

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 961126334-7025-02; I.D. 071597A]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska, Pelagic Shelf Rockfish in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska**

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the pelagic shelf rockfish total allowable catch (TAC) in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 15, 1997, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**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 pelagic shelf rockfish TAC in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska was established by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (62 FR 8179, February 24, 1997) as 990 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the pelagic shelf rockfish TAC in the Eastern Regulatory Area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 890 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 100 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 soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting

directed fishing for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Eastern Regulatory Area 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 responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1997 TAC for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action is impracticable and contrary to public interest. The fleet will soon take the directed fishing allowance for pelagic shelf rockfish. Further delay would only result in overharvest and disrupt the FMP's objective of allowing incidental catch to be retained throughout the year. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot 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 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 15, 1997.

**Bruce Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-19048 Filed 7-16-97; 9:28 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 961126334-7025-02; I.D. 071597B]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska, Offshore Pelagic Shelf 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:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for offshore pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the offshore pelagic shelf rockfish total allowable catch (TAC) in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 15, 1997, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**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 offshore pelagic shelf rockfish TAC in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska was established by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (62 FR 8179, February 24, 1997) as 3,320 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20 (c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20 (d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the offshore pelagic shelf rockfish TAC in the Central Regulatory Area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,100 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 220 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 soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for offshore pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area 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 responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1997 TAC for offshore pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action is impracticable and contrary to public interest. The fleet will soon take the directed fishing allowance for offshore pelagic shelf rockfish. Further delay would only result in overharvest and disrupt the FMP's objective of allowing incidental catch to be retained throughout the year. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of

this action cannot 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 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 15, 1997.

**Bruce Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-19049 Filed 7-16-97; 9:28 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 970619143-7143-01; I.D. 070997D]

RIN 0648-AC68

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Define Fishing Trip in Groundfish Fisheries; Correction

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

**ACTION:** Correction to final regulations.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is correcting a section of regulations that contain an inadvertent error that was introduced during a recent revision to regulations that pertain to the groundfish fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. This action corrects regulations defining a fishing trip.

**DATES:** Effective July 21, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Susan J. Salvesson, 907-586-7228

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

A final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on June 30, 1997 (62 FR 35109), that revised the definition of fishing trip with respect to monitoring compliance with groundfish directed closures.

As published, the instructions to revise the regulations contained an inadvertent error that resulted in the removal of two definitions of fishing trip with respect to the Individual Fishing Quota program and a vessel used to process or deliver fish. NMFS is correcting this error as follows and makes no substantive changes.

In § 679.2, the definition of "fishing trip" (page 35111) did not contain the amendatory instruction indicating that only definition (1) was affected, and two existing definitions were removed in error. This action restates the definition of "fishing trip."

##### Correction of Publication

Accordingly, the publication of June 30, 1997, of the final regulations (I.D. 061097A), which was the subject of FR Doc. 97-17046, is corrected as follows:

##### § 679.2 [Corrected]

On page 35111, in the first column, amendatory instruction number 2 is corrected to read as follows:

2. In § 679.2, the definition of "Fishing trip" is revised to read as follows:

##### § 679.2 Definitions.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fishing trip means:*

(1) With respect to monitoring compliance with groundfish directed fishing closures, an operator of a vessel

is engaged in a fishing trip from the time the harvesting, receiving, or processing of groundfish is begun or resumed in an area after the effective date of a notification prohibiting directed fishing in the same area under § 679.20 or § 679.21 until:

(i) The offload or transfer of all fish or fish product from that vessel;

(ii) The vessel enters or leaves an area where a different directed fishing prohibition applies; or

(iii) The end of a weekly reporting period, whichever comes first.

(2) With respect to the IFQ program, the period beginning when a vessel operator commences harvesting IFQ species and ending when the vessel operator lands any species.

(3) With respect to Part E of this part, one of the following periods:

(i) For a vessel used to process groundfish or a catcher vessel used to deliver groundfish to a mothership, a weekly reporting period during which one or more fishing days occur.

(ii) For a catcher vessel used to deliver fish to other than a mothership, the time period during which one or more fishing days occur, that starts on the day when fishing gear is first deployed and ends on the day the vessel offloads groundfish, returns to an Alaskan port, or leaves the EEZ off Alaska and adjacent waters of the State of Alaska.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, 1801 *et seq.*, and 3631 *et seq.*

Dated: July 16, 1997.

**David L. Evans,**

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

[FR Doc. 97-19114 Filed 7-18-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F