

allowance by 1,818 mt, the remaining amount of the A season allowance for pollock in Statistical Area 620. Therefore, the revised B season allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 is therefore 15,212 mt (13,394 mt plus 1,818 mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the B season allowance of the 2006 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 15,200 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 12 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 620 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 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 20, 2006.

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 21, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
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. 060216044-6044-01; I.D. 032006A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amount of Pacific cod from vessels using jig gear to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using pot or hook-and-line gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). These actions are necessary to allow the 2006 A season total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective March 21, 2006, through 2400 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management 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 2006 A season allowance of the Pacific cod TAC specified for vessels using jig gear in the BSAI is 1,393 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2006 and 2007 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 10894, March 3, 2006) and the adjustment of the Pacific cod TACs in the BSAI on March 14, 2006 (71 FR 13777, March 17, 2006), for the period

1200 hrs, A.l.t., January 1, 2006, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., April 30, 2006. See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), § 679.20(c)(5), and § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that jig vessels will not be able to harvest 1,300 mt of the A season apportionment of Pacific cod allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A) and § 679.20(a)(7)(iii)(A)(3). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C)(1), NMFS apportions 1,300 mt of Pacific cod from the A season jig gear apportionment to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear.

The harvest specifications for Pacific cod included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 10894, March 3, 2006) are revised as follows: 93 mt to the A season apportionment for vessels using jig gear and 2,536 mt to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear.

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 reallocation of Pacific cod specified for jig vessels to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear. Since the fishery is currently open, it is important to immediately inform the industry as to the revised allocations. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery; allow the industry to plan for the fishing season and avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet as well as processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of March 14, 2006.

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 20, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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