

operators book clients for trips well in advance. These operators will benefit by being able to better plan their operations for the entirety of the fishing year under the to-be established recreational management measures as opposed to having to develop business plans for measures under both the existing and increased catch levels that would become effective later in the fishing year were a second rulemaking necessary.

In addition, by implementing the increase in 2010 TAL quickly, NMFS will be able to increase the amount of black sea bass set aside for research from 69,000 lb (31 mt) to 111,000 lb (50 mt). This additional 42,000 lb (19 mt) will permit additional research on black sea bass to be conducted. A previously approved RSA project to conduct a pot survey of scup in hard bottom areas of southern New England has been awarded a NOAA Grant to conduct their proposed scup research using RSA; however, this project also proposed to conduct simultaneous research on black sea bass but was not awarded authorization to do so because insufficient pounds of black sea bass RSA were available at the time of the grant award. This action will make available sufficient black sea bass RSA for the black sea bass component of this project to move forward. Timely distribution of the additional RSA pounds is necessary to ensure both the research field work and RSA-compensation fishing can occur during the spring fishery. Delay of the additional black sea bass RSA award by notice-and-comment rulemaking would likely jeopardize the completion of the research. The researcher would likely miss a substantial portion of the field research, not have sufficient time to generate research funding by the sale or capture of the RSA pounds, or both.

NMFS has determined that increasing the 2010 black sea bass TAC and TAL by emergency action is consistent with section 305(c) of the MSA and NMFS guidance for application of emergency rules. The revised TAC and TAL are consistent with the best available scientific information (i.e., the revised SSC ABC recommendation), the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP, and present a low likelihood that the black sea bass stock will experience overfishing. Implementation via emergency rule is expected to substantially mitigate negative socio-economic impacts to fishery participants and associated businesses. Negative socio-economic impacts would continue or, in some components of the 2010 fisheries be more severe, if implementation of the increased TAL

were delayed by normal notice-and-comment rulemaking.

For the same reasons, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delayed effective date required by 5 U.S.C. 553(d). Members of the public, fishing and related industries, and the Council expect NMFS to utilize the most expedient rulemaking processes possible to ensure that the revised 2010 black sea bass TAL is implemented as quickly as possible to relieve fishery restrictions.

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

This rule is exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the rule is not subject to the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to 5 USC 553 or any other law.

Dated: February 4, 2010.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 0810141351-9087-02]

RIN 0648-XU30

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock for American Fisheries Act Catcher Vessels in the Inshore Open Access Fishery in 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 pollock by American Fisheries Act (AFA) trawl catcher vessels participating in the inshore open access fishery in the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2010 pollock total allowable catch (TAC) allocated to the inshore open access fishery in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 5, 2010, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., June 10, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Obren Davis, 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 A season allowance of the 2010 Bering Sea pollock TAC allocated to the AFA inshore open access fishery in the BSAI is 2,762 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2009 and 2010 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (74 FR 7359, February 17, 2009) and inseason adjustment (74 FR 68715, December 29, 2009). The actual 2010 Bering Sea subarea inshore cooperative allocations, including the inshore open access allocation, are posted at http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/afa/afa_sf.htm.

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the A season allowance of pollock TAC allocated to the AFA inshore open access fishery, which is catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Bering Sea subarea, will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing the A season allowance of pollock TAC as the directed fishing allowance. 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 by AFA trawl catcher vessels participating in the inshore open access fishery in the Bering Sea subarea.

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 directing fishing for pollock by AFA trawl catcher vessels participating in the inshore open access fishery in the Bering Sea subarea. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of February 4, 2010.

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: February 5, 2010.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 2010-2936 Filed 2-5-10; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 0910091344-9056-02]

RIN 0648-XU27

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 A season allowance of the 2010 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock for Statistical Area 630 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 5, 2010, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 10, 2010.

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 A season allowance of the 2010 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA is 4,403 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2009 and 2010 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (74 FR 7333, February 17, 2009) and inseason adjustment (74 FR 68713, December 29, 2009).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2010 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 4,303 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 100 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 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 February 3, 2010.

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: February 4, 2010.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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