



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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

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

**[Docket No. 260305-0066; RTID 0648-XF424]**

#### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Pot Catcher/ Processors 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/processors  
using pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This  
action is necessary to prevent exceeding the A season allowance of the 2026 Pacific cod  
total allowable catch (TAC) allocated to catcher/processors using pot gear in the BSAI.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 30, 2026, through 1200  
hours, A.l.t., September 1, 2026.

**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 A season allowance of the 2026 Pacific cod TAC allocated to  
catcher/processors using pot gear in the BSAI is 896 metric tons as established by the

final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS has determined that the A season allowance of the 2026 Pacific cod TAC allocated as a directed fishing allowance to catcher/processors using pot gear in the BSAI will be or has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod by pot catcher/processors in the BSAI to prevent exceeding this sector's A season allowance 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.

### **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 Pacific cod catch in a timely fashion and would delay the closure of directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher/processors using pot gear in the A season 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 March 27, 2026.

There is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to establish an effective date less than 30 days after date of publication. 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: March 27, 2026.

**David R. Blankinship,**

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*National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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