

Table 11 - Non-Exempt AFA Catcher Vessel Sideboard Directed Fishing Closures in the GOA. (Amounts are in mt)

Species	Regulatory Area/District	Gear	Amount
Pacific cod	E GOA	all	19
Deep-water flatfish	W and E GOA	all	0 and 42
Rex sole	W and E GOA	all	1 and 41
Flathead sole	E GOA	all	20
Shallow-water flatfish	E GOA	all	52
Arrowtooth flounder	E GOA	all	10
Pacific ocean perch	W GOA	all	168
Northern rockfish	W GOA	all	0
Pelagic shelf rockfish	entire GOA	all	10
Demersal shelf rockfish	SEO District	all	1
Other species	entire GOA	all	101

Under authority of the interim 2003 specifications (67 FR 78733, December 26, 2002), pollock fishing opened on January 20, 2003, for amounts specified in that notice. NMFS has since closed Statistical Area 610 to directed fishing for pollock effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., January 23, 2003 (68 FR 4115, January 28, 2003), and Statistical Area 630 to directed fishing for pollock effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., January 21, 2003 (68 FR 2921, January 22, 2003), and opened Statistical Area 630 to directed fishing for pollock effective 1200 hrs., A.l.t., February 13, 2003 through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., February 14, 2003 (68 FR 7448, February 14, 2003). The closures for pollock in Statistical Areas 610 and 630 will remain in effect through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., March 10, 2003. NMFS has prohibited directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the offshore component effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., February 1, 2003 (68 FR 5585, February 1, 2003), by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area, effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., February 9, 2003 (68 FR 7323, February 13, 2003), and by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by

the inshore component in the Western Regulatory Area, effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., February 17, 2003 (68 FR 8154, February 20, 2003). The closures for Pacific cod in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas will remain in effect through 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 1, 2003.

These closures supersede the closures announced in the interim 2003 harvest specifications (67 FR 78733, December 26, 2002). While these closures are in effect, the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a fishing trip. These closures to directed fishing are in addition to closures and prohibitions found in regulations at § 679. NMFS may implement other closures during the 2003 fishing year as necessary for effective conservation and management. Response to Comments

NMFS received one letter of comment in response to the proposed 2003 harvest specifications (67 FR 76344, December 12, 2002).

*Comment 1.* A request for an extension of time in which to comment on the document.

*Response.* Regulations at 50 CFR 679.20(c)(1)(i)(B) provide for a 30-day comment period on the proposed

specifications. NMFS has determined that an extension of the 30-day comment period on the proposed harvest specifications would pose unacceptable management implications for the 2003 groundfish fisheries. Without proposed and interim specifications in effect on January 1, the groundfish fisheries would not be able to open on that date, which would result in unnecessary closures and disruption within the fishing industry. Therefore, NMFS declines to extend the comment period on the proposed specifications.

#### Small Entity Compliance Guide

The following information is a plain language guide to assist small entities in complying with this final rule as required by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This rule's primary management measures are to announce final 2003 harvest specifications and prohibited species bycatch allowances for the groundfish fishery of the GOA. This action is necessary to establish harvest limits and associated management measures for groundfish during the 2003 fishing year and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fishery