

Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This adjustment closes the fishery 12 hours after its scheduled opening at noon, A.l.t. June 1, 1996, and is necessary to allow the harvest of the total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 620.

**DATES:** Fishery will be closed midnight, A.l.t., June 1, 1996, until 12 noon, A.l.t., July 1, 1996. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., June 14, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be sent to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori Gravel, or be delivered to the fourth floor of the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael L. Sloan, 907-581-2062.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone is managed by the 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 Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act). Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 672.

As of May 11, 1996, 2,891 metric tons (mt) of pollock remain in the second quarterly allowance of the inshore allocation of Statistical Area 620 of the GOA pollock TAC. In accordance with § 672.23(e), directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA is scheduled from 12 noon, A.l.t., June 1 until 12 noon, A.l.t., July 1, 1996, or until the TAC is reached, whichever occurs first.

Section 672.23(b) specifies that the time of all openings and closures of fishing seasons other than the beginning and end of the calendar fishing year is 12:00 noon, A.l.t. A fishery opening, therefore, normally extends for a minimum of 24 hours. Current information shows the catching capacity of vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component is in excess of 4,000 mt per day. The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the remaining portion of the TAC allocated to the inshore component would be exceeded if a 24-hour fishery were allowed to occur. NMFS intends that the TAC should not be exceeded, and will not allow a 24-hour directed fishery.

NMFS in accordance with § 672.22(a)(1)(i), is adjusting the season

for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA by allowing the scheduled opening of the directed fishery at 12:00 noon, A.l.t., June 1, 1996. The fishery will remain open until 12:00 midnight, A.l.t., June 1 at which time it will be closed. This action has the effect of opening the fishery for 12 hours. NMFS is taking this action to allow a controlled fishery to occur, thereby preventing either the underharvest or overharvest of the pollock TAC allocated to the inshore component as authorized by § 672.22(a)(2)(iii). In accordance with 672.22(a)(4), NMFS has determined that closing the season at midnight, A.l.t., June 1 after a 12-hour opening is the least restrictive management adjustment to achieve the second quarterly allowance of the pollock TAC allocated to the inshore component and will allow other fisheries to continue in noncritical areas and time periods.

#### Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds for good cause that providing prior notice and public comment or delaying the effective date of this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Without this inseason adjustment, NMFS could not allow this fishery, and the second quarterly allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA would not be harvested in accordance with the regulatory schedule, resulting in a seasonal loss of more than 500 thousand dollars. Under § 672.22(c)(2), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action to the above address until June 14, 1996.

This action is taken under § 672.22 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: May 29, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,  
*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries  
Conservation and Development, National  
Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-13950 Filed 5-30-96; 4:21 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

#### 50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 052896H]

#### Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Aggregate Species in the Rock Sole/Flathead Sole/"Other Flatfish" Fishery Category by Vessels Using Trawl Gear

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

**ACTION:** Modification of a closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is opening directed fishing for aggregate species in the rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to fully utilize the second seasonal bycatch allowance of Pacific halibut apportioned to the trawl rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category in the BSAI.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), June 3, 1996, until 12 midnight, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Andrew N. Smoker, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS 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 Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

In accordance with § 675.21(c)(1)(iii), the Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), determined that the second seasonal bycatch allowance of Pacific halibut apportioned to the trawl rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery in the BSAI had been caught. Therefore, NMFS prohibited directed fishing for species in the rock sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI effective April 13, 1996 (61 FR 16883, April 18, 1996) to prevent exceeding the second seasonal bycatch allowance of Pacific halibut apportioned to that fishery.

The Regional Director has determined that as of May 11, 1996, 50 metric tons of halibut mortality remain in the second seasonal bycatch allowance. Therefore, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for species in the rock

sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

All other closures remain in full force and effect.

#### Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: May 29, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-13843 Filed 5-30-96; 11:39 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

#### 50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 052996B]

#### Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Sharpchin/Northern Rockfish Species Category in the Aleutian Islands Subarea

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is closing the directed fishery for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category in the Aleutian Islands subarea (AI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category total allowable catch (TAC) in the AI.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 30, 1996, until 12 midnight, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

In accordance with § 675.20(a)(7)(ii), the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category initial TAC for the AI was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996) as 4,445 metric tons (mt).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), has determined, in accordance with § 675.20(a)(8), that the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category initial TAC in the AI soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Director has established a directed fishing allowance of 4,145 mt, with consideration that 300 mt will be taken as incidental catch in directed fishing for other species in the AI. The Regional Director has determined that the directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category in the AI.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 675.20(h).

#### Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: May 30, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-13949 Filed 5-30-96; 4:21 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F