

Dated: November 13, 2000.

Penelope D. Dalton,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

Dated: November 8, 2000.

Jamie Rappaport Clark,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 000831250-0250-01; 102500C]

Fisheries off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Closure of Directed Fishery for Pacific Mackerel; Correction

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

ACTION: Correction to the action closing the directed fishery for Pacific mackerel.

SUMMARY: This document contains a correction to the Pacific mackerel closure which was published on November 1, 2000.

DATES: Effective November 17, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James J. Morgan, Southwest Region, NMFS, 562-980-4036.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The directed fishery for Pacific mackerel was closed at 12:01 a.m. on October 27, 2000, by publication of a document in the **Federal Register** on November 1, 2000 (65 FR 65272). The document contains an error that requires correction.

Correction

In rule FR DOC. 00-28109, on page 65272, in the issue of Wednesday, November 1, 2000 (65 FR 65272), make the following correction:

On page 65272, in the third column, under the heading **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, the last sentence is corrected to read as follows:

“For the reasons stated here and in accordance with the FMP and its implementing regulations at 50 CFR 660.509, the directed fishery for Pacific mackerel will be closed October 27, 2000, after which time no more than 20 percent by weight of a landing of Pacific sardine, northern anchovy, jack

mackerel, or market squid may consist of Pacific mackerel.”

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

Dated: November 9, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 00-29415 Filed 11-16-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 000714206-0307-02; I.D. 061400A]

RIN 0648-AM53

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program

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

ACTION: Final rule

SUMMARY: NMFS issues a final rule that reduces observer experience requirements for some catcher vessels and reduces observer coverage experience requirements for some shoreside processors participating in the Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) fisheries. This action is necessary to reduce costs associated with the observer coverage requirements in the CDQ fisheries. It is intended to further the objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP).

DATES: Effective December 18, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) prepared for this action may be obtained from Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel, or by calling the Alaska Region, NMFS, at 907-586-7228. Send comments on any ambiguity or unnecessary complexity arising from the language used in this final rule to the Regional Administrator at the same address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alan Kinsolving, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Background

NMFS manages fishing for groundfish by U.S. vessels in the exclusive economic zone of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) according to the FMP. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the FMP under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels and implementing the FMP appear at 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

Through the CDQ program, NMFS allocates a portion of the BSAI groundfish, prohibited species, halibut, and crab total allowable catch (TAC) to 65 eligible Western Alaska communities. Unlike open access fisheries, the program makes individual vessels, processors, and CDQ groups accountable for their catch of groundfish and prohibited species. Because of this, the catch monitoring observer coverage and observer training standards are more stringent as compared to many other fisheries. CDQ observers receive more training and must have more experience than regular NMFS-certified observers. Observer coverage levels in the CDQ fisheries are also higher than those for most of the non-CDQ fisheries. In most cases, at least one of the CDQ observers on a vessel or in a processing plant also must be qualified as a “lead” CDQ observer. Lead qualification is gear-specific and is gained by having prior experience with the same gear type as the CDQ vessel on which the lead observer is deployed, or prior experience in a shoreside plant if the lead CDQ observer is deployed at a shoreside plant.

NMFS has reviewed the observer coverage and experience requirements and determined that, in some cases, the observer coverage or training requirements could be reduced without affecting the ability of NMFS to collect the data necessary to monitor and manage the CDQ fishery.

On July 24, 2000, NMFS published a proposed rule to implement these reductions (65 FR 45579). The proposed rule included a full description of observer coverage and training requirements in the CDQ fisheries, and the rationale for reducing those requirements. The proposed rule also solicited public comment for 30 days. No comments were received, and NMFS is publishing this final rule without changing the regulatory text of the proposed rule.

This final rule implements the following reductions in observer coverage and experience requirements:

1. Elimination of the requirement for a lead CDQ observer on all catcher