SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are in 50 CFR part 648, and require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state are described in §648.100.

The final rule implementing Amendment 5 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, which was published on December 17, 1993 (58 FR 65936), provided a mechanism for summer flounder quota to be transferred from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), can transfer or combine summer flounder commercial quota under §648.102(c)(2). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria in §648.102(c)(2)(i) to evaluate requests for quota transfers or combinations.

North Carolina has agreed to transfer 556,921 lb (252,615 kg) of its 2013 commercial quota to Virginia. This transfer was prompted by summer flounder landings of a Virginia vessel that was granted safe harbor in Virginia due to hazardous shoaling, from March 20, 2013, to April 5, 2013, thereby requiring a quota transfer to account for an increase in Virginia’s landings that would have otherwise accrued against the North Carolina quota. North Carolina has also agreed to transfer 8,940 lb (4,055 kg) of its 2013 commercial quota to Rhode Island. This transfer was prompted by summer flounder landings of a North Carolina vessel that was granted safe harbor in Rhode Island on March 17, 2013, thereby requiring a quota transfer to account for an increase in Rhode Island’s landings that would have otherwise accrued against the North Carolina quota.

Virginia has agreed to transfer 10,990 lb (4,985 kg) of its 2013 commercial quota to Massachusetts. This transfer was prompted by summer flounder landings of a Virginia vessel that was granted safe harbor in Massachusetts on March 20, 2013, thereby requiring a quota transfer to account for an increase in Massachusetts’ landings that would have otherwise accrued against Virginia quota. Virginia has also agreed to transfer 11,729 lb (5,320 kg) of its 2013 commercial quota to New Jersey. This transfer was prompted by summer flounder landings of a Virginia vessel that was granted safe harbor in New Jersey on March 7, 2013, thereby requiring a quota transfer to account for an increase in New Jersey’s landings that would have otherwise accrued against the Virginia quota. The Regional Administrator has determined that the criteria set forth in §648.102(c)(2)(i) have been met. The revised summer flounder quotas for calendar year 2013 are: North Carolina, 422,360 lb (191,579 kg); Virginia, 5,040,501 lb (2,286,333 kg); Rhode Island, 1,972,066 lb (894,514 kg); New Jersey, 1,839,824 lb (834,530 kg); and Massachusetts, 2,555,586 lb (1,160,180 kg).

Additional comments:
1—Should conform to relevant OSHA requirements, including 29 CFR 1910, Subpart L, Sections 1910.160 and 1910.162.
2—Per OSHA requirements, protective gear (SCBA) should be available in the event personnel should reenter the area.
3—The agent should be recovered from the fire protection system in conjunction with testing or servicing, and recycled for later use or destroyed.
4—EPA has no intention of duplicating or displacing OSHA coverage related to the use of personal protective equipment (e.g., respiratory protection), fire protection, hazard communication, worker training or any other occupational safety and health standard with respect to halon substitutes.
kg); and Massachusetts, 791,236 lb (358,899 kg).

Classification
This action is taken under 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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


Kara Meckley,
Acting Deputy 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. 120918468–3111–02]

RIN 0648–XC612

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Hook-and-Line Gear in the Western 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 catcher vessels (CVs) using hook-and-line gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowable catch apportioned to CVs using hook-and-line gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), April 24, 2013, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., September 1, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 907–586–7228.


The A season allowance of the 2013 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) apportioned to CVs using hook-and-line gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 145 metric tons (mt), as established by the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (78 FR 13162, February 26, 2013).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the A season allowance of the 2013 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to CVs using hook-and-line gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 130 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 15 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 using hook-and-line gear in the Western 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 Acting 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 closure of directed fishing for Pacific cod by CVs using hook-and-line gear in the Western 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 April 22, 2013.

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.


Kara Meckley,
Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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