

to move to other areas to obtain fish. Even if vessels could fish in other areas, their operating costs would be increased because of increased steaming time. An Area 2 TAC of 35,000 mt under this alternative would not be constraining, given recent landings history.

The final alternative considered would have established the following TACs: Area 1A, 55,000 mt; Area 1B, 5,000 mt; Area 2, 30,000 mt; and Area 3, 60,000 mt. With a 10,000-mt decrease in the combined Area 1 TACs, the impact of this alternative would be very similar to the impact of the prior alternative, although not as severe. An Area 2 TAC of 30,000 mt under this alternative would not be constraining, given recent landings history.

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule, or group of related rules, for which an agency is required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule and shall designate such publications as "small entity compliance guides." The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule or group of rules. As part of this rulemaking process, a small entity compliance guide will be sent to all holders of permits issued for the herring fishery. In addition, copies of this final rule and guide (i.e., permit holder letter) are available from the Regional Administrator (see **ADDRESSES**) and may be found at the following web site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>.

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

Dated: February 27, 2006.

William T. Hogarth,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 05120322-6051-02; I.D. 010506C]

RIN 0648-AU11

Fisheries Off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Western Pacific Pelagic Fisheries; Guam Longline Fishing Prohibited Area

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this final rule to amend the geographic coordinates that define the longline fishing prohibited area in waters of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Guam. This action is necessary to correct an error in one of the published coordinates. The intended effect of this action is to accurately implement the Guam longline closed area.

DATES: Effective April 3, 2006.

ADDRESSES: This rule is available from William L. Robinson, Administrator, NMFS, Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1601 Kapiolani Boulevard, Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814, and from the PIR web site <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pir>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Harman, PIR, 808 944-2271.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This **Federal Register** document is also accessible via the Internet at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/publications>.

Portions of the EEZ around Guam are closed to pelagic longline fishing to prevent conflicts with users of other types of fishing gear. In 1992, NMFS published in the **Federal Register** a final rule that created a 50-nm longline closed area around Guam (57 FR 45989, October 6, 1992); the regulations that were implemented by that final rule contained an error in the geographic coordinates for one of the points that define the closed area. NMFS published a technical amendment (59 FR 46933, September 13, 1994) that corrected those coordinates. NMFS subsequently published a rule that consolidated several sections of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) under 50 CFR 660 (61 FR 34570, July 2, 1996). In that rule, the geographic coordinates for the same point (Point "C") were inadvertently

published with an error in 50 CFR 660.26(d). This final rule corrects the coordinates.

Comments and Responses

The proposed rule was published in the **Federal Register** on January 20, 2006 (71 FR 3254), and the comment period ended on February 21, 2006. NMFS received no comments on the proposed rule.

Changes to the Proposed Rule

NMFS made no changes to the proposed rule.

Classification

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule and is not repeated here. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

This final rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 660

Administrative practice and procedure, American Samoa, Fisheries, Fishing, Guam, Hawaiian Natives, Indians, Northern Mariana Islands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: February 27, 2006.

James W. Balsiger,

*Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.*

■ For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 660 is correctly amended as follows:

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES AND IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC

■ 1. The authority citation for part 660 continues to read as follows:

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

■ 2. In § 660.26, revise the entry for Point C in the table in paragraph (d) to read as follows:

§ 660.26 Longline fishing prohibited area management.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

| Point | | | | | N. lat. | E. long. |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---------|------------|
| * | | * | * | * | * | * |
| | C | | | | 13° 41' | 143°33'33" |
| * | | * | * | * | * | * |

[FR Doc. 06-1997 Filed 3-2-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 060216044-6044-01; I.D. 112805A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2006 and 2007 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish

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

ACTION: Final rule; closures.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces final 2006 and 2007 harvest specifications, reserves and apportionments thereof, Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits, and associated management measures for the groundfish fishery of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to establish harvest limits and associated management measures for groundfish during the 2006 and 2007 fishing years and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP). The intended effect of this action is to conserve and manage the groundfish resources in the GOA in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: The final 2006 and 2007 harvest specifications and associated management measures are effective at 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 3, 2006, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) prepared for this action are available from Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Records Officer or from the Alaska Region Web site at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov>. Copies of the 2005 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for the groundfish resources of the GOA, dated

November 2005, are available from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99510-2252 (907-271-2809) or from its Web site at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Pearson, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, 907-481-1780, or e-mail at tom.pearson@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the GOA groundfish fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the GOA under the FMP. The Council prepared the FMP under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.* Regulations governing U.S. fisheries and implementing the FMP appear at 50 CFR parts 600, 679, and 680.

The FMP and its implementing regulations require NMFS, after consultation with the Council, to specify the total allowable catch (TAC) for each target species and for the "other species" category, the sum of which must be within the optimum yield (OY) range of 116,000 to 800,000 metric tons (mt). Section 679.20(c)(1) further requires NMFS to publish and solicit public comment on proposed annual TACs, halibut PSC amounts, and seasonal allowances of pollock and inshore/offshore Pacific cod. The final harvest specifications in Tables 1 through 18 of this document satisfy these requirements. For 2006, the sum of the TAC amounts is 291,950 mt. For 2007, the sum of the TAC amounts is 257,772 mt.

The proposed 2006 and 2007 harvest specifications and Pacific halibut PSC allowances for the GOA were published in the **Federal Register** on December 16, 2005 (70 FR 74739). Comments were invited and accepted through January 17, 2006. NMFS received 1 letter with several comments on the proposed harvest specifications. These comments are summarized and responded to in the Response to Comments section. In December 2005, NMFS consulted with the Council regarding the 2006 and 2007 harvest specifications. After considering public comments received, as well as biological and economic data that were available at the Council's December 2005 meeting, NMFS is implementing the final 2006 and 2007 harvest specifications, as recommended by the

Council, with the exception of pollock as described below.

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and TAC Specifications

In December 2005, the Council, its Advisory Panel (AP), and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), reviewed current biological and harvest information about the condition of groundfish stocks in the GOA. This information was compiled by the Council's GOA Plan Team and was presented in the 2005 SAFE report for the GOA groundfish fisheries, dated November 2005 (see **ADDRESSES**). The SAFE report contains a review of the latest scientific analyses and estimates of each species' biomass and other biological parameters, as well as summaries of the available information on the GOA ecosystem and the economic condition of the groundfish fisheries off Alaska. From these data and analyses, the Plan Team estimates an ABC for each species or species category.

The final ABC levels are based on the best available biological and socioeconomic information, including projected biomass trends, information on assumed distribution of stock biomass, and revised methods used to calculate stock biomass. The FMP specifies the formulas, or tiers, to be used in computing ABCs and overfishing levels (OFLs). The formulas applicable to a particular stock or stock complex are determined by the level of reliable information available to fisheries scientists. This information is categorized into a successive series of six tiers with tier one representing the highest level of information and tier six the lowest level of information.

The final TAC recommendations were based on the ABCs as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the total TAC within the required OY range of 116,000 to 800,000 mt. The Council adopted the AP's TAC recommendations. The Council recommended TACs for 2006 and 2007 that are equal to ABCs for pollock, deep-water flatfish, rex sole, sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, shortraker rockfish, rougheye rockfish, northern rockfish, pelagic shelf rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, big skate, longnose skate, and other skates. The Council recommended TACs that