

text and paragraph (b)(3)(i) to read as follows:

PART 595—RETROFIT ON-OFF SWITCHES FOR AIR BAGS

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§ 595.5 Requirements.

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(b) * * *

(3) The on-off switch meets all of the conditions specified in paragraphs (b)(3)(i) and (ii) of this section.

(i) The on-off switch is operable solely by a key or a key-like object. The on-off switch shall be separate from the ignition switch for the vehicle, so that the driver must take some action other than inserting the ignition key or turning the ignition key in the ignition switch to turn off the air bag. Once turned off, the air bag shall remain off until it is turned back on by means of the device. If a single on-off switch is installed for both air bags, the on-off switch shall allow each air bag to be turned off without turning off the other air bag. The readiness indicator required by S4.5.2 of § 571.208 of this chapter shall continue to monitor the readiness of the air bags even when one or both air bags has been turned off. The readiness indicator light shall not be illuminated solely because an air bag has been deactivated by means of an on-off switch.

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Issued on: December 18, 1997.

Ricardo Martinez,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 961210346-7035-02; I.D. 122297F]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for Virginia

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

ACTION: Commercial quota harvest.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the summer flounder commercial quota available to the Commonwealth of Virginia has been harvested. Vessels

issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the summer flounder fishery may not land summer flounder in Virginia for the remainder of calendar year 1997, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notice to advise the Commonwealth of Virginia that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel and dealer permit holders that no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in Virginia.

DATES: Effective December 23, 1997, through December 31, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Regina Spallone, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978-281-9221.

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.

The initial total commercial quota for summer flounder for the 1997 calendar year was set equal to 11,111,298 lb (5,040,000 kg) (March 7, 1997, 62 FR 10473). The percent allocated to vessels landing summer flounder in Virginia is 21.31676 percent, or 2,368,569 lb (1,074,365 kg).

Section 648.100(d)(2) stipulates that any overages of commercial quota landed in any state be deducted from that state's annual quota for the following year. In the calendar year 1996, a total of 2,274,457 lb (1,031,676 kg) were landed in Virginia. The amount allocated for Virginia landings in 1996 was 2,200,681 lb (998,212 kg), creating a 73,776 lb (33,464 kg) overage that was deducted from the amount allocated for landings in the Commonwealth during 1997 (July 15, 1997, 62 FR 37742). The resulting quota for Virginia is 2,294,793 lb (1,040,901 kg).

Section 648.101(b) requires the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), to monitor state commercial quotas and to determine when a state's commercial quota is harvested. The Regional Administrator is further required to publish a notice 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 the Commonwealth of

Virginia has attained its quota for 1997, the Regional Administrator has determined based on dealer reports and other available information, that the Commonwealth of Virginia'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 December 23, 1997, further landings of summer flounder in Virginia by vessels holding commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 1997 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective the date above, federally permitted dealers are also advised that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Virginia for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available through a transfer.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12886.

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

Dated: December 22, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 97-33889 Filed 12-23-97; 3:51 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 971208296-7296-01; I.D. 121997A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Closures of Specified Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing specified groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the prohibited species bycatch allowances and directed fishing allowances specified for the

1998 interim total allowable catch (TAC) amounts.

DATES: Effective 0001 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 1, 1998, until superseded by the Final 1998 Harvest Specification for Groundfish, which will be published in the **Federal Register**.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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.

In accordance with § 679.20(d), if the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) determines that the amount of a target species or "other species" category apportioned to a fishery or, with respect to pollock, to an inshore or offshore component allocation, will be reached, the Regional Administrator may establish a directed fishing allowance for that species or species group. If the Regional Administrator establishes a directed fishing allowance, and that allowance is or will be reached before the end of the fishing year, NMFS will prohibit directed fishing for that species or species group in the specified subarea or district (§ 679.20(d)(1)(iii)). Similarly, under § 679.21(e), if the Regional Administrator determines that a fishery category's bycatch allowance of halibut, red king crab, or *C. bairdi* Tanner crab for a specified area has been reached, the Regional Administrator will prohibit directed fishing for each species in that category in the specified area.

NMFS has published interim 1998 harvest specifications for these groundfish fisheries (62 FR 65626, December 15, 1997). The Regional Administrator has determined that the interim TAC amounts of pollock in the Bogoslof District; Pacific ocean perch, "other rockfish", and "other red rockfish" in the Bering Sea subarea; and sharpchin/northern rockfish, shortraker/rougeye rockfish, and "other rockfish" in the Aleutian Islands subarea, will be reached and will be necessary as incidental catch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries prior to the time that final specifications for groundfish are likely to be in effect for the 1998 fishing year. Consequently, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(i), the

Regional Administrator establishes these interim TAC amounts as directed fishing allowances.

Further, the Regional Administrator finds that these directed fishing allowances will be reached before the end of the year. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d) NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for these species in the specified areas. In addition, the interim BSAI halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl rockfish fishery and the trawl Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/sablefish fishery categories, defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(C) and (D), is 0 mt. In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(iv), NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for rockfish by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI and for Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

These closures will be in effect beginning at 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 1998, until superseded by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish.

While these closures are in effect, the maximum retainable bycatch amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a fishing trip. These closures to directed fishing are in addition to closures and prohibitions found in regulations at 50 CFR part 679. Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas. In the BSAI, "other rockfish" includes *Sebastes* and *Sebastes* species except for Pacific ocean perch and the "other red rockfish" species. "Other red rockfish" includes shortraker, rougeye, sharpchin, and northern rockfish.

NMFS may implement other closures at the time the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications are implemented or during the 1998 fishing year, as necessary for effective conservation and management.

Classification

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

This action responds to the interim TAC limitations and other restrictions on the fisheries established in the Interim 1998 harvest specifications for groundfish for the BSAI. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1998 interim TAC of several groundfish species in the BSAI. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet will begin to harvest groundfish on January 1, 1998. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly,

under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

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

Dated: December 22, 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. 970829216-7305-02; I.D. 073097B]

RIN 0648-AK15

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Extension of the Interim Groundfish Observer Program through 1998

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues a final rule to implement a regulatory amendment to extend with some minor revisions the current groundfish observer coverage requirements and implementing regulations for the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program (Observer Program) that are in effect through December 31, 1997. This action is necessary to assure uninterrupted observer coverage requirements through 1998. This action also provides notice of changes to observer qualifications and observer training/briefing requirements, which are non-codified elements of the Observer Program.

This action is intended to accomplish the objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska and the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMPs).

DATES: Effective January 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Regulatory Impact Review/Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (RIR/FRFA) prepared for this regulatory amendment and the Environmental Assessment (EA)/RIR/FRFA prepared for the 1997 Interim Groundfish Observer Program, dated August 27, 1996, may be obtained from the Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802; telephone: 907-586-7228. Copies of the non-codified