

in the BSAI. These actions are necessary to allow the 2002 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective September 27, 2002, until 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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-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 emergency rule implementing the 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) established the amount of the 2002 BSAI Pacific cod TAC as 185,000 metric tons (mt) after subtraction of the community development quota (CDQ) reserves and apportionment of the reserve. Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A), 3,700 mt was allocated to vessels using jig gear, 94,350 mt to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear, and 86,950 mt to vessels using trawl gear. The share of the Pacific cod TAC allocated to trawl gear was further allocated 50 percent to catcher vessels and 50 percent to catcher/processor vessels (§ 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)). The share of the Pacific cod TAC allocated to hook-and-line or pot gear was further allocated (i) 80 percent to catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear; (ii) 0.3 percent to catcher vessels using hook-and-line gear; (iii) 18.3 percent to vessels using pot gear; and (iv) 1.4 percent to catcher vessels less than 60 ft length overall (18.3 m) that use either hook-and-line or pot gear (§ 679.20(a)(7)(i)(C)).

As of September 7, 2002, the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that trawl catcher/processors will not be able to harvest 3,000 mt and trawl catcher vessels will not be able to harvest 1,000 mt of Pacific cod allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C), NMFS apportions 4,000 mt of Pacific cod from trawl gear to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear.

The Regional Administrator also has determined that vessels using jig gear

will not harvest 3,400 mt of their Pacific cod allocation by the end of the year. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C), NMFS is reallocating the unused amount of 3,400 mt of Pacific cod allocated to vessels using jig gear to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear.

In accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C)(1), 200 mt of the combined reallocation of unused Pacific cod from trawl and jig gear is apportioned to catcher vessels using hook-and-line gear. In accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(C)(2), the remaining combined reallocation of unused Pacific cod from trawl and jig gear, 7,200 mt, is apportioned so that catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear will receive 95 percent and vessels using pot gear will receive 5 percent of the reallocation.

The harvest specifications for Pacific cod established by the 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) are revised as follows: 300 mt to vessels using jig gear, 81,920 mt to catcher processor vessels using hook-and-line gear, 482 mt to catcher vessels using hook-and-line gear, 17,535 mt to pot gear, 40,475 mt to trawl catcher/processors, and 42,475 mt to trawl catcher vessels.

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 implementation of these measures in a timely fashion in order to allow full utilization of the Pacific cod 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 taken under 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from OMB review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: September 26, 2002.

Virginia M. Fay,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 092702A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Central Aleutian District

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

ACTION: Closure.

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

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.) September 27, 2002, until 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 BSAI exclusive economic zone 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-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 Atka mackerel TAC in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI is 22,015 metric tons (mt) as established 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 Atka mackerel TAC in the Central Aleutian District

will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 21,615 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 400 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 Atka mackerel in the Central 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 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 section 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: September 27, 2002.

John H. Dunnigan,

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

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