

Register and further communicated through the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fax Network, the HMS Information Line, NOAA weather radio, and Coast Guard Notice to Mariners. Although notification of the closure will be provided as far in advance as possible, fishermen are encouraged to call the HMS Information Line to check the status of the fishery before leaving for a fishing trip. The phone numbers for the HMS Information Line are (301) 713-1279 and (978) 281-9305. Information regarding the Atlantic tuna fisheries is also available toll free through NextLink Interactive, Inc., at (888) USA-TUNA.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 285.22 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*

Dated: October 8, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 98-27577 Filed 10-8-98; 3:53 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 971208297-8054-02; I.D. 100898B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod 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 Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component 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 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.), October 9, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 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 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 metric tons by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,000 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 1,337 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 prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central 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 cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to public interest, and 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: October 8, 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. 100898C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod 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 Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component 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 Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 9, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 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.

The 1998 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area was established as 30,037 metric tons (mt) by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998). See § 679.20(c)(3). On April 16, 1998 (63 FR 18848) it was increased by an apportionment of reserves to 37,548 mt.