

TABLE 2.—INTERIM 1996 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL AND NONTRAWL FISHERIES—Continued

Trawl fisheries	Zone 1 <sup>1</sup>	Zone 2 <sup>1</sup>	BSAI-wide
Total .....	.....	.....	465
<i>Nontrawl fisheries:</i>			
Pacific halibut, mortality (mt):			
Pacific cod Hook-and-line .....	.....	.....	181
Other nontrawl <sup>6</sup> .....	.....	.....	44
Groundfish pot gear .....	.....	.....	Exempt
Groundfish jig gear .....	.....	.....	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line .....	.....	.....	Exempt
Total .....	.....	.....	225

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 675.2 for definitions of areas.<sup>2</sup> Rock sole and other flatfish fishery category.<sup>3</sup> Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder, and sablefish fishery category.<sup>4</sup> Pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.<sup>5</sup> Pollock other than midwater pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.<sup>6</sup> Includes hook-and-line sablefish, rockfish, and Greenland turbot.

### 3. Closures to Directed Fishing

Under § 675.20(a)(8), if the Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), determines that the amount of a target species or "other species" category apportioned to a fishery or, with respect to pollock, to an inshore or offshore component allocation, is likely to be reached, the Regional Director may establish a directed fishing allowance for that species or species group. If the Regional Director establishes a directed fishing allowance, and that allowance is or will be reached before the end of the fishing year, NMFS will prohibit directed fishing for that species or species group in the specified subarea or district. Similarly, under §§ 675.21(c) and 675.21(d), if the Regional Director determines that a fishery category's bycatch allowance of halibut, red king crab, or *C. bairdi* Tanner crab for a specified area has been reached, the Regional Director will prohibit directed fishing for each species in that category in the specified area.

The Regional Director has determined that the interim TAC amounts of pollock in the Bogoslof District, Pacific ocean perch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island subareas, shortraker/rougheye rockfish in the Aleutian Islands subarea, other rockfish in the BSAI, and other red rockfish in the Bering Sea will be necessary as incidental catch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries prior to the time that final specifications for groundfish are in effect for the 1996 fishing year (Table 3). Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for these target species and gear types in the specified area identified in Table 3 to prevent exceeding the interim amounts of groundfish TACs specified in Table 1 of this document.

An interim Zone 1 red king crab bycatch allowance of zero crab is specified for the rockfish trawl fishery, which is defined at § 675.21(b)(1)(iii)(D). Similarly, the interim BSAI halibut bycatch allowance specified for the Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/sablefish trawl fishery category, defined at § 675.21(b)(1)(iii)(C), is 0 mt. The Regional Director has determined, in accordance with §§ 675.21(c)(1)(i) and 675.21(c)(iii), that the interim red king crab bycatch allowance specified for the trawl rockfish fishery in Zone 1 and the interim halibut bycatch allowance specified for the Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/sablefish trawl fishery category has been caught. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for rockfish in Zone 1 by vessels using trawl gear, and for Greenland turbot, arrowtooth flounder, and sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI (Table 3).

The closures listed in Table 3 will be in effect during the period that the 1996 interim specifications for groundfish TAC amounts are in effect beginning at 0001 hours, A.L.T., January 1, 1996, and will remain in effect until superseded by the Final 1996 Initial Harvest Specifications for Groundfish. While these closures are in effect, the maximum retainable bycatch amounts at § 675.20(h) apply at any time during a fishing trip. Additional closures and restrictions may be found in existing regulations at 50 CFR part 675.

TABLE 3.—CLOSURES TO DIRECTED FISHING UNDER 1995 INTERIM TAC AMOUNTS<sup>1</sup>

Fishery (All gear)	Closed area <sup>2</sup>
Pollock in Bogoslof District ....	Statistical Area 518.
Pacific ocean perch .....	Bering Sea.
	Eastern AI. <sup>3</sup>
	Central AI.
	Western AI.
Shortraker/rougheye rockfish .	AI.
Other rockfish <sup>4</sup> .....	BSAI.
Other red rockfish <sup>5</sup> .....	Bering Sea.
Rockfish (trawl only) .....	Zone 1.
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish (trawl only).	BSAI.

<sup>1</sup> These closures to directed fishing are in addition to closures and prohibitions found in regulations at 50 CFR part 675.<sup>2</sup> Refer to § 675.2 for definitions of areas.<sup>3</sup> "AI" means Aleutian Islands area.<sup>4</sup> In the BSAI, "Other rockfish" includes *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species except for Pacific ocean perch and the "other red rockfish" species.<sup>5</sup> "Other red rockfish" includes shortraker, rougheye, sharpchin, and northern.

After consideration of public comments on the Proposed 1996 Initial Specifications for Groundfish and additional scientific information presented at its December 1995 meeting, the Council may recommend other closures to directed fishing. NMFS may implement other closures at the time the Final 1996 Initial Harvest Specifications are implemented or during the 1996 fishing year, as necessary for effective management.

#### Classification

This action is authorized under 50 CFR 611.93(b), 675.20, and part 676 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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