

§ 648.104(b)(1) by 30-minute intervals of latitude and longitude and 2-week intervals, respectively, based on data specified in paragraph (a) of this section to prevent discarding of sublegal sized summer flounder in excess of 10 percent, by weight.

\* \* \* \* \*

22. In § 648.106, the introductory text is revised to read as follows:

**§ 648.106 Sea Turtle conservation.**

This section will be suspended during the effectiveness of any temporary regulations issued to regulate incidental take of sea turtles in the summer flounder fishery under authority of the ESA under parts 217, 222, 227 of this title. Such suspensions and temporary regulations will be issued by publication in the **Federal Register** and will be effective for a specified period of time, not to exceed 1 year.

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**PART 648—[NOMENCLATURE CHANGE]**

23. In part 648, all references to "Regional Director" are revised to read "Regional Administrator."

[FR Doc. 97-7714 Filed 3-24-97; 4:22 pm]

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**50 CFR Part 622**

[Docket No. 960807218-6244-02; I.D. 032097F]

**Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Closure of the Commercial Red Snapper Component**

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS closes the commercial fishery for red snapper in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico. NMFS has projected that the initial portion of the annual commercial quota for red snapper will be reached on March 25, 1997. This closure is necessary to protect the red snapper resource.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Closure is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 26, 1997, through September 14, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robert Sadler, 813-570-5305.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The reef fish fishery of the Gulf of Mexico is managed under the Fishery

Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and is implemented through regulations at 50 CFR part 622 under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Those regulations set the commercial quota for red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico at 4.65 million lb (m lb) (2.11 million kg (m kg)) for the current fishing year, January 1 through December 31, 1997. The 1997 commercial quota is split between two seasons, the first beginning on February 1 with a quota of 3.06 m lb (1.39 m kg) and the second beginning on September 15 with a quota equal to the unharvested balance of the annual commercial quota.

Under 50 CFR 622.43(a), NMFS is required to close the commercial fishery for a species or species group when the quota for that species or species group is reached, or is projected to be reached, by publishing notification to that effect in the **Federal Register**. Based on current statistics, NMFS has projected that the available commercial quota of 3.06 m lb (1.39 m kg) for red snapper will be reached on March 25, 1997. Accordingly, the commercial fishery in the EEZ in the Gulf of Mexico for red snapper is closed effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 26, 1997, through September 14, 1997. The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit having red snapper on board must land and sell such red snapper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 26, 1997.

During the closure, the bag limit applies to all harvests of red snapper in or from the EEZ in the Gulf of Mexico. The daily bag limit for red snapper is five per person. From 12:01 a.m., local time, March 26, 1997, through September 14, 1997, the sale or purchase of red snapper taken from the EEZ is prohibited. This prohibition does not apply to sale or purchase of red snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, March 26, 1997, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

**Classification**

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.43(a) and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: March 20, 1997.

**Bruce Morehead,**

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

[FR Doc. 97-7716 Filed 3-21-97; 4:50 pm]

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**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 961107312-7021-02; I.D. 032097A]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands**

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is closing directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the first seasonal apportionment of the 1997 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 22, 1997, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., April 1, 1997.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by 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 part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The first seasonal apportionment of the 1997 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery in the BSAI, which is defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(B)(1), was established by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the BSAI (62 FR 7168, February 18, 1997) as 210 mt.

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(iv), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the first seasonal apportionment of the 1997 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery in the BSAI has been caught. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

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