

■ 20. Section 660.390 is added to read as follows:

§ 660.390 Groundfish Conservation Areas (GCAs).

In § 660.302, a GCA is defined as “a geographic area defined by coordinates expressed in latitude and longitude, created and enforced for the purpose of contributing to the rebuilding of overfished West Coast groundfish species.” Specific GCAs may be defined here in this paragraph, or in the **Federal Register**, within the harvest specifications and management measures process. While some GCAs may be designed with the intent that their shape be determined by ocean bottom depth contours, their shapes are defined in regulation by latitude/longitude coordinates and are enforced by those coordinates. Fishing activity that is prohibited or permitted within a particular GCA is detailed in **Federal Register** documents associated with the harvest specifications and management measures process.

(a) *Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)*. RCAs are defined in the **Federal Register** through the harvest specifications and management measures process. RCAs may apply to a single gear type or to a group of gear types, such as “trawl RCAs” or “non-trawl RCAs”.

(b) *Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs)*. (1) The Western CCA is an area south of Point Conception that is bound by straight lines connecting all of the following points in the order listed:

33°50' N. lat., 119°30' W. long.;
33°50' N. lat., 118°50' W. long.;
32°20' N. lat., 118°50' W. long.;
32°20' N. lat., 119°37' W. long.;
33°00' N. lat., 119°37' W. long.;
33°00' N. lat., 119°53' W. long.;
33°33' N. lat., 119°53' W. long.;
33°33' N. lat., 119°30' W. long.;

and connecting back to 33°50' N. lat., 119°30' W. long.

(2) The Eastern CCA is a smaller area west of San Diego that is bound by straight lines connecting all of the following points in the order listed:

32°42' N. lat., 118°02' W. long.;
32°42' N. lat., 117°50' W. long.;
32°36'42" N. lat., 117°50' W. long.;
32°30' N. lat., 117°53'30" W. long.;
32°30' N. lat., 118°02' W. long.;

and connecting back to 32°42' N. lat., 118°02' W. long.

(c) *Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA)*. The YRCA is a C-shaped area off the northern Washington coast

that is bound by straight lines connecting all of the following points in the order listed:

48°18' N. lat., 125°18' W. long.;
48°18' N. lat., 124°59' W. long.;
48°11' N. lat., 124°59' W. long.;
48°11' N. lat., 125°11' W. long.;
48°04' N. lat., 125°11' W. long.;
48°04' N. lat., 124°59' W. long.;
48°00' N. lat., 124°59' W. long.;
48°00' N. lat., 125°18' W. long.;

and connecting back to 48°18' N. lat., 125°18' W. long.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 031125292-4061-02; I.D. 070904E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2004 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 12, 2004, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-2778.

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 2004 TAC specified for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory

Area of the GOA is 8,390 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2004 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (69 FR 9261, February 27, 2004).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2004 TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory Area will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 7,890 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 500 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 Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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 directed fishery for Pacific ocean perch in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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: July 12, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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