

that included regulatory text at 50 CFR 660.704 requiring display of vessel identification markings for commercial fishing vessels and recreational charter fishing vessels that fish for HMS off, or land HMS into ports of, the States of California, Oregon, and Washington. The identification markings are consistent in size, shape, and location with vessel identification markings required on commercial fishing vessels operating under the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Groundfish FMP. The marking requirements at 50 CFR 660.704(b) state that the official number must be affixed to each vessel in block Arabic numerals at least 10 inches (25.40 cm) in height for vessels more than 25 ft (7.62 m) but equal to or less than 65 ft (19.81 m) in length; and 18 inches (45.72 cm) in height for vessels longer than 65 ft (19.81 m) in length. Markings must be legible and of a color that contrasts with the background.

The inclusion of HMS recreational charter vessels as part of the vessel identification requirements in the HMS FMP is not consistent with how vessel marking requirements are applied in the Groundfish FMP. This final rule exempts HMS recreational charter vessels from the marking requirements at 50 CFR 660.704(b), similar to exemptions granted under the Groundfish FMP. Additional information on the Council's recommendation to exempt HMS recreational charter vessels is contained in the proposed rule (72 FR 19453) for this action and will not be repeated here.

Comments and Responses

During the comment period for the proposed rule, NMFS received two comments.

Comment 1: A Washington State HMS recreational charter boat owner/operator wrote in favor of the proposed rule based on his opinion that current state and federal marking requirements are more than adequate to properly identify the HMS recreational charter fleet. He recommended adoption of the proposed vessel marking exemption without modification.

Response: NMFS agrees with the premise that HMS charter recreational vessels are adequately marked under existing state and federal marking requirements. Providing this exemption to the existing marking requirements would not impede law enforcement personnel in properly identifying HMS recreational charter vessels.

Comment 2: A licensed boat captain from Alaska wrote against the proposed exemption based on his presumption

that exempting vessel marking requirements would allow unmarked vessels on the ocean thereby hindering law enforcement personnel in properly identifying boats that violate existing laws and regulations.

Response: The HMS recreational charter vessel marking exemption will not repeal applicable state and Federal (e.g., US Coast Guard) marking requirements already in place. The exemption is a repeal of additional HMS FMP marking requirements that are not necessary for enforcement.

Classification

NMFS has determined that the final rule is consistent with the HMS FMP and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and other applicable laws.

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

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 or the economic impact of the rule. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 660

Fisheries, Fishing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated July 31, 2007.

John Oliver,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF THE WEST COAST STATES

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

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

■ 2. Section 660.704 is revised to read as follows:

§ 660.704 Vessel identification.

(a) *General.* This section only applies to commercial fishing vessels that fish for HMS off or land HMS in the States of California, Oregon, and Washington. This section does not apply to recreational charter vessels that fish for

HMS off or land HMS in the States of California, Oregon, and Washington.

(b) *Official number.* Each fishing vessel subject to this section must display its official number on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck so as to be visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft.

(c) *Numerals.* The official number must be affixed to each vessel subject to this section in block Arabic numerals at least 10 inches (25.40 cm) in height for vessels more than 25 ft (7.62 m) but equal to or less than 65 ft (19.81 m) in length; and 18 inches (45.72 cm) in height for vessels longer than 65 ft (19.81 m) in length. Markings must be legible and of a color that contrasts with the background.

[FR Doc. E7-15227 Filed 8-3-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 070213032-7032-01]

RIN 0648-XB81

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch for Trawl Catcher Vessels Participating in the Rockfish Entry Level Fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch for trawl catcher vessels participating in the rockfish entry level fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2007 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch allocated to trawl catcher vessels participating in the rockfish entry level fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 1, 2007, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 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.

In accordance with § 679.83(a)(1)(i), allocations of entry level rockfish to trawl catcher vessels participating in the rockfish entry level fishery in the Central Regulatory Area are first made from the Pacific ocean perch TAC. Trawl catcher vessels participating in the rockfish entry level program are allocated northern rockfish and pelagic shelf rockfish only if the amount of Pacific ocean perch available for allocation is less than the total allocation allowable for the trawl catcher vessels. NMFS has determined that the 2007 TAC of Pacific ocean perch meets or exceeds the total allocation of rockfish allowable for the trawl catcher vessels.

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2007 TAC of Pacific ocean perch allocated to trawl catcher vessels participating in the entry level rockfish fishery in the Central Regulatory Area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 347 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 0 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 has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch allocated to trawl catcher vessels participating in the entry level rockfish fishery in the Central Regulatory Area.

After the effective date of this closure the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

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 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 closure of Pacific ocean perch for trawl catcher vessels participating in the rockfish entry level fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 31, 2007.

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 § 679.83 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: August 1, 2007.

Emily Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 07-3829 Filed 8-1-07; 2:17 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 070213032-7032-01]

RIN 0648-XB79

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch and Pelagic Shelf Rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; modification of a closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch and pelagic shelf rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to fully use the 2007 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch and pelagic shelf rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 1, 2007, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2007. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., August 16, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional

Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. Comments may be submitted by:

Mail to: P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802;

Hand delivery to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, Alaska;

FAX to 907-586-7557;

E-mail to inseason.fakr@noaa.gov and include in the subject line of the e-mail the document identifier: wgppopre.fo.wpd (E-mail comments, with or without attachments, are limited to 5 megabytes); or

Webform at the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions at that site for submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 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.

NMFS closed the Pacific ocean perch fishery in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA under § 679.20(d)(1)(iii) on July 22, 2007 (72 FR 40772, July 25, 2007) and the pelagic shelf rockfish fishery in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA on July 23, 2007 (72 FR 40773, July 25, 2007).

NMFS has determined that as of July 31, 2007 approximately 790 mt remain in the 2007 Pacific ocean perch directed fishing allowance and 939 mt remain in the 2007 pelagic shelf rockfish directed fishing allowance in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.25(a)(1)(i), (a)(2)(i)(C) and (a)(2)(iii)(D), and to fully utilize the 2007 TAC of Pacific ocean perch and pelagic shelf rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is reopening directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch and pelagic shelf rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area in the GOA.

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