

and hammerhead sharks starting in January. The opening date and retention limits finalized in this rule for the Atlantic region are the same as those for the current year and similar to those for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 years.

Based on past public comments, some Atlantic fishermen in the southern and northern parts of the region prefer a January 1 opening for the fishery as long as the majority of the quota is available later in the year. Along with the inseason retention limit adjustment criteria in § 635.24(a)(8), NMFS monitors the quota through the HMS electronic reporting system on a real-time basis. This allows NMFS the flexibility to further provide equitable fishing opportunities for fishermen across all regions, to the extent practicable. The direct impacts to shark fishermen in the Atlantic region of reducing the retention limit depend on the needed reduction in the retention limit and the timing of such a reduction. Therefore, such a reduction in the retention limit for directed shark limited access permit holders is only anticipated to have minor adverse direct economic impacts to fishermen in the short-term; long-term impacts are not anticipated as these reductions would not be permanent.

In the northern portion of the Atlantic region, a January 1 opening for the aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups, with inseason trip limit adjustments to ensure quota is available later in the season, will have direct, minor, beneficial economic impacts in the short-term for fishermen as they will potentially have access to the aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark quotas earlier than in past seasons. Fishermen in this area have stated that, depending on the weather, some aggregated LCS species might be available to retain in January. Thus, fishermen will be able to target or retain aggregated LCS while targeting non-blacknose SCS. There will be indirect, minor, beneficial economic impacts in the short- and long-term for shark dealers and other entities that deal with shark products in this region as they will also have access to aggregated LCS products earlier than in past seasons. Thus, opening the aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups in January and using inseason trip limit adjustments to ensure the fishery is open later in the year in 2019 will cause

beneficial cumulative economic impacts, because it allows for a more equitable distribution of the quotas among constituents in this region, consistent with the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and its amendments.

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule, and shall designate such publications as “small entity compliance guides.” The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule or group of rules. As part of this rulemaking process, NMFS has prepared a listserv summarizing fishery information and regulations for Atlantic shark fisheries for 2019. This listserv also serves as the small entity compliance guide. Copies of the compliance guide are available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 20, 2018.

Samuel D. Rauch III,
*Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 170817779–8161–02]

RIN 0648–XG648

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish 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; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is exchanging unused rock sole Community Development Quota (CDQ) for yellowfin sole CDQ

acceptable biological catch (ABC) reserves in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area. This action is necessary to allow the 2018 total allowable catch of yellowfin sole in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area to be harvested.

DATES: Effective November 27, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 907–586–7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) 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 2018 rock sole and yellowfin sole CDQ reserves specified in the BSAI are 4,540 metric tons (mt) and 17,023 mt as established by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (83 FR 8365, February 27, 2018) and revised by flatfish exchange (83 FR 50036, October 4, 2018). The 2018 rock sole and yellowfin sole CDQ ABC reserves are 10,772 mt and 12,670 mt as established by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (83 FR 8365, February 27, 2018) and revised by flatfish exchange (83 FR 50036, October 4, 2018).

The Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation has requested that NMFS exchange 400 mt of rock sole CDQ reserves for 400 mt of yellowfin sole CDQ ABC reserves under § 679.31(d). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.31(d), NMFS exchanges 400 mt of rock sole CDQ reserves for 400 mt of yellowfin sole CDQ ABC reserves in the BSAI. This action also decreases and increases the TACs and CDQ ABC reserves by the corresponding amounts. Tables 11 and 13 of the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (83 FR 8365, February 27, 2018) and revised by flatfish exchange (83 FR 50036, October 4, 2018), are further revised as follows:

TABLE 11—FINAL 2018 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUOTA (CDQ) RESERVES, INCIDENTAL CATCH AMOUNTS (ICAS), AND AMENDMENT 80 ALLOCATIONS OF THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH, AND BSAI FLATHEAD SOLE, ROCK SOLE, AND YELLOWFIN SOLE TACS

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector	Pacific ocean perch			Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole
	Eastern Aleutian District	Central Aleutian District	Western Aleutian District	BSAI	BSAI	BSAI
TAC	9,000	7,500	9,000	17,105	42,550	155,945
CDQ	963	803	963	1,507	4,140	17,423
ICA	100	120	10	4,000	6,000	4,000
BSAI trawl limited access	794	658	161	0	0	18,351
Amendment 80	7,143	5,920	7,866	11,599	32,410	116,171

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 13—FINAL 2018 AND 2019 ABC SURPLUS, ABC RESERVES, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUOTA (CDQ) ABC RESERVES, AND AMENDMENT 80 ABC RESERVES IN THE BSAI FOR FLATHEAD SOLE, ROCK SOLE, AND YELLOWFIN SOLE

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector	2018	2018	2018	2019 ¹	2019 ¹	2019 ¹
	Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole	Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole
ABC	66,773	143,100	277,500	65,227	132,000	267,500
TAC	17,105	42,550	155,945	16,500	49,100	156,000
ABC surplus	49,668	100,550	121,555	48,727	82,900	111,500
ABC reserve	49,668	100,550	121,555	48,727	82,900	111,500
CDQ ABC reserve	5,638	11,172	12,270	5,214	8,870	11,931
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	44,030	89,378	109,286	43,513	74,030	99,570

¹ The 2019 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2018.

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 flatfish exchange by the

Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation in the BSAI. Since these fisheries are currently open, it is important to immediately inform the industry as to the revised allocations. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery, to allow the industry to plan for the fishing season, and to avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet as well as processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of November 19, 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: November 20, 2018.

Karen H. Abrams,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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