

necessary for the conservation and management of the Pacific sardine resource because last year's restrictions on harvest ended on June 30, 2025. The FMP requires a prohibition on primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine for the 2025–2026 fishing year because the sardine biomass has dropped below the CUTOFF. The purpose of the CUTOFF in the FMP, and for prohibiting a primary directed fishery when the biomass drops below this level, is to protect the stock when biomass is low and provide a buffer of spawning stock that is protected from fishing and can contribute to rebuilding the stock. Without effective specifications, there is no prohibition on primary directed fishing, no regulations on catch, and a significant amount of sardine could theoretically be caught in a short period.

Delaying the effective date of this rule is contrary to the public interest because it would jeopardize the sustainability of the Pacific sardine stock and affected minor fisheries. Furthermore, most affected fishermen have already been operating under a prohibition of the primary directed fishery for years, and are aware that the Council recommended that primary directed commercial fishing be prohibited again for the 2025–2026 fishing year, and are fully prepared to comply with the prohibition.

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities for the purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule (90 FR 27273, June 26, 2025) and is not repeated here. As a result, a final regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

A Tribal summary impact statement under section (5)(b)(2)(B) and section (5)(c)(2)(B) of E.O. 13175 was not required for this final rule because this action does not impose substantial direct compliance costs on Indian Tribal Governments and this action does not preempt Tribal law. A Tribal summary impact statement has therefore not been prepared.

This action does not contain a collection-of-information requirement for purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act. There are no relevant Federal rules that may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the proposed action.

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

Dated: September 10, 2025.

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. 250312-0037; RTID 0648-XF004]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch 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 ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2025 total allowable catch of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 12, 2025, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 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 and recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens 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 2025 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 1,753 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has

determined that the 2025 TAC of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will be or has been reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 1,623 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 130 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 will be or has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA to prevent exceeding the Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

While this closure is in effect, 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) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 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 directed fishing of Pacific ocean perch 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 on catch of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA only became available as of September 11, 2025.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA 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.

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

Dated: September 12, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

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

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