Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, (AA), 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 a requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the prohibition of retention of ''other rockfish'' in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

The AA 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.*

Dated: July 27, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 04–17517 Filed 7–28–04; 3:57 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 031125292–4061–02; I.D. 072704C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shortraker and Rougheye 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: Prohibition of retention.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of shortraker and rougheye rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). NMFS is requiring that catch of shortraker and rougheye 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 shortraker and rougheye rockfish 2004 total allowable catch (TAC) in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 28, 2004, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 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 2004 TAC of shortraker and rougheye rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA was established as 254 metric tons (mt) by the final 2004 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (69 FR 9261, February 27, 2004).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the shortraker and rougheye rockfish TAC in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of shortraker and rougheye 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, (AA), 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 a requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the prohibition of retention of shortraker and rougheye rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

The AA 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.*

Dated: July 27, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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