

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 27, 2001, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., June 10, 2001.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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. 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 apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using pot gear in the BSAI was established by the Final 2001 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska (66 FR 7276, January 22, 2001) as a directed fishing allowance of 9,683 metric tons. See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), § 679.20(c)(7), and § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A) and (C).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using pot gear as a directed fishing allowance in the BSAI will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher processor vessels using pot gear and catcher vessels 60 ft (13.5 m) LOA and longer using pot gear in the BSAI. Catcher vessels less than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA using either hook-and-line or pot gear are still allowed to harvest Pacific cod until further notice.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts 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. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using pot gear constitutes 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)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to vessels using pot gear constitutes good cause to find that the effective date 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 Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 23, 2001.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 01-7666 Filed 3-23-01; 4:30 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 010112013-1013-01; I.D. 032301A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Processor Vessels Using Hook-and-line Gear in 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 Pacific cod by catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2001 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod allocated for catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 25, 2001, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., August 1, 2001.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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. 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 apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI was established by the Final 2001 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska (66 FR 7276, January 22, 2001) as a directed fishing allowance of 42,331 metric tons. See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), § 679.20(c)(7), and § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A) and (C).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear as a directed fishing allowance in the BSAI will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for

Pacific cod by catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI.

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

Classification

This action responds to the best available information obtained recently from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear constitutes 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)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to

the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2001 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear constitutes good cause to find that the effective date 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 Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 23, 2001.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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