

Therefore, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the AA finds that good cause exists to waive prior notice and an opportunity to comment on this action to implement a DAM restricted zone to reduce the risk of entanglement of endangered right whales in commercial lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear as such procedures would be impracticable.

For the same reasons, the AA finds that, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause exists to waive the 30-day delay in effective date. If NMFS were to delay for 30 days the effective date of this action, the aggregated right whales would be vulnerable to entanglement, which could cause serious injury and mortality. Additionally, right whales would likely move to another location between the time NMFS approved the action creating the DAM restricted zone and the time it went into effect, thereby rendering the action obsolete and ineffective. Nevertheless, NMFS recognizes the need for fishermen to have time to either modify or remove (if not in compliance with the required restrictions) their gear from a DAM zone once one is approved. Thus, NMFS makes this action effective 2 days after the date of publication of this document in the **Federal Register**. NMFS will also endeavor to provide notice of this action to fishermen through other means upon issuance of the rule by the AA, thereby providing approximately 3 additional days of notice while the Office of the Federal Register processes the document for publication.

NMFS determined that the regulations establishing the DAM program and actions such as this one taken pursuant to those regulations are consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved coastal management program of the U.S. Atlantic coastal states. This determination was submitted for review by the responsible state agencies under section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Following state review of the regulations creating the DAM program, no state disagreed with NMFS' conclusion that the DAM program is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved coastal management program for that state.

The DAM program under which NMFS is taking this action contains policies with federalism implications warranting preparation of a federalism assessment under Executive Order 13132. Accordingly, in October 2001 and March 2003, the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs, Department of Commerce, provided notice of the DAM program

and its amendments to the appropriate elected officials in states to be affected by actions taken pursuant to the DAM program. Federalism issues raised by state officials were addressed in the final rules implementing the DAM program. A copy of the federalism Summary Impact Statement for the final rules is available upon request (**ADDRESSES**).

The rule implementing the DAM program has been determined to be not significant under Executive Order 12866.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.* and 50 CFR 229.32(g)(3).

Dated: October 12, 2007.

**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 679

[Docket No. 070213032-7032-01]

RIN 0648-XD32

#### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Non-American Fisheries Act Crab Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component 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 the 2007 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-American Fisheries Act (AFA) crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2007 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 14, 2007, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2007.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Hogan, 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. Regulations governing sideboard protections for GOA groundfish fisheries appear at subpart B of 50 CFR part 800.

The 2007 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 1,635 metric tons (mt) for the GOA, as established by the 2007 and 2008 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (72 FR 9676, March 5, 2007).

In accordance with § 680.22(e)(2)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2007 Pacific cod sideboard limits apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a sideboard directed fishing allowance for Pacific cod as 1,625 mt in the Gulf of Alaska. The remaining 10 mt in the Gulf of Alaska will be set aside as bycatch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 680.22(e)(3), the Regional Administrator finds that this sideboard directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

After the effective date of this closure the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

#### **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 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 sideboard directed fishing closure of Pacific cod apportioned to non-AFA crab vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component 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 October 10, 2007.

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 § 680.22 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: October 12, 2007.

**Emily H. Menashes**

*Acting 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. 070213032-7032-01]

RIN 0648-XD41

#### Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Trawl Gear 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 groundfish by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), except for directed fishing for pollock by vessels using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. This closure also does not apply to fishing by vessels participating in the cooperative fishery in the Rockfish Pilot Program for the Central GOA. This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2007 Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit specified for trawl gear in the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 15, 2007, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2007.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jennifer Hogan, 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 2007 Pacific halibut PSC limit for vessels using trawl was established as 2,000 metric tons by the 2007 and 2008 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (72 FR 9676, March 5, 2007, as corrected by 72 FR 13217, March 21, 2007). The fishery was closed on October 8, 2007 (72 FR 57888, October 11, 2007) and was reopened on October 10, 2007.

The Administrator, Alaska Region, has determined, in accordance with § 679.21(d)(7)(i), that the 2007 Pacific halibut PSC limit allocated to vessels using trawl gear in the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl gear

in the GOA, except for directed fishing for pollock by vessels using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA that remain open to directed fishing for pollock. This closure also does not apply to fishing by vessels participating in the cooperative fishery in the Rockfish Pilot Program for the Central 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 closing directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl gear 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 October 12, 2007.

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 § 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: October 15, 2007.

**Alan D. Risenhoover**

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

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