

1,102,896 lb (500,265 kg) for Gulf migratory group king mackerel in the Florida east coast subzone (50 CFR 622.384(b)(1)(i)(A)). From November 1 through March 31, the Florida east coast subzone encompasses an area of the EEZ south of a line extending due east of the boundary between Flagler and Volusia Counties, FL, and north of a line extending due east of the boundary between Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, FL. From November 1 through the end of February, king mackerel in or from the subzone may be possessed on board or landed from a permitted vessel in amounts not exceeding 50 fish per day (50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(i)(A)).

However, beginning on March 1, if less than 70 percent of the Florida east coast subzone king mackerel commercial quota has been harvested by that date, king mackerel in or from that subzone may be possessed on board or landed from a permitted vessel in amounts not exceeding 75 fish per day (50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(i)(B)(2)).

NMFS has determined that less than 70 percent of the quota for Gulf migratory group king mackerel in the Florida east coast subzone will be harvested by March 1, 2016. Accordingly, a 75-fish trip limit applies to vessels fishing for king mackerel in or from the EEZ in the Florida east coast subzone effective 12:01 a.m., local time, March 1, 2016. The 75-fish trip limit will remain in effect until the commercial quota is reached and the subzone closes, or until the end of the subzone's current fishing year on March 31, 2016.

Classification

The Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of Gulf migratory group king mackerel and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(i)(B)(2) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this commercial trip limit increase constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment

pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), because prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this temporary rule is unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the rule establishing the trip limits has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the trip limit increase. Such procedures are contrary to the public interest, because prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time, thus delaying fishermen's ability to catch more king mackerel than the present trip limit allows and preventing fishermen from reaping the socioeconomic benefits associated with this increased trip limit.

As this action allows fishermen to increase their harvest of king mackerel from 50 fish to 75 fish per day in or from the EEZ of the Florida east coast subzone, the AA finds it relieves a restriction and may go into effect without a 30-day delay in effectiveness, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1).

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

Dated: March 1, 2016.

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. 140918791-4999-02]

RIN 0648-XE482

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Jig Gear in the Central 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 Pacific cod by vessels using jig gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2016 Pacific cod total allowable catch apportioned to vessels using jig gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 1, 2016,

through 1200 hours, A.l.t., June 10, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 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 680.

The A season allowance of the 2016 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to vessels using jig gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 222 metric tons (mt), as established by the final 2015 and 2016 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (80 FR 10250, February 25, 2015) and inseason adjustment (81 FR 188, January 5, 2016).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the A season allowance of the 2016 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to vessels using jig gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 217 mt and is setting aside the remaining 5 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 cod by vessels using jig gear in the Central 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 directed fishing closure of Pacific cod for vessels using jig gear in the Central 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 February 29, 2016.

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: March 1, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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