

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

[Docket No. 0810141351-9087-02]

RIN 0648-XN17

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch for Vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Trawl Limited Access Fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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 vessels participating in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI. This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2009 Pacific ocean perch total allowable catch (TAC) specified for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 21, 2009, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 907-586-7269.

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 2009 Pacific ocean perch TAC allocated as a directed fishing allowance to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI is 379 metric tons as established by the 2009 and 2010 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (74 FR 7359, February 17, 2009).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2009 Pacific ocean perch TAC allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI.

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 vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery in the Central Aleutian District 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 March 19, 2009.

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

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

Dated: April 2, 2009.

Kristen C. Koch,

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

[FR Doc. E9-7854 Filed 4-7-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S