

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 635**

[Docket No. 160527473–6999–02]

RIN 0648–BG09

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Individual Bluefin Quota Program; Inseason Transfers

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

ACTION: Stay of final rule.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the memorandum of January 20, 2017, from the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, entitled “Regulatory Freeze Pending Review,” published in the *Federal Register* on January 24, 2017 (the Memorandum), this action stays the final rule NMFS published on December 29, 2016, in order to delay its effective date.

DATES: Effective January 31, 2017, the final rule amending 50 CFR part 635, that published on December 29, 2016, at 81 FR 95903, is stayed until March 21, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Warren or Sarah McLaughlin, 978–281–9260; Carrie Soltanoff, 301–427–8503.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 29, 2016, NMFS published this final rule modifying the Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) regulations regarding the distribution of inseason Atlantic bluefin tuna quota transfers to the Longline category. This final rule provides NMFS the ability to distribute quota inseason either to all qualified Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) share recipients (*i.e.*, share recipients who have associated their permit with a vessel) or only to permitted Atlantic Tunas Longline vessels with recent fishing activity, whether or not they are associated with IBQ shares. This action is necessary to optimize fishing opportunity in the directed pelagic longline fishery for target species such as tuna and swordfish and to improve the functioning of the IBQ Program and its leasing provisions consistent with the objectives of Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan.

On January 20, 2017, the White House issued a memo instructing Federal agencies to temporarily postpone the effective date for 60 days after January 20, 2017, of any regulations or guidance

documents that have published in the *Federal Register* but not yet taken effect, for the purpose of “reviewing questions of fact, law, and policy they raise.” Because its effective date has already passed, we are enacting this stay of the rule published on December 29, 2016, at 81 FR 95903 (see DATES above) until March 21, 2017.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 635

Fisheries, Fishing, Fishing vessels, Foreign relations, Imports, Penalties, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Treaties.

Dated: January 26, 2017.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 635 is amended as follows:

PART 635—ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 635 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

§ 635.15 [Amended]

■ 2. In § 635.15, paragraphs (b) introductory text and (b)(9) are stayed until March 21, 2017.

[FR Doc. 2017–02043 Filed 1–30–17; 8:45 am]

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

[Docket No. 150818742–6210–02]

RIN 0648–XF170

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 in 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 pollock in Statistical Area 610 in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2017 total allowable catch of pollock for Statistical Area 610 in the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 27, 2017, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 10, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 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 A season allowance of the 2017 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA is 2,232 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2016 and 2017 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (81 FR 14740, March 18, 2016) and inseason adjustment (81 FR 95063, December 27, 2016).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2017 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,132 mt and is setting aside the remaining 100 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 pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 Acting 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 directed fishing for pollock in Statistical Area 610 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 January 13, 2017.

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: January 18, 2017.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-01515 Filed 1-27-17; 4:15 pm]

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