The 2020 ITAC of BSAI arrowtooth flounder was established as 8,500 metric tons (mt), the 2020 ITAC of BSAI “other flatfish” was established as 3,600 mt, and the 2020 ITAC of BSAI skates was established as 2,600 mt to BSAI Alaska plaice. These apportionments are consistent with § 679.20(b)(1)(i) and do not result in overfishing of any target species because the revised ITACs and TACs are equal to or less than the specifications of the acceptable biological catch in the final 2020 and 2021 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (85 FR 13553, March 9, 2020).

The harvest specification for the 2020 ITACs and TACs included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI are revised as follows: 8,930 mt for BSAI arrowtooth flounder, 4,121 mt for BSAI “other flatfish,” 20,050 mt for BSAI Alaska plaice, 17,206 mt for BSAI skates, 132 mt for BS/EAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, and 264 mt for WAI/CAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish.

The 2020 ITACs and TACs are equal to or less than the specifications of the acceptable biological catch in the final 2020 and 2021 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI. These apportionments are consistent with § 679.20(b)(1)(i) and do not result in overfishing of any target species because the revised ITACs and TACs are equal to or less than the specifications of the acceptable biological catch in the final 2020 and 2021 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (85 FR 13553, March 9, 2020).
setting aside the remaining 5,000 mt as incidental catch 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 arrowtooth flounder in the BSAI.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

Classification
NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 arrowtooth flounder 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 November 18, 2020.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.
Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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