

recommended by the Council. Minimum size limits, special requirements, restrictions, and exceptions are as stated in Tables 1 and 2 of the 1997 annual management measures.

**Commercial season, Cape Falcon to Cape Arago, OR (43°18'20" N. lat.)**

April 15 through April 30. All salmon except coho. No more than four spreads per line.

**Commercial season, Cape Arago, OR, to Oregon-California Border**

April 15 through (the earlier of either) April 30 or the reaching of a 4,400 chinook quota. All salmon except coho. No more than four spreads per line.

**Recreational season, Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain**

April 15 through April 30. All salmon except coho. Two fish per day. No more than six fish in 7 consecutive days. At its March 10 to 13, 1998, meeting, the Council also recommended elimination of the April commercial fishery between Point Lopez and Point Mugu, CA. This test fishery, part of the 1997 annual management measures approved by NMFS, was scheduled to open April 15, 1998, and to continue through (the earlier of either) April 28 or attainment of a 10,000 chinook quota. The recommendation was based on concern for the apparent high concentration of endangered Sacramento River winter chinook salmon observed in the April 1997 commercial test fishery in the same area.

The Regional Administrator consulted with representatives of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Department of Fish and Game regarding these adjustments. The states of Oregon and California will manage commercial and recreational fisheries in state waters adjacent to these areas of the exclusive economic zone in accordance with this Federal action. As provided by the inseason notice procedures at 50 CFR 660.411, actual notice to fishermen of this action was given prior to 0001 hours local time, April 15, 1998, by telephone hotline number 206-526-6667 or 800-662-9825 and by U.S. Coast Guard Notice to Mariners broadcasts on Channel 16 VHF-FM and 2182 kHz.

Because of the need for immediate action, NMFS has determined that good cause exists for this document to be issued without affording a prior opportunity for public comment. This

document does not apply to other fisheries that may be operating in other areas.

**Classification**

This action is authorized by 50 CFR 660.409 and 660.411 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: April 6, 1998.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting 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. 971208297-8054-02; I.D. 033098A]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Offshore Component Pacific Cod in the Central Regulatory Area**

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

**ACTION:** Modification of a closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska management area (GOA). This action is necessary to fully utilize the 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 6, 1998, until 2400 hrs. A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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

**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 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 1998 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area was established as 3,337 mt by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has established a directed fishing allowance of 2,000 mt, and set aside the remaining 1,337 mt as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. The fishery for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA was closed to directed fishing under § 679.20(d)(1)(iii) on March 11, 1998 (63 FR 12697, March 16, 1998).

NMFS has determined that as of March 14, 1998, 2,000 mt remain in the directed fishing allowance. Therefore, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**Classification**

All other closures remain in full force and effect. This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately in order to allow full utilization of the Pacific cod TAC. Providing prior notice and opportunity for public comment for this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Further delay would only disrupt the FMP objective of providing a portion of the Pacific cod TAC for vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component. 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: April 6, 1998.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

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