

category, and enforcing catch allocation quotas.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*

Dated: August 15, 1996.

Gary Matlock,

Program Management Officer, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 081296A]

RIN 0648-A170

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Allocations of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 46 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area for Secretarial review. Amendment 46 would allocate the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) Pacific cod

total allowable catch (TAC) among vessels using trawl gear, fixed gear (hook-and-line and pot), and jig gear and would provide authority for the fixed gear allocation to be divided into seasonal allowances.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before October 15, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Copies of Amendment 46 and the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review prepared for the amendment are available from the Council, 605 West Fourth Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252; telephone 907-271-2809.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kent Lind, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act) requires that each Regional Fishery Management Council submit any fishery management plan (FMP) or plan amendment it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial disapproval. The Magnuson Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an FMP or amendment, immediately publish a notice that the FMP or amendment is available for public review and comment. NMFS will consider the public comments received

during the comment period in determining whether to approve the FMP or amendment.

Amendment 46 would allocate the BSAI TAC among vessels using trawl gear, fixed gear, and jig gear. This amendment also would provide authority for the fixed gear allocation of Pacific cod to be divided into seasonal allowances, and would allow any unused portion of one gear's allocation to be reallocated to other gear types. This amendment is necessary to respond to socioeconomic needs of the fishing industry that have been identified by the Council and is intended to further the goals and objectives of the FMP.

NMFS will consider the public comments received during the comment period in determining whether to approve the proposed amendment. A proposed rule to implement Amendment 46 has been submitted for Secretarial review and approval. The proposed rule to implement this amendment is scheduled to be published within 15 days of this document.

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

Dated: August 14, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,

Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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