

specified in § 622.44(a) or (b), respectively.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 102699B]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; Amendment 58 to Revise the Chinook Salmon Savings Area

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 58 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) for Secretary of Commerce review. The intended effect of this amendment is to reduce bycatch of chinook salmon by trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Area (BSAI).

**DATES:** Comments on Amendment 58 must be submitted by January 3, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on Amendment 58 should be submitted to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK

99802, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Comments will not be accepted if submitted by e-mail or Internet. Copies of Amendment 58 and the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis prepared for this action may be obtained from the same address or by calling the Alaska Region, NMFS, at 907-586-7228.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Shane Capron, 907-586-7228 or shane.capron@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** To reduce bycatch of chinook salmon by trawl fisheries in the BSAI, the Council recommended changes to both the FMP and the regulations implementing it. Amendment 58 would revise the FMP's management measures for chinook salmon by (1) removing the prohibited species catch (PSC) limit of 48,000 chinook salmon from the FMP and replacing it with a framework that would allow NMFS to establish the chinook PSC limit through regulations; and (2) revising the boundaries of the chinook salmon savings area (CHSSA).

The Council also recommended that NMFS use the framework proposed in Amendment 58 to reduce the chinook PSC limit from 48,000 to 29,000 salmon over a 4-year period, to implement year-round accounting of chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery beginning on January 1 of each year, to revise the boundaries of the CHSSA, and to set new CHSSA closure dates.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that each Regional Fishery Management Council submit any fishery management plan (FMP) or FMP amendment it

prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an amendment, immediately publish a notification in the **Federal Register** that the amendment is available for public review and comment. NMFS will consider all public comments received during the comment period in determining whether to approve the FMP or amendment. Public comments on Amendment 58 must be received by January 3, 2000 to be considered by NMFS in the decision to approve/disapprove this amendment. After evaluating Amendment 58 pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS will publish a proposed rule to implement the amendment and the related regulatory changes the Council recommended in the **Federal Register** for public comment. Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by January 3, 2000, the end of the comment period for this notice of availability on Amendment 58, to be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the amendment. Comments received after that date will not be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the amendment. All comments received on the amendment or on the proposed rule will be responded to in the preamble to the final rule.

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

Dated: October 29, 1999.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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