

has determined that the allowed number of trips are projected to be taken.

Based on Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) trip declarations by general category scallop vessels fishing in the NLCA and analysis of fishing effort, a projection concluded that, given current activity levels by general category scallop vessels in the area, the trip cap would be attained on July 13, 2006. Therefore, in accordance with the regulations at 50 CFR 648.59(d)(5)(ii), the NLCA is closed to all general category scallop vessels as of 0001 hr local time, July 13, 2006. This closure is in effect for the remainder of the 2006 Access Area Season, which ends January 31, 2007. The NLCA is scheduled to re-open to scallop fishing, including trips for general category scallop vessels, on June 15, 2007, unless the schedule for scallop access areas is modified by the New England Fishery Management Council.

Classification

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

This action closes the NLCA to all general category scallop vessels until June 15, 2007. The regulations at § 648.59(d)(5)(ii) allow such action to ensure that general category scallop vessels do not take more than their allocated number of trips in the Scallop Access Area. The NLCA opened for the 2006 fishing year on June 15, 2006. Data indicating the general category scallop fleet has taken all of the NLCA trips have only recently become available. To allow general category scallop vessels to continue to take trips in the NLCA during the period necessary to publish and receive comments on a proposed rule would result in vessels taking much more than the allowed number of trips in the NLCA. Excessive trips and harvest from the Scallop Access Area would result in excessive fishing effort in the Access Area, where effort controls are critical. Should excessive effort occur in the Access Area, future management measures would need to be more restrictive. Based on the above, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), proposed rulemaking is waived because it would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest to allow a period for public comment. Furthermore, for the same reasons, there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period for this action.

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

Dated: July 11, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 070706B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Central Aleutian District 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 ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2006 Pacific ocean perch total allowable catch (TAC) in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 10, 2006, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

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 2006 Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI is 2,808 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2006 and 2007 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 10894, March 3, 2006).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 2006 Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI will soon

be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,508 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 300 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District 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

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 ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District 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 July 7, 2006.

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: July 10, 2006.

James P. Burgess,

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