

§ 622.1 [Amended]

■ 2. In § 622.1, Table 1, the entries for “Atlantic Coast Red Drum FMP” are removed.

§ 622.32 [Amended]

■ 3. In § 622.32, remove paragraph (b)(3), and redesignate paragraph (b)(4) as paragraph (b)(3); remove newly redesignated paragraph (b)(3)(iii), and redesignate newly redesignated paragraphs (b)(3)(iv) through (vi) as paragraphs (b)(3)(iii) through (v).

§ 622.48 [Amended]

■ 4. In § 622.48, remove paragraph (k), and redesignate paragraphs (l) and (m) as paragraphs (k) and (l), respectively.

PART 697—ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

■ 5. The authority citation for part 697 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*

■ 6. In § 697.2, the definition of “Atlantic red drum” is added and the definition of “Regional Administrator” is revised, in alphabetical order, to read as follows:

§ 697.2 Definitions.

* * * * *

Atlantic red drum, also called redfish, means *Sciaenops ocellatus*, or a part thereof, found in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean off the Atlantic coastal states, to the outer boundary of the EEZ, as specified in § 600.10 of this chapter, from the boundary of the United States and Canada, to the boundary between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, as specified in § 600.105(c) of this chapter.

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Regional Administrator, means Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, or Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, whichever has the applicable jurisdiction, or a respective designee.

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■ 7. In § 697.7, paragraph (f) is added to read as follows:

§ 697.7 Prohibitions.

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(f) *Atlantic red drum fishery*. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in § 600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(1) Harvest or possess Atlantic red drum in the EEZ south of a line extending in a direction of 115° from true north commencing at a point at 40°29.6' N. lat., 73°54.1' W. long., such

point being the intersection of the New Jersey/New York boundary with the 3-nm line denoting the seaward limit of state waters, and north of the demarcation line between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council described in § 600.105(c) of this chapter.

(2) Fail to release immediately without further harm, all Atlantic red drum caught in the EEZ area described in paragraph (f)(1) of this section.

■ 8. In § 697.22, the introductory text and paragraph (a)(1) are revised to read as follows:

§ 697.22 Exempted fishing.

The Regional Administrator or Director may exempt any person or vessel from the requirements of this part for the conduct of exempted fishing beneficial to the management of the American lobster, weakfish, Atlantic red drum, Atlantic striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, or horseshoe crab resource or fishery, pursuant to the provisions of § 600.745 of this chapter.

(a) * * *

(1) Have a detrimental effect on the American lobster, weakfish, Atlantic red drum, Atlantic striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, or horseshoe crab resource or fishery; or

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 071106671-8010-02]

RIN 0648-XK86

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component 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 vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2008 total

allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component of the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 3, 2008, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Obren Davis, 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 2008 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component of the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 25,583 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2008 and 2009 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (73 FR 10562, February 27, 2008).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2008 TAC of Pacific cod allocated to vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component of the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 24,583 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 1,000 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 vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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

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 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 closure of Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component of the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice

providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of September 29, 2008.

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 30, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes

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

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