

50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 052896G]

Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Eastern Aleutian District

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). NMFS is requiring that catches of Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the Pacific ocean perch total allowable

catch (TAC) in the Eastern Aleutian District has been caught.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 29, 1996, until 12 midnight A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by 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 Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

In accordance with § 675.20(a)(7)(ii), the Pacific ocean perch TAC for the Eastern Aleutian District was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996), and increased

by an apportionment from the reserve (61 FR 16085, April 11, 1996) to 3,025 metric tons (mt).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined, in accordance with § 675.20(a)(9), that the TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 675.20(c)(3).

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: May 28, 1996.

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

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