

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

[Docket No. 220223-0054; RTID 0648-XC487]

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 trawl catcher vessels to Amendment 80 trawl catcher/processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the 2022 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective October 18, 2022, through 2400 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Krista Milani, 907-581-2062.

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 2022 Pacific cod TAC specified for trawl catcher vessels in the BSAI is 27,855 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022) and reallocations (87 FR 51004, August 19, 2022; 87 FR 59730, October 3, 2022).

The 2022 Pacific cod TAC specified for Amendment 80 trawl catcher/processors in the BSAI is 17,981 mt as established by the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, (Regional Administrator) has determined that trawl catcher vessels will not be able to harvest 700 mt of the 2022 Pacific cod TAC allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A)(9).

Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(iii)(B), NMFS apportions 700 mt of Pacific cod from trawl catcher vessels to the annual amount specified for Amendment 80 trawl catcher/processors.

The harvest specifications for 2022 Pacific cod included in final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022) and reallocations (87 FR 51004, August 19, 2022; 87 FR 59730, October 3, 2022) is revised as follows: 27,155 mt to trawl catcher vessels, and 18,681 mt to Amendment 80 trawl catcher/processors.

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 allow for harvests that exceed the originally specified apportionment of the Pacific cod TAC. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of October 17, 2022.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA 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.

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

Dated: October 18, 2022.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

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