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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 260305-0066, RTID 0648-XG090]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Eastern Aleutian District 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 directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian district (EAI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector fishery. This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the 2026 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific ocean perch in the EAI allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector fishery.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), November 23, 2026, 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 (FMP) for Groundfish of the BSAI 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 2026 TAC of Pacific ocean perch, in the EAI, allocated to vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector fishery was established as a directed fishing allowance of 539 metric tons 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 this directed fishing allowance has been or will be reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch in the EAI by vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector fishery to prevent exceeding this sector's allocation of Pacific ocean perch in the EAI. 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 in a timely fashion and would delay the closure of the Pacific ocean perch directed fishing in the EAI for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector fishery. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data on Pacific ocean perch harvest in the EAI for vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector only became available as of November 20, 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: November 23, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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