

conducted on a preliminary data set provided by the NMFS Observer Program Office. A final data set is expected to be available in late September, which will allow refinement of this analysis, as well as additional analyses.

After the December 1995 Council meeting, NMFS will consider all available data and will announce preseason assumed halibut mortality rates in the Federal Register with the final 1996 initial specifications for groundfish TAC amounts.

Classification

This action is authorized under 50 CFR 611.92 and 672.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866. This action is also covered by the regulatory flexibility analysis prepared for the implementing regulations.

A draft environmental assessment (EA) on the allowable harvest levels set forth in the final 1995 SAFE Report will be available for public review from the NMFS, Alaska Region (see **ADDRESSES**), and at the December 1995 Council meeting. After the December meeting, a

final EA will be prepared on the final 1996 TAC amounts after consultation by the Council.

Consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act has been initiated for the 1996 GOA initial specifications.

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

Dated: November 24, 1995.

Nancy Foster,

*Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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