

- (130) 40°37.35' N. lat., 124°29.05' W. long.;
- (131) 40°34.76' N. lat., 124°29.82' W. long.;
- (132) 40°36.78' N. lat., 124°37.06' W. long.;
- (133) 40°32.44' N. lat., 124°39.58' W. long.;
- (134) 40°24.82' N. lat., 124°35.12' W. long.;
- (135) 40°23.30' N. lat., 124°31.60' W. long.;
- (136) 40°23.52' N. lat., 124°28.78' W. long.;
- (137) 40°22.43' N. lat., 124°25.00' W. long.;
- (138) 40°21.72' N. lat., 124°24.94' W. long.;
- (139) 40°21.87' N. lat., 124°27.96' W. long.;
- (140) 40°21.40' N. lat., 124°28.74' W. long.;
- (141) 40°19.68' N. lat., 124°28.49' W. long.;
- (142) 40°17.73' N. lat., 124°25.43' W. long.;
- (143) 40°18.37' N. lat., 124°23.35' W. long.;
- (144) 40°15.75' N. lat., 124°26.05' W. long.;
- (145) 40°16.75' N. lat., 124°33.71' W. long.;
- (146) 40°16.29' N. lat., 124°34.36' W. long.; and
- (147) 40°10.00' N. lat., 124°21.12' W. long.

28. Previous Regulations Superseded

These regulations shall supersede all previous regulations of the Commission, and these regulations shall be effective each succeeding year until superseded.

Classification

IPHC Regulations

Because approval by the Secretary of State of the IPHC regulations is a foreign affairs function, the notice-and-comment and delay-in-effective date requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. 553, do not apply to this notice of the effectiveness and content of the IPHC regulations, 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(1). Because prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required to be provided for these portions of this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*, are not applicable.

Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A

An EA/RIR was prepared on the proposed changes to the CSP. NMFS has determined that the proposed changes to the CSP and the management measures implementing the CSP

contained in these regulations will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and the preparation of an environmental impact statement on the final action is not required by 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act or its implementing regulations.

At the proposed rule stage, the Chief Counsel for Regulation, Department of Commerce, certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. No comments were received on this certification or on the economic impacts of the rule. No regulatory flexibility analysis has been prepared.

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

The AA finds good cause to waive the requirement to provide a 30-day delay in effectiveness (5 U.S.C. 553(d)) because it is contrary to the public interest to delay the effectiveness date of this rule for 30 days. This rule must be made effective for the opening of the 2003 Pacific halibut fishing season on March 1, 2003. Delaying the opening of the fishing season is contrary to the public interest because it would cause unnecessary economic burden on fishery participants due to loss of fishing opportunity. Because the annual quotas and management measures are ultimately determined by an international commission, the IPHC, the AA is constrained and cannot respond by publishing the final rule until after the IPHC has adopted the annual quotas and management measures for the year. NMFS's implementation of changes to the CSP could not begin until after January 24, 2003, when the IPHC adopted annual quotas and management measures for 2003. There was not enough time between when the IPHC adopted the annual quotas and management measures for 2003 and the scheduled March 1, 2003, start of the fishing season to publish the regulations in the **Federal Register** with enough time for a 30-day delay in effectiveness. In addition, good cause exists to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness for the minor technical amendment to 50 CFR 300.63 pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) because this amendment only clarifies the regulatory language and does not include a substantive change to the regulations.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR part 300

Fisheries, Fishing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Treaties.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773–773k.

Dated: February 27, 2003

William T. Hogarth,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 300 is amended as follows:

PART 300—INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES REGULATIONS, SUBPART E—PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERIES

1. The authority citation for 50 CFR part 300, subpart E continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773–773k.

2. Section 300.63, paragraph (a)(3)(ii) is revised to read as follows:

§ 300.63 Catch sharing plans, local area management plans, and domestic management measures.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(3) * * *

(ii) It is unlawful for any person to possess or land halibut south of 46°53'18" N. lat. that were taken and retained as incidental catch authorized by this section in the directed longline sablefish fishery.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 03–5171 Filed 3–3–03; 3:18 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 001005281–0369–02; I.D. 030303A]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction

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

ACTION: Trip limit reduction.

SUMMARY: NMFS reduces the trip limit in the commercial hook-and-line fishery for king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone to 500 lb (227 kg) of king mackerel per day in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This trip limit reduction is necessary to protect the Gulf king mackerel resource.

DATES: This rule is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 5, 2003, through June

30, 2003, unless changed by further notification in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mark Godcharles, telephone: 727-570-5305, fax: 727-570-5583, e-mail: Mark.Godcharles@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fishery for coastal migratory pelagic fish (king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, cero, cobia, little tunny, dolphin, and, in the Gulf of Mexico only, bluefish) is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils) and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

Based on the Councils' recommended total allowable catch and the allocation ratios in the FMP, on April 30, 2001 (66 FR 17368, March 30, 2001) NMFS implemented a commercial quota of 2.25 million lb (1.02 million kg) for the eastern zone (Florida) of the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel. That quota is further divided into separate quotas for the Florida east coast subzone and the northern and southern Florida west coast subzones. On April 27, 2000, NMFS implemented the final rule (65 FR 16336, March 28, 2000) that divided the Florida west coast subzone of the eastern zone into northern and southern subzones, and established their separate quotas. The quota implemented for the southern Florida west coast subzone is 1,040,625 lb (472,020 kg). That quota is further divided into two equal quotas of 520,312 lb (236,010 kg) for vessels in each of two groups fishing with hook-and-line gear and run-around gillnets (50 CFR 622.42(c)(1)(i)(A)(2)(i)).

In accordance with 50 CFR 622.44(a)(2)(ii)(B)(2), from the date that 75 percent of the southern Florida west coast subzone's quota has been harvested until a closure of the subzone's fishery has been effected or the fishing year ends, king mackerel in or from the EEZ may be possessed on board or landed from a permitted vessel in amounts not exceeding 500 lb (227 kg) per day.

NMFS has determined that 75 percent of the quota for Gulf group king mackerel for vessels using hook-and-line gear in the southern Florida west coast subzone will be reached on March 4, 2003. Accordingly, a 500-lb (227-kg) trip limit applies to vessels in the commercial hook-and-line fishery for king mackerel in or from the EEZ in the

southern Florida west coast subzone effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 5, 2003. The 500-lb (227-kg) trip limit will remain in effect until the fishery closes or until the end of the current fishing year (June 30, 2003), whichever occurs first.

The Florida west coast subzone is that part of the eastern zone south and west of 25°20.4' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Miami-Dade County, FL boundary). The Florida west coast subzone is further divided into northern and southern subzones. The southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone that, from November 1 through March 31, extends south and west from 25°20.4' N. lat. to 26°19.8' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Lee/Collier County, FL, boundary), i.e., the area off Collier and Monroe Counties. From April 1 through October 31, the southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone that is between 26°19.8' N. lat. and 25°48' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Monroe/Collier County, FL boundary), i.e., the area off Collier County.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to reduce the trip limit constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, there is a need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to prevent an overrun of the commercial quota of Gulf group king mackerel, given the capacity of the fishing fleet to harvest the quota quickly. Any delay in implementing this action would be impractical and contradictory to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the FMP, and the public interest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is waived.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.44(a)(2)(iii) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 3, 2003.

John H. Dunnigan,

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

[FR Doc. 03-5471 Filed 3-4-03; 2:44 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 03114012-3046-02; I.D. 121902F]

RIN 0648-AQ46

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Seasonal Area Closure to Trawl, Pot, and Hook-and-Line Fishing in Waters off Cape Sarichef

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues a final rule to seasonally close a portion of the waters located near Cape Sarichef in the Bering Sea subarea to directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl, pot, or hook-and-line gear. This action is necessary to support NMFS research on the effect of fishing on the localized abundance of Pacific cod. It is intended to further the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP).

DATES: Effective March 15, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) and the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) prepared for this action are available from NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Durall, or by calling the Alaska Region, NMFS, at (907) 586-7228.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melanie Brown at (907) 586-7228, or melanie.brown@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the domestic groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) under the FMP. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the FMP under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI appear at 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

In October 2002, the Council adopted a proposed regulatory amendment to implement a seasonal closure to directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl, pot, or hook-and-line gear in a portion of the waters off