

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Thomas Pearson, 907-481-1780, fax 907-481-1781 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 the Groundfish Fishery 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 2000 TAC of northern rockfish for the Central Regulatory Area was established as 4,490 metric tons (mt) in the Final 2000 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (65 FR 8298, February 18, 2000). See § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2000 TAC for northern rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,990 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 500 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 northern rockfish 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 2000 TAC of northern rockfish for the Central Regulatory Area 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 26, 2000.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

[FR Doc. 00-19250 Filed 7-26-00; 4:10 pm]

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

**[Docket No. 000211039-0039-01; I.D. 072500D]**

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Other Rockfish in the West Yakutat District 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 other rockfish in the West Yakutat District of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2000 total allowable catch (TAC) of other rockfish in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 26, 2000, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2000.

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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 2000 TAC of other rockfish for the West Yakutat District was established as 250 metric tons (mt) in the Final 2000 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the GOA (65 FR 8298, February 18, 2000). See § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2000 TAC for other rockfish in the West Yakutat District will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 200 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 50 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 other rockfish in the West Yakutat District 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 2000 TAC of other rockfish for the West Yakutat District 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 § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 26, 2000.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

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