

(46°38.17' N. lat.) (Washington state Marine Area 2), recreational fishing for groundfish, is prohibited seaward of a boundary line approximating the 30 fm (55 m) depth contour from March 15 through June 15 with the following exceptions: Recreational fishing for lingcod is permitted within the RCA on days that the primary halibut fishery is open; recreational fishing for rockfish is permitted within the RCA from March 15 through June 15; recreational fishing for sablefish and Pacific cod is permitted within the recreational RCA from May 1 through June 15. In addition to the RCA described above, between the Queets River (47°31.70' N. lat.) and Leadbetter Point (46°38.17' N. lat.) (Washington state Marine Area 2), recreational fishing for lingcod is prohibited year round seaward of a straight line connecting all of the following points in the order stated: 47°31.70' N. lat., 124°45.00' W. long.; 46°38.17' N. lat., 124°30.00' W. long. with the following exceptions: On days that the primary halibut fishery is open lingcod may be taken, retained and possessed within the lingcod area closure. Days open to Pacific halibut recreational fishing off Washington are announced on the NMFS hotline at (206) 526-6667 or (800) 662-9825. Retention of lingcod seaward of the boundary line approximating the 30 fm (55 m) depth contour south of 46°58' N. lat. is prohibited on Fridays and Saturdays from July 1 through August 31. For additional regulations regarding the Washington recreational lingcod fishery, see paragraph (c)(1)(iv) of this section. Coordinates for the boundary line approximating the 30 fm (55 m) depth contour are listed in § 660.71.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 101126522-0640-02]

RIN 0648-XB049

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620 in 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2012 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 620 in the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 27, 2012, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 10, 2012.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Josh Keaton, 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.

The A season allowance of the 2012 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA is 14,023 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2011 and 2012 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (76 FR 11111, March 1, 2011) and inseason adjustment (77 FR 438, January 5, 2012).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2012 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA will soon be

reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 13,773 mt and is setting aside the remaining 250 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 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 Acting 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 § 679.25(c)(1)(ii) 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 pollock in Statistical Area 620 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 24, 2012.

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 is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: February 27, 2012.

**James P. Burgess,**

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

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