

provision is stayed or determined to be invalid, it is GSA's intention that the remaining provisions shall continue in effect.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 240227-0061; RTID 0648-XD883]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2024 total allowable catch of Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 16, 2024, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., June 10, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abby Jahn, 907-586-7416.

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 (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

The A season allowance of the 2024 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 3,828 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2045 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (89 FR 15484, March 4, 2024).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2024 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,328 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 has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest, as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the closure of Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notification providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of April 12, 2024.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

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

Dated: April 12, 2024.

Everett Wayne Baxter,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Chapter I

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2023-0024; FXRS1261090000-245-FF09R25000]

National Wildlife Refuge System Planning Policies (602 FW 1-4) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notification of final policies.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the updated planning policies, 602 FW 1-4, for the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System). The purpose of the policy revisions is to update the Refuge System's refuge management by incorporating landscape conservation plans and consideration of climate change and other anthropogenic forces in refuge management.

DATES: The policies were effective April 1, 2024.

ADDRESSES: The revised planning policies are available at <https://www.fws.gov/policy-library/manuals/land-use-and-management-series/refuge-management/refuge-planning>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Henning, Chief, Branch of Conservation Planning and Policy, National Wildlife Refuge System, via email at julie_henning@fws.gov, by telephone at (703) 358-1945, or by mail at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, c/o Julie Henning, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point of contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

We are announcing the availability of four updated National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) planning policies. The purpose of the policy revisions is to update the Refuge System's refuge management by incorporating landscape conservation planning and design and consideration of climate change and other anthropogenic forces in refuge management. The Refuge System's authority for these policies comes from the Refuge System Administration Act