

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is closing directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), except for directed fishing for pollock by vessels using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. This action is necessary because the 1998 Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for trawl gear in the GOA has been caught.

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

The Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (63 FR 12027, March 12, 1998) established the 1998 Pacific halibut PSC limit for vessels using trawl gear at 2,000 metric tons (mt). The Acting Administrator, Alaska Region, has determined, in accordance with § 679.21(d)(7)(i), that vessels engaged in directed fishing for groundfish with trawl gear in the GOA have caught the 1998 Pacific halibut PSC limit. Therefore, NMFS is closing the directed fishery for groundfish by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA, except for directed fishing for pollock by vessels using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA that remain open to directed fishing for pollock.

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 exceeding the 1998 trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action is impracticable and contrary to

the public interest. The fleet has caught the 1998 trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit in the GOA. Further delay would only result in the 1998 trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit being exceeded and disrupt the FMP's objective of limiting trawl Pacific halibut mortality. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 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: October 9, 1998.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 98-27735 Filed 10-9-98; 4:44 pm]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 971208297-8054-02; I.D. 100998C]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 12, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas Pearson, 907-486-6919.

**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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA as 50,045 metric tons (mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 TAC for pollock will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 49,845 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 200 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 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 pollock for Statistical Area 620 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: October 9, 1998.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 98-27734 Filed 10-9-98; 4:44 pm]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**