

escape panel. Seven meshes of the top and seven meshes of the bottom of the funnel are attached to eight meshes at the top and bottom of the small-mesh section, such eight meshes being located immediately adjacent to the top and bottom centers of the small-mesh section on the side of the funnel's extended side. The extended side of the funnel is sewn at its top and bottom to the top and bottom of the small-mesh section, extending at an angle toward the top and bottom centers of the small-mesh section.

(d) *Semi-Rigid Hoop.* A 24-inch (61.0-cm) diameter hoop constructed of plastic-coated trawl cable, swaged together with a 3/8-inch (9.53-mm) micropress sleeve, is installed 5 meshes behind the trailing edge of the large mesh section. The extension webbing must be laced to the ring around the entire circumference and must be equally distributed on the hoop, that is, 30 meshes must be evenly attached to each quadrant.

(e) *Installation.* The extended funnel BRD is attached 8 inches (20.3 cm) behind the posterior edge of the TED. If it is attached behind a soft TED, a second semi-rigid hoop, as prescribed in paragraph A.3.(d), must be installed in the front section of the BRD extension webbing at the leading edge of the funnel. The codend of the trawl net is attached to the trailing edge of the BRD.

B. *Expanded Mesh.* The expanded mesh BRD is constructed and installed exactly the same as the standard size extended funnel BRD, except that one side of the funnel is not extended to form a lead panel.

C. *Fisheye.*

1. *Description.* The fisheye BRD is a cone-shaped rigid frame constructed from aluminum or steel rod of at least 1/4 inch diameter, which is inserted into the codend to form an escape opening. Fisheyes of several different shapes and sizes have been tested in different positions in the codend.

2. *Minimum Construction and Installation Requirements.* The fisheye has a minimum opening dimension of 5 inches (12.7 cm) and a minimum total opening area of 36 square inches (91.4 square cm). The fisheye must be installed in the codend of the trawl to create an opening in the trawl facing in the direction of the mouth of the trawl no further forward than 11 ft (3.4 m) from the codend tie-off rings.

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50 CFR Part 678

[I.D. 120696A]

RIN 0648-AH77

Atlantic Shark Fisheries; Notice of Availability of Amendment 1

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Highly Migratory Species Division has submitted Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean (FMP) for review, approval, and implementation by NMFS. Written comments are requested from the public. Amendment 1 would implement limited access measures for the Atlantic shark fisheries.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before February 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to William Hogarth, Acting Chief, Highly Migratory Species Division (F/SF1), National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Requests for copies of Amendment 1, which includes an environmental assessment and a regulatory impact review, should be sent to Margo Schulze, Fishery Biologist, Highly Migratory Species Division (F/SF1), National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margo Schulze or John Kelly, 301-713-2347; fax: 301-713-1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fishery for Atlantic sharks is managed under the FMP prepared by NMFS under authority of section 304(g) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act), as amended, and was implemented on April 26, 1993, through regulations found at 50 CFR part 678.

If approved, Amendment 1 would redefine permits as directed or incidental, develop eligibility criteria for these permits based on historical participation, and specify rules for transferability of permits. NMFS has determined that the Atlantic shark fishery is overcapitalized, with an excessive number of permitted vessels relative to current harvest levels. The objective of this amendment is to take a first and significant step towards reducing fleet capacity to levels more closely aligned with resource production by implementing limited access, substantially reducing latent harvesting capacity, and implementing measures to prevent further overcapitalization.

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

Dated: December 30, 1996.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

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50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 96122063-6363-01; I.D. 120296B]

RIN 0648-AI65

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Maximum Retainable Bycatch Percentages

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes a regulatory amendment to reduce maximum retainable bycatch percentages for sablefish in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish trawl fisheries and to allow the use of GOA arrowtooth flounder as a basis species for the retention of bycatch amounts of pollock and Pacific cod when either of these two species is closed to directed fishing. This action is necessary to slow the harvest rate of GOA sablefish and to provide for fuller utilization of pollock and Pacific cod incidentally taken in the arrowtooth flounder fishery. This action is intended to further the objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP).

DATES: Comments must be received at the following address by February 5, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori Gravel or delivered to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Copies of the environmental assessment/regulatory impact review prepared for this action may be obtained from the same address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan J. Salvesson, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Fishing for groundfish by U.S. vessels in the exclusive economic zone of the GOA is managed by NMFS according to the FMP. The FMP was prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens 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.

Regulations at § 679.20(e) establish maximum retainable bycatch (MRB) percentages for groundfish species or species groups. These MRB percentages establish the amount of a species that is