

persons aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, king mackerel from the closed zone, including those harvested under the bag and possession limits, may not be purchased or sold. This prohibition does not apply to trade in king mackerel from the closed zones or subzones that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to the closure and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Classification

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the western zone of the Gulf to commercial king mackerel fishing constitutes good cause to waive the requirements 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 prior notice and opportunity for public comment is unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures would be unnecessary because the rule implementing the commercial ACL (commercial quota) and the associated requirement for closure of the commercial harvest when the ACL (quota) is reached or projected to be reached has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure.

Additionally, allowing prior notice and opportunity for public comment is contrary to the public interest because of the need to immediately implement this action to protect the king mackerel because the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established quota.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

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: August 16, 2012.

James P. Burgess,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 111207737-2141-02]

RIN 0648-XC167

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; "Other Rockfish" 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 retention of "other rockfish" in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the 2012 total allowable catch of "other rockfish" in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 16, 2012, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Obren Davis, 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 2012 total allowable catch (TAC) of "other rockfish" in the Central

Regulatory Area of the GOA is 606 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2012 and 2013 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2012 TAC of "other rockfish" in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that "other rockfish" caught in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

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) 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 prohibiting the retention of "other rockfish" 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 August 15, 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 § 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: August 16, 2012.

James P. Burgess,

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

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