



Restricted Gear Area III, Closed to Lobster Trap Gear

Figure 6 to Part 649—Restricted Gear Area III

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50 CFR Part 672

[Docket No. 960129018-6018-01; I.D. 032096B]

Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska; Deep-water Species Fishery by Vessels using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for species that comprise the deep-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the first seasonal bycatch allowance of Pacific halibut apportioned to the deep-water species fishery in the GOA has been caught.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 21, 1996, until 12 noon, A.l.t., April 1, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Pearson, 907-486-6919.

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(f)(1)(i) the deep-water species fishery, which is defined at § 672.20(f)(1)(i)(B)(2) was apportioned 100 mt of Pacific halibut prohibited species catch for the first season, the period January 20, 1996, through March 31, 1996 (61 FR 4304, February 5, 1996).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined, in accordance with § 672.20(f)(3)(i), that vessels participating in the trawl deep-water species fishery in the GOA have caught the first seasonal bycatch allowance of Pacific halibut apportioned to that fishery. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting

directed fishing for each species and species group that comprise the deep-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA. The species and species groups that comprise the deep-water species fishery are: All rockfish of the genera *Sebastes* and *Sebastobus*, Greenland turbot, Dover sole, Rex sole, arrowtooth flounder, and sablefish.

After the effective date of this closure the maximum retainable bycatch amounts, calculated using the retainable percentages at § 672.20(g), apply at any time during a trip.

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 21, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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