

further ensure the success of the EM Program at meeting its goals and the goals of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, and would provide operational flexibility and reduce costs for vessel owners, while maintaining the best scientific information available for management.

As discussed in the proposed rule, delaying implementation of the EM program postpones the benefits that the EM program is expected to provide to vessel owners for an additional year. However, NMFS intends to maintain the current EM Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) program through 2021 and to allow additional vessels to join. Vessels in the EFP program are able to use EM in place of human observers and benefit from its cost savings while NMFS collects information to use in developing the regulations for and implementing the EM program. Maintaining the EFP in 2021 would allow vessels to continue to use EM in place of observers and mitigate potential negative economic effects of delaying the regulations. In the proposed rule, NMFS noted that it had not yet identified Federal funds to pay PSMFC to review, store, and report data from the EM EFP for 2021 and that, if NMFS did not receive Federal funds to pay PSMFC, vessel owners would be responsible for paying PSMFC or a private, third party EM service provider directly for the video review, storage, and reporting for the EM EFP. However, NMFS has since identified funding to pay PSMFC for the EM EFP in 2021. Therefore, NMFS expects the EFP program to continue through 2021 and to mitigate any negative economic effects of this rule.

Comments and Responses

No comments were received on the proposed rule.

Changes From the Proposed Rule

NMFS has made no changes from the proposed rule.

Classification

Pursuant to section 304(b)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law.

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

This final rule is considered an Executive Order 13771 deregulatory action.

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule and is not repeated here. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 660

Fisheries, Fishing, and Indian fisheries.

Dated: November 13, 2020.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

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

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 660 is amended as follows:

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES

- 1. The authority citation for part 660 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, and 16 U.S.C. 7001 *et seq.*

- 2. In § 660.603, revise paragraph (b) introductory text to read as follows:

§ 660.603 Electronic monitoring provider permits and responsibilities.

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(b) *Provider permits.* To be an EM service provider, a person must obtain an EM service provider permit and endorsement by submitting an application to the NMFS West Coast Region Fisheries Permit Office. NMFS has already accepted any EM service provider application submitted as of November 23, 2020. NMFS will begin accepting additional applications for EM service providers permits May 1, 2021. A person may meet some requirements of this section through a partnership or subcontract with another entity, in which case the application for an EM service provider permit must include information about the partnership. An applicant may submit an application at any time. If a new EM service provider, or an existing EM service provider seeking to deploy a new EMS or software version, submits an application by June 1, NMFS will issue a new permit by January 1 of the

following calendar year. Applications submitted after June 1 will be processed as soon as practicable. NMFS will only process complete applications.

Additional endorsements to provide observer or catch monitor services may be obtained under § 660.18.

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- 3. In § 660.604, revise paragraph (e) introductory text to read as follows:

§ 660.604 Vessel and first receiver responsibilities.

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(e) *Electronic Monitoring Authorization.* To obtain an EM Authorization, a vessel owner must submit an initial application to the NMFS West Coast Region Fisheries Permit Office, then a final application that includes an EM system certification and a vessel monitoring plan (VMP). NMFS will only review complete applications. NMFS has already accepted any EM Authorization application submitted as of the November 23, 2020. NMFS will begin accepting applications for EM Authorizations September 1, 2021. A vessel owner may submit an application at any time. Vessel owners that want to have their EM Authorizations effective for January 1 of the following calendar year must submit their complete application to NMFS by October 1. Vessel owners that want to have their EM Authorizations effective for May 15 must submit their complete application to NMFS by February 15 of the same year.

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[FR Doc. 2020–25432 Filed 11–20–20; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 665

[RTID 0648–XA646]

Pacific Island Fisheries; 2020 U.S. Territorial Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch Limits for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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

ACTION: Announcement of a valid specified fishing agreement.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a valid specified fishing agreement that allocates up to 1,000 metric tons (t) of the 2020 bigeye tuna limit for the

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to U.S. longline fishing vessels. The agreement supports the long-term sustainability of fishery resources of the U.S. Pacific Islands, and fisheries development in the CNMI.

DATES: The specified fishing agreement was valid as of November 12, 2020. The start date for attributing 2020 bigeye tuna catch to American Samoa was November 15, 2020.

ADDRESSES: The Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific (FEP) describes specified fishing agreements and is available from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel 808-522-8220, fax 808-522-8226, or <http://www.wpcouncil.org>.

NMFS prepared environmental analyses that describe the potential impacts on the human environment that would result from the action. The analyses, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2020-0120, are available from <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2020-0153>, or from Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynn Rassel, NMFS PIRO Sustainable Fisheries, 808-725-5184.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a final rule published on August 19, 2020, NMFS specified a 2020 limit of 2,000 t of longline-caught bigeye tuna for each of the U.S. Pacific Island territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI (85 FR 50961). NMFS allows each territory to allocate up to 1,500 t of the 2,000 t limit to U.S. longline fishing vessels identified in a valid specified fishing agreement, but the overall allocation limit among all territories may not exceed 3,000 t.

On November 9, 2020, NMFS received from the Council a specified fishing agreement between the CNMI and the Hawaii Longline Association. The Council's Executive Director advised that the specified fishing agreement was consistent with the criteria set forth in 50 CFR 665.819(c)(1). On November 12, 2020, NMFS reviewed the agreement and determined that it is consistent with the Pelagic FEP, implementing regulations, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and other applicable laws.

In accordance with 50 CFR 300.224(d) and 50 CFR 665.819(c)(9), vessels in the agreement may retain and land bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean under the CNMI attribution specified in the fishing agreement. On November 15, 2020, NMFS began

attributing bigeye tuna caught by vessels in the agreement to the CNMI, seven days before November 22, 2020, the date that NMFS forecasted that the fishery would reach the American Samoa bigeye tuna allocation limit of 1,000 t (85 FR 63216, October 7, 2020).

If NMFS determines that the fishery will reach the 1,000 t allocation specified in the CNMI agreement, we will restrict the retention of bigeye tuna caught by vessels in the agreement, unless the vessels are included in a subsequent specified fishing agreement with another U.S. territory.

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

Dated: November 17, 2020.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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. 200227-0066; RTID 0648-XA586]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea Subarea of the 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 prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod, except for the Community Development Quota program (CDQ), in the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the non-CDQ allocation of the 2020 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), November 18, 2020, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Krista Milani, 907-581-2062.

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 non-CDQ allocation of the 2020 Pacific cod TAC in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI is 126,627 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2020 and 2021 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (85 FR 13553, March 9, 2020). In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the non-CDQ allocation of the 2020 Pacific cod TAC in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 126,077 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 550 mt as incidental catch in directed fishing for other species. 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 Pacific cod in the Bering Sea subarea of 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

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 directed fishing closure of non-CDQ Pacific cod in the Bering Sea subarea of 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 November 17, 2020.

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

Dated: November 18, 2020.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

[FR Doc. 2020-25834 Filed 11-18-20; 4:15 pm]

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