

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 071106673-8011-02]

RIN 0648-XJ02

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Greenland Turbot in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; apportionment of reserves; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS apportions amounts of the non-specified reserve of groundfish to the Greenland turbot initial total allowable catch (ITAC) in the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the fishery to continue operating. It is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the fishery management plan for the BSAI.

DATES: Effective July 11, 2008 through 2400 hrs, Alaska local time, December 31, 2008. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., Alaska local time, July 28, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. You may submit comments, identified by 0648-XJ02, by any one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal website at <http://www.regulations.gov>;

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

- Fax: (907) 586-7557; or

- Hand delivery to the Federal Building: 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://>

www.regulations.gov without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management 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 2008 ITAC of Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI was established as 1,488 mt by the 2008 and 2009 harvest specifications for groundfish of the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008). The Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the ITAC for Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI needs to be supplemented from the non-specified reserve in order to continue operations.

Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(b)(3), NMFS apportions 75 mt from the non-specified reserve of groundfish to the Greenland turbot ITAC in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. This apportionment is consistent with § 679.20(b)(1)(i) and does not result in overfishing of a target species because the revised ITAC is equal to or less than the specifications of the acceptable biological catch in the 2008 and 2009 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008).

The harvest specification for Greenland turbot included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008) is revised as follows: 1,563 mt to the 2008 ITAC of Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI.

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) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A) 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 apportionment of the non-specified reserves of groundfish to the Greenland turbot fishery in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 8, 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.

Under § 679.20(b)(3)(iii), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action (see **ADDRESSES**) until July 28, 2008.

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 9, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes

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

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