

rockfish allocated to catcher processors participating in the rockfish limited access fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), July 25, 2008, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 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.

The 2008 TAC of northern rockfish allocated to catcher processors participating in the rockfish limited access fishery in the Central GOA is 514 metric tons (mt) as established by the 2008 and 2009 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (73 FR 10562, February 27, 2008), and as posted as the 2008 Rockfish Program Allocations at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/default.htm>.

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2008 TAC of northern rockfish allocated to catcher processors participating in the rockfish limited access fishery in the Central GOA will soon be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 514 mt, and is setting aside the remaining 0 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 northern rockfish by catcher processors participating in the rockfish limited access fishery in the Central 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 closure of northern rockfish by catcher processors participating in the rockfish limited access fishery in the Central GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of July 24, 2008.

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: July 25, 2008.

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. 071106673-8011-02]

RIN 0648-XJ32

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of 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; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amount of the 2008 incidental catch allowance (ICA) of Atka mackerel to the B season allowance of Atka mackerel for the Amendment 80

cooperative in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow the 2008 total allowable catch of Atka mackerel to be fully harvested.

DATES: Effective July 29, 2008, through 2400 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), December 31, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Hogan, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI 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 2008 ICA of Atka mackerel is 1,400 metric tons (mt) and the B season allowance of Atka mackerel for the Amendment 80 cooperative is 3,692 mt in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI as established by the 2008 and 2009 final harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008).

The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that 1,300 mt of the ICA will not be harvested. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(8)(v)(B), NMFS apportions 1,300 mt of Atka mackerel from the ICA to the B season allowance of Atka mackerel for the Amendment 80 cooperative in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. In accordance with § 679.91(f), NMFS will reissue cooperative quota permits for the reallocated Atka mackerel following the procedures set forth in § 679.91(f)(3).

The harvest specifications for Atka mackerel included in the harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (73 FR 10160, February 26, 2008) are revised as follows: 100 mt to the ICA and 4,992 mt to B season allowance of Atka mackerel for the Amendment 80 cooperative in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. Table 4 is correctly revised and republished in its entirety as follows:

TABLE 4—2008 AND 2009 SEASONAL AND SPATIAL ALLOWANCES, GEAR SHARES, CDQ RESERVE, INCIDENTAL CATCH ALLOWANCE, AND AMENDMENT 80 ALLOCATIONS OF THE BSAI ATKA MACKEREL TAC

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector ¹	Season ^{2,3}	2008 allocation by area			2009 allocation by area		
		Eastern Aleutian District/ Bering Sea	Central Aleutian District	Western Aleutian District	Eastern Aleutian District/ Bering Sea	Central Aleutian District	Western Aleutian District
TAC	n/a	19,500	24,300	16,900	15,300	19,000	13,200
CDQ reserve	Total HLA ⁴	2,087 n/a	2,600 1,560	1,808 1,085	1,637 n/a	2,033 1,220	1,412 847
ICA	Total	100	10	10	1,400	10	10
Jig ⁵	Total	80	0	0	61	0	0
BSAI trawl limited access	Total	319	434	0	488	678	0
	A HLA ⁴	159 n/a	217 130	0 0	244 n/a	339 203	0 0
	B HLA ⁴	159 n/a	217 130	0 0	244 n/a	339 203	0 0
Amendment 80 sectors	Total	15,615	21,256	15,082	12,202	16,957	11,778
	A HLA ⁴	7,807 4,684	10,628 6,377	7,541 4,525	6,101 3,660	8,479 5,087	5,889 3,533
	B HLA ⁴	7,807 4,684	10,628 6,377	7,541 4,525	6,101 3,660	8,479 5,087	5,889 3,533
Amendment 80 limited access	Total	8,232	12,809	9,298	n/a	n/a	n/a
	A HLA ⁴	4,116 n/a	6,405 3,843	4,649 2,789	n/a n/a	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
	B HLA ⁴	4,116 n/a	6,405 3,843	4,649 2,789	n/a n/a	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
Amendment 80 cooperatives	Total	8,804	8,447	5,784	n/a	n/a	n/a
	A HLA ⁴	3,812 n/a	4,224 2,534	2,892 1,735	n/a n/a	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
	B HLA ⁴	4,992 n/a	4,224 2,534	2,892 1,735	n/a n/a	n/a n/a	n/a n/a

¹ Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtraction of the CDQ reserves, jig gear allocation, and ICAs, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in Table 33 to part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (see §§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C) and 679.31).

² Regulations at §§ 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery. The A season is January 1 (January 20 for trawl gear) to April 15 and the B season is September 1 to November 1.

³ The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

⁴ Harvest Limit Area (HLA) limit refers to the amount of each seasonal allowance that is available for fishing inside the HLA (see § 679.2). In 2008 and 2009, 60 percent of each seasonal allowance is available for fishing inside the HLA in the Western and Central Aleutian Districts.

⁵ Section 679.20(a)(8)(i) requires that up to 2 percent of the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtraction of the CDQ reserve and ICA. The amount of this allocation is 0.5 percent. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season.

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 reallocation of Atka mackerel from the ICA to the Amendment 80 cooperative in the Eastern Aleutian District and the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. Since the fishery is currently

open, it is important to immediately inform the industry as to the revised allocations. Immediate notification is necessary to allow for the orderly conduct and efficient operation of this fishery, to allow the industry to plan for the fishing season, and to avoid potential disruption to the fishing fleet as well as processors. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most

recent, relevant data only became available as of July 23, 2008.

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: July 25, 2008.

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

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