

common pool vessels to approach their pertinent common pool sub-ACLs. Therefore, the trip limit for GB cod is increased to 1,500 lb (608.4 kg) per DAS, up to 4,500 lb (2,041.1 kg) per trip; and the trip limit for SNE/MA yellowtail flounder is increased to 1,500 lb (608.4 kg) per DAS, up to 4,500 lb (2,041.8 kg) per trip, for Category A DAS vessels, effective March 8, 2012, through April 30, 2012. In addition, the trip limit for GB cod is increased to 75 lb (34.0 kg) per trip for open access Handgear B vessels effective March 8, 2012, through April 30, 2012. This action does not change the current cod trip limit for vessels with a limited access Handgear A permit (300 lb (136.1 kg) per trip) or Small Vessel Category permit (300 lb (136.1 kg) of cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder combined). Catch will continue to be monitored through dealer-reported landings, VMS catch reports, and other available information, and if necessary, additional adjustments to common pool management measures may be made.

Classification

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

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA) finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment for this inseason adjustment because notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The regulations at § 648.86(o) grant the RA authority to adjust the NE multispecies trip limits for common pool vessels in order to prevent the overharvest or underharvest of the pertinent common pool sub-ACLs. The information informing this action only very recently became available. Give this fact, this action increases the trip limits for GB cod and SNE/MA yellowtail flounder to reduce the probability of underharvesting the common pool sub-ACLs. The information informing this action only very recently became available. Given his fact, the time necessary to provide for prior notice and comment would prevent NMFS from implementing the necessary trip limit adjustments in a timely manner. A resulting delay in the liberalization of trip limits would unnecessarily restrain catch rates for GB cod and SNE/MA yellowtail flounder, thereby preventing the total catch of these stocks to further approach the pertinent common pool sub-ACL. Giving effect to this rule as soon as possible will prevent these unnecessary impacts.

Further, the AA finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness for this action. This action increases the trip limits for GB cod and SNE/MA yellowtail flounder to reduce the probability of underharvesting the common pool sub-ACLs. A delay in the increase of these trip limits would prevent vessels from harvesting catch at higher rates and potentially prevent the total catch of these stocks to further approach the pertinent common pool sub-ACL. Giving effect to this rule as soon as possible will prevent these unnecessary impacts.

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

Dated: March 8, 2012.

Carrie Selberg,

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. 101126522-0640-02]

RIN 0648-XB077

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 in 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 Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the B season allowance of the 2012 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 630 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 10, 2012, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., August 25, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 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 B season allowance of the 2012 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA is 2,589 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2011 and 2012 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (76 FR 11111, March 1, 2011) and inseason adjustment (77 FR 438, January 5, 2012). In accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(B), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), hereby decreases the B season pollock allowance by 179 mt to reflect the total overharvest of the A seasonal apportionment in Statistical Area 630. Therefore, the revised B season allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 630 is 2,410 mt (2,589 mt minus 179 mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the B season allowance of the 2012 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,200 mt and is setting aside the remaining 210 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 Statistical Area 630 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 Acting 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) and § 679.25(c)(1)(ii) 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 pollock in Statistical Area 630 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 7, 2012.

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 8, 2012.

Carrie Selberg,

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

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