

1 because the entire quota is projected to not be landed.

The Alternative 2 possession limit of 5,000 (2268 kg) lb would allow higher per-trip revenues from spiny dogfish and could reduce regulatory discards during the time the fishery was open. However, both quota periods would close after an estimated 41-day season. Even under this option, a large number of vessels would suffer revenue losses compared to 1999 revenues because of the overall quota level. Also, the high trip limit would encourage directed spiny dogfish fishing, which is inconsistent with the objectives of the FMP. Further, long-term revenues to participants in the fishery would likely be reduced due to future reductions in landings that could be required due to overfishing caused by directed fishing on spiny dogfish.

Under the no action alternative, the spiny dogfish fishery would remain unregulated and fishing mortality could be expected to increase to an F of 0.43. With no restrictions, the FMP projects that landings would increase to about 22.0 million lb (997.9 mt) in fishing year 2001. This would actually be a 32 percent decline from 1999 levels (the last year of an unregulated fishery) due to continued reductions in the stock size. Although revenues would increase in comparison to 2000, long term revenues from an unregulated fishery would continuously decline as stock size is reduced, due to overfishing.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 648

Fisheries, Fishing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: March 26, 2001.

William T. Hogarth,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 648 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 648—FISHERIES OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

1. The authority citation for part 648 continues to read as follows:

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

2. In § 648.14, paragraph (aa)(7) is revised to read as follows:

§ 648.14 Prohibitions.

* * * * *

(aa) * * *

(7) Possess more than the possession limit of spiny dogfish specified under § 648.235. The possession limit is the maximum amount that may be landed in any calendar day.

* * * * *

3. Section 648.235 is revised to read as follows:

§ 648.235 Possession and trip limit restrictions.

(a) *Quota Period 1.* From May through October 31, vessels issued a valid Federal spiny dogfish permit specified under § 648.4(a)(11) may:

(1) Possess up to 600 lb (272 kg) of spiny dogfish per trip;

(2) Land only one trip of spiny dogfish per calendar day.

(b) *Quota Period 2.* From November 1 through April 30, vessels issued a valid Federal spiny dogfish permit specified under § 648.4(a)(11) may:

(1) Possess up to 300 lb (136 kg) of spiny dogfish per trip;

(2) Land only one trip of spiny dogfish per calendar day.

[FR Doc. 01-7937 Filed 3-29-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 010105005-1005-01; I.D. 120600A]

RIN 0648-AO64

Fisheries Off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery; Amendment 9

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

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes a regulation to implement a portion of Amendment 9 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which was submitted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) for review and approval by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), and which was approved on March 22, 2001.

Amendment 9 was prepared to provide for the documentation of bycatch in the coastal pelagic species fishery (CPS), to ensure that a standardized reporting methodology to assess the amount and type of bycatch is in place, to propose any necessary conservation and management measures to minimize bycatch, and to ensure that Indian fishing rights will be met according to treaties between the U.S. and specific tribes. This proposed rule would codify the procedures in Amendment 9 designed to ensure that Indian fishing rights will be met according to those

treaties. This proposed rule also would codify a provision in the FMP that authorizes the Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, to require observers on fishing vessels for scientific purposes should such observers be necessary. The intent of this proposed rule is to codify provisions in the FMP and in Amendment 9 that are in need of codification.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 14, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Copies of Amendment 9, which includes an environmental assessment/regulatory impact review, may be obtained from Donald O. McIssac, Executive Director, Pacific Fishery Management Council, 2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224, Portland, Oregon, 97201.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Morgan, Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, at 562-980-4036.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council submitted Amendment 9 for Secretarial review on November 21, 2000. NMFS published a notice of availability for Amendment 9 in the **Federal Register** on December 21, 2000 (65 FR 80411), announcing a 60-day public comment period, which ended on February 20, 2001. The Secretary approved Amendment 9 on March 22, 2001.

On June 10, 1999, Amendment 8 to the Northern Anchovy Fishery Management Plan was partially approved by the Secretary. The portions of Amendment 8 approved by the Secretary added four species to the plan, implemented limited entry to prevent overcapitalization, and changed the name of the plan to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan. Other provisions were not approved. The optimum yield (OY) for squid and the bycatch provisions in Amendment 8 were not approved because they did not conform to National Standards 1 and 9, respectively, of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Amendment 8, contrary to National Standard 9 failed to include a standardized reporting methodology to assess the amount and type of bycatch in the CPS fishery and did not explain whether additional management measures to minimize bycatch and the mortality of unavoidable bycatch were practicable. Also, Amendment 8 failed to provide an estimate of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for squid, a necessary component to determine OY.

At its meeting in June 1999, the Council directed its Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to recommend appropriate revisions to the

FMP and report to the Council the following September. A public meeting of the CPSMT was held in La Jolla, CA, on August 3 and 4, 1999, and August 24, 1999, and a meeting was held between the CPSMT and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel on August 24, 1999. At its September 1999 meeting, the Council gave further direction to the CPSMT regarding MSY for squid. At its March 2000 meeting, the Council asked the CPSMT for a more thorough analysis of the alternatives proposed for establishing MSY for squid and for bycatch. At a public meeting in La Jolla, CA, on April 20 and 21, 2000, the CPSMT reviewed comments from the Council, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and prepared additional material for establishing MSY for squid based on spawning area.

The Council distributed Amendment 9 for public review on July 27, 2000. At its September 2000 meeting, the Council reviewed written comments, received comments from its advisory bodies, and heard public comments, and decided to submit only two provisions for Secretarial review. Based on testimony concerning MSY for squid, the Council decided to include in Amendment 9 only the bycatch provision and a provision providing a framework to ensure that Indian fishing rights are implemented according to treaties between the U.S. and the specific tribes. Since implementation of the FMP, the CPS fishery has expanded to Oregon and Washington. As a result, the FMP must discuss Indian fishing rights in these areas. These rights were not included in the FMP; and the Council decided to address this issue in Amendment 9.

The Council decided to conduct further analysis of the squid resource and will prepare a separate amendment that addresses OY and MSY for squid.

This proposed rule would codify the procedures in Amendment 9 designed to ensure that Indian fishing rights are implemented according to treaties between the U.S. and the specific tribes. In addition, this proposed rule would codify a provision in the FMP that authorizes the Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, to require observers on fishing vessels for scientific purposes should such observers be necessary.

Classification

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for the purposes of Executive Order 12866.

The Chief Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this

proposed rule, if adopted, would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as follows:

Codifying the procedure to address Indian fishing rights would provide a framework that may be used in the future if such action should be necessary. The States of California, Oregon, and Washington are collecting sufficient data to assess the impact of bycatch in the fishery; Codifying the Regulatory Administrator's authority to require observers would have no effect on any U.S. businesses, small or otherwise.

As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not prepared.

NMFS initiated an informal consultation with the Protected Resources Division, Southwest Region, on January 12, 1999, with regard to the effects of Amendment 8 on endangered and threatened marine mammals and salmon under NMFS' jurisdiction. On June 3, 1999, NMFS determined that Amendment 8 would not likely adversely affect listed species under NMFS jurisdiction.

On June 8, 1999, NMFS provided the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) with background information on the harvest strategies in Amendment 8 and their potential impact on other species. NMFS requested that FWS concur with NMFS' determination that Amendment 8 would not likely adversely affect any threatened or endangered birds under FWS' jurisdiction. On June 10, 1999, the FWS stated that Amendment 8 would not adversely affect endangered or threatened birds under its jurisdiction.

NMFS reinitiated consultation with its Protected Resources Division, Southwest Region, following the publication of additional listed species. On September 2, 1999, NMFS determined that the FMP was not likely to adversely affect Central Valley spring-run chinook and coastal California chinook. However, since the CPS fishery has expanded to Oregon and Washington; NMFS reinitiated consultation on April 19, 2000.

List of Subject in 50 CFR Part 660

Administrative practice and procedure, American Samoa, Fisheries, Fishing, Guam, Hawaiian Natives, Indians, Northern Mariana Islands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: March 27, 2001.

William T. Hogarth,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES AND IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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

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

2. Sections 660.518 and 660.519 are added to subpart I to read as follows:

§ 660.518 Pacific coast treaty Indian rights.

(a) Pacific Coast treaty Indian tribes have treaty rights to harvest CPS in their usual and accustomed fishing areas in U.S. waters.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "Pacific Coast treaty Indian tribes" and their "usual and accustomed fishing areas" is described at § 660.324(b) and (c).

(c) Boundaries of a tribe's fishing area may be revised as ordered by a Federal court.

(d) *Procedures.* The rights referred to in paragraph (a) will be implemented in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the framework contained in Amendment 9 to the FMP and this Subpart.

(1) The Secretary, after consideration of the tribal request, the recommendation of the Council, and the comments of the public, will implement Indian fishing rights.

(2) The rights will be implemented either through an allocation of fish that will be managed by the tribes, or through regulations that will apply specifically to the tribal fisheries.

(3) An allocation or a regulation specific to the tribes shall be initiated by a written request from a Pacific Coast treaty Indian tribe to the NMFS Southwest Regional Administrator at least 120 days prior to the start of the fishing season as specified at § 660.510 and will be subject to public review according to the procedures in § 660.508(d).

(4) The Regional Administrator generally will announce the annual tribal allocation at the same time as the annual specifications.

(e) The Secretary recognizes the sovereign status and co-manager role of Indian tribes over shared Federal and tribal fishery resources. Accordingly, the Secretary will develop tribal allocations and regulations in consultation with the affected tribe(s) and, insofar as possible, with tribal consensus.

§ 660.519 Scientific observers.

All fishing vessels operating in the coastal pelagic species fishery, including catcher/processors, at-sea processors, and vessels that harvest in Washington, Oregon, or California and

land catch in another area, may be required to accommodate NMFS certified observers on board to collect scientific data. An observer program will be considered only for circumstances where other data collection methods are deemed insufficient for management of the fishery. Any observer program will be implemented in accordance with § 660.517.

[FR Doc. 01-7940 Filed 3-29-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 010228052-1052-01; I.D. 010301D]

RIN 0648-AL95

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Amendments to Alaska Groundfish and Crab Fishery Management Plans to Revise the License Limitation Program

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

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues a proposed rule to implement Amendment 60 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, Amendment 58 to the FMP for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, and Amendment 10 to the FMP for the Commercial King and Tanner Crab Fisheries in the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands. This proposed rule would implement changes to the License Limitation Program (LLP) that would be made by these Amendments and is intended to further the objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and the affected FMPs.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 30, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel. Hand delivery or courier delivery of comments may be sent to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Room 453, Juneau, AK 99801. Comments submitted via e-mail or the Internet will not be accepted.

Copies of the draft environmental assessment/regulatory impact review/initial regulatory flexibility analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) are available from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252; telephone 907-271-2809.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Lepore, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) recommended, and NMFS approved, the LLP to address concerns of excess capital and capacity in the groundfish and crab fisheries off Alaska. The LLP is one stage of a multi-staged process to reduce capacity and capital in the affected fisheries. The LLP replaced the Vessel Moratorium Program (VMP), a program implemented by NMFS to impose a temporary moratorium on the entry of new capacity in the groundfish and crab fisheries off Alaska and to help define the class of entities that would be eligible for licenses under the LLP. The VMP expired on December 31, 1999, and fishing under the LLP began on January 1, 2000 (63 FR 52642, October 1, 1998). The final rule establishing the application and transfer processes for the LLP was published August 6, 1999 (64 FR 42826). In October 1998, the Council recommended several changes to the LLP. These changes, which are embodied in Amendment 60 to the FMP for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (Amendment 60), Amendment 58 to the FMP for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (Amendment 58), and Amendment 10 to the FMP for the Commercial King and Tanner Crab Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (Amendment 10), are outlined below.

Proposed Changes to the LLP Qualifying Criteria

A. Amendment 10 would add a recent participation requirement to the eligibility requirements for a crab species license.

The Council recommended that a recent participation requirement be added to the eligibility requirements for a crab species license. Under the current LLP, a person applying for a crab species license must demonstrate that documented harvests were made from a qualifying vessel during two periods, the general qualification period (GQP) and the endorsement qualification period (EQP). The current documented harvest requirements for the two periods are as follows.

GQP: One documented harvest of any amount of crab species during the period beginning January 1, 1988, through June 27, 1992, or, if a legal landing of moratorium groundfish species was made from a vessel during the period beginning January 1, 1988, through February 9, 1992, and a legal landing of moratorium crab species was made from that vessel during the period beginning February 10, 1992, through December 11, 1994, one documented harvest of any amount of crab species during the period beginning January 1, 1988, through December 31, 1994.

EQP: Documented harvests during the EQP must be of the same crab species and in the same area as the endorsement.

1. Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area *C. opilio* and *C. bairdi* (Tanner crab): Three documented harvests of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1992, through December 31, 1994.

2. Aleutian Islands brown king crab: Three documented harvests of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1992, through December 31, 1994.

3. Aleutian Islands red king crab: One documented harvest of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1992, through December 31, 1994.

4. Bristol Bay red king crab: One documented harvest of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1991, through December 31, 1994.

5. Pribilof red king crab and Pribilof blue king crab: One documented harvest of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1993, through December 31, 1994.

6. St. Matthew blue king crab: One documented harvest of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1992, through December 31, 1994.

7. Norton Sound red king crab and Norton Sound blue king crab: One documented harvest of any amount during the period beginning January 1, 1993, through December 31, 1994.

In accordance with Amendment 10, this proposed rule would add a third period, the recent participation period (RPP), to the documented harvest requirements for crab. Under the RPP, a person applying for a crab species license would have to demonstrate that one documented harvest of any amount of crab species was made from a qualifying vessel during the period extending from January 1, 1996, through February 7, 1998. The additional eligibility requirements of the RPP are proposed as a means of reducing the number of crab species licenses that might otherwise be issued to persons who have been inactive in the crab