

TABLE 6—FINAL 2023 SEASONAL AND SPATIAL ALLOWANCES, GEAR SHARES, CDQ RESERVE, INCIDENTAL CATCH ALLOWANCE, AND AMENDMENT 80 ALLOCATIONS OF THE BSAI ATKA MACKEREL TAC
[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector ¹	Season ^{2,3,4}	2023 Allocation by area		
		Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea	Central Aleutian District ⁵	Western Aleutian District
TAC	n/a	27,260	17,351	24,671
CDQ reserve	Total	2,917	1,857	2,640
	A	1,458	928	1,320
	Critical Habitat	n/a	557	792
	B	1,458	928	1,320
	Critical Habitat	n/a	557	792
Non-CDQ TAC	n/a	24,343	15,494	22,031
ICA	Total	100	75	20
Jig ⁶	Total	118		
BSAI trawl limited access	Total	2,343	1,542	
	A	1,171	771	
	Critical Habitat	n/a	463	
	B	1,171	771	
	Critical Habitat	n/a	463	
Amendment 80 sector	Total	21,783	13,877	22,011
	A	10,892	6,939	11,006
	Critical Habitat	n/a	4,163	6,603
	B	10,892	6,939	11,006
	Critical Habitat	n/a	4,163	6,603

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹ Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs, and jig gear allocation, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in Table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (see §§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)).

² Sections 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery.

³ The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

⁴ Section 679.23(e)(3) authorizes directed fishing for Atka mackerel with trawl gear during the A season from January 20 to June 10 and the B season from June 10 to December 31.

⁵ Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(i) limits no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543 to be caught inside of Steller sea lion protection areas; section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(ii) equally divides the annual TACs between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3); and section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(2) requires that the TAC in Area 543 shall be no more than 65 percent of ABC in Area 543.

⁶ Sections 679.2 and 679.20(a)(8)(i) require that up to 2 percent of the Eastern Aleutian Islands District and the Bering Sea subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtracting the CDQ reserve and the ICA. NMFS sets the amount of this allocation for 2023 at 0.5 percent. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season.

This will enhance the socioeconomic well-being of harvesters dependent upon Atka mackerel in this area. The Regional Administrator considered the following factors in reaching this decision: (1) the current catch of Atka mackerel ICA in the BS/EAI; and, (2) the harvest capacity and stated intent on future harvesting patterns of the Amendment 80 cooperative that participates in this BS/EAI fishery.

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, as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the harvest of Atka

mackerel in the BS/EAI fishery. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of September 21, 2023.

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.

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

Dated: September 21, 2023.

Kelly Denit,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 230224–0053; RTID 0648–XD069]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch 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 ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2023 total allowable catch of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 22, 2023, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 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 2023 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 2,529 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2023 and 2024 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (88 FR 13238, March 2, 2023).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2023 TAC of Pacific

ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,429 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 Pacific ocean perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

While this closure is in effect, the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

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, 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 of Pacific ocean perch 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 September 21, 2023.

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: September 22, 2023.

Kelly Denit,

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

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