

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. It must be implemented immediately to prevent exceeding the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl Pacific cod fishery category. Providing prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet will soon take the allowance. Further delay would only result in the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance for the trawl Pacific cod fishery category being exceeded. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR 679.21 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: October 15, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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. 990304063-9063-01; I.D. 101599C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Yellowfin Sole by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

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

ACTION: Closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is closing directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 15, 1999, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 1999.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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. 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 Final 1999 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish established the halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the BSAI trawl yellowfin sole fishery, which is defined at § 679.21(e)(3)(iv)(B)(1), as 955 metric tons (64 FR 12103, March 11, 1999).

In accordance with § 679.21(e)(7)(v), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery in the BSAI has been caught. Consequently, the Regional Administrator is closing directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

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 exceeding the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance specified for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category. A delay in the effective date is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The fleet will soon take the allowance. Further delay would only result in the 1999 halibut bycatch mortality allowance for the trawl yellowfin sole fishery category being exceeded. NMFS finds for good cause that the implementation of this action can 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: October 15, 1999

Bruce C. Morehead,

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. 990304063-9063-01; I.D. 101299E]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock

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

ACTION: Reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating projected unused amounts of Bering Sea subarea (BS) pollock from the incidental catch account to the directed fisheries. This action is necessary to allow the 1999 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock to be harvested.

DATES: Effective October 15, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Smoker, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) exclusive economic zone 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. 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.

In accordance with section 206(b) of the American Fisheries Act (AFA), NMFS specified a pollock incidental catch allowance equal to 6 percent of the pollock total allowable catch after subtraction of the 10 percent Community Development Quota reserve in the Final 1999 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish for the BSAI (64 FR 12103, March 11, 1999).

As of October 2, 1999, the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that approximately 5,000 metric tons (mt) of pollock remain in the incidental catch account. Based on projected harvest rates of other groundfish species and the expected bycatch of pollock in those fisheries, the Regional Administrator has determined that 2,000 mt of pollock specified to the incidental catch account will not be necessary as incidental catch. Therefore, NMFS is apportioning the projected unused amount, 2,000 mt, of pollock