

Government in the Sunshine Act, including any cost assessed against the Board in such litigation (whether or not paid by the Board).

§ 1603.14 Severability.

If any provision of this part or the application of such provision to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of this part or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, shall not be affected thereby.

Dated: May 14, 2002.

Christopher W. Warner,
General Counsel.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 051402B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using 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 prohibiting directed fishing for species that comprise the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), except for vessels fishing for pollock using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. This action is necessary because the second seasonal

apportionment of the 2002 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 15, 2002, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., June 30, 2002.

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 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance for the GOA trawl shallow-water species fishery, which is defined at § 679.21(d)(3)(iii)(A), was established by an emergency rule implementing 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002) for the second season, the period April 1, 2002, through June 30, 2002, as 100 metric tons.

In accordance with § 679.21(d)(7)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the second seasonal apportionment of the 2002 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA, except for vessels fishing for pollock using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. The species and species groups that

comprise the shallow-water species fishery are: pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, and ≥other species.≥

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. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action because the second seasonal apportionment of the 2002 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion because the second seasonal apportionment of the 2002 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been reached constitutes good cause to find that the effective date 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 Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: May 14, 2002.

John H. Dunnigan,
*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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