

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679****[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 071902A]****Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Western Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands****AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Western Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2002 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 20, 2002, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2002.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Gulf of Alaska (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 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Western Aleutian District was established as 5,236 metric tons (mt) by an emergency rule implementing 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2002 TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Western Aleutian District will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 4,436 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 800 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Western Aleutian District of the BSAI.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

**Classification**

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to avoid exceeding the 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Western Aleutian District of the BSAI constitutes 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) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A). These procedures are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest because the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to avoid exceeding the 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Western Aleutian District of the BSAI constitutes good cause to find that the effective date of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

**Authority:**

Dated: July 19, 2002.

**John H. Dunnigan,***Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679****[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 071902B]****Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pelagic Shelf Rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska****AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2002 total allowable catch (TAC) of pelagic shelf rockfish in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 21, 2002, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2002.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone 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-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 2002 TAC of pelagic shelf rockfish for the Central Regulatory Area was established as 3,480 metric tons (mt) by an emergency rule implementing 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002 and 67 FR 34860, May 16, 2002).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2002 TAC for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,450 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 30 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 will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pelagic shelf rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

**Classification**

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, 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

contrary to the public interest. This requirement is contrary to the public interest as it would delay the closure of the fishery, lead to exceeding the TAC, and therefore reduce the public's ability to use and enjoy the fishery resource.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA 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: July 19, 2002.

**Virginia M. Fay,**

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

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