

■ 2. In § 635.21, add paragraph (c)(1)(iii) to read as follows:

§ 635.21 Gear operation and deployment restrictions.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) * * *

(iii) Has pelagic longline gear on board, persons aboard that vessel are required to release unharmed, to the extent practicable, porbeagle sharks that are alive at the time of haulback.

* * * * *

■ 3. In § 635.22, add paragraph (a)(3) to read as follows:

§ 635.22 Recreational retention limits.

(a) * * *

(3) Vessels issued an HMS General Category permit under § 635.4(d) that are participating in an HMS registered tournament, vessels issued a Swordfish General commercial permit under § 635.4(f) that are participating in an HMS registered tournament, vessels issued a HMS Angling category permit under § 635.4(c), or vessels issued a HMS Charter/Headboat permit under § 635.4(b) are required to release unharmed, to the extent practicable, porbeagle sharks that are alive at the time of haulback if swordfish, tuna, or billfish are retained or possessed on board, or offloaded from, the vessel during that trip.

* * * * *

■ 4. In § 635.24, add paragraph (a)(10) to read as follows:

§ 635.24 Commercial retention limits for sharks, swordfish, and BAYS tunas.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(10) Notwithstanding other provisions in this paragraph (a), vessels issued a permit under this part that have pelagic longline gear on board or on vessels issued both an HMS Charter/Headboat permit and a commercial shark permit when tuna, swordfish, or billfish are on board the vessel, offloaded from the vessel, or being offloaded from the vessel, are required to release unharmed, to the extent practicable, porbeagle sharks that are alive at the time of haulback.

* * * * *

■ 5. In § 635.71, add paragraph (d)(20) to read as follows:

§ 635.71 Prohibitions.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(20) Retain, possess, or land porbeagle sharks that were alive at the time of haulback as specified in

§§ 635.21(c)(1)(iii), 635.22(a)(3), and 635.24 (a)(10).

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 150916863-6211-02]

RIN 0648-XE833

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel 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 Atka mackerel in the Central Aleutian district (CAI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery. This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2016 total allowable catch (TAC) of Atka mackerel in this area allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 19, 2016, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone 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 2016 TAC of Atka mackerel, in the CAI, allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery was established as a directed fishing allowance of 1,421 metric tons by the final 2016 and 2017 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (81 FR 14773, March 18, 2016).

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 Atka mackerel in the CAI by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery.

After the effective dates 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 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 the closure of the Atka mackerel directed fishery in the CAI for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access fishery. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of August 18, 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: August 19, 2016.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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