



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 250312-0037; RTID 0648-XF142]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels using Trawl Gear in the Central 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
using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action
is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2025 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod by
catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 1, 2025, through
2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abby Jahn, 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 and recommended 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 annual 2025 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher vessels using trawl gear
in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA not participating in the cooperative fishery of

the Rockfish Program is 6,203 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for groundfish in the GOA (90 FR 12468, March 18, 2025).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator has determined that the annual 2025 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been or will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 3,225 mt and is setting aside the remaining 2,978 mt as incidental catch 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 or will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA to prevent exceedance of this sector's annual apportionment of Pacific cod TAC.

While this closure is effective the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip. This closure does not apply to fishing by vessels participating in the cooperative fishery of the Rockfish Program in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

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) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 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 on the harvest of Pacific cod in a timely fashion and would delay the closure of Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing

time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data regarding harvest of Pacific cod by catcher vessels using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA only became available as of August 28, 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: August 28, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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