

through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notification to advise Massachusetts that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no Federal commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in Massachusetts.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours, September 22, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carly Bari, (978) 281-9224, or Carly.Bari@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis among the coastal states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.102.

The initial total commercial quota for summer flounder for the 2014 fishing year was set at 10,835,720 lb (4,915,000 kg) (79 FR 29371, May 22, 2014). The percent allocated to vessels landing summer flounder in Massachusetts is 6.82046 percent, resulting in a commercial quota of 739,046 lb (335,226 kg). The 2014 allocation was adjusted to 688,593 lb (312,340 kg) after the deduction of research set-aside and quota overages for 2013.

The Administrator, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), monitors the state commercial landings and determines when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS is required to publish notification in the **Federal Register** advising and notifying commercial vessels and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in that state. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that the 2014 Massachusetts commercial summer flounder quota will be harvested by September 22, 2014.

Section 648.4(b) provides that Federal permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land summer flounder in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours, September 22, 2014, landings of summer flounder in Massachusetts by vessels holding summer flounder commercial Federal fisheries permits

are prohibited for the remainder of the 2014 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours, September 22, 2014, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Massachusetts for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state.

Classification

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

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment because it would be contrary to the public interest. This action closes the summer flounder fishery for Massachusetts until January 1, 2015, under current regulations. The regulations at § 648.103(b) require such action to ensure that summer flounder vessels do not exceed quotas allocated to the states. If implementation of this closure was delayed to solicit prior public comment, the quota for this fishing year will be exceeded, thereby undermining the conservation objectives of the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan. The AA further finds, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period for the reason stated above.

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

Dated: September 18, 2014.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2014-22599 Filed 9-18-14; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 140417346-4575-02]

RIN 0648-XD514

Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Closure

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: Through this action NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific sardine off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California. This action is necessary because the adjusted non-tribal directed harvest allocation of approximately 7,274 metric tons (mt) for the second harvest allocation period from September 15, 2014, through December 31, 2014, has been projected to have been reached. The allocation for the second period increased from the initial assigned allocation primarily as a result of the release to the non-treaty sector of 2,500 mt by the Quinault Indian Nation and the coastal treaty tribes from overall the treaty set-aside of 4,000 mt. From the effective date of this rule until December 31, 2014, Pacific sardine may be harvested only as part of either the live bait or tribal fishery or incidental to other fisheries; the incidental harvest of Pacific sardine is limited to 45-percent by weight of all fish per trip. Fishing vessels must cease fishing (be at shore and in the process of offloading) at or before the effective date of this closure.

DATES: Effective 12:01 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) September, 20, 2014, through 11:59 p.m., December 31, 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joshua Lindsay, West Coast Region, NMFS, (562) 980-4034.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document announces that based on the best available information recently obtained from the fishery and information on past fishing effort, the non-tribal directed fishing harvest allocation for the 2014-2015 harvest allocation period from September 15, 2014, through December 31, 2014, will be reached and therefore directed fishing for Pacific sardine is being closed until the next allocation period begins on January 1, 2015. Fishing vessels must cease fishing (be at shore and in the process of offloading) at or before the effective date of this closure. From the effectiveness of this closure, through December 31, 2014, Pacific sardine may be harvested only as part of either the live bait or tribal fishery or incidental to other fisheries, with the incidental harvest of Pacific sardine limited to 45-percent by weight of all fish caught during a trip.

NMFS manages the Pacific sardine fishery in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the Pacific coast (California, Oregon, and Washington) in accordance with the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Annual specifications published

in the **Federal Register** establish the allowable harvest levels (i.e. annual catch limit/harvest guideline (HG)) for each Pacific sardine fishing season. If during any of the seasonal allocation periods the applicable directed harvest allocation is projected to be taken, and the fishery is closed, only incidental harvest is allowed. For the remainder of the period, any incidental Pacific sardine landings will be counted against that period's incidental set aside. In the event that an incidental set-aside is projected to be attained, all fisheries will be closed to the retention of Pacific sardine for the remainder of the period via appropriate rulemaking.

Under 50 CFR 660.509, if the total allocation or any specific apportionment levels for Pacific sardine are reached at any time, NMFS is required to close the Pacific sardine fishery via appropriate rulemaking and the fishery remains closed until it re-opens either per the allocation scheme or the beginning of the next fishing season. In accordance with § 660.509 the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the date of the closure of the directed fishery for Pacific sardine.

The above in-season harvest restrictions are not intended to affect the prosecution of the live bait or tribal portions of the Pacific sardine fishery.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR 660.509 and is exempt from Office of Management and Budget review under Executive Order 12866.

NMFS 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) for the closure of the directed harvest of Pacific sardine. For the reasons set forth below, notice and comment procedures are impracticable and contrary to the public interest. For the same reasons, NMFS also finds good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness for this action. This measure responds to the best available information and is necessary for the conservation and management of the Pacific sardine resource. A delay in effectiveness would cause the fishery to exceed the allocated in-season harvest level. These seasonal harvest levels are important mechanisms in preventing overfishing and managing the fishery at optimum yield. The established directed and incidental harvest allocations are designed to allow fair and equitable opportunity to the resource by all sectors of the Pacific sardine fishery and to allow access to other profitable CPS

fisheries, such as squid and Pacific mackerel. Many of the same fishermen who harvest Pacific sardine rely on these other fisheries for a significant portion of their income.

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

Dated: September 18, 2014.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2014-22570 Filed 9-18-14; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 130424402-4775-02]

RIN 0648-BD23

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area; Amendment 105

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS publishes regulations to implement Amendment 105 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP). Amendment 105 and its implementing regulations establish a process for Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups, and cooperatives established under the Amendment 80 Program (Amendment 80 cooperatives), to exchange harvest quota from one of three flatfish species (flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole) for an equal amount of another of these three flatfish species, while maintaining total catch below acceptable biological catch (ABC) limits. This final rule modifies the annual harvest specifications process to allow the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to establish the maximum amount of flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole that may be exchanged based on social, economic, or biological considerations. This action is necessary to mitigate the operational variability, environmental conditions, and economic factors that may constrain the CDQ groups and Amendment 80 cooperatives from achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. This action is intended to promote the goals

and objectives of the BSAI FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), and other applicable law.

DATES: Effective October 23, 2014.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA), and the Categorical Exclusion prepared for this action, the supplemental information report prepared for the final 2014 and 2015 harvest specifications (Harvest Specifications Supplemental Information Report (SIR)), and the Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Final Environmental Impact Statement (Harvest Specifications EIS) may be obtained from <http://www.regulations.gov> or from the NMFS Alaska Region Web site at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>.

Written comments regarding the burden-hour estimates or other aspects of the collection of information requirements contained in this final rule may be submitted by mail to NMFS, Alaska Region, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Ellen Sebastian, Records Officer; in person at NMFS, Alaska Region, 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK; or by email to OIRA_submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-7285.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Seanbob Kelly, 907-586-7228

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulatory Authority

Here, NMFS establishes regulations to implement Amendment 105 to the BSAI FMP. NMFS manages the U.S. groundfish fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska under the BSAI FMP and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska. The Council prepared the BSAI FMP pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. Regulations implementing the BSAI FMP appear at 50 CFR part 679. General regulations governing U.S. fisheries also appear at 50 CFR part 600.

Background

NMFS published the Notice of Availability for Amendment 105 in the **Federal Register** on June 13, 2014 (79 FR 33889), with a 60-day comment period that ended August 12, 2014. NMFS published a proposed rule for Amendment 105 in the **Federal Register** on June 30, 2014 (79 FR 36702). The 30-day comment period on the proposed rule ended July 30, 2014. NMFS received a total of five comment letters from three unique persons during the comment periods. The comment letters