

50 CFR Part 661

[Docket No. 950426116-5116-01; I.D. 022796C]

Ocean Salmon Fisheries Off the Coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California; Inseason Adjustment, Point Arena, CA, to the U.S.-Mexican Border

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

ACTION: Inseason adjustment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the retention of coho salmon will be prohibited in the recreational salmon fishery in the area from Point Arena, CA, to the U.S.-Mexican border when the season opens on March 2, 1996. This adjustment is intended to ensure conservation of coho salmon.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours local time, March 2, 1996, until the effective date of the 1996 management measures, as published in the *Federal Register*. Comments will be accepted through March 15, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to William Stelle, Jr., Director, Northwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., BIN C15700-Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0070; or Hilda Diaz-Soltero, Director, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 501 W. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213. Information relevant to this action has been compiled in aggregate form and is available for public review during business hours at the office of the Director, Northwest Region, NMFS (Regional Director).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William L. Robinson, 206-526-6140, or Rodney R. McInnis, 310-980-4030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the 1995 annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries, NMFS announced 1996 recreational salmon seasons opening earlier than May 1, 1996 (60 FR 21746, May 3, 1995). The 1996 recreational fishery in the area between Point Arena, CA, and the U.S.-Mexican border is scheduled to open on March 2 (the nearest Saturday to March 1) for all salmon, unless an evaluation indicates low coho abundance in 1996, in which case inseason action may be taken to prohibit retention of coho salmon.

The best available information on February 6 indicated that the 1996 preseason index abundance estimate for Oregon Production Index (OPI) area

coho stocks is 427,300 fish, about 4 percent below the 1995 preseason estimate of 443,000 fish. In 1994 and 1995, preseason abundance estimates for Oregon coastal natural (OCN) coho salmon, an OPI area stock component, were at record low levels, resulting in no coho retention south of Cape Falcon, OR, when commercial and recreational salmon seasons opened May 1. Due to the continuing low preseason abundance estimates for OPI coho and OCN coho in 1996, it is necessary to modify the recreational fishery in the area between Point Arena, CA, and the U.S.-Mexican border such that it will open on March 2 for all salmon except coho.

Modifications in the species which may be caught and landed during specific seasons and the establishment or modification of limited retention regulations are authorized by regulations at 50 CFR 661.21(b)(1)(ii). All other restrictions that apply to this fishery remain in effect as announced in the annual management measures.

The Regional Director consulted with representatives of the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the California Department of Fish and Game regarding this adjustment. The State of California will also prohibit retention of coho salmon in the recreational fishery in State waters adjacent to this area of the exclusive economic zone. Because of the need for immediate action to conserve coho salmon, NMFS has determined that good cause exists to take this action without affording a prior opportunity for public comment. This action does not apply to other fisheries that may be operating in other areas.

Classification

This action is authorized by 50 CFR 661.21 and 661.23 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: February 29, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 96-5100 Filed 2-29-96; 4:00 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 022396G]

Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Central Aleutian District

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 Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to fully utilize the total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 29, 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 § 675.20(a)(7)(ii), the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996) for the BSAI established 2,571 metric tons (mt) as the initial TAC catch of Pacific ocean perch for the Central Aleutian District. At the same time, the directed fishery for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District was closed to directed fishing under § 675.20(a)(8) in order to reserve amounts anticipated to be needed for incidental catch in other fisheries. NMFS has determined that as of February 10, 1996, 2,571 mt remain unharvested.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 1996 TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District has not been reached. Therefore, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is reopening directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District.

All other closures remain in full force and effect.

Classification

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

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

Dated: February 27, 1996.
 Richard W. Surdi,
*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries
 Conservation and Management, National
 Marine Fisheries Service.*
 [FR Doc. 96-4997 Filed 2-28-96; 3:58 pm]
 BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D.
 022396F]

Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Eastern Aleutian District

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 Pacific ocean perch in the
 Eastern Aleutian District of the Bering
 Sea and Aleutian Islands management
 area (BSAI). This action is necessary to
 fully utilize the total allowable catch
 (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this
 area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local
 time (A.l.t.), February 29, 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 § 675.20(a)(7)(ii),
 the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of
 Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5,
 1996) for the BSAI established 2,571
 metric tons (mt) as the initial total
 allowable catch of Pacific ocean perch
 for the Eastern Aleutian District. At the
 same time, the directed fishery for
 Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern
 Aleutian District was closed to directed
 fishing under § 675.20(a)(8) in order to
 reserve amounts anticipated to be

needed for incidental catch in other
 fisheries. NMFS has determined that as
 of February 10, 1996, 2,485 mt remain
 unharvested.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS,
 has determined that the 1996 TAC for
 Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern
 Aleutian District has not been reached.
 Therefore, NMFS is terminating the
 previous closure and is reopening
 directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch
 in the Eastern Aleutian District.

All other closures remain in full force
 and effect.

Classification

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

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

Dated: February 27, 1996.

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