

proximately caused by illness, injury, or death of the permit owner. If the permit expires, it will be forfeited and NMFS will not reissue the permit to anyone.

(10) *Owner on-board requirement.* (i) Except as provided in paragraphs (f)(10)(ii) through (v) of this section, the DGN permit holder must be on-board the vessel and in possession of a valid Federal limited entry DGN permit when engaged in DGN fishing activity.

(ii) A permit holder may designate another individual to fish under their permit for up to 15 days per fishing year (April 1 to March 31 of the following year); the substitute must comply with all other Federal permitting requirements. A permit holder shall notify NMFS of a substitution at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the trip.

(iii) If the person who owns a Federal DGN permit is prevented from being on-board a fishing vessel because the person died, is ill, or is injured, NMFS may allow an exemption to the owner on-board requirement for more than 15 days. The person requesting the exemption must send a letter to NMFS requesting an exemption from the owner on-board requirements, with appropriate evidence as described at paragraph (f)(10)(iv) or (v) of this section. All exemptions for death, injury, or illness will be evaluated by NMFS and a decision will be made in writing to the permit owner (or, in the case of the death of the permit owner, to the estate or heirs of the permit owner) within 60 calendar days of receipt of the original exemption request.

(iv) Evidence of death of the permit owner shall be provided to NMFS in the form of a copy of a death certificate. In the interim before the estate is settled, if the deceased permit owner was subject to the owner on-board requirements, the estate of the deceased permit owner may send a letter to NMFS with a copy of the death certificate, requesting an exemption from the owner-on-board requirements. An exemption due to death of the permit owner will be effective only until such time that the estate of the deceased permit owner has registered the deceased permit owner's permit to a beneficiary, transferred the permit to another owner, or three years after the date of death as proven by a death certificate, whichever is earliest. An exemption from the owner-on-board requirement will be conveyed in a letter from NMFS to the estate of the permit owner and is required to be on the vessel during DGN fishing operations.

(v) Evidence of illness or injury that prevents the permit owner from

participating in the fishery shall be provided to NMFS in the form of a letter from a certified medical practitioner.

This letter must detail the relevant medical conditions of the permit owner and how those conditions prevent the permit owner from being on-board a fishing vessel during DGN fishing. An exemption due to injury or illness will be effective only for the fishing year of the request for exemption. In order to extend a medical exemption for a succeeding year, the permit owner must submit a new request and provide documentation from a certified medical practitioner detailing why the permit owner is still unable to be on-board a fishing vessel. An exemption from the owner-on-board requirement will be conveyed in a letter from NMFS to the permit owner and is required to be on the vessel during DGN fishing operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 170816769-8162-02]

RIN 0648-XF900

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 610 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2018 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 610 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 9, 2018, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 10, 2018.

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 2018 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA is 1,317 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (83 FR 8768, March 1, 2018).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2018 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 1,167 mt and is setting aside the remaining 150 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 610 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 directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 March 8, 2018.

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: March 9, 2018.

Emily H. 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. 170816769-8162-02]

RIN 0648-XG078

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 B season allowance of the 2018 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 630 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 10, 2018, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., May 31, 2018.

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 B season allowance of the 2018 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA is 4,184 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (83 FR 8768, March 1, 2018).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the B season allowance of the 2018 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 3,684 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 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 directed fishing for 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 March 8, 2018.

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: March 9, 2018.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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