

Agenda Item: "B-4"



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL
DECEMBER 2003**

Fisheries managed under delegated authority to the State of Alaska since the last council report: salmon, crab, and groundfish.

Salmon Troll Fishery (FIGURE 1)

The 2003-2004 winter troll chinook salmon fishery opened by regulation on October 11, 2003. This fishery is confined to waters east of the "winter boundary line" (see 5 AAC 29.020(b)) and includes waters of Yakutat Bay. The winter fishery will continue through April 14, 2004 or until 45,000 treaty chinook salmon are harvested. The current fishery could be characterized as slow and steady when compared to last year, when the winter troll chinook salmon catch of 50,854 was the highest since 1994. Catches last year were unusually high for the first three weeks but then dropped to average or below average levels. To

date, regional catches this season have been much more consistent, with harvests at about 85% of the most recent 5-year average. With a first week harvest of approximately 4,500 fish, this is still the second highest catch for that period since the 1989 season. Fishing effort is similar to that in 2003, and above the 5-year average. However, catch per landing is below the level seen in 2003 and below the recent 5-year average. Prices remain above those paid early in 2003 and above the 5-year average. At this juncture, the Alaska hatchery component, at about 14% of the catch, nearly doubles that seen in 2003.

Aleutian Island Golden King Crab (FIGURE 2)

The Aleutian Islands (Area O) opened to commercial fishing for golden king crab on August 15, 2003 with guideline harvest levels (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds east and 2.7 million pounds west of 174° W longitude. Through September 3, 2003, approximately 2.3 million pounds of golden king crab had been landed from Area O east of 174° W longitude. Given that the harvest rate at that time was approximately 129,000 pounds per day, the GHL of 3.0 million pounds was projected to be reached by 12:00 NOON September 8, 2003. Therefore, that portion of Area O east of 174° W longitude closed to commercial fishing on September 8, 2003. Final harvest was approximately 2.97 million pounds. The golden king crab fishery west of 174° W longitude continues at this time. Present catch stands at approximately 1.5 million pounds from 6 vessels. Prices are averaging between \$3.50–3.60 per pound.

Bristol Bay Red King Crab (FIGURE 3)

The Bristol Bay red king crab season opened by regulation on October 15, 2003. The GHL for the general fishery was 14.535 million pounds. There were 252 vessels registered to fish this season. Based on voluntary catch reports received from approximately 45% of the fleet through October 19, 2003, it was determined that the GHL would be reached by 6:00 PM, October 20, 2003, and that closure

date and time were announced. Preliminary catch estimates for the season put the total general fishery harvest at 14,530,000 pounds, with an average price of \$5.08 per pound. The CDQ fleet has made an additional harvest of approximately 824,000 pounds to date on its 1.2 million pound GHL.

Western Aleutian Island Red King Crab (FIGURE 4)

The Petrel Bank area of the western Aleutians opened to commercial fishing for red king crab at noon on October 25, 2003. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game established a GHL of 500,000 pounds of legal male red king crabs. The Petrel Bank area is defined as those waters of king crab Registration Area O west of 179° West longitude, east of 179° East longitude, and north of 51° 45' North latitude. Only those waters in the above described area that are 125 fathoms or less in depth will be open to fishing for red king crab. Golden king crab fishermen participating in the Petrel Bank red king crab fishery were not required to remove golden king crab pots from the water, except from the area that was open to fishing for red king crab. Red king crab pots could not be longlined and red king crab could not be harvested from longlined golden king crab gear. Inseason reports through 6:00 PM October 28, 2003 indicated that approximately 433,000 pounds of red king crab have been harvested by 30 registered vessels and that the guideline harvest level (GHL) of 500,000 pounds would be reached by the fishery closure at 6:00 AM, Wednesday, October 29, 2003. Preliminary harvest estimates put the final catch at 479,113 pounds from 31 landings. The average price for the fishery was about \$5.10 per pound.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)

Cook Inlet

In Cook Inlet, the state waters fishery opened on February 10, 2003, twenty-four hours after the close of the Federal fishery. The 1.44 million pound GHL was allocated 50% to pot gear and 50% to jig gear. The GHL was calculated as 2.25% of the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for the federal Central Gulf of

Alaska area. This year there was more effort in the state waters fishery, the fish were larger and more abundant. Good catches by the pot fleet resulted in a closure on February 27, 2003. By regulation, the fishery reopened to pot gear on September 1, 2003. Total catch to date by 34 vessels making 287 landings is approximately 1.4 million pounds.

Prince William Sound

The 2003 Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season opened February 16, 2003 with a 0.71 million pound GHL allocated 60% to pot gear and 40% to jig gear. The GHL is calculated as 10% of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. One vessel has participated to date in the fishery, so landing data remains confidential.

Southeast Groundfish (FIGURE 6)

In the Southeast District, from September 1 through November 16 2003, activity occurred in the directed lingcod fishery, the directed black rockfish fishery, the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) and Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) sablefish fisheries and the directed Pacific cod fishery. The directed lingcod fishery opened on May 16, 2003. The 41 permit holders participating in the lingcod fishery landed a total of 342,445 round pounds of lingcod from the Central Southeast Outside (CSEO), Southern Southeast Outer Coast (SSEOC), Northern Southeast Outside (NSEO) and East Yakutat (EYKT) management areas. The season for the lingcod fishery in EYKT was short with a closure on May 21, 2003. The CSEO, NSEO and SSEOC management areas remain open. The directed black rockfish fishery opened on January 1, 2003. Nine permit holders participated in the fishery, landing a total of 73,456 round pounds of black rockfish from the CSEO, SSEOC and NSEO management areas. The NSEI sablefish fishery opened on August 15, 2003 and closed on November 15, 2003 with a quota of 2,005,000 round pounds. One hundred eight permit holders

registered to fish. Those fishermen landed a total of 1,956,141 round pounds of sablefish. The SSEI sablefish pot gear fishery opened on September 1, 2003 and closed on November 15, 2003, with a quota of 99,440 round pounds. The four permit holders registered to fish landed a total of 78,575 round pounds of sablefish. The Pacific cod fishery opened January 1, 2003 with an annual quota of 1,000,000 round pounds. To date the directed fishery has landed approximately 256,112 round pounds. It is anticipated that this fishery will remain open year-around. The demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fall fishery opened on November 16, 2003; the only management areas open are CSEO with 59,535 round pounds, NSEI with 19,845 round pounds and SSEI with 17,640 round pounds. Due to small allocations and anticipated high level of vessel participation, area openings are expected to be brief.

FIGURE 1. 2004 COMMERCIAL WINTER TROLL CHINOOK FISHERY

This table was updated November 25, 2003. Numbers below are listed by Troll Year, which begins with the winter fishery in October and ends with the summer fishery in September.

Troll Year	Statistics for Oct. 26 - Nov.1				Week 45		
	Total Catch to date	Week 47 Catch	Permits Fished	Landings	Catch/Landing	Average Weight (lbs.)	Average Price/lb
2004	10,759	214	30	35	6.1	13.2	\$4.04
2003	17,987	365	28	34	10.7	13.1	\$3.09
5-year ave.99-03	14,720	1,446	57	82	16.2	14.1	\$3.04

Troll Year 2004	Weekly Chinook Salmon Catch and Effort Data					
Week	Permits	Landings	Number	Pounds	Ave.Price	Ave. Wt.
41	28	29	547	7,386	\$2.96	13.5
42	133	182	4,449	61,532	\$2.96	13.9
43	74	102	1,586	22,398	\$3.38	14.2
44	107	147	1,702	23,152	\$3.42	13.7
45	93	129	1,860	24,420	\$3.76	13.2
46	37	46	395	5,205	\$3.83	13.2
47	30	35	214	2,879	\$4.04	13.5
48	3	3	6	99	\$4.92	16.5
Totals	212	673	10,759	147,071	\$3.28	13.7

Data for troll year 2004 is preliminary and based on fish ticket reports.

FIGURE

SE AK WINTER TROLL FISHERY, 2004

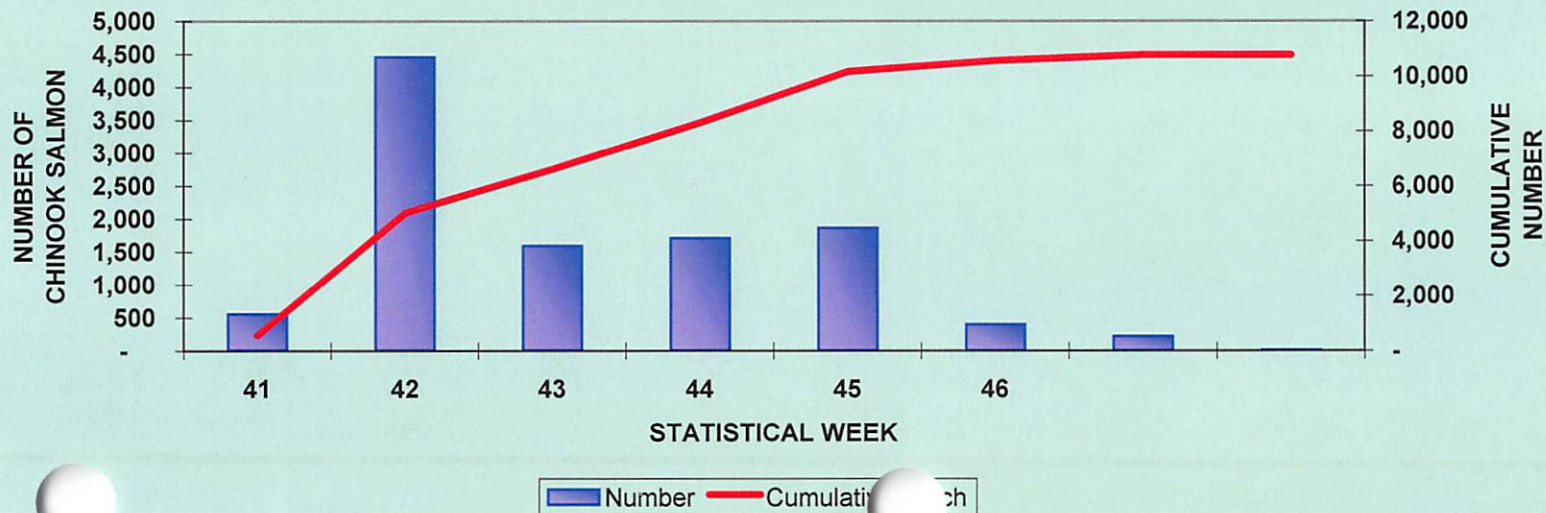
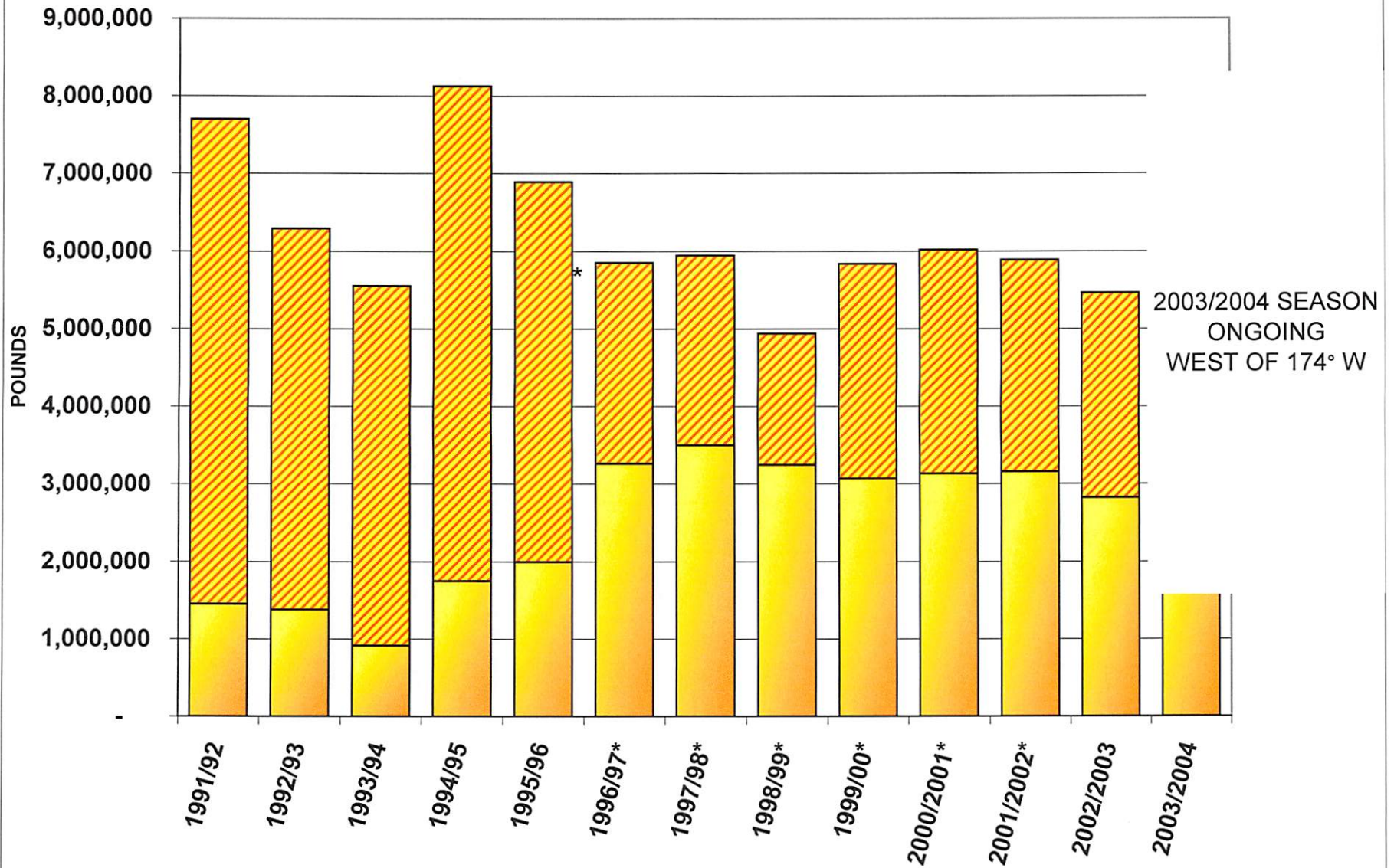


FIGURE 2

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GOLDEN KING CRAB HARVESTS



*NOTE: FISHING AREA DESIGNATION MODIFIED IN 1996 @ 174° W

■ EAST OF 174° W

■ WEST OF 174° W

FIGURE 3.

Bristol Bay Commercial Red King Crab Catches (1990-2003)

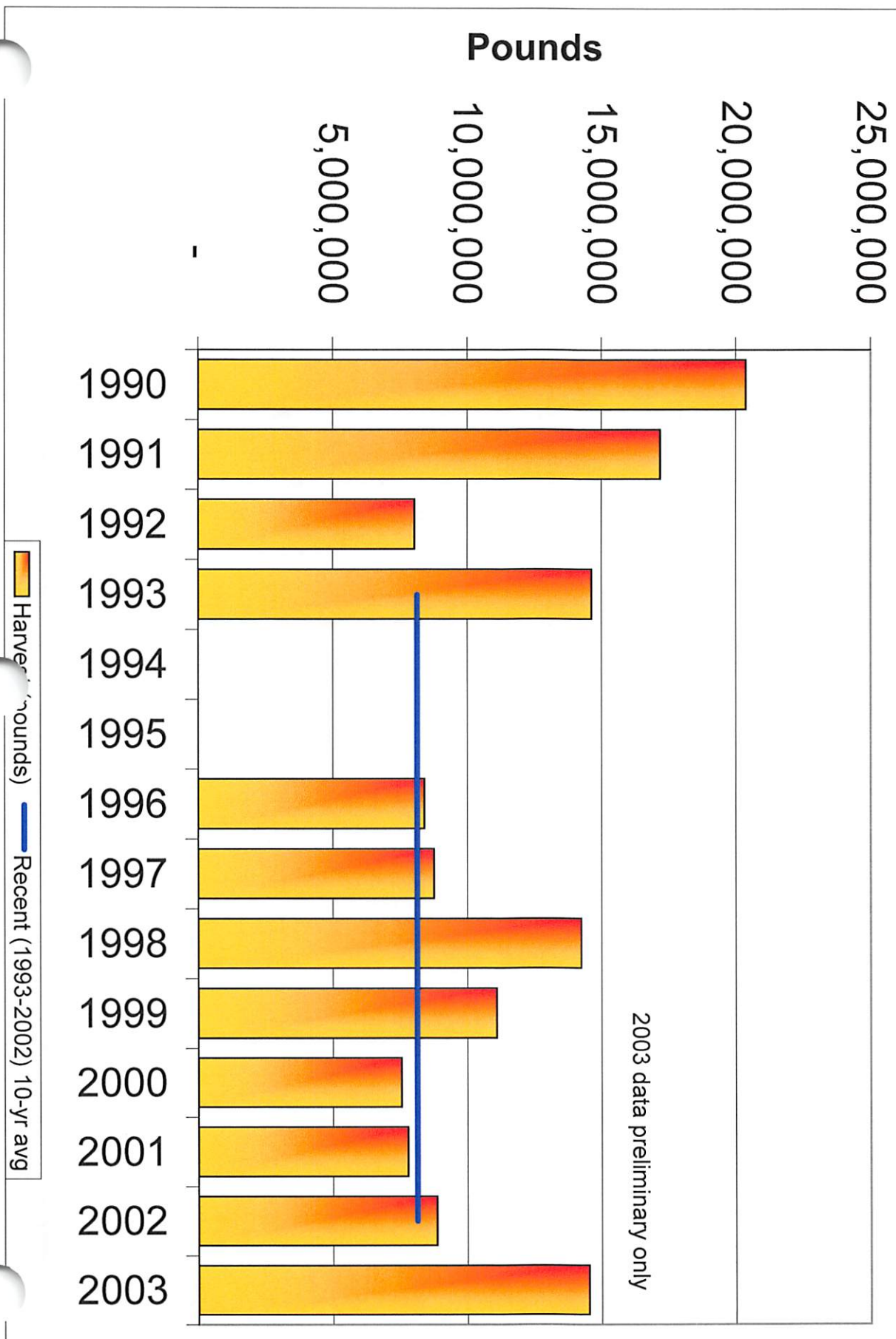


Figure 4.

Aleutian Islands Red King Crab Commercial Harvest Data

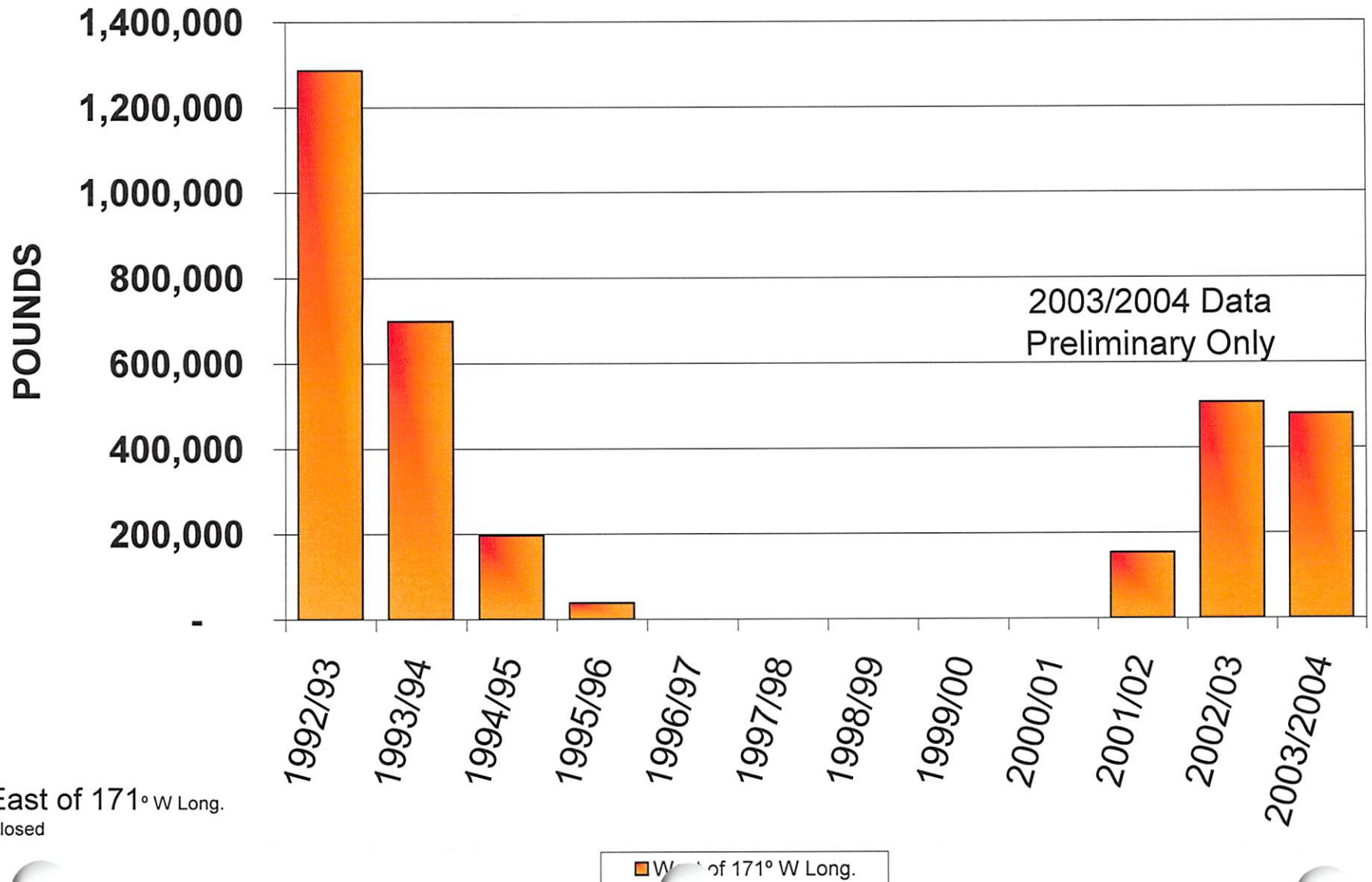


FIGURE 5. 2003 harvest guideline, effort, and catch reported for state water Pacific cod fisheries through Nov 13.

This summary censured for confidential reports or records.

Pacific Cod

PARALLEL SEASON - STATE WATERS

Gear	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
Hand troll (05)	0	0	0	1	confidential	confidential
Jigs (26)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trawl (47)	0	0	0	3	confidential	confidential
Longline (61)	41	54	126,168	26	41	13,951
Pots (91)	7	89	292,809	0	0	0
Totals	48	143	418,977	30	41	13,951
Status		Closed			Closed	
Federal seasons: Central Gulf	Directed Opened - Closed Jan 1 - noon Feb 9			Directed Opened - Closed Jan 1 - noon Feb 9		

Parallel season concurrent with federal waters of the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA).
Totals include Pacific Cod bycatch to other directed fisheries e.g. halibut & sablefish.

Pacific Cod

STATE MANAGED - STATE WATERS*

Gear	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
GHL (lb)		1.44 million lbs.			*705,500 lbs.	
Hand troll (05)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jigs (26)	24	161	429,685	0	0	0
Pots (91)	10	126	974,128	1	confidential	confidential
Totals	34	287	1,403,813	1	confidential	confidential
State seasons: Jigs (26) Status	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 - Open			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 - Open		
State seasons: Pots (91)	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 - 5 PM Feb 27 Sept 1 -			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 - Gear and exclusive area registrations removed effective October 31.		
Status		Open			Open	

*The state managed fishery for Pacific cod opens by emergency order to pot and jig gear under exclusive area registration 24 hours after the Federal closure in Cook Inlet and 7 days in PWS.
Includes only directed fishery harvest.

*Note; new GHL calculation effective 5/14/03.

