

(b) The minimum size for scup is 10.5 inches (26.67 cm) TL for all vessels that do not have a moratorium permit, or for party and charter vessels that are issued a moratorium permit but are fishing with passengers for hire, or carrying more than three crew members if a charter boat, or more than five crew members if a party boat.

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■ 8. In § 648.125, the first sentence in paragraph (a) is revised to read as follows:

§ 648.125 Possession limit.

(a) No person shall possess more than 15 scup in, or harvested from, the EEZ unless that person is the owner or operator of a fishing vessel issued a scup moratorium permit, or is issued a scup dealer permit. * * *

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 071106673-8011-02]

RIN 0648-XI07

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole by Vessels Participating in the Amendment 80 Limited Access Fishery in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels participating in the Amendment 80

limited access fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the first seasonal allowance of the 2008 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category by vessels participating in the Amendment 80 limited access fishery in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 19, 2008, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., July 1, 2008.

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 first seasonal allowance of the 2008 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category by vessels participating in the Amendment 80 limited access fishery for the yellowfin sole fishery category in the BSAI is 214 metric tons as established by the 2008 and 2009 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008). See § 679.21(e)(3)(vi)(A) and § 679.91(d)(1) and (3).

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(3)(vi)(B) and § 679.21(e)(7)(v), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the first seasonal allowance of the 2008 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category by vessels participating in the Amendment 80 limited access fishery in the BSAI will be caught.

Consequently, NMFS is closing directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels participating in the Amendment 80 limited access fishery in the BSAI.

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 yellowfin sole by vessels participating in the Amendment 80 limited access fishery in the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of May 16, 2008.

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

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

Dated: May 19, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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