

NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for flathead sole, shallow water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, and deep water flatfish by catcher vessels that are non-exempt under the AFA in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

#### Classification

All other closures remain in full force and effect. This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately in order to allow participation of catcher vessels that are non-exempt under the AFA. Providing prior notice and opportunity for public comment for this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot 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 28, 2000.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 000211039-0039-01; I.D. 032700B]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in the West Yakutat District of 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 pollock in the West Yakutat District of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) specified for the West Yakutat District established by the Final 2000 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 28, 2000, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 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 by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management 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 pollock TAC in the West Yakutat District was established by the Final 2000 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish (65 FR 8298, February 18, 2000) as 2,340 metric tons (mt),

determined in accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(ii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the TAC of pollock in the West Yakutat District will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,140 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 200 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 in the West Yakutat District of the GOA.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts 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 to prevent overharvesting the pollock TAC in the West Yakutat District. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should 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 27, 2000.

**George H. Darcy,**

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

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