

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

[Docket No. 031124287-4060-02; I.D. 092004B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Central Aleutian District of 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). NMFS is requiring that catch of Pacific ocean perch 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 Pacific ocean perch in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 21, 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI was established as 2,706 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 Pacific ocean perch TAC in the Central Aleutian District of the BSAI has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Central Aleutian District of 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 20, 2004.

John H. Dunnigan,

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. 031124287-4060-02; I.D. 092004D]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Rougheye Rockfish 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 rougheye rockfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). NMFS is requiring that catch of rougheye rockfish 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 rougheye rockfish in this area has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 22, 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 rougheye rockfish in the BSAI was established as 181 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 rougheye rockfish TAC in the BSAI has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that further catches of rougheye rockfish 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 rougheye rockfish 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 20, 2004.

John H. Dunnigan,

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

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