

directed golden crab fishery in the EEZ. Rope is the only material allowed to be used for mainlines and buoy lines, except that wire cable will be allowed for these purposes for 18 months after [publication of the final rule implementing the FMP]. Golden crab in or from the EEZ may not be retained on board a vessel possessing or using unauthorized gear.

(b) *Maximum trap size.* The maximum volume of a trap deployed or possessed in the EEZ is 64 cubic feet (ft<sup>3</sup>) (1.81 cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>)) in the northern zone and 48 ft<sup>3</sup> (1.36 m<sup>3</sup>) in the middle and southern zones. See § 686.4(a)(8) for a description of the respective zones.

(c) *Trap escape mechanisms.* (1) *Escape gaps.* Each trap must have at least one escape gap or escape ring on each of two opposite vertical sides. The minimum inside dimensions of an escape gap are 2.75 by 3.75 inches (6.99 by 9.53 cm); the minimum inside diameter of an escape ring is 4.5 inches (11.4 cm).

(2) *Biodegradable escape mechanism.* In addition to the escape gaps required by paragraph (c)(1) of this section, each trap, except as noted in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, must have a biodegradable escape panel or door measuring at least 12 by 12 inches (30.5 by 30.5 cm), located on at least one side, excluding top and bottom. The hinges and fasteners of each door or panel must be made of one of the following degradable materials:

(i) Ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire no larger than 19-gauge or 0.041-inch (0.10-cm) diameter;

(ii) Untreated cotton string of 3/1609inch (0.4809cm) diameter or smaller.

(3) *Traps constructed of webbing.* The provisions of paragraph (c)(2) of this section notwithstanding, traps constructed of webbing must have an opening (slit) at least 1 foot (30.5 cm) in length that may be closed (relaced) only with cotton string of 3/1609inch (0.4809cm) diameter or smaller.

(d) *Depth limitations.* In the northern zone, traps may not be deployed in waters of less than 900 ft (274 m) depth. In the middle and southern zones, traps may not be deployed in waters of less than 700 ft (213 m) depth. See § 686.4(a)(8) for a description of the respective zones.

(e) *Tending traps.* A golden crab trap may be pulled or tended only by a person (other than an authorized officer) aboard the vessel permitted to fish such trap, or aboard another vessel if such vessel has on board written consent of the vessel permit holder and possesses a valid golden crab vessel permit.

#### § 686.23 Restrictions on sale.

(a) No person may purchase, barter, trade, or sell, or attempt to purchase, barter, trade, or sell, a golden crab harvested in the EEZ by a vessel for which a valid permit has not been issued under § 686.4.

(b) No person may sell, trade, or barter, or attempt to sell, trade, or barter, a golden crab harvested in the EEZ by a vessel permitted under § 686.4 to a dealer who does not have a valid permit issued under § 686.4.

(c) No dealer who has a valid permit issued under § 686.4 may purchase, trade, or barter, or attempt to purchase, trade, or barter, a golden crab harvested in the EEZ from a vessel for which a valid permit has not been issued under § 686.4.

(d) The sale, trade or barter or attempted sale, trade, or barter of a female golden crab harvested from the EEZ is prohibited.

#### § 686.24 Adjustment of management measures.

In accordance with the procedures and limitations of the FMP, the Regional Director may establish or modify the following items relating to the golden crab fishery: Maximum sustainable yield, acceptable biological catch, total allowable catch, quotas (including quotas equal to zero), trip limits, minimum sizes, gear regulations and restrictions, permit requirements, seasonal or area closures, time frame for recovery of golden crab if overfished, fishing year (adjustment not to exceed 2 months), observer requirements, and authority for the Regional Director to close the fishery when a quota is reached or is projected to be reached.

#### § 686.25 Specifically authorized activities.

The Assistant Administrator may authorize, for the acquisition of information and data, activities otherwise prohibited by this part. In addition, the Regional Director may issue a permit for experimental fishing, provided that, as a condition of such permit, data on the gear used and fish caught in such experimental fishing is maintained and provided to the Science and Research Director.

[FR Doc. 96-9059 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

#### 50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6091-01; I.D. 040496A]

#### Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Reserve Apportionment

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

**ACTION:** Apportionment of reserve; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS proposes to apportion reserve to certain target species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to allow for ongoing harvest and account for previous harvest of the total allowable catch (TAC). It is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

**DATES:** Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., Alaska local time, April 25, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be sent to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, 709 W. 9th, room 453, Juneau, AK 99801 or P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Andrew N. Smoker, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the U.S. BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the initial TACs specified for the following species need to be supplemented from the non-specific reserve in order to continue operations and account for prior harvest, as follows: For pollock in the Bering Sea subarea; for pollock in the Aleutian Islands subarea; for Atka mackerel in the combined Eastern Aleutian District and Bering Sea subarea; for Pacific ocean perch in the Eastern Aleutian District; for Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch in the Central and Western Aleutian Districts; and for Pacific cod, arrowtooth flounder, and the "other species" category in the BSAI.

Therefore, in accordance with § 675.20(b), NMFS proposes to apportion from the reserve to TACs for the following species: (1) Bering Sea subarea - 89,250 metric tons (mt) to pollock; (2) Aleutian Islands subarea - 2,670 mt to pollock; (3) Eastern Aleutian District and Bering Sea subarea - 4,005 mt to Atka mackerel; (4) Eastern Aleutian District - 454 mt to Pacific ocean perch; (5) Central Aleutian District - 5,040 mt to Atka mackerel and 454 mt to Pacific ocean perch; (6) Western Aleutian District - 6,879 mt to Atka mackerel and 907 mt to Pacific ocean perch; and (7) BSAI - 40,500 mt to Pacific cod, 1,350 mt to arrowtooth flounder and 3,019 mt to the "other species" category.

These proposed apportionments are consistent with § 675.20(a)(2)(i) and do not result in overfishing of a target species or the 'other species' category, because the revised TACs are equal to

or less than specifications of acceptable biological catch.

Pursuant to § 675.20(a)(3)(i), the proposed apportionments of pollock are allocated between the inshore and offshore components: (1) For the Bering Sea subarea - 31,238 mt to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component and 58,012 mt to vessels catching pollock for processing by the offshore component; and (2) for the Aleutian Islands subarea - 935 mt to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component and 1,735 mt to vessels catching pollock for processing by the offshore component.

Pursuant to § 675.20(a)(3)(iv), the proposed apportionment of the BSAI Pacific cod TAC is allocated 810 mt to vessels using jig gear, 17,820 mt to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear, and 21,870 mt to vessels using trawl gear.

In accordance with the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications for the BSAI (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996), the allocation to hook-and-line/pot gear will result in seasonal apportionments as follows: For the period January 1 through April 30 - 94,118 mt, for the period May 1 through August 31 - 21,176 mt, and for the period September 1 through December 31 - 3,506 mt.

#### Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is in compliance with E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 5, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-8995 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F