

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**December 6-9, 2022 - Anchorage, AK**

**C4 BSAI Groundfish Specifications**

**Motion 1**

The AP has reviewed the 2022 Ecosystem Report for the EBS and AI. The AP greatly appreciates the work put into this detailed report each year.

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2022 BSAI Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The AP recommends the Council approve the final 2023 and 2024 BSAI groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1 (attached). The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod TACs have been adjusted for the State Water cod fisheries. Additionally, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands TACs for sablefish has been reduced in the BSAI (combined) by 5% to accommodate the State Water GHL fishery.

The AP recommends the Council approve Table 13 the 2023 and 2024 ABC Flatfish Reserves (below).

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2023 and 2024 PSC limits and apportionments as assigned to their respective target fisheries as provided in Tables 14, 15, 16, and 17 (below).

The AP recommends the Council approve the halibut discard mortality rates for 2023 and 2024 as shown in Table 18 (below).

*Motion passed 15-1*

*Rationale in Favor*

- *Each December industry members representing the major BSAI groundfish sectors get together to develop a consensus position and recommend proposed TAC levels that take into account any changes from stock assessment updates, Plan Team recommendations, and SSC approved OFLs and ABCs. The proposed TACs take into account deductions for state water fisheries (BSAI cod and BSAI sablefish), statutory minimums (AI pollock @ 19,000 mt) and any adjustments necessary for sea lion protection (543 mackerel maximum of 65% of the ABC). The sum of the TACs cannot exceed 2 million mt and the industry proposed TAC sheet balances to that number this year.*
- *For 2023, sablefish has a 5% state-water set aside and the proposed TAC sheet recommends that 5% be deducted from both the BS and AI sablefish ABCs as the state-water fishery is a BSAI fishery. Consistent with 2022, TAC for sablefish is equal to ABC minus the state-water deduction as a means to reduce regulatory discards and hopefully allow sablefish incidental catch to be retained in more fisheries. The BS sablefish TAC was nearly completely used this*

*year by all sectors. In the AI, the trawl sector caught a large portion of their allocation of sablefish (78% of 25% of TAC).*

- *While concerns have been expressed by members of the public regarding the need to protect small sablefish in the BS (as these fish mature and migrate into the GOA), it is important to note that the proposed TACs are conservative in that they represent the third (75%) stair-step in the full area apportionment scheme.*
- *Flatfish TACs for directed and bycatch species are similar to last year, but in some cases have been adjusted down to accommodate the increase in pollock and several other fisheries (e.g., POP, sablefish).*
- *The POP TAC recommendations are up slightly from 2022, but consistent with past years and industry's recommendation, the 543 POP TAC has been set below the ABC as a means to reduce blackspotted/rougheye catch in the western Aleutian Islands.*
- *Atka mackerel TAC recommendations are up slightly, but the areas are very similar to 2022. Consistent with SSL regulations, the 543 mackerel TAC has been set to 65% of the ABC.*
- *The skate TAC has been adjusted down slightly for 2023 (-9.2%) to account for the drop in P. cod TAC (-9.6%) where most of the skate incidental catch occurs.*

#### *Rationale in Opposition*

- *Concerns have been expressed in public comment and public testimony around the continued high increases in the BSAI Sablefish TAC. At this time there are no alternative harvest control rules for making different recommendations. The option is available to set a more conservative Sablefish TAC for social, economic and/or ecological reasons and still be in alignment with National Standard 1. There is room for conservation of this long lived resource in hopes that it will reach a more robust maturity and meaningfully contribute to the spawning stock biomass in the future.*
- *The average age of sablefish in the BSAI is about 4.5 years old and sablefish are 90 percent sexually mature at age 10. The 2014-2019 year classes make up 60 percent of the spawning biomass despite being only partially mature. This is the portion of the population the BSAI groundfish fisheries are putting the most pressure on with continued increases in TAC. The stock assessment states that "Any impediments to these recent year classes reaching fully mature ages could negatively affect the population and future ABCs."*
- *The increased catch and marketing of juvenile sablefish has negative economic impacts to the fishery by driving down the price. The GOA, aside from Western Gulf, is looking at static to decreasing TAC in 2023 and regional decreases in 2024. This coupled with a depressed price will hurt many participants of the directed fishery in the GOA.*
- *Both the resource and the industry will benefit from allowing the current strong sablefish year classes to reach more maturity and contribute to both the spawning biomass and the economic value of the resource.*

## **Motion 2**

The AP encourages the sablefish stock assessment authors to explore alternative harvest control strategies for sablefish for future consideration by the SSC, AP and Council.

*Motion passed 15-0*

### *Rationale in Favor*

- *This motion is in direct response to the Joint Plan team presentation that the team is recommending consideration of alternative harvest control rules for long lived species like sablefish. The Team requested the SSC recommend the AFSC (and ADF&G, where appropriate) to consider two proposals for working groups one of which is for a working group that addresses current policies affecting harvest control rules and develop new approaches for accounting for changes in ecosystems related to climate change, including the exploration of environmental data to help inform recruitment.*
- *Current harvest control rules are guidelines that determine how much fishing can take place based on indicators of the targeted stock status. With a long-lived stock like sablefish, these harvest control rules do not necessarily place value on age structure and treats partially mature age classes the same as fully mature age classes.*
- *Alternative harvest control rules, such as capped or maximum ABC approach, could aid in stabilizing long-term sablefish dynamics and may help create more stability in sablefish TACs over longer time periods rather than continuing peak and valley management.*

Table 1. Advisory Panel recommended TACs with SSC specified OFL, ABC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2023-2024 12/8/2022

Species	Area	2021				2022				2023			2024		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 12/31/2021	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 11/5/2022	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,594,000	1,626,000	1,375,000	1,376,258	1,469,000	1,111,000	1,111,000	1,103,996	3,381,000	1,910,000	1,300,000	4,639,000	2,275,000	1,302,000
	AI	61,856	51,241	19,000	1,840	61,264	50,752	19,000	2,895	52,383	43,413	19,000	52,043	43,092	19,000
	Bogoslof	113,479	85,109	250	8	113,479	85,109	250	256	115,146	86,360	300	115,146	86,360	300
Pacific cod	BS	147,949	123,805	111,380	109,202	183,012	153,383	136,466	127,885	172,495	144,834	127,409	166,814	140,159	123,295
	AI	27,400	20,600	13,796	7,298	27,400	20,600	13,796	6,178	18,416	13,812	8,425	18,416	13,812	8,425
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	60,426	29,558	n/a		40,432	34,521	n/a		47,390	40,502		48,561	41,539	
	BS	n/a	3,396	3,396	4,169	n/a	5,264	5,264	5,205	n/a	8,417	7,996	n/a	10,185	9,676
	AI	n/a	4,717	4,717	1,578	n/a	6,463	6,463	2,193	n/a	8,884	8,440	n/a	10,308	9,793
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	341,571	313,477	200,000	108,788	377,071	354,014	250,000	149,869	404,882	378,499	230,000	495,155	462,890	230,656
Greenland turbot	BSAI	8,568	7,326	6,025	1,597	7,687	6,572	6,572	1,477	4,645	3,960	3,960	3,947	3,364	3,364
	BS	n/a	6,176	5,125	1,130	n/a	5,540	5,540	1,038	n/a	3,338	3,338	n/a	2,836	2,836
	AI	n/a	1,150	900	467	n/a	1,032	1,032	439	n/a	622	622	n/a	528	528
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	90,873	77,349	15,000	9,014	94,445	80,389	20,000	7,626	98,787	83,852	15,000	103,070	87,511	15,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	10,630	8,982	8,982	6,667	10,903	9,214	9,214	8,349	8,946	7,579	7,579	8,776	7,435	7,435
Northern rock sole	BSAI	145,180	140,306	54,500	14,393	214,084	206,896	66,000	18,242	166,034	121,719	66,000	196,011	119,969	66,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	75,863	62,567	25,000	10,259	77,967	64,288	35,500	14,559	79,256	65,344	35,500	81,167	66,927	35,500
Alaska plaice	BSAI	37,924	31,657	24,500	15,862	39,305	32,697	29,221	11,006	40,823	33,946	17,500	43,328	36,021	18,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	22,919	17,189	6,500	2,638	22,919	17,189	10,000	2,550	22,919	17,189	4,500	22,919	17,189	4,500
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	44,376	37,173	35,899	35,479	42,605	35,688	35,385	22,629	50,133	42,038	37,703	49,279	41,322	38,264
	BS	n/a	10,782	10,782	10,693	n/a	10,352	10,352	9,665	n/a	11,903	11,903	n/a	11,700	11,700
	EAI	n/a	8,419	8,419	8,288	n/a	8,083	8,083	5,924	n/a	8,152	8,152	n/a	8,013	8,013
	CAI	n/a	6,198	6,198	5,993	n/a	5,950	5,950	5,823	n/a	5,648	5,648	n/a	5,551	5,551
	WAI	n/a	11,774	10,500	10,505	n/a	11,303	11,000	10,882	n/a	16,335	12,000	n/a	16,058	13,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	18,917	15,557	13,000	6,212	23,420	19,217	17,000	7,801	22,776	18,687	11,000	22,105	18,135	11,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	576	482	482	515	598	503	503	386	703	525	525	763	570	570
	EBS/EAI	n/a	313	313	196	n/a	326	326	137		359	359		388	388
	CAI/WAI	n/a	169	169	319	n/a	177	177	249		166	166		182	182
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	722	541	500	496	722	541	541	284	706	530	530	706	530	530
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,751	1,313	916	1,002	1,751	1,313	1,144	1,224	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,680	1,260	1,260
	BS	n/a	919	522	392	n/a	919	750	647		880	880		880	880
	AI	n/a	394	394	610	n/a	394	394	577		380	380		380	380
Atka mackerel	BSAI	85,580	73,590	62,257	61,354	91,870	78,510	66,481	54,311	118,787	98,588	69,282	101,188	86,464	66,855
	EAI/BS	n/a	25,760	25,760	25,183	n/a	27,260	27,260	15,504	n/a	43,281	27,260	n/a	37,958	30,000
	CAI	n/a	15,450	15,450	15,308	n/a	16,880	16,880	16,599	n/a	17,351	17,351	n/a	15,218	15,218
	WAI	n/a	32,380	21,047	20,863	n/a	34,370	22,341	22,208	n/a	37,956	24,671	n/a	33,288	21,637
Skates	BSAI	49,297	41,257	18,000	20,029	47,790	39,958	30,000	27,799	46,220	38,605	27,441	44,168	36,837	27,927
Sharks	BSAI	689	517	200	221	689	517	500	125	689	450	250	689	450	250
Octopuses	BSAI	4,769	3,576	700	170	4,769	3,576	700	254	4,769	3,576	400	4,769	3,576	400
<b>Total</b>	BSAI	<b>3,945,315</b>	<b>2,747,727</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>1,795,049</b>	<b>2,953,182</b>	<b>2,383,653</b>	<b>1,871,000</b>	<b>1,586,764</b>	<b>4,859,585</b>	<b>3,155,268</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>6,219,700</b>	<b>3,590,412</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

Sources: 2021 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs and 2022 OFLs and ABCs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2020 and December 2021 respectively; 2021 catches through December 31, and 2022 catches through November 5, 2022 from AKR Catch Accounting.

Table 13—Final 2023 and 2024 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, Community Development Quota (CDQ) ABC Reserves, and Amendment 80 ABC Reserves In the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector	2023 Flathead sole	2023 Rock sole	2023 Yellowfin sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Flathead sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Rock sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Yellowfin sole
ABC	65,344	121,719	378,499	66,927	119,969	462,890
TAC	35,500	66,000	230,000	35,500	66,000	230,656
ABC surplus	29,844	55,719	148,499	31,427	53,969	232,234
ABC reserve	29,844	55,719	148,499	31,427	53,969	232,234
CDQ ABC reserve	3,193	5,962	15,889	3,363	5,775	24,849
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	26,651	49,757	132,610	28,064	48,194	207,385

<sup>1</sup> The 2024 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2023.

Table 14—Final 2023 And 2024 Apportionment of Prohibited Species Catch Allowances to Non-Trawl Gear, the CDQ Program, Amendment 80, and the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors

PSC species and area and zone <sup>1</sup>	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve <sup>2</sup>	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector <sup>3</sup>	BSAI trawl limited access sector	BSAI PSC limits not allocated <sup>3</sup>
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,515	710	315	n/a	1,745	745	-
Herring (mt) BSAI	3,444	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	32,000	n/a	3,424	28,576	14,282	8,739	5,555
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	4,350,000	n/a	465,450	3,884,550	1,909,256	1,248,494	726,799
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	830,000	n/a	88,810	741,190	312,115	348,285	80,790
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,520,000	n/a	269,640	2,250,360	532,660	1,053,394	664,306

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

<sup>3</sup> The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits for crab below the total PSC limit. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

Table 15—Final 2023 And 2024 Herring and Red King Crab Savings Subarea Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for all Trawl Sectors

Fishery Categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	200	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish <sup>1</sup>	99	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	10	n/a
Rockfish	10	n/a
Pacific cod	18	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	3,066	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>2,3</sup>	41	n/a
2023 Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>4</sup>	n/a	-
2024 Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>5</sup>	n/a	8,000
Total trawl PSC	3,444	32,000

<sup>1</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

<sup>3</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

<sup>4</sup> Section 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B) establishes criteria under which an annual red king crab bycatch limit must be specified for the Red King

<sup>5</sup> If the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery remains closed in the 2023/2024 crab season, the RKCSS specification will be zero. If the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery is open in the 2023/2024 crab season, NMFS, after consultation with the Council, will specify an annual red king crab bycatch limit for the RKCSS, which is limited by regulation to up to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (§

**Note:** Species allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 16–Final 2023 And 2024 Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector

BSAI trawl limited access fisheries	Prohibited species and area and zone				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	265	7,700	1,192,179	293,234	1,005,879
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish April 15 - December 31	5	-	1,006	-	849
Pacific cod	300	975	50,281	50,816	42,424
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>3</sup>	175	65	5,028	4,235	4,243
Total BSAI trawl limited access PSC	745	8,739	1,248,494	348,285	1,053,394

**Note:** Seasonal or sector allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>3</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

Table 17–Final 2023 And 2024 Halibut Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI					
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher	All Non-Trawl	
Pacific cod	Total Pacific cod	648	13	661	
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a	
	June 10-August 13	162	2	n/a	
	August 13-December 31	98	2	n/a	
Non-Pacific cod non-trawl	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	49	
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt	
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt	
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710	

**Note:** Seasonal or sector allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 18–2023 and 2024 Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMR) For The BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	85
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	62
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Pot	All	26