

year it is available. States and tribes must keep records of activities carried out under the authority of the conservation order. We believe that this recordkeeping requirement is necessary to ensure that those individuals carrying out control activities are authorized to do so. The States and tribes must submit an annual report summarizing the activities conducted under the conservation order. Reported information helps us to assess the effectiveness of light geese population control methods and strategies, and assess whether or not additional population control methods are needed. However, we believe that the number of elements in the information collection requirement can be reduced while maintaining a core of elements that allow us to monitor the number of participants in the conservation order and resulting harvest of birds. We have revised 50 CFR 21.60(f)(8) to require that information be collected only on the number of:

- Persons participating in the conservation order;
- Days people participated in the conservation order;
- Light geese shot and retrieved under the conservation order; and
- Light geese shot but not retrieved.

Each State and tribe determines how they collect data from participants. Though there is no common form or method, the States and tribes have shared their forms and there is commonality. Some States require participants to obtain a permit to participate in the conservation order; others do not. Post-harvest survey questions and questionnaire delivery methods differ among States and tribes. States measure harvest and hunter activity through the use of mail questionnaires, phone surveys, hunter diaries, online data entry, and so forth. Differences also exist within similar survey types, such as the proportion of participants surveyed and the type and number of followup contacts.

During the proposed rule stage, we solicited comments on the new information collection requirements. We received several comments that addressed information collection. Most conflated the information collection and control of overabundant light geese. We did not change our requirements based on these comments. Several of the comments only noted that we proposed to change the information collection. We have addressed all comments in the preamble above.

The public may comment at any time on the accuracy of the information collection burden in this rule and may submit any comments to the Information Collection Clearance

Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW., (Mailstop BPHC), Washington, DC 20240.

#### *National Environmental Policy Act*

We have analyzed this rule in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 432–437(f) and Part 516 of the U.S. Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM). The regulations change would simply remove unused regulations, and is administrative in nature. The action is categorically excluded from further NEPA consideration by 43 CFR 46.210(i).

*Socioeconomic.* The regulations change would have no discernible socioeconomic impacts.

*Migratory bird populations.* The regulations change would not affect native migratory bird populations.

*Endangered and Threatened Species.* The regulation change would not affect endangered or threatened species or habitats important to them.

#### *Endangered Species Act*

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531–1543; 87 Stat. 884) provides that “Each Federal agency shall, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out . . . is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of [critical] habitat. . . .” We previously completed section 7 consultation under the ESA for the rule that authorized the light goose regulations (73 FR 65926, November 5, 2008). This rule will only affect information collection and reporting requirements, so a section 7 consultation is not needed.

#### *Energy Effects—Executive Order 13211*

Executive Order 13211 requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. This rule is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 13211, and will not adversely affect energy supplies, distribution, or use. This action is not a significant energy action, so no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

#### *Government-to-Government Relationship With Tribes*

In accordance with the President’s memorandum of April 29, 1994, “Government-to-Government Relations With Native American Tribal Governments” (59 FR 22951), Executive Order 13175, and 512 DM 2, we have

determined that this rule has very little effect on federally recognized Indian tribes because few participate in the order.

#### **List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 21**

Exports, Hunting, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation, Wildlife.

#### **Regulation Promulgation**

For the reasons stated in the preamble, we hereby amend part 21, of subchapter B, chapter I, title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as set forth below:

#### **PART 21—[AMENDED]**

■ 1. The authority citation for part 21 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 703–712.

■ 2. Amend § 21.60 by revising paragraph (f)(8) to read as follows:

#### **§ 21.60 Conservation order for light geese.**

\* \* \* \* \*

(f) \* \* \*

(8) States and tribes must keep annual records of activities carried out under the authority of the conservation order. Specifically, information must be collected on:

- (i) The number of persons participating in the conservation order;
- (ii) The number of days people participated in the conservation order;
- (iii) The number of light geese shot and retrieved under the conservation order; and
- (iv) The number of light geese shot but not retrieved.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dated: February 2, 2015.

**Michael J. Bean,**

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

[FR Doc. 2015–05977 Filed 3–13–15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310–55–P**

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **50 CFR Part 679**

**[Docket No. 140918791–4999–02]**

**RIN 0648–XD823**

### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Trawl Catcher Vessels in the Western 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 catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2015 Pacific cod total allowable catch apportioned to trawl catcher vessels in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 11, 2015, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., June 10, 2015.

**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. Regulations governing sideboard protections for GOA groundfish fisheries appear at subpart B of 50 CFR part 680.

The A season allowance of the 2015 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to trawl catcher vessels in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 7,242 metric tons (mt), as established by the final 2015 and 2016 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (80 FR 10250, February 25, 2015).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the A season allowance of the 2015 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to trawl catcher vessels in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 6,942 mt and is setting aside the remaining 300 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 catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western 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 directed fishing closure of Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Western 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 March 10, 2015.

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: March 11, 2015.

**Emily H. Menashes,**  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 2015-05912 Filed 3-11-15; 4:15 pm]

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