

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 031124287-4060-02; I.D. 090204C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Flathead Sole in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Prohibition of retention.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of flathead sole in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). NMFS is requiring that catch of flathead sole in this area be treated in the same manner as prohibited species and discarded at sea with a minimum of injury. This action is necessary because the 2004 total allowable catch (TAC) of flathead sole in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 4, 2004, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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. 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 2004 TAC of flathead sole in the BSAI was established as 16,150 metric tons by the final 2004 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (69 FR 9242, February 27, 2004).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the flathead sole TAC in the BSAI has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of flathead sole in the BSAI be treated as a prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA,

(AA), finds 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)(B) as such a requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is 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 prohibition of retention of flathead sole in the BSAI.

The AA 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.

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: September 2, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 04-20422 Filed 9-3-04; 2:49 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 031124287-4060-02; I.D. 090204B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Non-Community Development Quota Pollock with Trawl Gear in the Chinook Salmon Savings Areas of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for non-Community Development Quota (CDQ) pollock with trawl gear in the Chinook Salmon Savings Areas of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary because the 2004 non-CDQ limit of chinook salmon caught by vessels using trawl gear while directed fishing for pollock in the BSAI has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 5, 2004, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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. 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 2004 chinook salmon PSC limit for the pollock fishery is set at 29,000 fish (§ 679.21(e)(1)(vi)). Of that limit, 7.5 percent is allocated to the groundfish CDQ program as prohibited species quota reserve (§ 679.21(e)(1)(i)). Consequently, the 2004 non-CDQ limit of chinook salmon caught by vessels using trawl gear while directed fishing for pollock in the BSAI is 26,825 animals.

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(viii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2004 non-CDQ limit of chinook salmon caught by vessels using trawl gear while directed fishing for pollock in the BSAI has been reached. Consequently, the Regional Administrator is prohibiting directed fishing for non-CDQ pollock with trawl gear in the Chinook Salmon Savings Areas defined at Figure 8 to 50 CFR part 679.

Maximum retainable 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, (AA), finds 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)(B) as such a requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is 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 prohibiting directed fishing for non-CDQ pollock with trawl gear in the Chinook Salmon Savings Areas.

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.

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: September 2, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable

Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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