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Dated: February 10, 2015.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2015-03087 Filed 2-11-15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 130925836-4174-02]

RIN 0648-XD761

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Big Skate in the Central Regulatory Area 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 retention
of big skate in the Central Regulatory
Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This
action is necessary because the 2015
total allowable catch of big skate in the
Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will
be reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska
local time (A.l.t.), February 11, 2015,

through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31,
2015.

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 2015 total allowable catch (TAC)
of big skate in the Central Regulatory
Area of the GOA is 1,532 metric tons
(mt) as established by the final 2014 and
2015 harvest specifications for
groundfish of the GOA (79 FR 12890,
March 6, 2014).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the
Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS
(Regional Administrator), has
determined that the 2015 TAC of big
skate in the Central Regulatory Area of
the GOA will be reached. Therefore,
NMFS is requiring that big skate caught
in the Central Regulatory Area of the
GOA be treated as prohibited species in
accordance with § 679.21(b).

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 prohibiting the retention of big
skate in the Central Regulatory Area 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 February 9, 2015.

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

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

Dated: February 10, 2015.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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