

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 072496C]

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

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of the sharpchin/northern rockfish species group in the Aleutian Islands subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). NMFS is requiring that catches of the sharpchin/northern rockfish species group in the Aleutian Islands subarea be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the sharpchin/northern rockfish species group total allowable catch (TAC) in the Aleutian Islands subarea has been caught.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 27, 1996, until 2400 hours, 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 the 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 600 and 679.

In accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category initial TAC for the Aleutian Islands subarea was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996) as 4,445 metric tons (mt). On May 30, 1996 (61 FR 28072), NMFS closed

the directed fishery for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category in this area.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), that the TAC for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species group in the Aleutian Islands subarea has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of the sharpchin/northern rockfish species group in the Aleutian Islands subarea be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 26, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 960129018-6018-01; I.D. 072596B]

Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area

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

ACTION: Modification of a closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is opening the directed fishery for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to fully utilize the total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in that area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 31, 1996, until 12 noon, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone is managed by 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. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at Subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

In accordance with § 679.20 (c)(3)(ii), the annual TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA, was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4304, February 5, 1996) as 2,366 metric tons (mt). The directed fishery for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA closed to directed fishing under § 679.20 (d)(1)(iii) in order to reserve amounts anticipated to be needed for incidental catch in other fisheries (61 FR 37225; July 17, 1996). NMFS has determined that as of July 13, 1996, 800 mt remain in the directed fishing allowance.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 1996 directed fishing allowance of Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA has not been reached. Therefore, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA.

All other closures remain in full force and effect.

Classification

This action is taken under § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 26, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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