

(2) \* \* \*

(i) Mackerel ABC must be calculated using the formula  $ABC = T - C$ , where C is the estimated catch of mackerel in Canadian waters for the upcoming fishing year and T is the catch associated with a fishing mortality rate that is equal to  $F_{target}$  at  $B_{MSY}$  or greater and decreases linearly to zero at  $B_{MSY}$  or below. Values for  $F_{target}$  and  $B_{MSY}$  are as calculated in the most recent stock assessment.

\* \* \* \* \*

(iii) IOY is composed of RQ, DAH, and TALFF. RQ will be based on requests for research quota as described in paragraph (g) of this section. DAH, DAP, and JVP will be set after deduction for RQ, if applicable, and must be projected by reviewing data from sources specified in paragraph (b) of this section and other relevant data, including past domestic landings, projected amounts of mackerel necessary for domestic processing and for joint ventures during the fishing year, projected recreational landings, and other data pertinent for such a projection. The JVP component of DAH is the portion of DAH that domestic processors either cannot or will not use. In addition, IOY is based on the criteria set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, specifically section 201(e), and on the following economic factors:

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) *Recommended measures.* Based on the review of the data described in paragraph (b) of this section and requests for research quota as described in paragraph (g) of this section, the Monitoring Committee will recommend to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee the measures from the following list that it determines are necessary to ensure that the specifications are not exceeded:

\* \* \* \* \*

(3) The amount of *Loligo*, *Illex*, and butterfish that may be retained, possessed and landed by vessels issued the incidental catch permit specified in § 648.4(a)(5)(ii).

\* \* \* \* \*

(f) \* \* \*

(1) A commercial quota will be allocated annually for *Loligo* squid into trimester periods, based on the following percentages:

Trimester	Percent
I. January-April	43.0
II. May-August	17.0
III. September-October	40.0

(2) Any underages of commercial period quota for Trimester I and II will

be applied to Trimester III of the same year, and any overages of commercial quota for Trimesters I and II will be subtracted from Trimester III of the same year.

\* \* \* \* \*

(g) \* \* \*

(2) \* \* \*

(ii) The NEFSC Director and the NOAA Grants Office will consider each panel member's recommendation, provide final approval of the projects and the Regional Administrator may, when appropriate, exempt selected vessel(s) from regulations specified in each of the respective FMPs through written notification to the project proponent.

\* \* \* \* \*

(5) If a proposal is disapproved by the NEFSC Director or the NOAA Grants Office, or if the Regional Administrator determines that the allocated research quota cannot be utilized by a project, the Regional Administrator shall reallocate the unallocated or unused amount of research quota to the respective commercial and recreational fisheries by publication of a notice in the **Federal Register** in compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act, provided:

\* \* \* \* \*

■ 4. In § 648.22, paragraphs (a) and (c) are revised and paragraph (d) is added to read as follows:

**§ 648.22 Closure of the fishery.**

(a) *Closing Procedures.* (1) NMFS shall close the directed mackerel fishery in the EEZ when the Regional Administrator projects that 80 percent of the mackerel DAH is landed, if such a closure is necessary to prevent the DAH from being executed. The closure shall remain in effect for the remainder of the fishing year, with incidental catches allowed as specified in paragraph (c) of this section, until the entire DAH is attained. When the Regional Administrator projects that the DAH will be landed for mackerel, NMFS will close the mackerel fishery in the EEZ, and the incidental catches specified for mackerel in paragraph (c) of this section will be prohibited.

(2) NMFS shall close the directed fishery in the EEZ for *Loligo* when the Regional Administrator projects that 90 percent of the quota is harvested in Trimesters I and II, and when 95 percent of DAH has been harvested in Trimester III. The closure of the directed fishery shall be in effect for the remainder of the fishing period, with incidental catches allowed as specified in paragraph (c) of this section.

(3) NMFS shall close the directed *Illex* or butterfish fishery in the EEZ when the Regional Administrator projects that 95 percent of the *Illex* or butterfish DAH is landed. The closure of the directed fishery will be in effect for the remainder of the fishing year, with incidental catches allowed as specified in paragraph (c) of this section.

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) *Incidental catches.* During a closure of the directed mackerel fishery, the possession limit for mackerel is 10 percent, by weight, of the total amount of fish on board. For vessels that have been issued a *Loligo* or butterfish incidental catch permit (as specified at § 648.4(a)(5)(ii)) or during a closure of the directed fishery for *Loligo* or butterfish, the possession limit for *Loligo* and butterfish is 2,500 lb (1.13 mt) each. For vessels that have been issued an *Illex* incidental catch permit (specified at § 648.4(a)(5)(ii)) or during a closure of the directed fishery for *Illex*, the possession limit for *Illex* is 10,000 lb (4.54 mt). Vessels may not land more than these limits and may only land once during any single calendar day, which is defined as the 24 hr period beginning at 0001 hours and ending at 2400 hours.

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 060216045-6045-01; I.D. 012507A]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels 60 Feet (18.3 Meters) Length Overall and Using Pot Gear 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; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) and longer using pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2007 Pacific cod allowable catch (TAC) specified for catcher vessels using pot gear in the BSAI.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 26, 2007, though 1200 hrs, A.l.t., June 10, 2007.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Hogan, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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 A season allowance of the 2007 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher vessels using pot gear in the BSAI is 6,050 metric tons as established by the 2006 and 2007 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (71 FR 13777, March 17, 2006). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), (c)(5), (a)(7)(i)(A), and (a)(7)(i)(C)(1)(iv).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the A

season allowance of the 2007 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher vessels using pot gear in the BSAI has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA and longer using pot gear in the BSAI. Vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using pot gear in the BSAI may continue to participate in the directed fishery for Pacific cod under a separate Pacific cod allocation to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear.

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 Pacific cod by catcher vessels 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA and longer using pot gear in the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of January 24, 2007.

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: January 25, 2007.

**James P. Burgess,**

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