FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pat Scida, 978–281–9260, or Sarah McLaughlin, 301–713–2347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations implemented under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*) governing the harvest of BFT by persons and vessels subject to U.S. jurisdiction are found at 50 CFR part 285. Section 285.22 subdivides the U.S. quota recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas among the various domestic fishing categories.

Harpoon Category Closure

NMFS is required, under § 285.20(b)(1), to monitor the catch and landing statistics and, on the basis of these statistics, to project a date when the catch of BFT will equal the quota and publish a **Federal Register** announcement to close the applicable fishery.

Implementing regulations for the Atlantic tuna fisheries at § 285.22 provide for a quota of 53 mt of large medium and giant BFT to be harvested from the regulatory area by vessels permitted in the Harpoon category. Based on reported landings and effort, NMFS projects that this quota will be reached by July 7, 1998. Therefore, fishing for, retaining, possessing, or landing large medium or giant BFT by vessels in the Harpoon category must cease at 11:30 p.m. local time July 7, 1998.

The intent of this closure is to prevent overharvest of the quota established for the Harpoon category.

Classification

This action is taken under §§ 285.20(b) and 285.22 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 7, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 98–18461 Filed 7–7–98; 4:25 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 971208298–8055–02; I.D. 070798E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Eastern Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1998 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in this area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 7, 1998, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Furuness, 907–586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and CFR part 679.

The 1998 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Eastern Aleutian District was established by Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the BSAI (63 FR 12689, March 16, 1998) as 2,840 metric tons (mt). See § 679.20(c)(3)(iii).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1998 TAC for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 2,540 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 300 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 ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent overharvesting the 1998 TAC of Pacific ocean perch for the Eastern Aleutian District of the BSAI. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Further delay would only result in overharvest. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action should not be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: July 7, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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