

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing the directed fishery for Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the allocation of Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Western Regulatory Area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 9, 1996, until 2359 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew N. Smoker, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS 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 Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 672.

In accordance with § 672.20(c)(1)(ii)(B), the allocation of Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component in the Western Regulatory Area was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish (61 FR 4304, February 5, 1996) as 1,885 metric tons (mt).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), has determined, in accordance with § 672.20(c)(2)(ii), that the allocation of Pacific cod total allowable catch for processing by the offshore component in the Western Regulatory Area soon will be reached. The Regional Director established a directed fishing allowance of 1,785 mt, with consideration that 100 mt will be taken as incidental catch in directed fishing for other species in the Western Regulatory Area. The Regional Director has determined that the directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for

processing by the offshore component in the Western Regulatory Area.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 672.20(g).

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 672.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: March 8, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 030796E]

Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Inshore Component Pollock in the Aleutian Islands Subarea

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the Aleutian Islands subarea (AI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the first allowance of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) for vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 10, 1996, until 12 noon, A.l.t., April 15, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS

according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

In accordance with § 675.20(a)(7)(ii), the first allowance of pollock for the inshore component in the AI was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996) as 10,591 metric tons (mt).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), has determined in accordance with § 675.20(a)(8), that the first allowance of pollock TAC for vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Director has established a directed fishing allowance of 10,091 mt with consideration that 500 mt will be taken as incidental catch in directed fishing for other species in the AI. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI. This closure is effective noon, A.l.t., March 10, 1996, through noon, A.l.t., April 15, 1996. Under § 675.20(a)(2)(ii), the second allowance is available from noon, A.l.t., August 15 through the end of the fishing year.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 675.20(h).

Classification

This action is taken under § 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: March 8, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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