

rule published on April 1, 2024 (89 FR 22352).

Classification

NMFS is issuing an extension of this emergency rule pursuant to section 305(3)(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this emergency rule is consistent with the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP, section 305(c) and other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), and other applicable law. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries finds prior notice and public comment is not required because it would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The reasons justifying promulgation of this rule on an emergency basis, coupled with the fact that the public has had the opportunity to comment on the original emergency rule, make solicitation of additional comment unnecessary, impractical and contrary to the public interest. This rule must be in place before the expiration of the original emergency rule to provide the necessary relief to California recreational fishery participants. Modifying the continuous transit requirement for California recreational vessels would not pose a conservation risk; and it would allow recreational vessels to continue to utilize multi-day and multi-target trips even when the offshore fishery is in place. The impacts of the California recreational fisheries have been prior analyzed in the *Environmental Assessment for Amendment 30 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, 2023–2024 Harvest Specifications, and Management Measures*.

Additionally, this rule is exempted from the 30-day delayed effectiveness provision of the APA under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1) because it relieves a restriction that would otherwise place California recreational vessels at an economic disadvantage in 2024. Immediate implementation of this rule is necessary to prevent the possible cancellation of thousands of fishing trips that could otherwise occur if not for the current continuous transit requirement.

This action is being taken pursuant to the emergency provision of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and is exempt from Office of Management and Budget review.

The Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to this emergency rule because prior notice and opportunity for public comment is not required.

This emergency/interim rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 660

Fisheries, Fishing, and Fishing vessels.

Dated: August 14, 2024.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

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

For the reasons set out in the preamble, NMFS amends 50 CFR part 660 as follows:

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 660 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, and 16 U.S.C. 7001 *et seq.*

■ 2. In § 660.360, revise paragraph (c)(3)(i)(A)(6) to read as follows:

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(3) * * *

(i) * * *

(A) * * *

(6) Emergency rule revising continuous transit requirement. Effective August 20, 2024 until December 31, 2024, notwithstanding any other section of these regulations, in times and areas where a recreational RCA is closed shoreward of a recreational RCA line (*i.e.*, when an “off-shore only” fishery is active in that management area) vessels may stop, anchor in, or transit through waters shoreward of the recreational RCA line so long as they do not have any hook-and-line fishing gear in the water.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 240304–0068; RTID 0648–XE201]

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 vessels using jig gear, trawl catcher vessels, and catcher vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line gear to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the 2024 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Effective August 19, 2024, through 2400 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Krista Milani, 907–586–2062.

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 (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 2024 Pacific cod TAC specified for vessels using jig gear in the BSAI is 848 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024) and reallocation (89 FR 24736, April 9, 2024).

The 2024 Pacific cod TAC specified for trawl catcher vessels in the BSAI is 30,754 mt as established by the final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024).

The 2024 Pacific cod TAC specified for catcher vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI is 277 mt as established by the final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024).

The 2024 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI is 3,867 mt as established by final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024) and reallocation (89 FR 24736, April 9, 2024).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, (Regional Administrator) has determined that jig vessels will not be able to harvest 750 mt of the 2024

Pacific cod TAC allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A)(1), trawl catcher vessels will not be able to harvest 1,000 mt of the 2024 Pacific cod TAC allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A)(9), and catcher vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line gear will not be able to harvest 267 mt of the 2023 Pacific cod TAC allocated to those vessels under § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A)(3).

Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(iv)(C), NMFS apportions 750 mt of Pacific cod from the jig vessels to the annual amount specified for catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear. Also, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(iii)(A), NMFS reallocates 1,000 mt from trawl catcher vessels, and 267 mt from the catcher vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line gear to the annual amount specified for catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear.

The harvest specifications for 2024 Pacific cod included in final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024) and reallocation (89 FR 24736, April 9, 2024) is revised as follows: 98 mt to vessels using jig gear, 29,754 mt to trawl catcher vessels, 10 mt to catcher vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line gear, and 5,884 mt to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear.

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 August 14, 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: August 14, 2024.

Lindsay Fullenkamp,

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

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