

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

[Docket No. 0810141351-9087-02]

RIN 0648-XO85

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amount of Pacific cod from vessels using jig gear to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (< 18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line or pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the B season apportionment of the 2009 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective April 22, 2009, through 2400 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management 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 B season apportionment of the 2009 Pacific cod TAC specified for vessels using jig gear in the BSAI is 441 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2009 and 2010 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (74 FR 7359, February 17, 2009), for the period 1200 hrs, A.l.t., April 30, 2009, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., August 31, 2009.

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that jig vessels will not be able to harvest 400 mt of the B season apportionment of the 2009 Pacific cod TAC allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A)(1). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(iii)(A), NMFS apportions

400 mt of Pacific cod from the B season jig gear apportionment to catcher vessels <60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear.

The harvest specifications for Pacific cod included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (74 FR 7359, February 17, 2009) are revised as follows: 41 mt to the B season apportionment for vessels using jig gear and 4,737 mt to catcher vessels <60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear.

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 reallocation of Pacific cod specified from jig vessels to catcher vessels <60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear. Since the fishery is currently open, it is important to immediately inform the industry as to the revised allocations. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery, to allow the industry to plan for the fishing season, and to avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet as well as processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of April 20, 2009.

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: April 21, 2009.

Kristen C. Koch,

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

[FR Doc. E9-9566 Filed 4-22-09; 4:45 pm]

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

[Docket No. 0810141351-9087-02]

RIN 0648-XO13

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; modification of a closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line or pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to fully use the 2009 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod specified for catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 30, 2009, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2009. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., May 11, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. You may submit comments, identified by [RIN number], by any one of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal website at <http://www.regulations.gov>;
- *Mail:* P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802;
- *Fax:* (907) 586-7557; or
- *Hand delivery to the Federal Building:* 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft

Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe portable document format file formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management 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.

NMFS closed directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI under § 679.20(d)(1)(iii) on March 16, 2009 (74 FR 11503, March 18, 2009).

NMFS has determined that as of April 20, 2009, approximately 184 metric tons of Pacific cod remain in the 2009 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.25(a)(1)(i), (a)(2)(i)(C), and (a)(2)(iii)(D), and to fully use the 2009

TAC of Pacific cod specified for catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI.

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 opening of the Pacific cod fishery by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery, to allow the industry to plan for the fishing season, and to avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet

and processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of April 20, 2009.

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.

Without this inseason adjustment, NMFS could not allow the fishery for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI to be harvested in an expedient manner and in accordance with the regulatory schedule. Under § 679.25(c)(2), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action to the above address until May 12, 2009.

This action is required by § 679.25 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: April 21, 2009.

Kristen C. Koch,

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

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