



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

June 3, 2022

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report Online

Updated daily at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/amendments.pdf>

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the April 2022 meeting include:

- The comment period for the proposed rule to remove the Halibut IFQ vessel use caps in Area 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D for the 2022 IFQ fishing year closed on **May 5, 2022**. The draft final rule was submitted on **May 25, 2022** will be published on June 6, 2022.
- **Attachment 1** provides additional detail.

Council Requests for Emergency and Expedited Rulemaking

The most recent and up to date information about the Council's requests for emergency and expedited rulemaking is available on our website at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/north-pacific-fishery-management-council-requests-emergency-actions>.

IFQ Medical Transfer Limitation

Following NMFS's denial of the Council's February request for emergency regulations to allow the temporary transfer of catcher vessel halibut and sablefish IFQ for all individual quota share holders for the 2022 fishing season, in a letter dated May 20, 2022, AKR submitted a draft analysis to the Council to evaluate the benefits and costs of waiving medical transfers approved in 2020, 2021, or 2022 toward the medical transfer restriction specified at 50 CFR 679.42(d)(2)(iv)(C). AKR staff will present an overview of this draft analysis to the Council and its IFQ Committee at their upcoming meetings. AKR intends to propose regulations to waive medical transfers approved during 2020, 2021, and 2022 under section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to develop regulations necessary to implement fishery management plans and the Halibut Act.



Pot Catcher/Processor Monitoring Changes

In a letter dated May 27, 2022, AKR submitted a draft analysis to the Council to evaluate proposed changes to the monitoring requirements for the Pot CP fleet participating in BSAI groundfish fisheries. Due to a high rate of monitoring data collection errors, NMFS has expressed concern about data availability for the management of this fishery. In February 2021, Council members supported NMFS to work on data collection improvements for this fishery as a NMFS action under section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and report back for Council and public consideration at a later meeting date. The measures under consideration include requiring participants to carry at least one Level 2 observer at all times, requiring participants comply with pre-cruise meeting notifications, and clarifying requirements for participants choosing additional voluntary monitoring options such as an observer sampling station, motion-compensating platform and flow scales, or carrying additional observers. These changes are intended to reduce the likelihood of data collection errors by ensuring experienced observers are deployed onboard pot CP vessels, effective collaboration, and an improved work environment.

Tribal Engagement Update

Halibut ABM: In March 2022, the Sustainable Fisheries (SF) sent a letter to the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council regarding the Halibut Abundance Based Management (ABM) action. The letter solicited additional input or questions on the Halibut ABM action.

Outreach: NMFS SF staff have begun conversations with Alaska tribes and tribal associations to better understand how NMFS can improve tribal consultations and outreach. NMFS's is planning to hold additional tribal engagement sessions to supplement forthcoming Council meetings and/or fishery management actions. We would like to hold additional meetings with Alaska tribes and tribal associations outside of the Council process to provide a forum to explain our role in the development of fishery management actions and to hear from Alaska tribes and tribal associations on fishery management processes and issues. NMFS envisions the forum could include discussing issues of particular importance to tribes, soliciting feedback and comments, and then reporting the results of such meetings to the Council. At this juncture, we would like to hear from prospective participants about the following: when would be best to hold such meetings, and any potential topics of interest to discuss at the meetings. To provide input or for further information, contact Kelly Cates at kelly.cates@noaa.gov.

PIBKC Progress Towards Rebuilding

Pribilof Islands blue king crab (PIBKC) has been overfished since 2002 and a rebuilding plan was implemented in 2004 and revised in 2014. The revised rebuilding plan does not have a target rebuild date and NMFS cannot predict when or if rebuilding will occur. The 2021 stock assessment shows this stock is still overfished. The causes of the continued low abundance and failure to recover are not well understood, but are thought to be predominantly due to environmental changes that inhibit recruitment.

The MSA requires that an evaluation be made as to whether or not the stock is making inadequate progress towards rebuilding every two years. In April 2022, the Regional Administrator made the

determination that PIBKC is not making inadequate progress towards rebuilding. There is no new and unexpected information that would significantly alter the rebuilding expectations.

NMFS last reviewed the rebuilding progress in December 2019, and NMFS determined that the stock was making inadequate rebuilding progress. On further review, NMFS believes that the 2019 determination was inappropriate and that PIBKC was NOT making inadequate progress towards rebuilding. PIBKC is a data poor stock with no identifiable target rebuild date and chronic low abundance. Considering the environmental factors and the uncertainty as to whether the stock can rebuild absent a change in environmental conditions, the stock performed as expected between 2017 and 2019. Therefore, the stock did not make inadequate progress towards rebuilding between 2017 and 2019.

NMFS will continue to actively monitor PIBKC bycatch in the groundfish fisheries. Consistent with the requirements of section 304(e)(7) of the MSA, NMFS will also continue to review the PIBKC rebuilding plan no less than every two years.

US Navy training activities in the Gulf of Alaska 2023

Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) is awaiting the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment for an upcoming United States Department of the Navy (US Navy) training exercise. This exercise, referred to as *Northern Edge*, is scheduled to take place during the April to October 2023 timeframe. The US Navy will conduct activities previously described in the 2016 GOA Final SEIS/OEIS with several changes (no SINKEX, no underwater explosives, no tracking range).

The US Navy reached out to HCD for early coordination to ensure MSA regulatory processes are met and to minimize potential adverse impacts to EFH. The US Navy has created maps (Figure 1 is one example) and will provide extensive habitat-related information in the EFH Assessment. New to this project plan is a large mitigation area that covers the continental shelf and slope out to 4,000 meters depth with the purpose of minimizing adverse impacts to salmon and their migration routes. For more information, contact Charlene Felkely at charlene.felkely@noaa.gov.

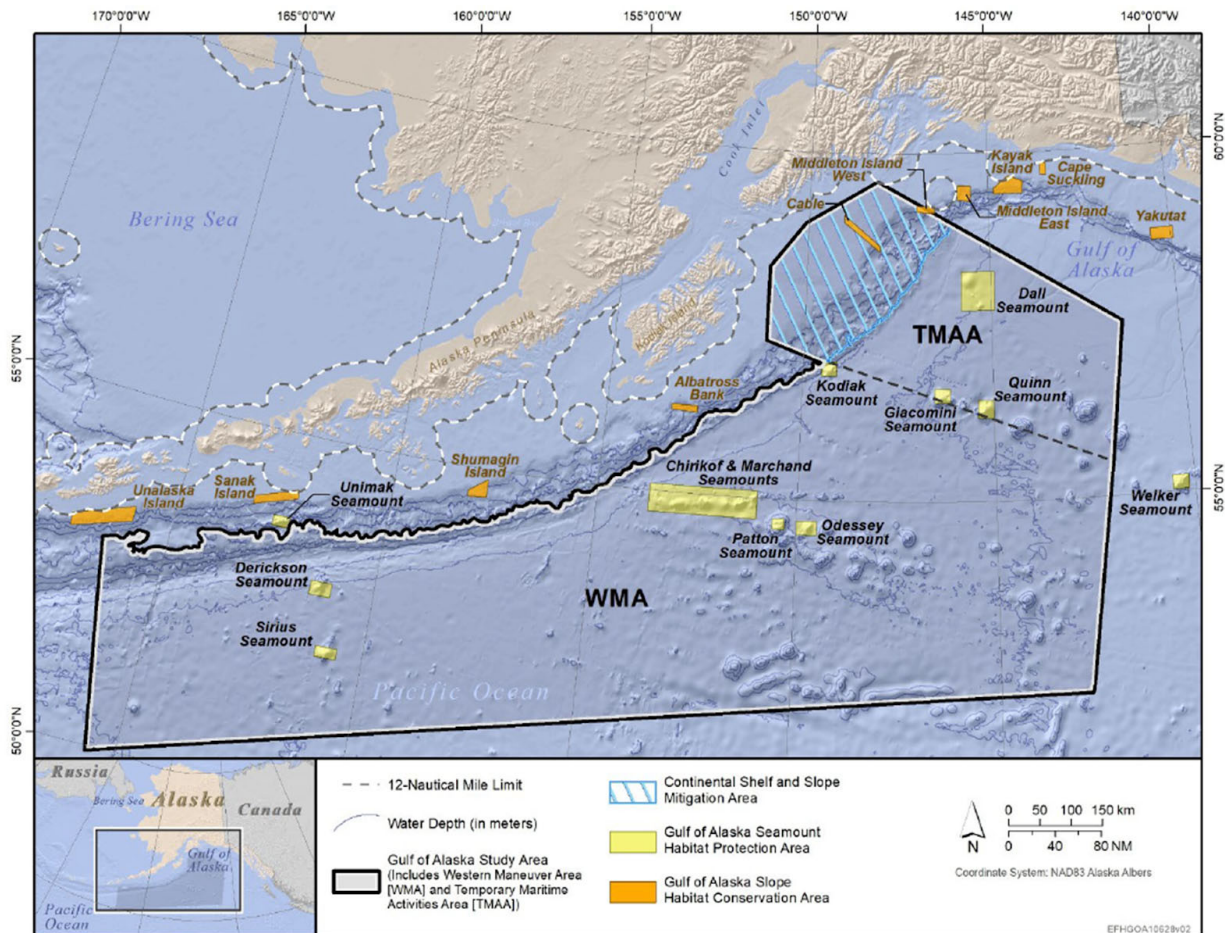


Figure 1. Alaska HAPCs-Seamount and Slope image provided by the US Navy April 27th, 2022, shows areas where training activities will not take place to minimize potential adverse impacts to EFH. WMA is Western Maneuver Area and TMAA is Temporary Maritime Activities Area.

Staff Changes

Glenn Merrill separated from Federal service on June 3rd. After more than two decades of service in the Alaska Regional office, Glenn has accepted a position in the private sector. During his time in the Alaska Region, Glenn played an integral role in developing innovative fishery management programs. Glenn and his experience in Alaska fishery management will greatly missed. Until the SF ARA position is filled, several of the SF branch supervisors (**Alicia M. Miller, Jennifer Mondragon, Josh Keaton, and Mary Furuness**) will work together as a team to take on the different components of the SF ARA duties.

Dr. Anne Marie Eich began serving as the Acting Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources on May 8th. While Dr. Eich is serving as the acting PR ARA, **Jennifer Watson** will be serving as Acting Deputy SF ARA and **Doug Duncan** will serve as the Ecosystem Branch Supervisor.

Abby Jahn will be moving from the Catch Share branch and joining the Inseason Management branch in July. Abby started working for SF in 2020, and has made numerous significant contributions on analyses, rulemaking, and our annual cost recovery process.

Inseason Management Report

Attachment 2 provides additional detail.

Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory Actions

Changes since April 2022 are noted in **Bold Red** EOC = End of Comment Period

Action Status	Lead Council and SF Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Notice of Availability (FMP) Published in <i>Federal Register</i>	Proposed Rule Published in <i>Federal Register</i>	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in <i>Federal Register</i>
FMP Amendments								
Amendment 52 to the FMP for BSAI King and Tanner Crabs (KTC); EDR Revisions	Marrinan Watson	February 2022						
Amendment 122 (BSAI) Pacific cod Trawl CV Cooperative Program	McCracken Warpinski	October 2021						
Amendment 123 (BSAI) Halibut ABM	Stram Mansfield	December 2021						
Amendment 124 (BSAI) IFQ Omnibus	Cleaver Jahn	April 2022						
Regulatory Amendments								
Modify the 2022 Halibut (IFQ) Vessel Use Caps in IFQ Regulatory Areas 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D	Jahn	February 2022	PR: 3/23/22 FR: 05/16/22	PR: 3/23/22 FR:05/17/22	PR: 04/01/22 FR: 05/25/22	N/A	Apr 19, 2022 87 FR 23155 EOC: 05/04/22	June 6, 2022 87 FR XXXX Effective: 6/6/22
BSAI Pot CP Monitoring Requirements	Smith							
Clarify Timing of Haul Designation for Trawl CPs	Cates							

DRAFT Attachment 2 -- Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2022 is through May 28, 2022 and is compared to catch during 2021 through May 29, 2021. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information is available from [daily catch reports and information bulletins](#).

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

The 2022 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,111,000 mt compared to 1,375,000 mt in 2021. For 2022, NMFS will not reallocate any AI pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to the Bering Sea since the Bering Sea TAC is set equal to the Bering Sea acceptable biological catch. The sectors ended their A season fisheries the week of March 12 for the CDQ, March 19 for the CP sectors, April 2 for the mothership sector, and April 30 for the Inshore sector. The B season opens at noon, Alaska local time, June 10, 2022.

Bering Sea	2022 A season allocation	2022 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	213,840	211,197	99%
CP	171,072	170,421	100%
Mothership	42,768	41,476	97%
CDQ	49,995	49,844	100%
Total	477,675	472,938	99%

Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

Based on the State of Alaska's estimate that Chinook salmon abundance in western Alaska is less than 250,000 Chinook salmon, the Chinook salmon PSC limit is 45,000 Chinook salmon, allocated to each sector as specified in 50 CFR 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(A). In 2022 relative to 2021, the total Chinook and non-Chinook PSC and rates are lower.

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2022		2021		2022		2021	
Year	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	392	0.0078	848	0.0134	4	0.00008	14	0.00022
AFA	4,792	0.0112	8,626	0.0161	63	0.00015	128	0.00024
Total	5,184	0.0108	9,474	0.0158	67	0.00014	142	0.00024

¹ Rate is number of salmon by total groundfish in the pollock fishery.

Herring in the BSAI

In 2022, BSAI herring PSC is 13% or 482 mt of the 3,819 mt 2022 limit relative to 2021 when the herring PSC was also at 28% or 761 mt of the 2,723 mt 2021 limit.

Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish

For 2022, the maximum species specific catch recommended in the Western Aleutian Islands is 32 mt and the current catch is 22 mt. All sectors are requested to avoid blackspotted/rougheye rockfish. A [weekly report](#) is available to monitor total catch of blackspotted/rougheye rockfish in the Western Aleutian Islands.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

The 2022 Pacific cod TAC is 136,466 mt in the Bering Sea and 13,796 mt in the Aleutian Islands compared to the 2021 Bering Sea TAC of 111,830 mt and Aleutian Islands TAC of 13,796 mt.

BSAI Sector	2022				2021			
	A season allocation ¹	Catch May 28	A season closed	# of vessels May 28	A season allocation ¹	Catch May 29	A season closed ²	# of vessels May 29
CDQ	9,647	5,888	n/a	26	8,037	4,983	n/a	27
Hook-and-line CP	33,164	30,669	n/a	16	27,600	25,941	n/a	13
Pot CP	1,021	1,065	Mar 15	3	850	792	Jan 16	3
Pot CV >= 60 ft	5,720	6,954	Jan 22	27	4,761	4,486	Jan 21	21
Hook-and-line CV >= 60 ft	136	0	n/a	0	113	0	n/a	0
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	3,746	4,019	Jan 26	20	3,122	3,147	Jan 26	26
Jig	428	0	n/a	0	352	0	n/a	0
Trawl CV	25,206	22,454	n/a	93	20,998	19,372	Apr 23	90
AFA CP	3,086	2,009	Jan 20	15	2,571	4,783	Jan 20	15
Amendment 80 CP	17,981	11,191	n/a	18	14,979	7,164	n/a	18
HAL/Pot ICA	400	75	n/a	15	400	13	n/a	18
Total³	91,230	84,324		233	75,965	70,682		231

¹In 2022, NMFS reallocated 1,075 mt, and in 2021 NMFS reallocated 900 mt of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 ft length annual allocation. Trawl and jig sector allocations are for the A and B season.

²In 2021, NMFS prohibited retention for AFA CPs on March 15, 2021.

³Number of vessels may include vessels in more than one sector.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Non-CDQ Pacific cod

The 2022 BS non-CDQ Pacific cod catch is 62% of the TAC relative to 64% in 2021. The 2022 AI non-CDQ Pacific cod catch is 21% or 2,606 mt relative to 2021 at 15% or 1,848 mt. A rough projection using the current amount of non-CDQ Pacific cod remaining in the BS and AI and the projected incidental catch needed in the BS non-CDQ fisheries is that directed fishing for BS non-CDQ Pacific cod would need close around mid to late September. This projected closure date may be extended as more catch occurs in the AI and depending on the projected incidental catch in the BS. As the fisheries progress, NMFS will update the projected directed fishing closure date for BS non-CDQ Pacific cod.

Pacific cod directed fishing - trawl CVs

The trawl CV sector had a voluntary stand down from directed fishing for Pacific cod from January 20 to February 6, 2022. The stand down is to delay fishing until catch rates are expected to be higher and halibut prohibited species catch rates are expected to be lower. The A season closed March 30, 2022. The B season opened April 1 for 24 hours, and reopened April 11, 2022. The B season closes by regulation on June 10, when the C season opens. Any remaining B season allocation rolls over to the C season.

BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)

In 2022 relative to 2021, total catch is higher by about 16,000 mt higher. The highest increase is for yellowfin sole. The 2022 BSAI flatfish species with lower 2022 catch are Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, and Greenland turbot.

Species	2022			2021		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Alaska plaice	6,616	29,221	23%	13,177	24,500	54%
Arrowtooth flounder	1,298	20,000	6%	2,114	15,000	14%
Flathead sole	8,056	35,500	23%	3,945	25,000	16%
Greenland turbot	178	6,572	3%	224	6,025	4%
Kamchatka flounder	1,600	9,214	17%	1,104	8,982	12%
Other flatfish	1,338	10,000	13%	451	6,500	7%
Rock sole	14,707	66,000	22%	11,431	54,500	21%
Yellowfin sole	83,028	250,000	33%	68,423	200,000	34%
Total	67,140	426,507	27%	52,555	340,507	30%

Note: Directed fishing for Arrowtooth flounder, Kamchatka flounder, and Greenland turbot opened May 1.

BSAI Atka mackerel, Pacific ocean perch (POP) includes CDQ, and Trawl Sablefish

The catch of Atka mackerel is slightly higher in 2022 than in 2021, and of POP is higher in 2022 than in 2021. The non-CDQ trawl sablefish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands have been closed to directed fishing in both years, and 2022 catch is lower than 2021 catch.

Species	2022			2021		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	26,536	66,481	40%	26,124	62,257	42%
Pacific ocean perch	5,352	35,385	15%	2,847	35,899	8%
Non-CDQ Sablefish - Trawl	470	3,928	12%	578	2,660	22%

Gulf of Alaska

Pacific cod

In 2022, NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season for some sectors with allocations that are necessary to support incidental catch:

- Western GOA – Hook-and-line CV, Trawl CP
- Central GOA – Trawl CV, Trawl CP

Pacific cod - Western GOA

Sector	2022				2021			
	A season allocation	Catch May 28	A season closed	# of vessels May 28	A season allocation	Catch May 29	A season closed	# of vessels May 29
Hook-and-line CP	732	725	Mar 23	4	588	590	Mar 3	<3
Hook-and-line CV	47	24	Jan 1	10	38	3	Jan 1	8
Jig	146	0	n/a	0	117	26	n/a	<3
Pot CV/CP	1,330	1,346	Feb 11	15	1,068	1,028	Feb 3	13
Trawl CV	2,118	2,057	Mar 6	26	1,701	1,615	May 28	18
Trawl CP	60	0	Jan 20	0	49	0	Jan 20	0
Total	4,433	4,151		55	3,561	3,261		42

Pacific cod - Central GOA

Sector	2022				2021			
	A season allocation	Catch May 28	A season closed	# of vessels May 28	A season allocation	Catch May 29	A season closed	# of vessels May 29
Hook-and-line CP	602	592	Mar 25	<3	416	283	Jun 10	<3
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	1,366	1,408	Mar 15	64	945	955	Feb 5	60
Hook-and-line CV >=50 ft	823	735	Mar 30	37	569	542	Mar 9	35
Jig	89	3	n/a	2	61	26	n/a	11
Pot CV/CP	2,615	2,897	Feb 16	26	1,808	1,579	Jan 22	15
Non RP Trawl CV	3,710	3,216	Jan 20	39	2,565	2,310	Jan 20	38
Trawl CP	294	124	Jan 20	0	203	0	Jan 20	0
Total	9,499	8,975		174	6,567	5,696		162

Pollock

For Area 610, NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season on January 20, 2022 because the TAC does not support directed fishing. Area 620 directed fishing is open, and will close by regulation at noon, Alaska local time, May 31.

2022 A season	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	1,132	52,304	8,080	6,722 (annual)
A season catch	138	48,785	7,623	6,387
A season closure	January 20	n/a	April 22	April 13

IFQ Sablefish in the Sablefish target in the GOA

The number of vessels and total catch of sablefish using pot gear is continuing to increase relative to hook-and-line gear. Currently, the total vessels in 2022 is 161 and for the same time period total vessels in 2021 is 153. In 2022, 59 vessels have reported both gear types and in 2021, 45 vessels have reported both gear types.

Gear	2022 Catch	2022 # of Vessels	2021 Catch	2021 # of Vessels
Hook-and-line	1,382	99	1,641	103
Pot	6,049	121	4,066	95
Total	7,431		5,707	

Chinook Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

Total 2022 Chinook salmon PSC and rate is lower relative to 2021. In 2021, directed fishing for all non-pollock, non Rockfish Program trawl CVs closed March 26, 2021 when the limit was reached.

Chinook Salmon	2022 Limit	2022 PSC (Rate ¹)	2021 PSC (Rate ¹)
Total	n/a	3,224	8,372
Western GOA pollock	6,684	0	0
Central GOA pollock	18,316	3,063 (0.046)	4,313 (0.080)
Western/Central trawl CV ²	2,700	0	3,827 (2.008)
Central Rockfish Program CV	1,200	50 (0.009)	231 (0.023)
Western/Central trawl C/P ²	4,080	111 (0.025)	0

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

²The limit includes the incentive buffer for 2021 and 2022 Western/Central trawl C/P limit (480 Chinook) and 2021 Western/Central trawl CV (360 Chinook).

Non-Chinook Salmon PSC in the GOA

Non-Chinook Salmon	2022 PSC	2021 PSC
Total All Sectors	46	45

Halibut Mortality Data

In 2022 relative to 2021, total halibut mortality and halibut PSC rates are higher in the BSAI and GOA. In the BSAI the total groundfish catch is lower in 2022, and in the GOA the total groundfish catch is higher.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2022			2021		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	PSC Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	PSC Rate
BSAI Total	1,360	733,461	0.19%	779	815,204	0.10%
Amendment 80	921	161,653	0.57%	502	133,624	0.38%
BSAI TLAS	332	463,394	0.07%	221	572,835	0.04%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	44	42,521	0.10%	18	33,706	0.05%
Non-trawl Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDQ	62	65,894	0.09%	39	75,039	0.05%
GOA Total	164	82,866	0.20%	115	69,015	0.17%
Trawl, Deep-water	96	9,504	1.01%	3	10,114	0.03%
Trawl, Shallow-water	41	69,097	0.06%	73	56,027	0.13%
Hook-and-line CP	6	1,473	0.39%	6	1,017	0.62%
Hook-and-line CV	15	2,786	0.55%	30	1,854	1.62%