

zone (EEZ) in the Florida west coast subzone. This closure is necessary to protect the overfished Gulf king mackerel resource.

DATES: The closure is effective 12:00 noon, local time, February 3, 1998, through June 30, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark F. Godcharles, 813-570-5305.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fishery for coastal migratory pelagic fish (king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, cero, cobia, little tunny, dolphin, and, in the Gulf of Mexico only, bluefish) is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils) and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

Based on the Councils' recommended total allowable catch and the allocation ratios in the FMP, NMFS implemented a commercial quota for the Gulf of Mexico migratory group of king mackerel in the Florida west coast subzone of 865,000 lb (392,357 kg).

That quota was further divided into two equal quotas of 432,500 lb (196,179 kg) for vessels in each of two groups by gear types—vessels fishing with run-around gillnets and those using hook-and-line gear (50 CFR 622.42(c)(1)(i)(A)(2)).

In accordance with 50 CFR 622.43(a)(3), NMFS is required to close any segment of the king mackerel commercial fishery when its allocation or quota is reached or is projected to be reached by publishing a notification in the **Federal Register**. NMFS has determined that the commercial quota of 432,500 lb (196,179 kg) for Gulf group king mackerel for vessels using run-around gillnets in the Florida west coast subzone was reached on February 3, 1998. Accordingly, the commercial fishery for king mackerel for such vessels in the Florida west coast subzone is closed effective 12:00 noon, local time, February 3, 1998, through June 30, 1998, the end of the fishing year.

The Florida west coast subzone extends from 87°31'06" W. long. (due south of the Alabama/Florida boundary) to: (1) 25°20.4' N. lat. (due east of the Dade/Monroe County, FL, boundary) through March 31, 1998; and (2) 25°48' N. lat. (due west of the Monroe/Collier County, FL, boundary) from April 1, 1998, through October 31, 1998.

NMFS previously determined that the commercial quota for king mackerel from the western zone of the Gulf of Mexico was reached and closed that segment of the fishery on August 2, 1997 (62 FR 42417, August 7, 1997). Subsequently, NMFS determined that the commercial quota of king mackerel for vessels using hook-and-line gear in the Florida west coast subzone of the eastern zone of the Gulf of Mexico was reached and closed that segment of the fishery on January 7, 1998 (63 FR 1772, January 12, 1998). Thus, with this closure, all commercial fisheries for king mackerel in the EEZ are closed from the U.S./Mexico border through the Florida west coast subzone through June 30, 1998.

Except for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat, during the closure, no person aboard a vessel permitted to fish under a commercial quota may fish for Gulf group king mackerel in the EEZ in the closed zones or retain Gulf group king mackerel in or from the EEZ of the closed zones. A person aboard a vessel for which the permit indicates both commercial king mackerel and charter/headboat for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel under the bag and possession limit set forth in 50 CFR 622.39(c)(1)(ii), provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat.

During the closure, king mackerel from the closed zones taken in the EEZ, including those harvested under the bag limit, may not be purchased or sold. This prohibition does not apply to trade in king mackerel from the closed zones that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to the closure and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.43(a)(3) and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: February 2, 1998.

Gary C. Matlock,

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.971208296-7296-01 ; I.D. 013098B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1998 interim specifications of Atka mackerel in these areas.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 2, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and CFR part 679.

The 1998 interim specifications of Atka mackerel total allowable catch for the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea was established by Interim 1998 Harvest Specifications (62 FR 65626, December 15, 1997) for the BSAI as 3,187 metric tons (mt). See § 679.20(c)(2)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 interim specification for Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,587 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 600 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 soon will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

Classification

This action responds to the interim TAC limitations and other restrictions on the fisheries established in the interim 1998 harvest specifications for groundfish for the BSAI. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1998 interim TAC of Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to public interest. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: January 30, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 98-2938 Filed 2-2-98; 4:55 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 971208295-7295-01; I.D. 013098A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the interim specification for pollock in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 2, 1998, until the effective date of the Final 1998 Harvest Specification of Groundfish, as published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Pearson, 907-486-6919.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS 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. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The interim specification of pollock total allowable catch in Statistical Area 630 was established by the Interim 1998 Harvest Specifications (62 FR 65622, December 15, 1997) as 7,985 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20(c)(2)(i).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 interim specification of pollock in Statistical Area 630 soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 7,485 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 500 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 will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

This action responds to the interim TAC limitations and other restrictions on the fisheries established in the interim 1998 harvest specifications for groundfish for the GOA. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1998 interim TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to public interest. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

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

Dated: January 30, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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