

The 75-fish trip limit will remain in effect until the subzone closes or until the end of the current fishing year (March 31, 2013) for this subzone.

#### Classification

The Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of Gulf group king mackerel and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

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

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

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 in 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 are unnecessary because the rule itself already has been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the trip limit increase. Allowing prior notice and opportunity for public comment for this trip limit increase is contrary to the public interest because it requires time, thus delaying fishermen's ability to catch more king mackerel than the present trip limit allows and preventing fishermen from reaping the socioeconomic benefits derived from this increase in daily catch.

As this action allows fishermen to increase their harvest of king mackerel from 50 fish to 75 fish per day in or from the EEZ of the Florida east coast subzone, the AA finds it relieves a restriction and may go into effect without a 30-day delay in effectiveness, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1).

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

Dated: January 29, 2013.

**Kara Meckley,**

*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. 111213751-2102-02]

RIN 0648-XC465

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Pot Gear 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; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by pot catcher/processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season apportionment of the 2013 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) specified for pot catcher/processors in the BSAI.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 28, 2013, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2013.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Obren Davis, 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 A season apportionment of the 2013 Pacific cod TAC allocated as a directed fishing allowance to pot catcher/processors in the BSAI is 1,770 metric tons as established by the final 2012 and 2013 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (77 FR 10669, February 23, 2012) and inseason adjustment (78 FR 270, January 3, 2013).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the A season apportionment of the 2013 Pacific cod TAC allocated as a directed fishing allowance to pot catcher/processors in the BSAI has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific

cod by pot catcher/processors in 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) 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 directed fishing closure of Pacific cod by pot catcher/processors in 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 January 25, 2013.

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: January 28, 2013.

**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-XC466

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Pot Gear 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 Pacific cod by vessels using pot gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2013 Pacific cod total allowable catch apportioned to vessels using pot gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 28, 2013, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2013.

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

The A season allowance of the 2013 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to vessels using pot gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA

is 4,137 metric tons (mt), as established by the final 2012 and 2013 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012) and inseason adjustment to the final 2013 harvest specifications for Pacific cod (78 FR 267, January 3, 2013).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the A season allowance of the 2013 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to vessels using pot gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 4,127 mt and is setting aside the remaining 10 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 Pacific cod by vessels using pot gear 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 directed fishing closure of Pacific cod for vessels using pot gear 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 January 25, 2013.

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: January 28, 2013.

**James P. Burgess,**

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

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