

5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.21 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 24, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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. 971208297-8054-02; I.D. 072498G]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sablefish by Vessels Using Trawl Gear 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 retention of sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). NMFS is requiring that catch of sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in this area be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the allocation of the sablefish 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) assigned to trawl gear in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 28, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery 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.

In accordance with § 679.20(a)(4)(ii)(B), the Final 1998

Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998) established the allocation of the 1998 sablefish TAC assigned to trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA as 1,264 metric tons (mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the allocation of the sablefish TAC assigned to trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the allocation of the sablefish TAC assigned to trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet has taken the allocation of the sablefish TAC assigned to trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area. Further delay would only result in overharvest. 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 24, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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. 971208297-8054-02; I.D. 072498E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch 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 retention of Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). NMFS is requiring that catch of Pacific ocean perch in this area be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the amount of the Pacific ocean perch 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 27, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery 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.

In accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(ii), the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998) established the amount of the 1998 Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA as 6,600 metric tons (mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the amount of the Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the amount of the Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet has taken the amount of the Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Regulatory Area. Further delay would only result in overharvest. 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 27, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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