

nation and validated by a responsible official(s) designated by NMFS. The documentation must be executed and submitted in a format (electronic facsimile (fax), the Internet, *etc.*) specified by NMFS.

(3) *Effective date of import restrictions.* Effective upon the date of publication of such finding, shipments of fish or fish products found to be ineligible will be denied entry to the United States. Entry will not be denied for any such shipment that, on the date of publication, was in transit to the United States.

(4) *Removal of negative certifications and import restrictions.* Upon a determination by the Secretary of Commerce that an identified nation that was not certified positively has satisfactorily met the conditions in this subpart and that nation has been positively certified, the provisions of § 300.205 shall no longer apply. The Secretary of Commerce, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State and in cooperation with the Secretary of Treasury, will notify such nations and will file with the Office of the Federal Register for publication notification of the removal of the import restrictions effective on the date of publication.

#### **§ 300.206 Alternative procedures for IUU fishing activities.**

(a) These certification procedures may be applied to fish or fish products from a vessel of a harvesting nation that has been identified under § 300.202 in the event that the Secretary cannot reach a certification determination for that nation by the time of the next biennial report. These procedures shall not apply to fish or fish products from identified nations that have received either a negative or a positive certification under this subpart.

(b) Consistent with paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary of Commerce may allow entry of fish or fish products on a shipment-by-shipment, shipper-by-shipper, or other basis if the Secretary determines that:

(1) The vessel has not engaged in IUU fishing under an international fishery management agreement to which the U.S. is a party; or

(2) The vessel is not identified by an international fishery management organization as participating in IUU fishing activities.

(c) Fish or fish products offered for entry under this paragraph (c) must be accompanied by a completed documentation of admissibility available from NMFS. The documentation of admissibility must be executed by a duly authorized official of the identified nation and must be

validated by a responsible official(s) designated by NMFS. The documentation must be executed and submitted in a format (electronic facsimile (fax), the Internet, *etc.*) specified by NMFS.

#### **§ 300.207 Alternative procedures for bycatch of PLMRs.**

(a) These certification procedures may be applied to fish or fish products from a vessel of a harvesting nation that has been identified under § 300.203 in the event that the Secretary cannot reach a certification determination for that nation by the time of the next biennial report. These procedures shall not apply to fish or fish products from identified nations that have received either a negative or a positive certification under this subpart.

(b) Consistent with paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary of Commerce may allow entry of fish or fish products on a shipment-by-shipment, shipper-by-shipper, or other basis if the Secretary determines that imports were harvested by practices that do not result in bycatch of a protected marine species, or were harvested by practices that—

(1) Are comparable to those of the United States, taking into account different conditions, and which, in the case of pelagic longline fisheries, the regulatory program of an identified nation includes mandatory use of circle hooks, careful handling and release equipment, and training and observer programs; and

(2) Include the gathering of species specific data that can be used to support international and regional assessments and conservation efforts for protected living marine resources.

(c) Fish or fish products offered for entry under this section must be accompanied by a completed documentation of admissibility available from NMFS. The documentation of admissibility must be executed by a duly authorized official of the identified nation and validated by a responsible official(s) designated by NMFS. The documentation must be executed and submitted in a format (electronic facsimile (fax), the Internet, *etc.*) specified by NMFS.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 101006495–0498–01]

RIN 0648–BA31

#### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska**

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

**ACTION:** Interim final rule, extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS published an interim final rule on December 13, 2010, to implement Steller sea lion protection measures to ensure that the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area groundfish fisheries off Alaska are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the western distinct population segment of Steller sea lions or adversely modify its designated critical habitat. A notice correcting errors identified in the preamble to the interim final rule and in the regulatory text was published on December 29, 2010. The public comment period for the interim final rule ends on January 12, 2011. NMFS has decided to extend the public comment period for an additional 45 days, to February 28, 2011, to provide adequate time for various stakeholders and other members of the public to submit comments.

**DATES:** The public comment period for this action has been extended for an additional 45 days, to February 28, 2011. Comments must be received no later than February 28, 2011.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to Dr. James W. Balsiger, Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. You may submit comments, identified by RIN 0648–BA31, by any one of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

- *Mail:* P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802.

- *Fax:* (907) 586–7557.

- *Hand delivery to the Federal Building:* 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

All comments received are a part of the public record. No comments will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> for

public viewing until after the comment period has closed. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields, if you wish to remain anonymous). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Written comments regarding the burden-hour estimates or other aspects of the collection-of-information requirements contained in this action rule may be submitted to NMFS, e-mailed to

*OIRA\_Submission@omb.eop.gov*, or faxed to 202-395-7285.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Melanie Brown, (907) 586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** An interim final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on December 13, 2010 (75 FR 77535), to implement Steller sea lion protection measures to ensure that the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area groundfish fisheries off Alaska are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the western distinct population segment of Steller sea lions or adversely modify its designated critical habitat. A notice correcting one error in the preamble and one typographical error and content within the regulatory tables was published in the **Federal Register** on December 29, 2010 (75 FR 53272).

The public comment period for the interim final rule ends on January 12,

2011. The comment period occurred over the Christmas and New Year holidays, limiting the number of work days available to the public for developing a response to this action. Due to the public concern regarding this action, NMFS extends the public comment period for an additional 45 days, to end on February 28, 2011. The extension of the comment period ensures that NMFS provides adequate time for various stakeholders and other members of the public to comment on the interim final rule for the revised Steller sea lion protection measures.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*; 1801 *et seq.*; 3631 *et seq.*; Pub. L. 108-447.

Dated: January 7, 2011.

**Eric C. Schwaab,**

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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