

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

[Docket No. 990304062-9062-01; I.D. 100899C]

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 of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1999 total allowable catch (TAC) in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 12, 1999, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Pearson, 907-481-1780 or tom.pearson@noaa.gov.

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 1999 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA was established by the Final 1999 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish (64 FR 12094, March 11, 1999) as 38,840 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 1999 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 38,440 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 400 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 of 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 1999 TAC of pollock in 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 12, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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