

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 Atlantic Tunas Information Line to check the status of the fishery before leaving for a fishing trip. The phone numbers for the Atlantic Tunas Information Line are (978) 281-9305 and (888) USA-TUNA.

#### Classification

This action is taken under § 635.27(a)(1) and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 14, 1999.

#### Bruce C. Morehead,

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 99-27304 Filed 10-14-99; 4:59 pm]

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### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

##### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 990304062-9062-01; I.D. 101599D]

#### Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska

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

**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 1999 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 16, 1999, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1999.

**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 1999 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (64 FR 12094, March 11, 1999) established the 1999 Pacific halibut PSC limit for vessels using trawl gear at 2,000 metric tons (mt). The 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 1999 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 1999 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 will soon take the 1999 trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit in the GOA. Further delay would only result in the 1999 trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit being exceeded. 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 15, 1999.

#### 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. 990304063-9063-01; I.D. 101599E]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is closing directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl Pacific cod fishery category.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 18, 1999, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Andrew Smoker, 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.

The Final 1999 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (64 FR 12103, March 11, 1999) established the halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the BSAI trawl Pacific cod fishery, which is defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(E), as 1,473 metric tons.

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(v), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl Pacific cod fishery in the BSAI has been caught. Consequently, the Regional Administrator is closing directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).