

Table 3 (South). Continued			JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
35	<b>RIDGEBACK PRAWN AND, SOUTH OF 38°57.50' N. LAT., CA HALIBUT AND SEA CUCUMBER NON-GROUNDFISH TRAWL</b>							
36	<b>NON-GROUNDFISH TRAWL Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) for CA Halibut, Sea Cucumber &amp; Ridgeback Prawn:</b>							
37	40° 10' N. lat. - 38° 00' N. lat.	100 fm line <sup>1/</sup> - 200 fm line <sup>1/</sup>	100 fm line <sup>1/</sup> - 150 fm line <sup>1/</sup>				100 fm line <sup>1/</sup> - 200 fm line <sup>1/</sup>	
38	38° 00' N. lat. - 34° 27' N. lat.	100 fm line <sup>1/</sup> - 150 fm line <sup>1/</sup>						
37	South of 34° 27' N. lat.	100 fm line <sup>1/</sup> - 150 fm line <sup>1/</sup> along the mainland coast; shoreline - 150 fm line <sup>1/</sup> around islands						
39	Groundfish: 300 lb/trip. Species-specific limits described in the table above also apply and are counted toward the 300 lb groundfish per trip limit. The amount of groundfish landed may not exceed the amount of the target species landed, except that the amount of spiny dogfish landed may exceed the amount of target species landed. Spiny dogfish are limited by the 300 lb/trip overall groundfish limit. The daily trip limits for sablefish coastwide and thornyheads south of Pt. Conception and the overall groundfish "per trip" limit may not be multiplied by the number of days of the trip. Vessels participating in the California halibut fishery south of 38°57.50' N. lat. are allowed to (1) land up to 100 lb/day of groundfish without the ratio requirement, provided that at least one California halibut is landed and (2) land up to 3,000 lb/month of flatfish, no more than 300 lb of which may be species other than Pacific sanddabs, sand sole, starry flounder, rock sole, curffin sole, or California scorpionfish (California scorpionfish is also subject to the trip limits and closures in line 31).							
40	<b>PINK SHRIMP NON-GROUNDFISH TRAWL GEAR (not subject to RCAs)</b>							
41	South	Effective April 1 - October 31: Groundfish: 500 lb/day, multiplied by the number of days of the trip, not to exceed 1,500 lb/trip. The following sublimits also apply and are counted toward the overall 500 lb/day and 1,500 lb/trip groundfish limits: lingcod 300 lb/ month (minimum 24 inch size limit); sablefish 2,000 lb/ month; canary rockfish, thornyheads and yelloweye rockfish are PROHIBITED. All other groundfish species taken are managed under the overall 500 lb/day and 1,500 lb/trip groundfish limits. Landings of all groundfish species count toward the per day, per trip or other species-specific sublimits described here and the species-specific limits described in the table above do not apply. The amount of groundfish landed may not exceed the amount of pink shrimp landed.						
1/ The Rockfish Conservation Area is an area closed to fishing by particular gear types, bounded by lines specifically defined by latitude and longitude coordinates set out at §§ 660.71-660.74. This RCA is not defined by depth contours (with the exception of the 20-fm depth contour boundary south of 42° N. lat.), and the boundary lines that define the RCA may close areas that are deeper or shallower than the depth contour. Vessels that are subject to RCA restrictions may not fish in the RCA, or operate in the RCA for any purpose other than transiting.								
2/ POP is included in the trip limits for minor slope rockfish. Blackgill rockfish have a species specific trip sub-limit within the minor slope rockfish cumulative limits. Yellowtail rockfish is included in the trip limits for minor shelf rockfish. Bronzespotted rockfish have a species specific trip limit.								
3/ "Other flatfish" are defined at § 660.11 and include butter sole, curffin sole, flathead sole, Pacific sanddab, rex sole, rock sole, and sand sole.								
4/ The commercial minimum size limit for lingcod is 24 inches (61 cm) total length South of 42° N. lat.								
5/ "Other fish" are defined at § 660.11 and includes kelp greenling, leopard shark, and cabezon in Washington.								
<b>To convert pounds to kilograms, divide by 2.20462, the number of pounds in one kilogram.</b>								

TABLE 3 (South) cont'd

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 160920866-7167-02]

RIN 0648-XF418

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Deep-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska**

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

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; opening.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is opening directed fishing for species that comprise the deep-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska

(GOA). This action is necessary to fully use the 2017 groundfish total allowable catch specified for the species comprising the deep-water species category in the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 15, 2017, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., July 1, 2017.

Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., May 31, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on this document, identified by FDMS Docket Number NOAA-NMFS-2016-0127 by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to [www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0127](http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0127), click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Address written comments to Glenn Merrill, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region NMFS, Attn:

Ellen Sebastian. Mail comments to P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

*Instructions:* Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

**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.

NMFS prohibited directed fishing for species that comprise the deep-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA, effective 1200 hours, A.l.t., April 13, 2017 (82 FR 18252; April 18, 2017) under § 679.21(d)(6)(i). That action was necessary because the second seasonal apportionment of the Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the deep-water species fishery in the GOA was reached. The species and species groups that comprise the deep-water species fishery include sablefish, rockfish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole, and arrowtooth flounder.

Regulations at § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(D) require NMFS to combine management of the available trawl halibut PSC limits in the second season (April 1 through July 1) deep-water and shallow-water species fishery categories for use in either fishery from May 15 through June 30 of each year. The combined second seasonal apportionment of Pacific halibut PSC is 810 metric tons (mt). This includes the deep-water and shallow water Pacific halibut PSC limits carried forward from the first seasonal apportionments (January 20 through April 1). The deep-water and shallow-

water Pacific halibut PSC apportionments were established by the final 2017 and 2018 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (82 FR 12032; February 27, 2017).

As of May 11, 2017, NMFS has determined that there is approximately 337 mt of the trawl Pacific halibut PSC limit remaining in the deep-water fishery and shallow-water fishery seasonal apportionments. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.25(a)(1)(i), (a)(2)(i)(C), and (a)(2)(iii)(D), and to fully utilize the 2017 groundfish total allowable catch available in the deep-water species fishery category NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is reopening directed fishing for species comprising the deep-water fishery category in the GOA. The Administrator, Alaska Region (Regional Administrator) considered the following factors in reaching this decision: (1) The current harvest of Pacific halibut PSC in the deep-water species trawl fishery the of the GOA and, (2) the harvest capacity and stated intent on future harvesting patterns of vessels in participating in this fishery.

#### 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 the opening of directed fishing for species comprising the deep-water species fishery category in 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 May 11, 2017.

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.

Without this inseason adjustment, NMFS could not allow the trawl deep-water species fishery in the GOA to be harvested in an expedient manner and in accordance with the regulatory schedule. Under § 679.25(c)(2), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action to the above address until May 31, 2017.

This action is required by § 679.21 and § 679.25 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: May 12, 2017.

**Karen H. Abrams,**

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

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