

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 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 1, 2001, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2001.

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, Statistical Area 640, was established by the Final 2001 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska (66 FR 7276, January 22, 2001) as 2,235 metric tons (mt).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the 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 2,035 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. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to prevent exceeding the pollock TAC in the West Yakutat District constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely

fashion to prevent exceeding the pollock TAC in the West Yakutat District constitutes good cause to find that the effective date 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 Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 14, 2001.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 01-6728 Filed 3-14-01; 2:48 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 010112013-1013-01; I.D. 031301E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 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 Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the B season allowance of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) for Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 17, 2001, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., August 20, 2001.

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.

Within any fishing year, under harvest or over harvest of a seasonal

allowance may be added to or subtracted from the subsequent seasonal allowances in a manner to be determined by the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), provided that a revised seasonal allowance does not exceed 30 percent of the annual TAC apportionment (§ 679.20(a)(5)(ii)(C)). The combined A and B season allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 630 outside Shelikof Strait is 8,211 metric tons (mt) as established by the Final 2001 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska (66 FR 7276, January 22, 2001). The Regional Administrator hereby increases the B season pollock TAC by 227 mt, the amount of the A season under harvest. In accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(ii)(C), the B season allowance of pollock TAC in Statistical Area 630 outside Shelikof Strait is 2,964 mt. This adjusted B season TAC does exceed 30 percent of the annual TAC.

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the B season allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,464 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 be reached within 48 hours of the March 15 opening date. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area in the GOA effective at 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 17, 2001.

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. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to prevent exceeding the seasonal allocation of pollock in Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20(b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures

would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to prevent exceeding the seasonal allocation of pollock in Statistical Area 630 outside the Shelikof Strait conservation area constitutes good

cause to find that the effective date 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 Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: March 14, 2001.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 01-6727 Filed 3-14-01; 2:48 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S