

further divided into two equal quotas of 520,312 lb (236,010 kg) for vessels in each of two groups fishing with run-around gillnets and hook-and-line gear (50 CFR 622.42(c)(1)(i)(A)(2)(i)).

The southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone which from November 1 through March 31 extends south and west from 26°19.8' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Lee/Collier County, FL, boundary), to 25°20.4' N. lat. (a line directly east from the Monroe/Miami-Dade County, FL, boundary), i.e., the area off Collier and Monroe Counties. From April 1 through October 31, the southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone which is between 26°19.8' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Lee/Collier County, FL, boundary) and 25°48' N. lat. (a line directly west from the Collier/Monroe County, FL, boundary), i.e., the area off Collier County.

Under 50 CFR 622.43(a)(3), NMFS is required to close any segment of the king mackerel commercial fishery when its quota has been reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification at the Office of the **Federal Register**. NMFS has determined that the commercial quota of 520,312 lb (236,010 kg) for Gulf group king mackerel for vessels using run-around gillnet gear in the southern Florida west coast subzone was reached on February 4, 2008. Accordingly, the commercial fishery for king mackerel for such vessels in the southern Florida west coast subzone is closed at 6 a.m., local time, February 5, 2008, through 6 a.m., January 20, 2009, the beginning of the next fishing season, i.e., the day after the 2009 Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fisheries. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the fishery constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures would be unnecessary because the rule itself already has been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure.

NMFS also finds good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. There is a need to implement this measure in a timely fashion to prevent an overrun of the commercial run-around gillnet fishery for king mackerel in the southern

Florida west coast subzone, given the capacity of the fishing fleet to harvest the quota quickly. Any delay in implementing this action would be contrary to the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the FMP. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is waived.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.43(a) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: February 4, 2008.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 08-554 Filed 2-4-08; 2:33 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-XF49

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Non-American Fisheries Act Crab Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Western 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 the A season allowance of the 2008 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-American Fisheries Act (AFA) crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2008 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 4, 2008, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2008.

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. Regulations governing sideboard protections for GOA groundfish fisheries appear at subpart B of 50 CFR part 680.

The A season allowance of 2008 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 1,017 metric tons (mt) for the GOA, as established by the 2007 and 2008 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (72 FR 9676, March 5, 2007) and revision (72 FR 71802, December 19, 2007).

In accordance with § 680.22(e)(2)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the A season allowance of the 2008 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a sideboard directed fishing allowance for Pacific cod as 1,007 mt in the Gulf of Alaska. The remaining 10 mt in the Gulf of Alaska will be set aside as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 680.22(e)(3), the Regional Administrator finds that this sideboard directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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 sideboard directed fishing closure of Pacific cod apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western 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 February 1, 2008.

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

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

Dated: February 4, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes

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

[FR Doc. 08-553 Filed 2-4-08; 2:33 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S