

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Regina Spallone, Fishery Policy Analyst, 508-281-9221.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state are described in § 648.100.

Amendment 7 to the FMP (November 24, 1995, 60 FR 57955) revised the fishing mortality rate reduction schedule for summer flounder, and the revised schedule was the basis for establishing the 1996 quota. The total commercial quota for summer flounder for the 1996 calendar year was adopted to ensure achievement of the appropriate fishing mortality rate of 0.41 for 1996, and is set equal to 11,111,298 lb (5,040,000 kg) (January 4, 1996, 61 FR 291). The percent allocated to vessels landing summer flounder in New Jersey is 16.724 percent or 1,858,363 lb (842,939 kg).

Section 648.101(b) requires the Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) to monitor state commercial quotas and to determine when a state commercial quota is harvested. The Regional Administrator is further required to publish a notification in the Federal Register advising a state and notifying Federal vessel and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in that state. Because the available information indicates that New Jersey has attained its quota for 1996, the Regional Administrator has determined, based on dealer reports and other available information, that the State's commercial quota has been harvested.

The regulations at § 648.4(b) provide that Federal permit holders agree as a condition of the permit not to land summer flounder in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota

available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours October 3, 1996 further landings of summer flounder in New Jersey by vessels holding commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 1996 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the Federal Register. Federally permitted dealers are also advised that they may not purchase summer flounder from Federally permitted vessels that land in New Jersey for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available, effective on October 3, 1996.

**Classification**

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: October 3, 1996.

Bruce Morehead,

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

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**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 960129018-6018-01; I.D. 093096B]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620**

**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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to fully utilize the total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in that area.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 5, 1996, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas Pearson, 907-486-6919.

**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 pollock in area 620 of the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4304, February 5, 1996) as 12,840 metric tons (mt). The directed fishery for pollock in statistical area 620 of the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska was 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 50256, September 30, 1996). NMFS has determined that as of September 21, 1996, 1,993 mt remain in the directed fishing allowance.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 1996 directed fishing allowance of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska has not been reached. Therefore, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska.

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: October 3, 1996.

Bruce Morehead,

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

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