

the **Federal Register** on February 6, 2018 (83 FR 5212), remain effective for the 2019 fishing year.

Classification

This action is authorized by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: November 2, 2018.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-24368 Filed 11-6-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 665

RIN 0648-XG025

Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries; 2018 U.S. Territorial Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch Limits for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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

ACTION: Announcement of a valid specified fishing agreement.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a valid specified fishing agreement that allocates up to 1,000 metric tons (t) of the 2018 bigeye tuna limit for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to identified U.S. longline fishing vessels. The agreement supports the long-term sustainability of fishery resources of the U.S. Pacific Islands, and fisheries development in the CNMI.

DATES: The specified fishing agreement is valid on November 6, 2018.

ADDRESSES: NMFS prepared environmental analyses that describe the potential impacts on the human environment that would result from the action. The analyses, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026, are available from <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026>, or from Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

The Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific (Pelagic FEP) is available from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel

808-522-8220, fax 808-522-8226, or <http://www.wpcouncil.org>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rebecca Walker, NMFS PIRO Sustainable Fisheries, 808-725-5184.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In a final rule published on October 23, 2018, NMFS specified a 2018 limit of 2,000 t of longline-caught bigeye tuna for the U.S. Pacific Island territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI (83 FR 53399). NMFS allows each territory to allocate up to 1,000 t of the 2,000 t limit to U.S. longline fishing vessels identified in a valid specified fishing agreement.

On October 22, 2018, NMFS received from the Council a specified fishing agreement between the CNMI and Quota Management, Inc. (QMI). The Council's Executive Director advised that the specified fishing agreement was consistent with the criteria set forth in 50 CFR 665.819(c)(1). NMFS reviewed the agreement and determined that it is consistent with the Pelagic FEP, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, implementing regulations, and other applicable laws.

In accordance with 50 CFR 300.224(d) and 50 CFR 665.819(c)(9), vessels identified in the agreement may retain and land bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean under the CNMI limit. NMFS will begin attributing bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement to the CNMI starting on October 25, 2018. If NMFS determines that the fishery will reach the attribution limit of 1,000 t, we will restrict the retention of bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement, unless the vessels are included in a subsequent specified fishing agreement with another U.S. territory.

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

Dated: November 1, 2018.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-24278 Filed 11-6-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 170817779-8161-02]

RIN 0648-XG116

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch 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; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian district (EAI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery. This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2018 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in the EAI allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), November 2, 2018, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 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.

The 2018 TAC of Pacific ocean perch, in the EAI, allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery was established as a directed fishing allowance of 794 metric tons by the final 2018 and 2019 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (83 FR 8365, February 27, 2018).

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 ocean perch in the EAI by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery.

After the effective dates 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 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 closure of the Pacific ocean perch directed fishery in the EAI for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of November 1, 2018. 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: November 2, 2018.

Karen H. Abrams,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2018-24375 Filed 11-2-18; 4:15 pm]

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