

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 14, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone 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. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

In accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(ii), the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998) established the amount of the 1998 TAC of Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska as 2,366 metric tons (mt). The directed fishery for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area was closed under § 679.20(d)(1)(iii) on July 6, 1998, (63 FR 37071, July 9, 1998) and reopened on July 12, 1998, (to be published on July 16, 1998).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 TAC for Pacific ocean perch will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,116 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 250 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 has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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 1998 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. 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.

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: July 14, 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. 071398C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Northern Rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) of northern rockfish in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 14, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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 part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The amount of the 1998 TAC of northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska was established by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998) as 4,150 metric tons (mt), determined in accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 TAC for northern rockfish will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,650 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 has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area.

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 1998 TAC of northern rockfish for the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. 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.

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: July 14, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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