

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by pot catcher processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2008 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) allocated to pot catcher processors in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 19, 2008, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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 2008 Pacific cod TAC allocated to pot catcher processors in the BSAI is 2,274 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2008 and 2009 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that the 2008 Pacific cod directed fishing allowance allocated to pot catcher processors in the BSAI has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by pot catcher processors 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 Pacific cod by pot catcher processors 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 September 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: September 17, 2008.

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. 071106671-8010-02]

RIN 0648-XK72

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 C season allowance of the 2008 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock for Statistical Area 630 in the GOA.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 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 C season allowance of the 2008 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA is 4,431 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2008 and 2009 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (73 FR 10562, February 27, 2008). In accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(B) the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), hereby decreases the C season pollock allowance by 753 mt. This is the amount of the pollock TAC that was exceeded in Statistical Area 630 during the B season. Therefore, the revised C season allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 630 is 3,678 mt (4,431 mt minus 753 mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the C season allowance of the 2008 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 3,518 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 160 mt as incidental catch 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 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 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 September 17, 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: September 18, 2008.

Alan D. Risenhoover

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

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