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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 679**

**[Docket No. 150818742-6210-02]**

**RIN 0648-XY045**

**Fisheries of the Economic Exclusive Zone Off Alaska; Pollock Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl 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 pollock by vessels using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2019 Chinook salmon prohibited species catch limit established for vessels using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), October 8, 2019, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2019.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Josh Keaton, 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 2019 Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for vessels directed fishing for pollock using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA is 6,684 Chinook salmon (§ 679.21(h)(2)(i)).

In accordance with § 679.21(h)(8), the Regional Administrator has determined that the 2019 Chinook salmon PSC limit established for vessels directed fishing for pollock using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by vessels using trawl gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the GOA.

### **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 a 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 closing directed fishing for pollock by vessels using trawl 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 October 7, 2019.

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 § 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: October 8, 2019.

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Jennifer M. Wallace,  
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National Marine Fisheries Service.

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