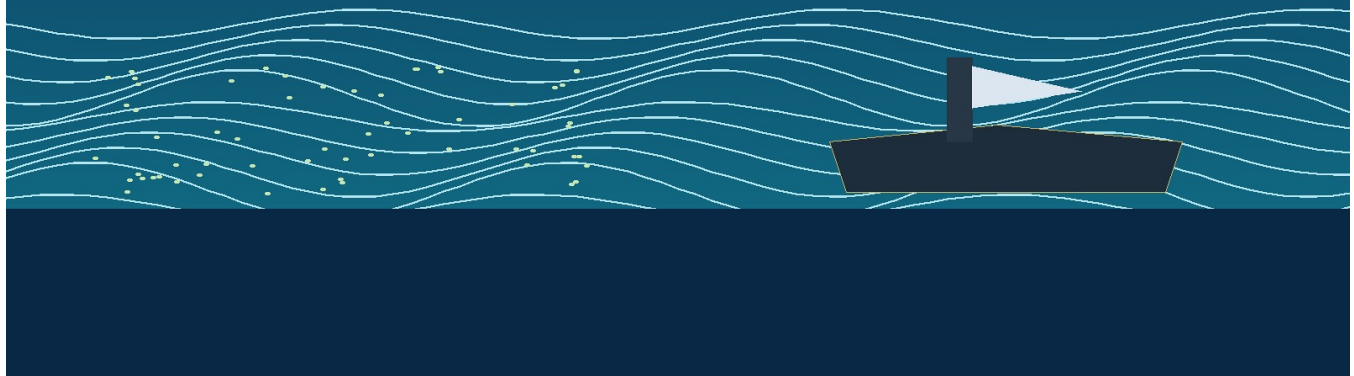


Winter Herring Savings Area

NMFS · NOAA · BSAI pollock trawl closure

Directed pollock trawl closed through March 1, 2027

Magnuson-Stevens Act inseason action



NMFS Closes Directed Pollock Trawl in the Winter Herring Savings Area Through March 1, 2027

Public paper · October 3, 2026 · Ocean desk · Ryan Standley / Record of Sale, LLC / Notice Nearby

National Marine Fisheries Service temporary rule closes directed fishing for pollock with trawl gear in the BSAI Winter Herring Savings Area from noon Alaska time September 30, 2026 through noon March 1, 2027 after the herring bycatch allowance was reached.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), under NOAA, published a temporary rule in the Federal Register on October 1, 2026 that closes directed fishing for pollock by vessels using trawl gear in the Winter Herring Savings Area of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). The action is required by regulation to limit herring prohibited species catch (bycatch). It also covers Community Development Quota (CDQ) vessels using trawl gear for directed pollock in that area.

This is a fisheries management clock — not a harbor closure for recreational boaters in the Lower 48. It matters to Alaska groundfish fleets, processors, and communities that track Magnuson-Stevens Act inseason actions in the exclusive economic zone off Alaska.

Effective window

- Starts: 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 30, 2026
- Ends: 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 1, 2027
- Authority cited: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; 50 CFR part 679; section 305(d)

Why NMFS closed it

The 2026 herring bycatch allowance specified for the midwater pollock fishery in the BSAI is 2,359 metric tons, set in the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026). The Alaska Region Regional Administrator determined that allowance has been caught. Under § 679.21(e)(7)(vi)(B)(1), when the midwater pollock category reaches its herring bycatch allowance, the applicable Herring Savings Areas close to directed fishing for pollock with trawl gear.

NMFS states the action is necessary to prevent further herring bycatch in the Winter Herring Savings Area by vessels directing on pollock with trawl gear.

Where is the Winter Herring Savings Area?

Per the rule (and figure 4 to 50 CFR part 679), the Winter Herring Savings Area is the part of the Bering Sea subarea between latitudes 58° and 60° North and longitudes 172° and 175° West, for the seasonal window from 1200 hours A.L.T. September 1 of the current fishing year through 1200 hours A.L.T. March 1 of the succeeding fishing year.

That is a mapped box in federal waters — not a municipal harbor. Operators should work from official charts and the CFR figure, not this summary alone.

What “directed fishing” means here

A directed-fishing closure for pollock with trawl gear in the savings area does not rewrite every groundfish fishery in the BSAI. It is a targeted inseason tool tied to the herring bycatch limit for the midwater pollock category. CDQ trawl pollock in the same Winter Herring Savings Area is included in the prohibition described in the temporary rule.

Contact listed in the Federal Register: Andrew Olson, 907-586-7228.

Why the rule waived normal comment delay

NMFS waived prior notice and comment under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), saying delay would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest because it would prevent a timely response to the latest herring bycatch data and could allow more herring bycatch. The agency notes the most recent relevant data became available as of August 29, 2026. The same reasons support a short effective-date delay waiver under 553(d)(3).

Source

Federal Register Document 2026-20135 (Oct. 1, 2026), 91 FR 62343 — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock Fishing in the Winter Herring Savings Area of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/10/01/2026-20135/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-pollock-fishing-in-the-winter-herring-savings>

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Notes

- Author: Ryan Standley / Record of Sale, LLC / Notice Nearby.
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