

(15) Prohibition on combining small-mesh exempted fishery and sector trips in SNE;

(16) Extra-large mesh requirement to target dogfish on trips excluded from ASM in SNE and Inshore GB;

(17) Requirement that Handgear A vessels carry a Vessel Monitoring System unit when fishing in a single broad stock area; and

(18) Limits on the number of gillnets for Day gillnet vessels in the GOM.

#### Exemption Requests in Fishing Year 2024

For fishing year 2024, sectors did not request any novel exemptions.

#### Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act because this action is necessary to carry out the Northeast Multispecies FMP in accordance with the FMP's implementing regulations. The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this rule is consistent with the Northeast Multispecies FMP, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries finds good cause to waive prior public notice and an opportunity for public comment, because allowing time for notice and comment is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest. The allocations in this action are required by regulations that prescribe how they are determined. The public had a prior opportunity to comment on this process and the formula used for its calculation during the development of the rules implementing the Northeast Multispecies FMP and subsequent amendments and framework adjustments. Thus, in accordance with the existing regulations, NMFS calculates a sector's allocation for each stock by summing its members' PSC for a stock and then multiplying that total percentage by the available commercial sub-ACL for that stock. Thus, the ACE allocations are based on long-established fishing histories and are formulaic, administrative, and involve no exercise of discretion.

NMFS finds, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), that there is good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the date of effectiveness for this final rule. This action allocates ACE to groundfish sectors in the Northeast multispecies fishery for fishing year 2024. Sectors are prohibited from fishing without ACE allocations; as such, timely implementation is necessary to ensure that sectors may fish at the start of the

2024 fishing year on May 1, 2024. If sectors were prohibited from fishing while waiting for the rule to take effect, there would be significant disruption to the fishery along with negative economic impacts, thus undermining the intent of the rule. The allocation of ACE to groundfish sectors occurs annually. Industry members and other stakeholders are aware of and familiar with these proceedings and expect them to occur in a timely manner.

This final rule is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866 because it contains no implementing regulations.

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Because prior notice and the opportunity for public comment are not required for this action by the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 *et seq.*), or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*, are inapplicable. Therefore, no final regulatory flexibility analysis is required and none has been prepared.

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

Dated: April 2, 2024.

**Samuel D. Rauch III,**

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

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

##### 50 CFR Part 665

[RTID 0648-XD790]

##### Pacific Island Fisheries; 2024 Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Lobster Harvest Guideline

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

**ACTION:** Notification of lobster harvest guideline.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS establishes the annual harvest guideline for the commercial lobster fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) for calendar year 2024 at zero lobsters.

**DATES:** April 5, 2024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Keith Kamikawa, NMFS Pacific Island Regional Office (PIRO) Sustainable Fisheries, 808-725-5177.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the NWHI commercial lobster fishery under the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the Hawaii Archipelago. The regulations at 50 CFR 665.252(b) require NMFS to publish an annual harvest guideline for lobster in Crustacean Permit Area 1, comprised of Federal waters around the NWHI.

Regulations governing the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the NWHI prohibit the unpermitted removal of monument resources (50 CFR 404.7), and establish a zero annual harvest guideline for lobsters (50 CFR 404.10(a)). Accordingly, NMFS establishes the harvest guideline for the NWHI commercial lobster fishery for calendar year 2024 at zero lobsters. Harvest of NWHI lobster resources is not allowed.

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

Dated: March 27, 2024.

**Everett Wayne Baxter,**

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

[FR Doc. 2024-06917 Filed 4-4-24; 8:45 am]

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

##### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 240227-0061]

RTID 0648-XD694

##### 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 2024 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock for Statistical Area 610 in the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 2, 2024, through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., May 31, 2024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Adam Zaleski, 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 (Magnuson-Stevens 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 2024 TAC of pollock in Statistical Area 610 of the GOA is 5,422 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (89 FR 15484, March 4, 2024) and correction (89 FR 18835, March 15, 2024).

In accordance with §§ 679.20(d)(1)(i) and 679.20(d)(1)(ii)(B), the Regional Administrator has determined that the A season allowance of the 2024 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 5,322 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.

While this closure is effective, 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 pollock in Statistical Area 610 in 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 April 01, 2024.

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: April 1, 2024.

**Everett Wayne Baxter,**

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

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