

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 679**

[Docket No. 041126332-5039-02; I.D. 120905A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processor Vessels Using Hook-and-line Gear 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; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2005 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod specified for catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 12, 2005, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

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. 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 2005 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI is 99,519 metric tons as established by the 2005 and 2006 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (70 FR 8979, February 24, 2005), the reallocation on October 5, 2005 (70 FR 58983, October 11, 2005) and the reallocation on November 21, 2005 (70 FR 71039, November 25, 2005). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii) and (c)(5), and (a)(7)(i)(C).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the 2005 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line

gear in the BSAI will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI.

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 closure of Pacific cod by catcher/processor vessels using hook-and-line gear in the BSAI.

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: December 9, 2005.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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**

[I.D. 120805C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; North Pacific Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishing Quota Cost Recovery Program

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

ACTION: Notification of standard prices for the North Pacific halibut and

sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) cost recovery program.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service publishes IFQ standard prices for the IFQ Cost Recovery Program in the halibut and sablefish fisheries of the North Pacific. This action is intended to provide holders of halibut and sablefish IFQ permits information to calculate the payments required for IFQ cost recovery fees due by January 31, 2006.

DATES: Effective December 15, 2005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Troie Zuniga, Fee Coordinator, 907-586-7231.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

NMFS, Alaska Region, administers the halibut and sablefish IFQ programs in the North Pacific. The IFQ Programs are limited access systems authorized by section 303(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982. Fishing under the IFQ Programs began in March 1995. Regulations implementing the IFQ Program are set forth at 50 CFR part 679.

In 1996, the Magnuson-Stevens Act was amended by Public Law 104-297 to, among other things, require the Secretary of Commerce to "collect a fee to recover the actual costs directly related to the management and enforcement of any . . . individual fishing quota program" (section 304(d)(2)(A)). Section 304(d)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies an upper limit on these fees, when the fees must be collected, and where the fees must be deposited. Section 303(d)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act allows NMFS to reserve up to 25 percent of the fees collected for use in an IFQ loan program to aid in financing the purchase of IFQ or quota share (QS) by entry-level and small-vessel fishermen.

On March 20, 2000, NMFS published regulations implementing the IFQ Cost Recovery Program (65 FR 14919), which are set forth at 50 CFR 679.45. Under the regulations, an IFQ permit holder incurs a cost recovery fee liability for every pound of IFQ halibut and IFQ sablefish that is landed on his or her IFQ permit(s). The IFQ permit holder is responsible for self-collecting the fee liability for all IFQ halibut and IFQ sablefish landings on his or her permit(s). The IFQ permit holder is also responsible for submitting a fee liability payment to NMFS on or before the due date of January 31 following the year in which the IFQ landings were made. The