

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 961114318-6318-01; I.D. 020397F]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and Bering Sea Subarea 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 Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1997 interim specifications of Atka mackerel in these areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 4, 1997, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by the 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-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at Subpart H of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

The 1997 interim specifications of Atka mackerel total allowable catch for the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea Subarea was established by Interim 1997 Harvest Specifications (61 FR 60044, November 26, 1996) for the BSAI as 3,187 metric tons (mt). See § 679.20(c)(2)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1997 interim

specification for Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea Subarea soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,587 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 600 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 soon will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Atka mackerel in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea Subarea.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e).

Classification

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: February 3, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 961126333-6333-01; I.D. 020397D]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting the directed fishery for pollock in Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the interim specification for pollock in this area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 4, 1997, until superseded by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications for groundfish.

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-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The interim specification of pollock total allowable catch in Statistical Area 630 was established by Interim 1997 Harvest Specifications (61 FR 64299, December 4, 1996) as 4,875 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20(c)(2)(i).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1997 interim specification of pollock in Statistical Area 630 soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 4,675 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 200 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 pollock in Statistical Area 630 until superseded by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e).

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: February 3, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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