



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 250312-0037; RTID 0648-XE689]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Big Skates 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 retention of big skates in the Central Regulatory
Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary because the 2025 total
allowable catch (TAC) of big skates in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been
reached.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Adam Zaleski, 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 50 CFR part 600, subpart
H, and 50 CFR part 679.

The 2025 TAC of big skates in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 1,749 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)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has determined that the 2025 TAC of big skates in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that big skates in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(a)(2).

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 the retention of big skates 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 only became available as of November 18, 2025.

There is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action. 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: November 19, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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