

Species		Historic range	Vertebrate population where endangered or threatened	Status	When listed	Critical habitat	Special rules
Common name	Scientific name						
Mammals:							
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bighorn sheep, (Peninsular Ranges population).	<i>Ovis canadensis</i> .....	U.S.A. (western conterminous states), Canada (southwest), Mexico (north).	U.S.A., Peninsular Ranges of CA.	E	634	NA	NA
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Dated: March 6, 1998.  
**Jamie Rappaport Clark,**  
 Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.  
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 BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 971208298-8055-02; I.D. 031398A]

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; 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 amount of the 1998 pollock total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI of the BSAI.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 13, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by the 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-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. processors is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

In accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), the amount of the 1998 pollock total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI of the BSAI was established as 7,705 metric tons (mt) by the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the BSAI (to be published March 16, 1998).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the amount of the 1998 pollock TAC apportioned to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI of the BSAI will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 7,205 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 500 mt as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels catching pollock for processing by the

inshore component in the AI of the BSAI.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

**Classification**

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately in order to prevent overharvesting the amount of the 1998 pollock TAC apportioned to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI of the BSAI. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet has already taken the amount of the 1998 pollock TAC apportioned to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in the AI of the BSAI. Further delay would only result in overharvest which would disrupt the FMP's objective of providing sufficient pollock as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action can not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § . 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: March 13, 1998.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

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

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