



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
June 2012

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last council report includes those for crab and groundfish.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab (FIGURE 1)

The 2011/12 Area O (Aleutian Islands) commercial golden king crab fishery opened August 15, 2011. The total allowable catch (TAC) is 5.985 million pounds and is apportioned east and west of 174° W longitude with the eastern TAC set at 3.15 million pounds and the western TAC set at 2.835 million pounds.

As previously reported, the TAC has been fully harvested in the eastern Aleutians Islands. The western Aleutian Islands TAC has also now been fully harvested (last delivery was in mid April). The regulatory closure date for the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery is May 15.

Bering Sea Snow Crab (FIGURE 2 & 3)

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2011 and closes, by regulation, on May 15 in the Eastern Subdistrict (east of 173° W longitude) and May 31 in the Western Subdistrict. Throughout a large portion of the snow crab season, record sea ice coverage significantly reduced available fishing grounds. On May 8, 2012, the State extended the snow crab season in waters of the Eastern Subdistrict between 171° W longitude and 173° W longitude through May 31, 2012, noting that nearly 25 percent of the snow crab TAC had not been harvested. The season for the area west of 171° W longitude was again extended on May 15, 2012, through June 15, 2012 given that sea ice coverage persisted into mid May further hampering harvest efforts. The State also waived the 72-hour delivery requirement for snow crab for the remainder of the 2011/12 season.

As of Tuesday, June 5, approximately 92% of the 88.894 million pound 2011/12 snow crab TAC has been harvested (~81 million pounds). Forty vessels are currently active in the fishery and last week 39 vessels made 48 deliveries and landed a total of 7.4 million pounds. Catch per unit of effort (CPUE or catch per pot lift) was 329 crabs per pot, which is the highest weekly CPUE all season, average CPUE for the season is 195 crabs per pot lift. The sea ice no

longer appears to be hindering fishing activity. Given the current catch rates and fleet size, it appears that the fleet will be able to fully harvest the TAC by June 15.

Central Region Pacific Cod

Cook Inlet (FIGURE 4)

The GHL for the Cook Inlet Area was set at 4.7 million pounds, a 6% increase from last year. The GHL is allocated 85% to pot gear (4.0 million pounds) and 15% to jig gear (0.7 million pounds). Pot vessels larger than 58 feet are limited to 25% of the total GHL (~1.2 million pounds) prior to September 1.

The state-waters pot season opened at noon on February 11, 24-hours after the closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska A-season pot fishery. The fishery closed to pot vessels on March 29. Total pot fishery harvest was just over 4.0 million pounds.

The state-waters jig season in Cook Inlet opened at noon on March 7, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery. Thirty-one vessels have registered for the jig/hand troll fishery and to date have harvested just under 189,000 pounds.

Westward Region Pacific Cod

Kodiak Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)

The 2012 state-waters GHL for the Kodiak Area is 15.69 million pounds and is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 7.845 million pounds each. The Kodiak Area is designated as an exclusive registration area for Pacific cod.

The state-waters pot fishery opened on February 17, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure, and closed on March 1, as previously reported.

The state-waters jig fishery opened at noon on March 8, 48-hours after the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery closure, and closed on May 23, 2012. Total harvest by 147 vessels was 7.9 million pounds (101% of the GHL).

Chignik Pacific Cod (FIGURE 6)

The 2012 GHL for the Chignik Area is 10.98 million pounds, with pot vessels targeting 90 percent of that amount (9.88 million pounds). The area is designated superexclusive registration for Pacific cod and vessels may not exceed 58 feet in overall length.

The state-waters pot season opened on March 7, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure. The fishery closed on March 28 and 23 vessels harvested a total of 10.23 million pounds.

The state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 15. The Western GOA parallel jig season that overlaps with the Chignik Area (state waters east of Kupreanof Point) closed March 14 at 11:59 p.m. Three vessels have harvested a total of 87,000 pounds and the fishery remains open.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod (FIGURE 7)

The 2012 GHL in the South Alaska Peninsula (SAP) Area is 15.45 million pounds, with 85 percent targeted by pot gear (13.13 million pounds). A 58-foot vessel length limit is in effect and the area has an exclusive registration designation.

The state-waters pot season opened at noon on March 7 and closed on March 22, as previously reported.

The state-waters jig fishery was initially scheduled to open on March 19, 48-hours after the WGOA jig sector closed. Due to weather delays, the fishery opened at noon on March 21, 2012. Forty-seven vessels have registered to fish and current harvest is just under 2.0 million pounds.

Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod (FIGURE 8)

The 2012 GHF for the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery is 20.77 million pounds. The A season opened January 1, between 175° W long. and 178° W long. to vessels 60 feet overall length (OAL) or less using pot, jig, and non-pelagic trawl gear and vessels 58 feet OAL or less using longline gear. Beginning noon March 4, the state-waters A season was expanded to include all state waters west of 170° W long. and opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 100 feet OAL or less using trawl gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline and jig gear.

Daily catch reporting is required for all vessels and the daily harvest limit is 150,000 pounds round weight, with a maximum of 150,000 pounds of unprocessed Pacific cod on board a vessel at any time.

Stellar sea lion closures in place prior to 2011 are in effect during the state-waters Pacific cod season with an additional 3-mile fishing closure around the Kanaga Island/Ship Rock rookery.

There are currently 2 active vessels in the fishery (both pot vessels). Total catch to date is approximately 11.2 million pounds, with approximately 3.3 million pounds of the A season TAC remaining to be harvested. Pot harvest dropped off for a short time (about a week) but picked back up to relatively good fishing.

The state-waters A season GHF is not anticipated to be taken by June 10, when the state-waters B season will open. Therefore the A season will close on June 10 and the B season will open immediately after, with approximately 3.3 million pounds being rolled over from the A season to the B season GHF, for a total B season GHF of 9.6 million pounds. All vessels will be limited to 60 feet OAL for the B season, until August 1, when pot vessels may be up to 125 feet OAL.

Figure 1

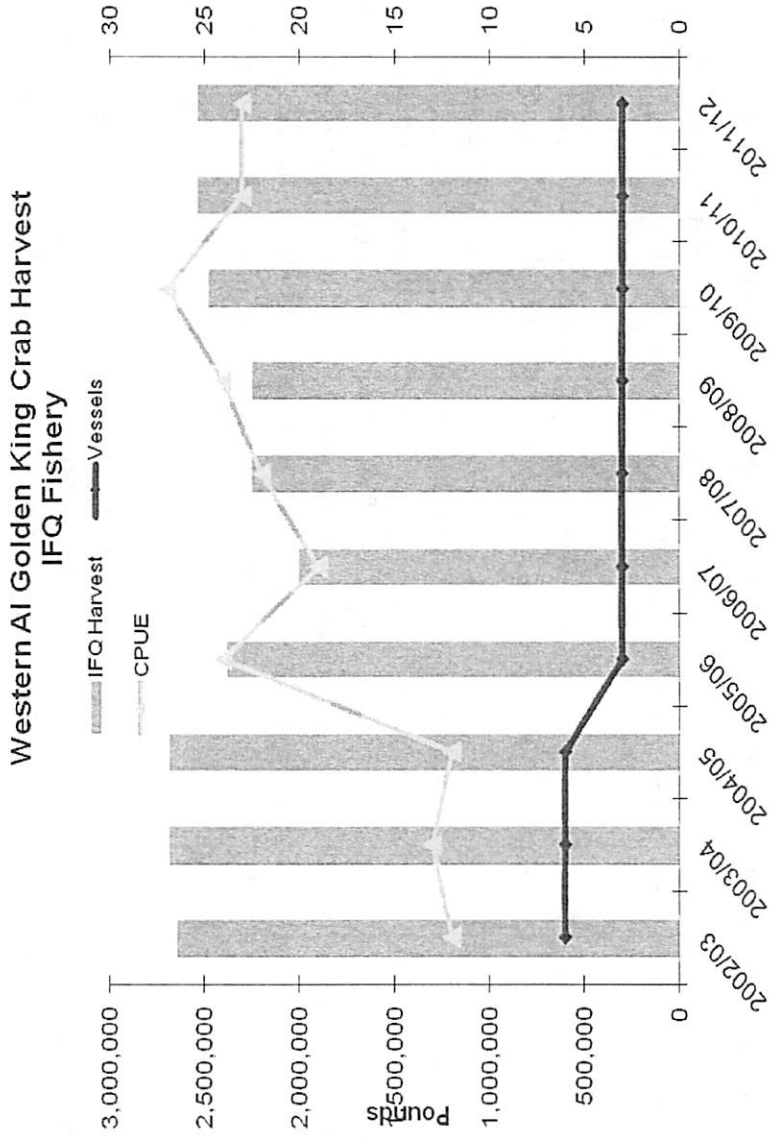


Figure 2

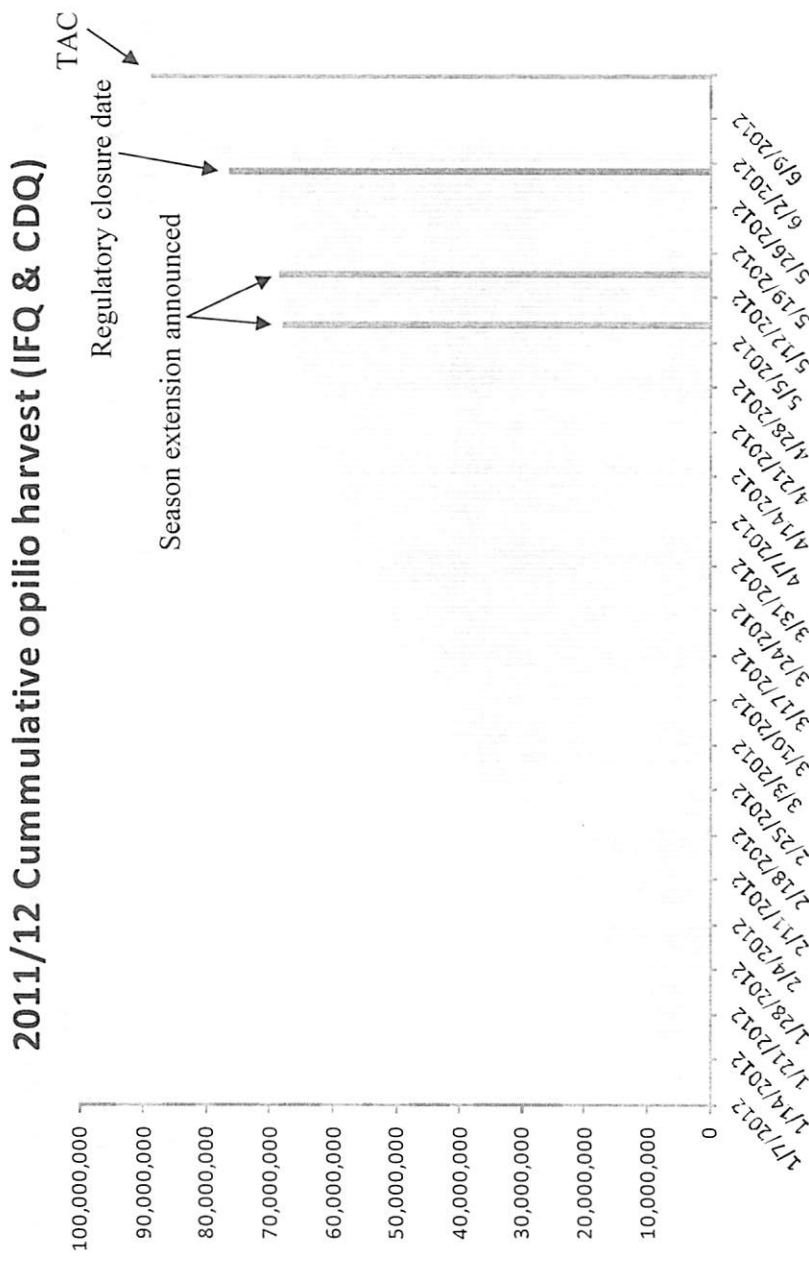


Figure 3

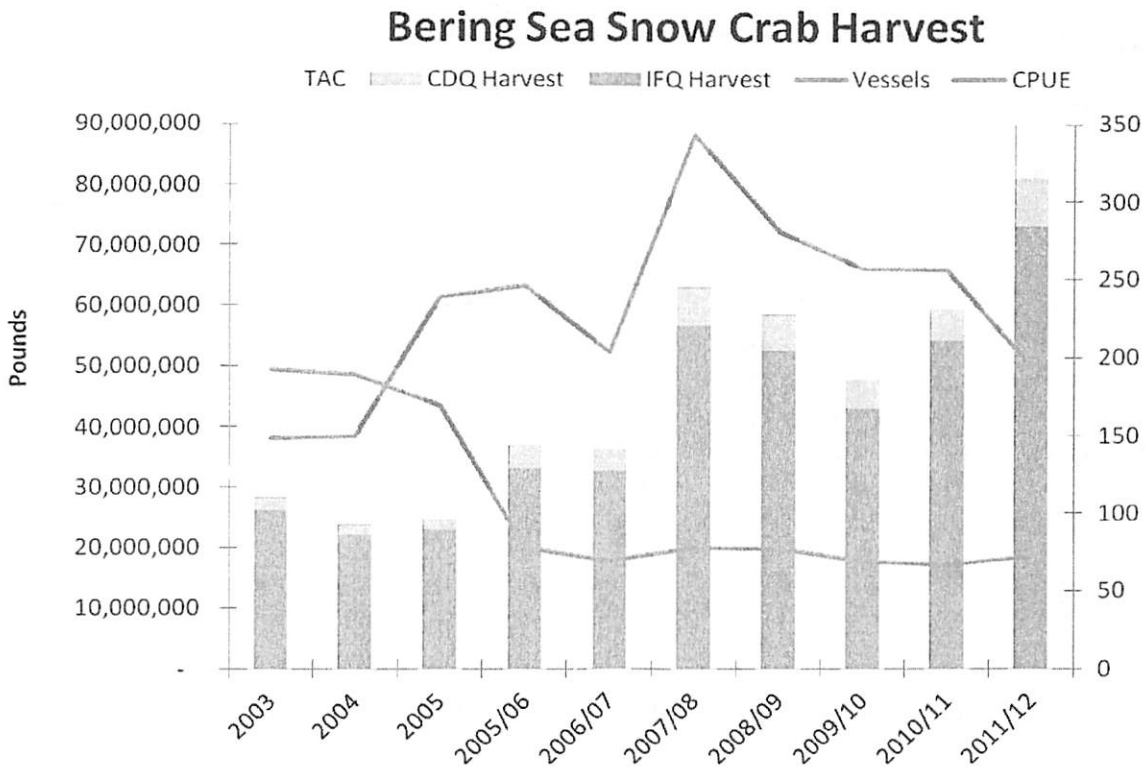


Figure 4

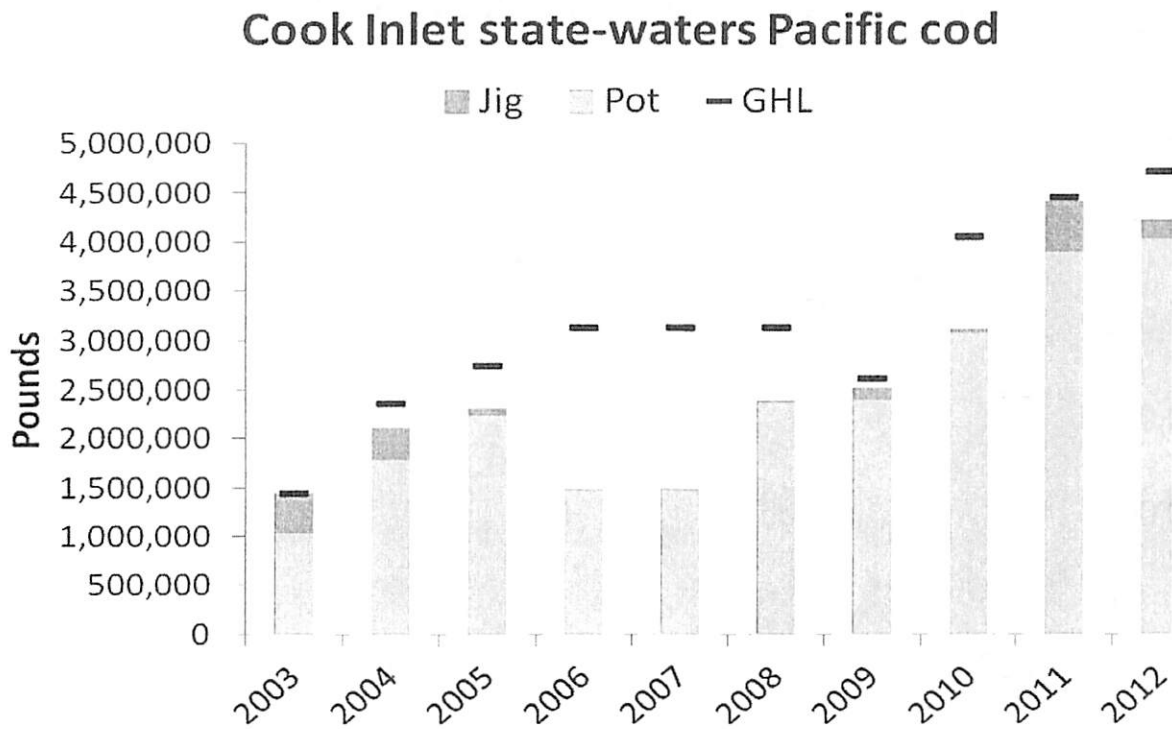


Figure 5

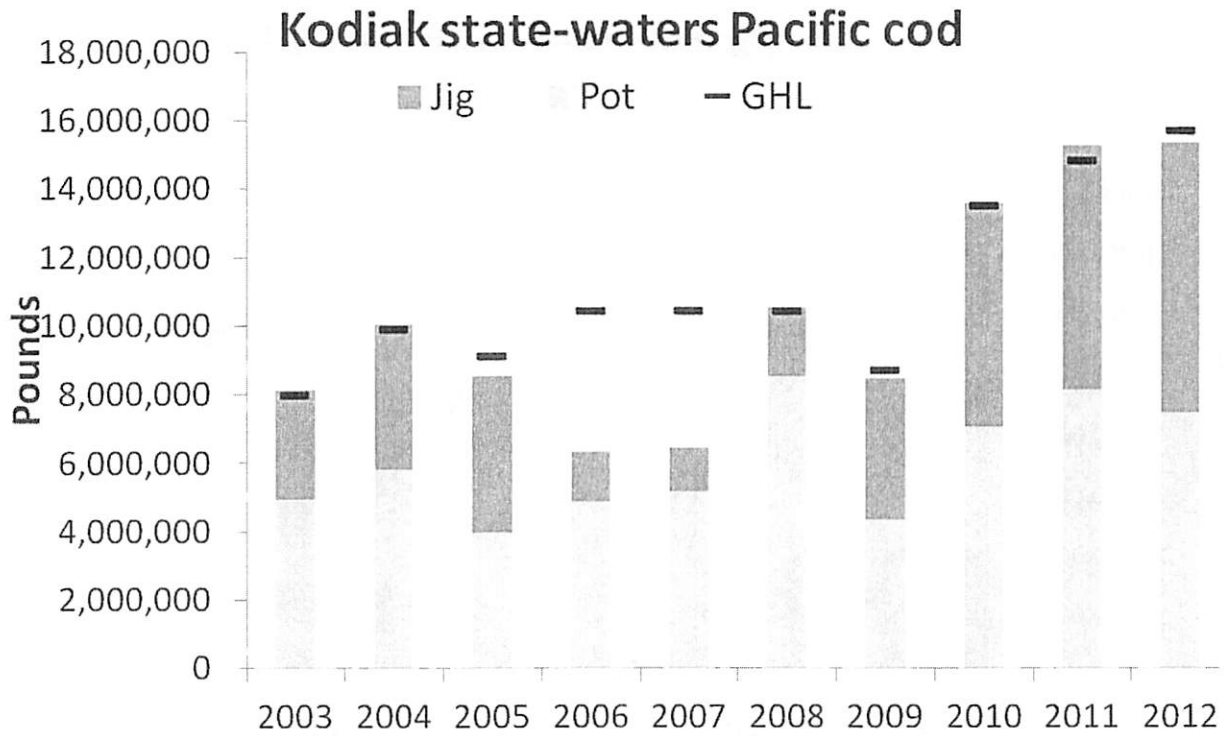


Figure 6

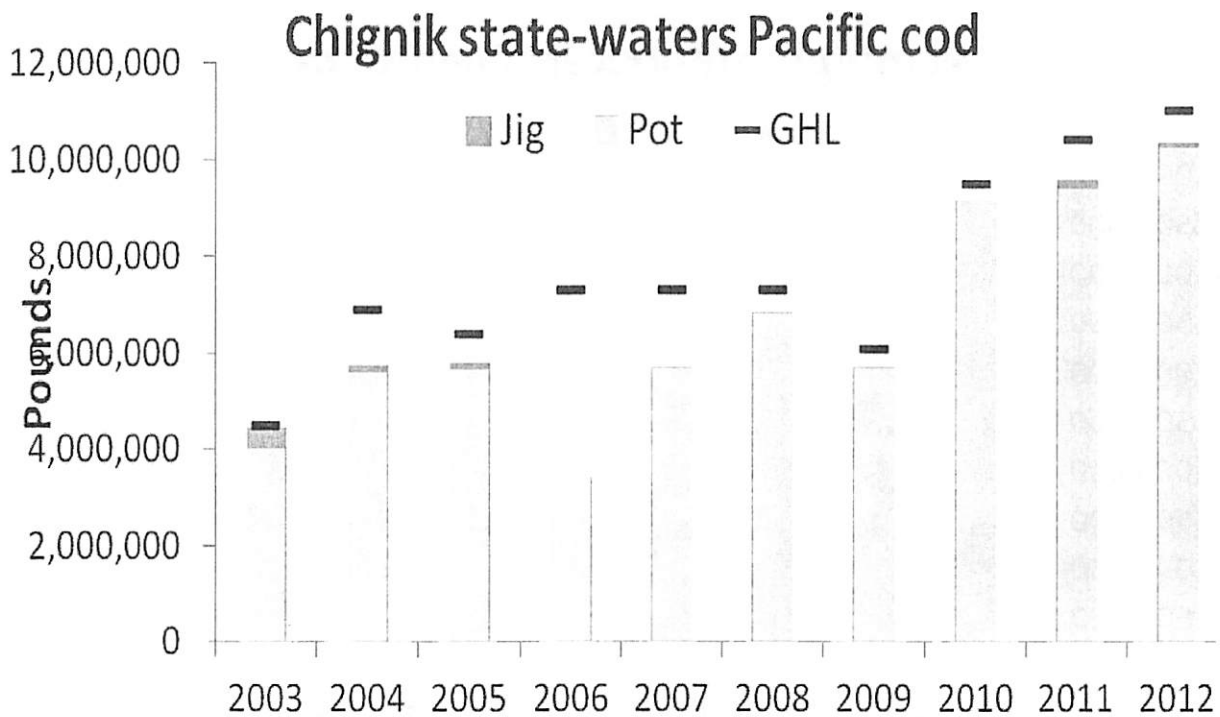


Figure 7

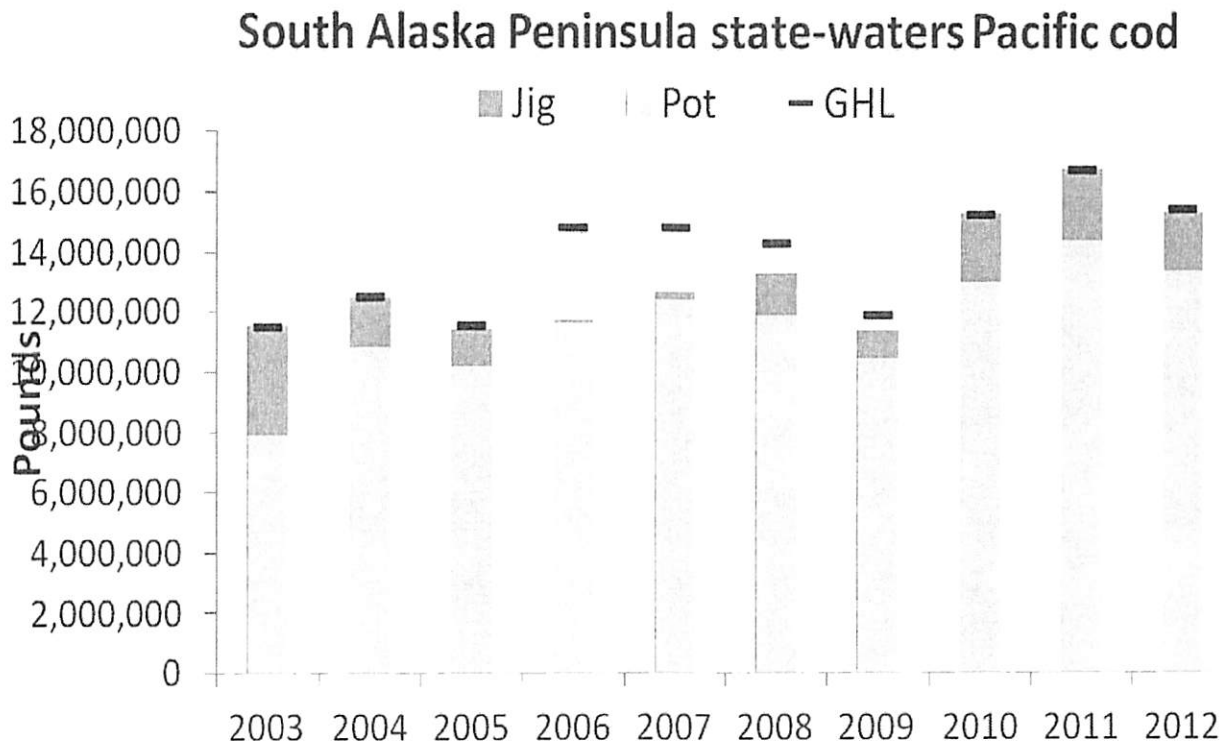


Figure 8

