

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 622**

[Docket No. 040205043-4043-01]

RIN 0648-XA228

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; Closure

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS closes the commercial sector for vermilion snapper in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. This closure is necessary to protect the vermilion snapper resource.

DATES: This rule is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 10, 2011, until 12:01 a.m., local time, July 1, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Catherine Bruger, telephone: 727-824-5305, fax: 727-824-5308, e-mail: Catherine.Bruger@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

The commercial quota for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic is 315,523 lb (143,119 kg) for the current fishing period, January 1 through June 30, 2011, as specified in 50 CFR 622.42(e)(4)(i).

Under 50 CFR 622.43(a), NMFS is required to close the commercial sector for vermilion snapper when its quota has been reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. NMFS has determined that the commercial quota for South Atlantic vermilion snapper will have been reached by March 10, 2011. Accordingly, the commercial sector for South Atlantic vermilion snapper is closed effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 10, 2011, until 12:01 a.m., local time, July 1, 2011.

The operator of a vessel with a valid commercial vessel permit for South

Atlantic snapper-grouper having vermilion snapper onboard must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such vermilion snapper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 10, 2011. During the closure, the bag limit and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.39(d)(1)(v) and (d)(2), respectively, apply to all harvest or possession of vermilion snapper in or from the South Atlantic EEZ, and the sale or purchase of vermilion snapper taken from the EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of vermilion snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 10, 2011, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. For a person on board a vessel for which a Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery has been issued, the sale and purchase provisions of the commercial closure for vermilion snapper would apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or Federal waters, as specified in 50 CFR 622.43(a)(5)(ii).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the commercial sector for vermilion snapper constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures would be unnecessary because the rule itself has been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure.

Allowing prior notice and opportunity for public comment is contrary to the public interest because of the need to immediately implement this action to protect the fishery since the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established quota.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.43(a) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 4, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2011-5362 Filed 3-4-11; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 622**

[Docket No. 0907271170-0576-03]

RIN 0648-AY10

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery Off the Southern Atlantic States; Amendment 17A

Correction

In rule document 2010-30394, appearing on pages 76874-76890, in the issue of December 9, 2010, make the following correction:

§ 622.41 [Corrected]

On page 76890, in the first column, in § 622.41(n)(2), in the last line, make the following correction:

“28E N. lat.” should read “28° N. lat.”

[FR Doc. C1-2010-30394 Filed 3-8-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 101126522-0640-02]

RIN 0648-XA276

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock 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 pollock in the West Yakutat District of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2011 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in the West Yakutat District of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 5, 2011, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2011.

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 2011 TAC of pollock in the West Yakutat District of the GOA is 2,339 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2011 and 2012 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (76 FR 11111, March 1, 2011).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the 2011 TAC of pollock in the West Yakutat District of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,319 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 20 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 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 pollock 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 March 3, 2011.

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: March 4, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-5359 Filed 3-4-11; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 100413185-1155-02]

RIN 0648-AY84

Groundfish Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; American Fisheries Act; Recordkeeping and Reporting

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this rule to amend the American Fisheries Act implementing regulations that previously required cooperatives participating in the directed fishery for pollock in the Bering Sea to prepare and submit preliminary annual reports to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council). The Council determined that the requirement for cooperatives to submit a preliminary annual report is no longer necessary, and this action eliminates that requirement. This action does not eliminate the requirement for the cooperatives to submit a single annual report to the Council. This action promotes the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and other applicable laws.

DATES: Effective April 8, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of this rule, the Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), and the categorical exclusion memorandum may be obtained from the Alaska Region Web site at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>.

Written comments regarding the burden-hour estimates or other aspects of the collection-of-information requirements contained in this final rule

may be submitted by mail to NMFS, Alaska Region, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Ellen Sebastian, Records Officer; in person at NMFS, Alaska Region, 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, Alaska; and by e-mail to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov, or by fax to 202-395-7285.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patsy A. Bearden, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the U.S. groundfish fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area under the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (FMP). The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the FMP under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Regulations implementing the FMP appear at subpart F of 50 CFR part 679. General regulations that pertain to U.S. fisheries appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600.

Background

In October 1998, Congress enacted the American Fisheries Act (AFA), 16 U.S.C. 1851, which “rationalized” the Bering Sea pollock fishery by identifying the vessels and processors eligible to participate in the fishery and allocating pollock among those eligible participants. The AFA allocates 10 percent of the Bering Sea pollock total allowable catch to the Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program. After subtracting the CDQ Program allocation, and an amount set aside for the catch of pollock in other Bering Sea fisheries, the AFA allocates the remaining available pollock quota (the “directed fishing allowance”) among the AFA inshore sector (50 percent), the AFA catcher/processor sector (40 percent), and the AFA mothership sector (10 percent).

The AFA allowed for development of pollock fishing cooperatives in the non-CDQ sectors. Thirteen cooperatives were developed under the AFA: Ten inshore catcher vessel cooperatives, two offshore catcher/processor cooperatives, and one mothership cooperative. After NMFS allocates pollock quota to each of the inshore catcher vessel cooperatives, the cooperatives further subdivide each cooperative’s pollock allocation among vessel owners in the cooperative through private contractual agreements. The cooperatives manage these allocations to optimize their harvest and to ensure that individual vessels and companies do not harvest more than their agreed upon share of pollock. The cooperatives also enforce contract