

vessels in the Convention Area reaches 150 mt (the amount estimated to have been caught by the U.S. longline fishery in the Convention Area in 2001). The measure recommended by the IATTC and approved by DOS states that, no bigeye tuna may be caught and retained by U.S. longline bigeye tuna vessels in the Convention Area during the remainder of the calendar year 2005 once the fishery is closed upon reaching the 2001 catch level. NMFS promulgated a proposed rule to effect this recommendation on August 15, 2005 (70 FR 47774–47776).

NMFS has determined that the 150 mt catch level has been reached for the 2005 season and hereby closes the U.S. longline fishery for bigeye tuna in the Convention Area for the remainder of the year 2005. It is therefore prohibited for a U.S. longline bigeye tuna vessel to retain bigeye tuna in the Convention Area from the effective date of this action through December 31, 2005. Longline vessels are not subject to this rule if they declare to NMFS under the Western Pacific Pelagics FMP that they intend to shallow-set to target swordfish.

Classification

This action is consistent with the Tuna Conventions Act 16, U.S.C. 951–961 and 971 *et seq.* This action is consistent under the regulations for the Pacific Tuna Fisheries found at 50 CFR 300.29.

For the reasons set forth below, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA) finds good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive notice and comment for this rule, which closes the U.S. bigeye tuna longline fishery in the IATTC Convention Area for the remainder of the 2005 season. Similarly, the AA finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effective date for this rule under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

It is impracticable and contrary to the public interest to provide for notice and an opportunity for public comment because the U.S. quota for bigeye tuna in the ETP longline fishery has already been reached, much earlier this year than in the preceding year. In 2004, U.S. vessels using longline gear in the ETP did not attain the 2001 catch limit until September. This year, however, in July of 2005, U.S. longline vessels in the ETP were estimated to have harvested over 150 metric tons of bigeye tuna. The estimated catch to date is approximately 241 metric tons, significantly over-quota. Accommodating notice and comment and delaying the effective date for this rule would result in continued harvest of bigeye tuna by the longline fleet over the 2001 catch level.

Failure to effectuate the closure immediately, when estimates indicate that the fishery is already significantly over-quota, could also cause potentially serious harm to the ETP bigeye tuna stock. In 2003, 2004, and 2005, IATTC stock assessment scientists concluded that the bigeye tuna stock is at a level below that which would produce the average maximum sustainable yield. Furthermore, NMFS has determined that bigeye tuna in the Pacific are subject to overfishing, using the standards for “overfishing” in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Furthermore, the rule must be made effective immediately to meet U.S. obligations under the Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, as well as U.S. obligations to manage tuna stocks in a sustainable manner under the Tuna Conventions Act of 1950, 16 U.S.C. 951–961 and 971 *et seq.* Therefore, notice and an opportunity for comment, and delayed effectiveness of the closure, are not practicable and are contrary to the public interest.

This emergency rule is exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

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

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 951–961 and 971 *et seq.*

Dated: August 30, 2005.

John Oliver,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 041126333–5040–02; I.D. 082905D]

Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear 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 species that comprise the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2005 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 4, 2005, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 30, 2005.

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 fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2005 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the shallow-water species fishery in the GOA is 150 metric tons as established by the 2005 and 2006 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (70 FR 8958, February 24, 2005), for the period 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2005, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 30, 2005.

In accordance with § 679.21(d)(7)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2005 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA. The species and species groups that comprise the shallow-water species fishery are pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, skates, and “other species.”

This closure does not apply to fishing for pollock by vessels using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock.

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 the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in 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 August 26, 2005.

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 § 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: August 29, 2005.

Emily Menashes,

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. 041126333-5040-02; I.D. 082905B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Northern Rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of 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 northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2005 total allowable catch (TAC) of northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 30, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2005.

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 2005 TAC of northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 4,283 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2005 and 2006 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (70 FR 8958, February 24, 2005).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2005 TAC of northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 4,000 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 283 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 northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area 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 northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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: August 29, 2005.

Emily Menashes,

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. 041126333-5040-02; I.D. 082905C]

Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Deep-water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear 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 species that comprise the deep-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2005 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the deep-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 4, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 30, 2005.

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 fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2005 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the deep-water species fishery in the GOA is the