



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **50 CFR Part 679**

**[Docket No. 240304-0068; RTID 0648-XE586]**

### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 Feet (18.3 Meters) Length Overall Using Hook-and-Line or Pot Gear 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; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels  
less than 60 feet (18.3 meters (m)) length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line or pot gear  
in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary  
to prevent exceeding the 2025 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) allocated to  
catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the  
BSAI.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), January 21, 2025, through 2400  
hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the  
BSAI exclusive economic zone 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 (Magnuson-Stevens 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 2025 Pacific cod TAC allocated to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI is 2,525 metric tons as established by the final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (89 FR 17287, March 11, 2024) and inseason adjustment (89 FR 105478, December 27, 2024).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2025 Pacific cod TAC allocated as a directed fishing allowance to catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI will soon be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

### **Classification**

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be 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 Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of January 17, 2025.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA 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.

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

Dated: February 28, 2025.

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**Karen H. Abrams,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,*

*National Marine Fisheries Service.*