon and 50 marked coho per vessel per open period from the U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, OR (80 FR 25611).

Effective dates: Inseason action #15 took effect on July 10, 2015, and remains in effect until superseded by inseason action or the end of the season.

Reason and authorization for the action: After consideration of Chinook salmon landings to date and fishery effort, the RA determined that sufficient quota remained to increase the landing and possession limit to allow access to the remaining quota without exceeding the quota that was set preseason. Inseason action to modify quotas and/or fishing seasons is authorized by 50 CFR 660.409(b)(1)(i).

Consultation date and participants:

Consultation on inseason action #15 occurred on July 9, 2015. Participants in this consultation were staff from NMFS, Council, WDFW, and ODFW.

All other restrictions and regulations remain in effect as announced for the 2015 ocean salmon fisheries and 2016

salmon fisheries opening prior to May 1, 2016 (80 FR 25611, May 5, 2015).

The RA determined that the best available information indicated that Chinook salmon catch to date and fishery effort supported the above inseason actions recommended by the states of Washington and Oregon. The states manage the fisheries in state waters adjacent to the areas of the U.S. exclusive economic zone in accordance with these Federal actions. As provided by the inseason notice procedures of 50 CFR 660.411, actual notice of the described regulatory actions was given, prior to the time the action was effective, by telephone hotline numbers 206-526-6667 and 800-662-9825, and by U.S. Coast Guard Notice to Mariners broadcasts on Channel 16 VHF-FM and 2182 kHz.

Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that good cause exists for this notification to be issued without affording prior notice and opportunity for public comment under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) because such notification would be impracticable. As previously noted, actual notice of the regulatory actions was provided to fishers through telephone hotline and radio notification. These actions comply with the requirements of the annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries (80 FR 25611, May 5, 2015), the West Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (Salmon FMP), and regulations implementing the Salmon FMP, 50 CFR 660.409 and 660.411. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment was impracticable because NMFS and the state agencies had insufficient time to provide for prior notice and the opportunity for public comment between the time Chinook salmon catch and effort assessments and projections were developed and fisheries impacts were calculated, and the time the fishery modifications had to be implemented in order to ensure that fisheries are managed based on the best available scientific information, ensuring that conservation objectives and ESA consultation standards are not exceeded. The AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness required under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), as a delay in effectiveness of these actions would allow fishing at levels inconsistent with the goals of the Salmon FMP and the current management measures.

These actions are authorized by 50 CFR 660.409 and 660.411 and are

exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: July 17, 2015.

Emily H. Menashes,

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. 140918791-4999-02]

RIN 0648-XE064

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the West Yakutat District 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 directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the West Yakutat District of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2015 total allowable catch of Pacific ocean perch in the West Yakutat District of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 17, 2015, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2015.

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 2015 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in the West Yakutat District of the GOA is 2,014 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2015 and 2016 harvest specifications for groundfish of the (80 FR 10250, February 25, 2015).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2015 TAC of Pacific ocean perch in the West Yakutat District of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 1,914 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 100 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 Pacific ocean perch in the West Yakutat District of the GOA.

After the effective date of this closure 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 ocean perch in the West Yakutat District 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 16, 2015.

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: July 17, 2015.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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