



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 250312-0036]

RTID 0648-XE947

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish in the Central Aleutian and Western Aleutian Districts of 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 retention of blackspotted and rougheye rockfish in the Central Aleutian Island and Western Aleutian Island districts (CAI/WAI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary because the 2025 blackspotted and rougheye rockfish total allowable catch (TAC) in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI will soon be or has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 11, 2025, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 907-206-6783.

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 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 2025 blackspotted and roughey rockfish TAC in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI is 298 metric tons as established by the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (90 FR 12640, March 18, 2025). The Administrator for the Alaska Region of NMFS has determined that the 2025 blackspotted and roughey rockfish TAC in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI will soon be or has been reached. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), NMFS is prohibiting retention of blackspotted and roughey in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI and requiring that blackspotted and roughey rockfish in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI be treated in the same manner as a prohibited species, as described under § 679.21(a), for the remainder of the year. Blackspotted and roughey rockfish species in the CAI/WAI caught by catcher vessels using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear as described in § 679.20(j). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2025 blackspotted and roughey TAC in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI.

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 in a timely fashion and would delay prohibiting retention of blackspotted and roughey rockfish in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data on the total catch of blackspotted and roughey in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI only became available as of September 10, 2025.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of 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: September 11, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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