

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 part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The 1997 TAC for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA was established as 24,550 metric tons (mt) by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (62 FR 8179, February 24, 1997), determined in accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(ii)(A).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1997 TAC for pollock in Statistical Area 630 will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 24,050 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 500 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 closing directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA.

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

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1997 TAC for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment is impracticable and contrary to public interest. The fleet will soon take the directed fishing allowance for pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA. Further delay would only result in overharvest which would disrupt the FMP's objective of providing sufficient pollock as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

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: September 10, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

*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. 961107312-7021-02; I.D. 091097C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock by Trawl Vessels Using Nonpelagic 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 pollock by trawl vessels using nonpelagic trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1997 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery category.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.L.T.), September 11, 1997, A.L.T., December 31, 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 1997 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the BSAI pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery category, which is defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(F), was established by the Final 1997 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the BSAI (62 FR 7168, February 18, 1997) as 350 metric tons.

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(iv), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 1997 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery in the BSAI has been caught. Consequently, NMFS is closing directed fishing for pollock by trawl vessels using nonpelagic trawl gear in 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. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1997 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery category in the BSAI. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment for this action is impracticable and contrary to public interest. The fleet has taken the Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery category in the BSAI. Further delay would only result in overharvest and disrupt the FMP's objective of allowing incidental catch to be retained throughout the year. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.21 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: September 10, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

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