Midwater trawl vessels may transit the Cap Closure Area from that trip. More than 2,000 lb (907.2 kg) of herring from entered port before 00:01 hr local time, March 14, 2018. Midwater trawl vessels that have entered the Cap Closure Area through December 31, 2018, possession limit for Cap Closure Area is delayed to solicit prior public comment. This action restricts the catch of herring in the Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Catch Cap Closure Area for the remainder of the fishing year. Data have only recently become available indicating that herring midwater trawl vessels will have caught 95 percent of the river herring and shad catch cap allocated to that gear type in the Catch Cap Area. Once NMFS projects that river herring and shad catch will reach 95 percent of the cap for the Catch Cap Area, NMFS is required by Federal regulation to implement a 2,000-lb (907.2-kg) herring trip and calendar day possession limit for Cap Closure Area through December 31, 2018. The regulations at §648.201(a)(4)(ii) require such action to ensure that herring vessels do not exceed the river herring and shad catch cap allocated to midwater trawl vessels in the Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Catch Cap Area. If implementation of this closure is delayed to solicit prior public comment, the midwater trawl catch cap for the Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Catch Cap Area for this fishing year will be exceeded, thereby undermining the conservation objectives of the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. For the reasons stated above, NMFS further finds, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period.

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

**Dated:** March 12, 2018.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

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

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 170816769–8162–02]

**RIN 0648–XG076**

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 610 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the B season allowance of the 2018 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 610 in the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 12, 2018, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., May 31, 2018.

**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 B season allowance of the 2018 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA is 1,317 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (83 FR 8768, March 1, 2018). In accordance with §679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the B season allowance of the 2018 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 1,217 mt and is setting aside the remaining 100 mt as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with §679.20(d)(1)(ii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting
directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 closure of directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 March 8, 2018.

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: March 9, 2018.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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