

2002, with a vessel trip limit of 250 chinook salmon for the 8-day open period. The Northwest Regional Administrator, NMFS (Regional Administrator), determined that available catch and effort data indicated that these management measures should be implemented to fully access the chinook and coho quotas. This action was necessary to conform to the 2002 management goals.

**DATES:** The inseason adjustment in the area from the U.S.-Canada Border to Cape Falcon, OR, is effective 0001 hours local time (l.t.), July 1, 2002, through 2359 hours l.t. July 8, 2002, after which the fishery will remain closed until opened through an additional inseason action or until the effective date of the year 2003 management measures, which will be published in the **Federal Register** for the west coast salmon fisheries. Comments will be accepted through August 2, 2002.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on these actions must be mailed to D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, NOAA, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0070; or faxed to 206-526-6376; or Rod McInnis, Acting Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, NOAA, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4132; or faxed to 562-980-4018. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet. Information relevant to this document is available for public review during business hours at the Office of the Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher Wright, 206-526-6140.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Regional Administrator modified the season for the commercial fishery in the area from the U.S.-Canada Border to Cape Falcon, OR, to open on July 1 and close at midnight, July 8, 2002, with a vessel trip limit of 250 chinook salmon for the 8-day open period. Information provided to NMFS on June 26 regarding the available catch and effort data indicated that these management measures should be implemented to fully access the chinook and coho quotas. Modification of fishing seasons are authorized by regulations at 50 CFR 660.409(b)(1)(i).

In the 2002 annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries (67 FR 30616, May 7, 2002), NMFS announced that the commercial fishery for all salmon except coho in the area from the U.S.-Canada Border to Cape Falcon, OR would open July 1 and run through the earlier of September 8 or a

32,500-chinook quota, except for a selective fishery for marked coho scheduled at the end of the season with a 5000 marked coho quota.

On June 26, 2002, the Regional Administrator consulted with representatives of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) by conference call. Information related to catch to date, the chinook catch rate, and effort data indicated that it was likely that the chinook quota would be reached prematurely, potentially foreclosing opportunity of fishers to conduct the selective fishery for marked coho later in the season. There was also concern about placing an oversupply of chinook salmon on the market in a short time period, thus reducing the price of salmon and economic value of the fishery. As a result, the states of WA and OR recommended, and the Regional Administrator concurred, that the commercial fishery in the area from the U.S.-Canada Border to Cape Falcon, OR would open on July 1 and close at midnight, July 8, 2002, with the provision that no vessel may possess, land, or deliver more than 250 chinook for the entire 8 day open period. All other restrictions that apply to this fishery remain in effect as announced in the 2002 annual management measures. The State of Oregon added a landing restriction for this fishery in their regulations requiring that fishers fishing within this area, and intending to land salmon south of Cape Falcon, notify the ODFW before they leave the area at the following phone number (541) 867-0300, Ext. 252.

The Regional Administrator determined that the best available information indicated that the catch and effort data, and projections, supported the above inseason action recommended by the states. The states manage the fisheries in state waters adjacent to the areas of the U.S. exclusive economic zone in accordance with this Federal action. As provided by the inseason notice procedures of 50 CFR 660.411, actual notice to fishers of the above described action was given prior to the effective date by telephone hotline number 206-526-6667 and 800-662-9825, and by U.S. Coast Guard Notice to Mariners broadcasts on Channel 16 VHF-FM and 2182 kHz.

This action does not apply to other fisheries that may be operating in other areas.

#### Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that good

cause exists for this notification to be issued without affording prior notice and opportunity for public comment under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), because such notification and delay would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. As previously noted, actual notice of this action was provided to fishermen through telephone hotline and radio notification. This action complies with the requirements of the annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries (67 FR 30616, May 7, 2002) and the West Coast Salmon Plan. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment was impracticable because NMFS and the state agencies have insufficient time to provide for prior notice and the opportunity for public comment between the time the fishery catch and effort data are collected to determine the extent of the fisheries and the time and trip limits to which the fishery must be adjusted to reduce the tempo of the fishery. Such prior notice and the opportunity for public comment is contrary to the public interest because it does not allow commercial fishermen appropriately controlled access to the available fish at the time they are available.

Moreover, the AA finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness required under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). A delay in effectiveness of this action would not allow commercial fishermen appropriately controlled access to the available fish at the time they are available.

This action is authorized by 50 CFR 660.409 and 660.411 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: July 12, 2002.

**Virginia M. Fay,**

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

[FR Doc. 02-18151 Filed 7-17-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 071502A]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2002 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 15, 2002, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2002.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Central Aleutian District was established as 2,831 metric tons (mt) by an emergency rule implementing 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2002 TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,531 mt and is setting aside the remaining 300 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 will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI.

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 to avoid exceeding the 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI 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)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A). These procedures are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest because the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to avoid exceeding the 2002 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI 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)(3), 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: July 15, 2002.

**John H. Dunnigan,**

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

[FR Doc. 02-18145 Filed 7-15-02; 2:23 pm]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304-1304-01; I.D. 071202G]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; "Other Rockfish" in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska.

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

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting retention of "other rockfish" in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). NMFS is requiring that catch of "other rockfish" in this area be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the allocation of the "other rockfish" 2002 total allowable catch (TAC) in this area has been achieved.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 15, 2002, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 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 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 CFR part 679.

The 2002 TAC allocation of "other rockfish" for the Western Regulatory Area was established as 90 metric tons by an emergency rule implementing 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries off Alaska (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002 and 67 FR 34860, May 6, 2002).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the allocation of the "other rockfish" TAC in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA has been achieved. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of "other rockfish" in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

#### Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds 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)(B) as such requirement is contrary to the public interest. This requirement is contrary to the public interest as it would delay the closure of the fishery, lead to overharvesting the TAC, and therefore reduce the public's ability to use and enjoy the fishery resource.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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