

Classification

This final rule has been determined to be significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration when this rule was proposed that this rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not prepared.

The amendments to §§ 622.34(l) and 622.34(m) are necessary to mitigate derby fishery effects, e.g., market gluts and lower exvessel prices, and to prevent associated adverse social and economic impacts. It is essential that these amendments are effective when the fall commercial red snapper season opens on September 1, 1999. Accordingly, under authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds for good cause that a 30-day delay in the effective date of those measures would be contrary to the public interest.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 622

Fisheries, Fishing, Puerto Rico, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Virgin Islands.

Dated: August 27, 1999.

Gary C. Matlock,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 622 is amended as follows:

PART 622—FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

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

2. In § 622.34, the suspension of paragraph (l) is lifted; paragraph (m) is removed; and paragraph (l) is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

* * * * *

(l) *Closures of the commercial fishery for red snapper.* The commercial fishery for red snapper in or from the Gulf EEZ is closed from January 1 to noon on February 1 and thereafter from noon on the 15th of each month to noon on the first of each succeeding month until the quota specified in § 622.42(a)(1)(i)(A) is reached or until noon on September 1, whichever occurs first. From September

1 to December 1, the commercial fishery for red snapper in or from the Gulf EEZ is closed from noon on the 10th of each month to noon on the first of each succeeding month until the quota specified in § 622.42(a)(1)(i)(B) is reached or until the end of the fishing year, whichever occurs first. All times are local times. During these closed periods, the possession of red snapper in or from the Gulf EEZ and in the Gulf on board a vessel for which a commercial permit for Gulf reef fish has been issued, as required under § 622.4(a)(2)(v), without regard to where such red snapper were harvested, is limited to the bag and possession limits, as specified in § 622.39(b)(1)(iii) and (b)(2), respectively, and such red snapper are subject to the prohibition on sale or purchase of red snapper possessed under the bag limit, as specified in § 622.45(c)(1). However, when the recreational quota for red snapper has been reached and the bag and possession limit has been reduced to zero, the limit for such possession during a closed period is zero.

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3. In § 622.39, the suspension of paragraph (b)(1)(iii) is lifted; paragraph (b)(1)(vi) is removed; and paragraph (b)(1)(iii), is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.39 Bag and possession limits.

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(b) * * *

(1) * * *

(iii) Red snapper—4, except that for an operator or member of the crew of a charter vessel or headboat, the bag limit is 0.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 635

[I.D. 052499C]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fisheries; Large Coastal Shark Species; Adjustments

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

ACTION: Fishery reopening; fishing season notification.

SUMMARY: NMFS has determined that the large coastal shark (LCS) commercial fishery quota for the second semiannual

fishing season has not been reached. Therefore, NMFS notifies eligible participants that the commercial fishery for LCS in the Western North Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, will open beginning September 1, 1999, and will close September 30, 1999, at 11:30 p.m. local time. Both the ridgeback and non-ridgeback sectors of the LCS fishery will open and close on these dates. This action is necessary to ensure adequate opportunity for eligible fishery participants to harvest the available quota and to ensure that the adjusted semiannual quota for LCS for the period July 1 through December 31, 1999, is not exceeded.

DATES: The commercial fishery for LCS will open effective September 1, 1999, and will close effective 11:30 p.m. local time September 30, 1999, and will remain closed through December 31, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margo Schulze or Steve Meyers, 301-713-2347; fax 301-713-1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Atlantic shark fishery is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks (HMS FMP), and its implementing regulations found at 50 CFR part 635 issued under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*).

The annual commercial quota of LCS to be harvested from Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico waters is apportioned between two equal semiannual fishing seasons. The second semiannual quota for LCS of 642 mt dw was reduced by the overharvest of 57 mt dw in the first semiannual fishing season such that 585 mt dw was available for harvest for the semiannual period beginning July 1, 1999.

Dealer reports and state landings summaries for the period July 1 through July 28, 1999, indicate that approximately 278.5 mt dw of the available second semiannual LCS subquota of 585 mt dw have been harvested at a rate of 9.9 mt dw per day. Approximately 306.5 mt dw of the LCS subquota have not been harvested. Therefore, given a catch rate of approximately 9.9 mt dw per day, NMFS believes that the available quota will be attained within 30 days and that a LCS commercial fishery reopening from September 1 through September 30, 1999, will allow adequate opportunity for fishermen to harvest the available quota and will ensure that the quota is not exceeded. Therefore, the LCS commercial fishery will open

beginning September 1, 1999, and will close at 11:30 p.m. local time September 30, 1999, and will remain closed through December 31, 1999. NMFS will continue to monitor landings and will close the fishery if landings indicate that the quota will be exceeded, as required under § 635.28(b).

During a closure, retention of, fishing for, possessing or selling LCS are prohibited for persons fishing aboard vessels issued a limited access permit under § 635.4. After September 30, 1999, the sale, purchase, trade, or barter of carcasses and/or fins of LCS harvested by a person aboard a vessel that has been issued a permit under § 635.4 are prohibited, except for those that were harvested, offloaded, and sold, traded, or bartered prior to the closure and were held in storage by a dealer or processor.

Commercial fishing for pelagic and small coastal sharks may continue until further notice. When quotas are projected to be reached, the AA will file notice of closure at the Office of the Federal Register. Those vessels that have not been issued a limited access permit under § 635.4 may not sell sharks and are subject to the recreational retention limits and size limits specified at §§ 635.22(c) and 635.20(d). The recreational fishery is not affected by this action.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR part 635 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: August 26, 1999.

Gary C. Matlock

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

[FR Doc. 99-22672 Filed 8-26-99; 4:54 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 990304063-9063-01; I.D. 082699E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock by Vessels Catching Pollock for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Bering Sea Subarea

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1999 B season pollock total allowable catch (TAC) specified to the inshore component in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 26, 1999, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 15, 1999.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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. 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 Section 206(b)(1) of the American Fisheries Act, 50 percent of the remainder of the pollock TAC in the BSAI after the subtraction of the allocation to the pollock Community

Development Quota and the subtraction of allowances for the incidental catch of pollock by vessels harvesting other groundfish species, shall be allocated as a directed fishing allowance to catcher vessels harvesting pollock for processing by the inshore component. In accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(C)(1), the Bering Sea pollock TAC allocated for processing by the inshore component is divided into four seasonal allowances. The final 1999 amount for B season pollock in the Bering Sea subarea is 125,885 metric tons (64 FR 12103, March 11, 1999) and (64 FR 39087, July 21, 1999).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, finds that this directed fishing allowance soon will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI.

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 in order to prevent exceeding the final 1999 B season pollock TAC specified to the inshore component in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. 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: August 26, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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