



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 260305-0066; RTID 0648-XF648]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; reallocation.

SUMMARY: NMFS is reallocating the projected unused amounts of the Aleut Corporation and the Community Development Quota (CDQ) pollock directed fishing allowances (DFA) from the Aleutian Islands subarea to the Bering Sea subarea. This action is necessary to provide the opportunity for the harvest of the 2026 total allowable catch (TAC) of pollock, consistent with the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI).

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), **[INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 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 BSAI Management Area (FMP) prepared and recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (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.

In the Aleutian Islands subarea, the portion of the 2026 pollock TAC allocated to the Aleut Corporation and CDQ DFA is 12,600 metric tons (mt) and 1,900 mt, respectively, as established by the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026).

As of March 14, 2026, the Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that 6,300 mt of the Aleut Corporation's DFA and 1,900 mt of pollock CDQ DFA in the Aleutian Islands subarea will likely not be harvested and that there is harvesting capacity by Bering Sea sectors. The Regional Administrator made this determination based on harvest to date that indicates vessels participating in the Aleutian Islands directed pollock fishery and Aleutian Islands CDQ directed pollock fishery likely will not harvest the entire DFAs, the future harvest needs in the Aleutian Islands subarea reported by the Aleut Corporation and CDQ Program groups, and the current harvesting capacity of sectors in the Bering Sea subarea. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(4), NMFS reallocates 6,300 mt of the Aleut Corporation's DFA and 1,900 mt of pollock CDQ DFA from the Aleutian Islands subarea to the Bering Sea subarea allocations. The 1,900 mt of pollock CDQ DFA is added to the 2026 Bering Sea pollock CDQ DFA. The 6,300 mt of pollock reallocated from the Aleut Corporation's DFA is apportioned to the American Fisheries Act (AFA) inshore sector (50 percent), AFA catcher/processor (C/P) sector (40 percent), and the AFA mothership sector (10 percent). The 2026 Bering Sea subarea pollock incidental catch allowance remains at 46,000 mt. As a result, the 2026 harvest specifications for pollock in the Aleutian Islands subarea included in the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026) is revised as follows: 0 mt to CDQ DFA and 6,300 mt to the Aleut Corporation's DFA. Furthermore,

pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5), table 4 is revised to make 2026 pollock allocations consistent with this reallocation. This reallocation results in an adjustment to the 2026 CDQ pollock DFAs, Aleutian Islands Aleut Corporation DFA, and Bering Sea AFA sector allocations as established at § 679.20(a)(5).

Table 4 -- Final 2026 Allocations of Pollock TACs to the Directed Pollock Fisheries and to the CDQ Directed Fishing Allowances DFA¹

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Area and sector	2026 Allocations	2026 A season ¹		2026 B season ¹
		A season DFA	SCA harvest limit ²	B season DFA
Bering Sea subarea TAC ¹	1,383,200	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	139,400	62,730	39,032	76,670
ICA ¹	46,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Bering Sea non-CDQ DFA	1,197,800	539,010	335,384	658,790
AFA Inshore	598,900	269,505	167,692	329,395
AFA CPs	479,120	215,604	134,154	263,516
Catch by CPs	438,395	197,278	n/a	241,117
Catch by CVs ³	40,725	18,326	n/a	22,399
Unlisted CP Limit ⁴	2,396	1,078	n/a	1,318
AFA Motherships	119,780	53,901	33,538	65,879
Excessive Harvesting Limit ⁵	209,615	n/a	n/a	n/a
Excessive Processing Limit ⁶	359,340	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea ABC	46,437	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea TAC ¹	10,800	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	-	-	n/a	-
ICA	4,500	2,250	n/a	2,250
Aleut Corporation ⁷	6,300	6,300	n/a	-
Area harvest limit ⁸	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

541	13,931	n/a	n/a	n/a
542	6,966	n/a	n/a	n/a
543	2,322	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bogoslof District ICA ⁹	250	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Season or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 harvest specifications for pollock are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

¹ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A), the annual BS subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (46,000 mt), is allocated as a DFA as follows: inshore sector-50 percent, C/P sector-40 percent, and mothership sector-10 percent. In the BS subarea, 45 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the A season (January 20-June 10) and 55 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the B season (June 10-November 1). When the AI subarea pollock ABC equals or exceeds 19,000 mt, the annual TAC for the AI subarea is equal to 19,000 mt (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(1)). Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(2), the annual AI subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (4,500 mt), is allocated to the Aleut Corporation for a directed pollock fishery. In the AI subarea, the A season is allocated up to 40 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

² In the BS subarea, pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(C), no more than 28 percent of each sector's annual DFA may be taken from the SCA before noon, April 1. The SCA is defined at § 679.22(a)(7)(vii).

³ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(4), 8.5 percent of the DFA allocated to listed C/Ps shall be available for harvest only by eligible catcher vessels with a C/P endorsement delivering to listed C/Ps, unless there is a cooperative contract for the year.

⁴ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(4)(iii), the AFA unlisted C/Ps are limited to harvesting not more than 0.5 percent of the C/P sector's allocation of pollock.

⁵ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(6), NMFS establishes an excessive harvesting share limit equal to 17.5 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

⁶ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(7), NMFS establishes an excessive processing share limit equal to 30 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

⁷ Pursuant to § 679.4(m), prior to harvesting or processing pollock in the AI directed pollock fishery, a participant must be selected by the Aleut Corporation and approved by the Regional Administrator. Annual allocation for vessels 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA or less participating in the AI directed pollock fishery is 50 percent of the AI directed pollock fishery allocation (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(5)).

⁸ Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(6), NMFS establishes harvest limits for pollock in the A season in Area 541 no more than 30 percent, in Area 542 no more than 15 percent, and in Area 543 no more than 5 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

⁹ Pursuant to § 679.22(a)(7)(B), the Bogoslof District is closed to directed fishing for pollock. The amounts specified are therefore for incidental catch only and are not apportioned by season or sector (§ 679.20(a)(5)(ii)).

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 pollock catch in a timely fashion, and would delay the reallocation of unharvested Aleutian Islands pollock to the Bering Sea, where sectors have the current capacity to harvest this reallocated pollock. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data on pollock catch only became available as of March 14, 2026.

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: April 1, 2026.

David R. Blankinship,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.