

B-2  
Jay Dinter

Status of FMP Amendments  
March 31, 2006

FMP Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since February 2006 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Proposed FMP Amendment Notice of Availability Published	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Amendment 20 (KTC) – Bairdi split	October 2005	PR: 12/2/05	<b>PR: February 16, 2006</b>	<b>February 27, 2006</b> 71 FR 9770 <u>Comment period ends April 28, 2006</u>	<b>March 21, 2006</b> 71 FR 14153 <u>Comment period ends May 5, 2006</u>	
Amendment 21 (KTC) – Share match binding arbitration	February 2006	<b>PR: 2/23/06</b>	<b>PR: March 24, 2006</b>		<i>Pub Tues/Wed next week</i>	
Amendments 62/62: Single Geographic Location and AFA housekeeping	Oct 2002	PR: 10/15/04				
Amendments 65/78 (BSAI) 65/73 (GOA) 12/16 (KTC) 7/9/11 (SCAL) 8/7 (SAL) – Habitat Areas of Particular Concern and Essential Fish Habitat <b>Record of Decision: 8/8/05</b>	February 2005	PR: 4/20/05	PR: January 30, 2006	<b>February 6, 2006</b> 71 FR 6031 <u>Comment period ends April 7, 2006</u>	<b>March 22, 2006</b> 71 FR 14470 <u>Comment period ends May 8, 2006</u>	
Amendment 67 (GOA) – IFQ omnibus IV	December 2004	<b>PR: 2/6/06</b>				
Amendment 68 (GOA) – Rockfish Demonstration Project	June 2005	<b>PR: 3/7/06</b>				
Amendment 69 (GOA) – Change “Other species” TAC fixed at 5% <b>Decision Date: 2/16/06</b>	June 2005	PR: 10/7/05 FR: 1/24/06	PR: November 7, 2005 <b>FR: February 9, 2006</b>	November 16, 2005 70 FR 69505 <u>Comment period ends January 17, 2006</u>	November 29, 2005 70 FR 71451 <u>Comment period ends January 13, 2006</u>	<b>March 13, 2006</b> 71 FR 12626 <u>Effective April 12, 2006</u>

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Amendment 72 (GOA): Remove flatfish IR/IU provisions	April 2003					
Amendment 79 (BSAI): Groundfish Retention Standard <u>Approved: August 31, 2005</u>	June 2003	PR: 3/30/05  FR: 11/18/05	PR: May 26, 2005  <b>FR: February 7, 2006</b>	June 2, 2005 70 FR 32287 <u>Comment period ended August 1, 2005</u>	June 16, 2005 70 FR 35054 <u>Comment period ended August 1, 2005</u>	<del>April 7, 2006</del> April 6  <b>Effective January 20, 2008</b>
Amendment 84 (BSAI) – Salmon Bycatch ICA	October 2005	PR: 2/1/06				

Status of Regulatory Amendments  
March 31, 2006

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<b>Groundfish Regulations</b>					
Chiniak Gully closure	February 2006	<b>PR: February 13, 2006</b>	<b>PR: February 28, 2006</b>	<b>March 27, 2006</b> 71 FR 15152 <u>Comment period ends April 26, 2006</u>	
CDQ reserve management measures	December 2005				
Electronic catcher vessel logbook	NMFS	PR: September 9, 2005			

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March 31, 2006

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<b>Groundfish Regulations</b>					
2006-2007 BSAI groundfish harvest specifications	December 2005	PR: 10/13/05  FR: 1/2/06	PR: November 25, 2005	December 16, 2005 70 FR 74723 <u>Comment period ended January 17, 2006</u>	<b>March 3, 2006</b> <b>71 FR 10894</b>
2006-2007 GOA groundfish harvest specifications	December 2005	PR: 10/18/05  FR: 1/2/06	PR: November 25, 2006	December 16, 2005 70 FR 74739 <u>Comment period ended January 17, 2006</u>	<b>March 3, 2006</b> <b>71 FR 10870</b>
IFQ fee framework	NMFS	<b>PR: March 2, 2006</b>			
Revise accounting for tagged halibut	NMFS	PR: November 5, 2005	<b>PR: March 7, 2006</b>	<b>March 29, 2006</b> <b>71 FR 15687</b> <u>Comment period ends April 28, 2006</u>	
Revise requirements for facilitation of observer data transmission, improving support of observers (ATLAS 2)	NMFS	PR: May 24, 2005  FR: September 14, 2005	PR: June 6, 2005  <b>FR: March 17, 2006</b>	August 8, 2005 70 FR 45638 <u>Comment period ended September 7, 2005</u>	

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<b>Halibut Regulations</b>					
Halibut subsistence III	December 2004				
<b>Crab Regulations</b>					
Correction to GOA sideboards for crab fleet	NMFS	<b>PR: February 13, 2006</b>	<b>PR: March 28, 2006</b> 29		
Crab Revise crab EDR submission date	NMFS	<b>PR: April 3, 2006</b>			
<b>Other Actions</b>					
EFP for AI pollock <b>issued March 9, 2006</b>					



**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Catch Report**  
 (includes CDQ)  
 Through: 25-MAR-06

**National Marine Fisheries Service**  
 Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries  
 Catch Accounting



**Bering Sea**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Other Rockfish	28	391	363	7%	0
	Other Rockfish CDQ	1	35	34	2%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	144	1,190	1,046	12%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch CDQ	1	105	104	1%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	18	1,128	1,110	2%	9
	Sablefish CDQ (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	0	282	282	0%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	11	1,199	1,188	1%	0
	Sablefish CDQ (Trawl)	0	106	106	0%	0
	Greenland Turbot	34	1,607	1,573	2%	0
	Greenland Turbot CDQ	1	142	141	1%	0
X	Pollock, AFA Inshore	262,394	648,666	386,272	40%	11,270
X	Pollock, AFA Catcher Processor	208,216	518,933	310,717	40%	4,540
X	Pollock, AFA Mothership	51,669	129,733	78,064	40%	482
X	Pollock CDQ	60,033	149,260	89,227	40%	870
	Pollock, Incidental Catch, non-Bogoslof (includes CDQ)	15,437	44,967	29,530	34%	1,392
	Pollock, Incidental Catch, Bogoslof (includes CDQ)	0	10	10	0%	0

Note: All weights are in metric tons.

**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Catch Report**  
(includes CDQ)  
Through: 25-MAR-06

**National Marine Fisheries Service**  
**Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries**  
**Catch Accounting**



**Aleutian Islands**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Other Rockfish	45	502	457	9%	2
	Other Rockfish CDQ	1	44	43	2%	1
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Eastern	77	2,849	2,772	3%	9
	Pacific Ocean Perch CDQ, Eastern	0	231	231	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Central	480	2,808	2,328	17%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch CDQ, Central	0	228	228	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Western	53	4,703	4,650	1%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch CDQ, Western	0	381	381	0%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Eastern (Other Gear)	1,185	6,868	5,683	17%	20
	Atka Mackerel, Eastern (Jig)	0	69	69	0%	0
	Atka Mackerel CDQ, Eastern	0	563	563	0%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Central	18,956	37,000	18,044	51%	0
	Atka Mackerel CDQ, Central	0	3,000	3,000	0%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Western	59	14,338	14,279	0%	0
	Atka Mackerel CDQ, Western	0	1,163	1,163	0%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	80	1,800	1,720	4%	10
	Sablefish CDQ (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	0	450	450	0%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	0	638	638	0%	0
	Sablefish CDQ (Trawl)	0	56	56	0%	0
	Greenland Turbot	18	723	705	2%	1
	Greenland Turbot CDQ	0	64	64	0%	0
X	Pollock	499	9,500	9,001	5%	444
X	Pollock CDQ	0	1,140	1,140	0%	0
X	Pollock, Incidental Catch (includes CDQ)	203	1,800	1,597	11%	3

Note: All weights are in metric tons.

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Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries  
Catch Accounting



**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Alaska Plaice	6,266	6,800	534	92%	2,558
	Alaska Plaice CDQ	0	600	600	0%	0
	Arrowtooth Flounder	1,849	11,050	9,201	17%	52
	Arrowtooth Flounder CDQ	20	975	955	2%	1
	Flathead Sole	4,433	16,575	12,142	27%	531
	Flathead Sole CDQ	127	1,463	1,336	9%	6
	Northern Rockfish	622	4,163	3,541	15%	3
	Northern Rockfish CDQ	2	338	336	0%	1
	Other Flatfish	1,268	2,975	1,707	43%	15
	Other Flatfish CDQ	15	263	248	6%	1
	Other Species	9,684	24,650	14,966	39%	562
	Other Species CDQ	907	2,175	1,268	42%	96
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Trawl)	20,416	40,906	20,490	50%	387
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Trawl)	28,030	40,906	12,876	69%	164
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Hook-and-Line)	45,646	70,619	24,973	65%	12
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Hook-and-Line)	158	265	107	60%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Pot)	1,175	2,913	1,738	40%	242
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Pot)	9,471	13,241	3,770	72%	0
X	Pacific Cod (Jig)	2	2,181	2,179	0%	0
	Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line and Pot < 60 ft)	1,698	2,536	838	67%	345
	Pacific Cod, Incidental Catch (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	89	500	411	18%	2
X	Pacific Cod CDQ	6,800	14,114	7,314	48%	693
	Rock Sole	17,996	35,275	17,279	51%	1,396
	Rock Sole CDQ	102	3,113	3,011	3%	1
	Rougheye Rockfish	10	207	197	5%	0
	Rougheye Rockfish CDQ	0	17	17	1%	0
	Shortraker Rockfish	30	537	507	6%	0
	Shortraker Rockfish CDQ	1	44	43	1%	0
	Squid (includes CDQ)	497	1,084	587	46%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	31,974	81,346	49,372	39%	10,538
	Yellowfin Sole CDQ	8	7,178	7,170	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>		<b>808,938</b>	<b>1,977,681</b>	<b>1,168,743</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>36,659</b>

Other gear in the Atka mackerel fishery includes all authorized gear types except jig.

Other flatfish: all flatfish species, except for Pacific halibut, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder, and Alaska plaice.

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Other rockfish: all Sebastes and Sebastolobus species except for Pacific ocean perch, northern, shorttraker, and rougheye rockfish.

Other species: sculpins, sharks, skates and octopus.

For changes to the harvest specifications refer to [www.fakr.noaa.gov/2006/hschanges.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/2006/hschanges.htm)



**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report  
(includes CDQ fisheries)**

Through: 25-MAR-06

**National Marine Fisheries Service  
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**Chinook Salmon**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	BS Pollock (Pelagic)	Count	57,118	26,825	-30,293	213%	1,646
	BS Chinook Salmon PSQ	Count	1,532	2,175	643	70%	15
	AI Pollock (Pelagic)	Count	55	647	592	8%	49
	AI Chinook Salmon PSQ	Count	0	53	53	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>58,705</b>	<b>29,700</b>	<b>-29,005</b>	<b>198%</b>	<b>1,710</b>

**Halibut Mortality**

**Non-Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line)	MT	171	775	604	22%	1
	Non-Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line)	MT	0	58	58	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>171</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>1</b>

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	MT	960	1,434	474	67%	11
	Rockfish	MT	0	69	69	0%	0
X	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish (Trawl)	MT	472	779	307	61%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	MT	95	232	137	41%	0
X	Yellowfin Sole (Trawl)	MT	173	886	713	20%	92
	Turbot/Sablefish/Arrowtooth Flounder	MT	42	0	-42	0%	3
<b>Total:</b>			<b>1,742</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>106</b>

**Trawl and Hook-and-Line Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Halibut Mortality PSQ	MT	11	342	331	3%	1
<b>Total:</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1</b>

**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report  
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**National Marine Fisheries Service  
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**Herring (includes CDQ fisheries)**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	MT	0	27	27	0%	0
	Rockfish	MT	0	10	10	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	MT	0	27	27	0%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	MT	0	192	192	0%	0
	Pollock Pelagic	MT	9	1,350	1,341	1%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	MT	0	152	152	0%	0
	Greenland Turbot, Arrowtooth, Sablefish	MT	0	12	12	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0</b>

**Opilio (Tanner) Crab - COBLZ**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	1,271	184,402	183,131	1%	0
	Rockfish	Count	0	62,356	62,356	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	641	810,091	809,450	0%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	24	106,591	106,567	0%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	433,673	4,103,752	3,670,079	11%	387,778
	Greenland Turbot, Arrowtooth, Sablefish	Count	0	62,356	62,356	0%	0
	Opilio Crab PSQ	Count	7	432,126	432,119	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>435,616</b>	<b>5,761,674</b>	<b>5,326,058</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>387,778</b>

**Bairdi Crab, Zone 1**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	58,328	183,112	124,784	32%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	70,235	365,320	295,085	19%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	749	17,224	16,475	4%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	33,708	340,844	307,136	10%	5,790
	Bairdi Crab PSQ	Count	13	73,500	73,487	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>163,034</b>	<b>980,000</b>	<b>816,966</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>5,790</b>

**Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report  
(includes CDQ fisheries)**

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**National Marine Fisheries Service  
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**Bairdi Crab, Zone 2**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	32,933	324,176	291,243	10%	0
	Rockfish	Count	0	10,988	10,988	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	5,506	596,154	590,648	1%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	78	27,473	27,395	0%	2
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	87,521	1,788,459	1,700,938	5%	66,557
	Bairdi Crab PSQ	Count	3	222,750	222,747	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>126,041</b>	<b>2,970,000</b>	<b>2,843,959</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>66,559</b>

**Red King Crab, Zone 1**

**Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	5,935	26,563	20,628	22%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	51,006	121,413	70,407	42%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	204	406	202	50%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	5,334	33,843	28,509	16%	1,740
	Red King Crab PSQ	Count	0	14,775	14,775	0%	0
<b>Total:</b>			<b>62,479</b>	<b>197,000</b>	<b>134,521</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>1,740</b>

"Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring: all flatfish species, except for Pacific halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder.

COBLZ: C. Opilio Crab Bycatch Limitation Zone. 50 CFR 679.21(e) and Figure 13.

Zone 1: Federal Reporting Areas 508, 509, 512, 516.

Zone 2: Federal Reporting Areas 513, 517, 521.

Data is based on observer reports extrapolated to total groundfish harvest. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

Gulf of Alaska Catch Report

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National Marine Fisheries Service  
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Western, Central Pollock

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Pollock, 610 Shumagin	12,041	28,918	16,877	42%	1
X	Pollock, 620 Chirikof	23,851	30,492	6,641	78%	3,074
X	Pollock, 630 Kodiak	4,690	18,448	13,758	25%	13

Western Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	458	8,000	7,542	6%	4
	Deep Water Flatfish	1	420	419	0%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	182	4,500	4,318	4%	1
	Flathead Sole	346	2,000	1,654	17%	0
	Rex Sole	126	1,159	1,033	11%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	12	4,155	4,143	0%	0
	Rougheye Rockfish	2	136	134	2%	0
	Shortraker Rockfish	8	153	145	6%	3
	Thornyhead Rockfish	13	513	500	3%	2
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	14	1,438	1,424	1%	0
	Northern Rockfish	92	1,483	1,391	6%	0
	Other Rockfish	1	577	576	0%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Inshore	12,268	18,127	5,859	68%	2
X	Pacific Cod, Offshore	609	2,014	1,405	30%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	199	2,136	1,937	9%	40
	Sablefish (Trawl)	1	534	534	0%	0
	Big Skate	22	695	673	3%	1
	Longnose Skate	3	65	62	4%	1

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Central Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	2,886	25,000	22,114	12%	938
	Deep Water Flatfish	77	4,139	4,062	2%	74
	Shallow Water Flatfish	671	13,000	12,329	5%	230
	Flathead Sole	431	5,000	4,569	9%	98
	Rex Sole	581	5,506	4,925	11%	168
	Pacific Ocean Perch	95	7,418	7,323	1%	37
	Rougeye Rockfish	25	608	583	4%	5
	Shortraker Rockfish	53	353	300	15%	24
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	25	3,262	3,237	1%	1
	Northern Rockfish	48	3,608	3,560	1%	2
	Thornyhead Rockfish	9	989	980	1%	8
	Other Rockfish	6	386	380	2%	3
		14,230	25,565	11,335	56%	71
X	Pacific Cod, Inshore	10	2,840	2,830	0%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Offshore	88	5,096	5,008	2%	40
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	10	1,274	1,264	1%	9
	Sablefish (Trawl)	415	2,250	1,835	18%	30
	Big Skate	127	1,969	1,842	6%	22
	Longnose Skate					

Eastern Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Rougeye Rockfish	7	239	232	3%	2
	Shortraker Rockfish	14	337	323	4%	10
	Thornyhead Rockfish	4	707	703	1%	2
	Pacific Cod, Inshore	1	3,346	3,345	0%	1
	Pacific Cod, Offshore	0	372	372	0%	0
	Big Skate	2	599	597	0%	2
	Longnose Skate	5	861	856	1%	5

Note: All weights are in metric tons.



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**West Yakutat**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	0	2,500	2,500	0%	0
	Deep Water Flatfish	0	2,661	2,661	0%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	0	628	628	0%	0
	Flathead Sole	0	2,022	2,022	0%	0
	Rex Sole	0	1,049	1,049	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	0	1,101	1,101	0%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	0	301	301	0%	0
	Other Rockfish	0	317	317	0%	0
	Pollock	0	1,792	1,792	0%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	60	1,990	1,930	3%	23
	Sablefish (Trawl)	0	290	290	0%	0

**Southeast**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	1	2,500	2,499	0%	1
	Deep Water Flatfish	0	1,445	1,445	0%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	0	1,844	1,844	0%	0
	Flathead Sole	0	55	55	0%	0
	Rex Sole	0	1,486	1,486	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	0	1,587	1,587	0%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	0	435	435	0%	0
	Other Rockfish	1	200	199	1%	1
	Pollock	0	6,157	6,157	0%	0
	Demersal Shelf Rockfish	6	410	404	1%	4
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	288	3,520	3,232	8%	109

**Entire Gulf**

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Atka Mackerel	31	1,500	1,469	2%	0
	Other Skates	410	1,617	1,207	25%	24
	Other Species	2,002	13,856	11,854	14%	238
<b>Total:</b>		<b>77,557</b>	<b>291,950</b>	<b>214,393</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>5,327</b>

Deep water flatfish: Dover sole, Greenland turbot, and deepsea sole.

Shallow water flatfish: flatfish not including deep water flatfish, flathead sole, rex sole, or arrowtooth flounder.

**Gulf of Alaska Catch Report**

**Through: 25-MAR-06**

**National Marine Fisheries Service  
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries  
Catch Accounting**



Other rockfish in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas and in the West Yakutat District: slope rockfish and demersal shelf rockfish.

Other rockfish in the Southeast Outside District: slope rockfish.

Slope rockfish: aurora, blackgill, bocaccio, chilipepper, darkblotch, greenstriped, harlequin, pygmy, redbanded, redstripe, sharpchin, shortbelly, silvergrey, splitnose, stripetail, vermilion, and yellowmouth.

In the Eastern GOA only, "slope rockfish" also includes northern rockfish.

Demersal shelf rockfish: canary, china, copper, quillback, rosethorn, tiger, and yelloweye.

"Pelagic shelf rockfish" means *Sebastes ciliatus* (dark), *S. variabilis* (dusky), *S. entomelas* (widow), and *S. flavidus* (yellowtail).

Other species: sculpins, sharks, squid, and octopus.

For changes to the harvest specifications refer to [www.fakr.noaa.gov/2006/hschanges.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/2006/hschanges.htm)

# Gulf of Alaska Halibut Mortality Report

Through: 25-MAR-06

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries  
Catch Accounting



## Trawl Fisheries

### Deep Water Species Complex

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-06	01-APR-06	25	100	75	25%
2nd Season	01-APR-06	01-JUL-06	0	300	300	0%
3rd Season	01-JUL-06	01-SEP-06	0	400	400	0%
4th Season	01-SEP-06	30-SEP-06	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total:</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>3%</b>

### Shallow Water Species Complex

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-06	01-APR-06	301	450	149	67%
2nd Season	01-APR-06	01-JUL-06	0	100	100	0%
3rd Season	01-JUL-06	01-SEP-06	0	200	200	0%
4th Season	01-SEP-06	30-SEP-06	0	150	150	0%
<b>Total:</b>			<b>301</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>33%</b>

## Year-To-Date

Account	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
Trawl Fishery	325	2,000	1,675	16%	20

## Other Hook-and-Line Fisheries

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	01-JAN-06	10-JUN-06	132	250	118	53%
2nd Season	10-JUN-06	01-SEP-06	0	5	5	0%
3rd Season	01-SEP-06	31-DEC-06	0	35	35	0%
			<b>132</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>46%</b>

Deep-water species complex: sablefish, rockfish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole and arrowtooth flounder. Shallow-water species complex: pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, and 'other species'.

No apportionment between shallow-water and deep-water fishery complexes during October 1 to December 31 (300 mt allocated).

Other hook-and-line fisheries means all hook-and-line fisheries except sablefish and demersal shelf rockfish in the Southeast District.

Halibut mortality for the demersal shelf rockfish fishery. Southeast District is not listed due to insufficient observer coverage.

# Gulf of Alaska Halibut Mortality Report

Through: 25-MAR-06

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries  
Catch Accounting



Data is based on observer reports extrapolated to total groundfish harvest. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

**Note:** All weights are in metric tons.

Report run on March 31, 2006 6:16 AM

National Marine Fisheries Service  
Alaska Region  
Inseason Management Highlights

March 31, 2006

**Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands**

**Bering Sea Pollock**

All sectors completed their A season pollock fisheries. The combined A season allocations total 522,296 mt. The Chinook Salmon Savings Area closed to pollock fishing on February 15. This area remains closed until April 15 and then closes again from September 1 through December 31. Current estimates show 57,173 Chinook salmon caught through March 25, 2005.

The A season CDQ fishery is also complete. Current reports show catch equal to the 60,160 mt allocation. The CDQ pollock fishery took about 1,576 Chinook salmon.

The pollock incidental catch is consistent with the 2003-2005 fisheries. The projected pollock incidental catch for January-March, 2006 is 16,700 mt or about 1,000 mt less than the average for 2003-2005. Several fisheries accounted for the pollock incidental catch: rock sole (34%), yellowfin sole (25%), trawl Pacific cod (27%), and hook-and-line Pacific cod (13%). The 2006 first quarter retention rate is 57% for all fisheries. The 2003-2005 first quarter fisheries averaged about 53% retention. In 2005, the average retention rates by fishery were 90% for hook-and-line Pacific cod, 36% for trawl Pacific cod, 50% for trawl rock sole, and 58% for yellowfin sole. Preliminary 2006 fishery data indicates retention in the rock sole (58%) and yellowfin sole (81%) fisheries are higher than the 2003-2005 first quarter averages.

**Aleutian Islands Pollock**

On March 3, NMFS reallocated 5,800 mt of A season non-CDQ pollock from the Aleutian Islands directed fishery to the Bering Sea fisheries. Pollock catch in the Aleutian Islands totals 702 mt. The Atka mackerel and Pacific cod fisheries accounted for the 203 mt of pollock incidental catch. Between March 18-25, 499 mt have been delivered in the directed pollock fishery under an experimental fishing permit.

**Non-pelagic Trawl Catcher Processors**

Catcher processors using non-pelagic trawl gear have taken about 113,300 mt of groundfish through the week ending March 25, 2006. This total is similar to 2005 (113,600 mt) and less than in 2004 (119,500 mt). Compared to the 2004 and 2005 first quarters, more groundfish was caught in the yellowfin sole target and less in the Pacific cod, Atka mackerel, and rock sole targets all of which as a proportion of total groundfish catch are lower in 2006. In 2006, groundfish catch in the yellowfin sole target makes up 34% of the total groundfish catch.

Total halibut bycatch mortality assigned to this sector is roughly equivalent to 2005 for the same time period (week ending March 25, 2006 and March 26, 2005). The 2006 total is 1,174 mt, and the 2005 total was 1,187 mt. Both years are much higher than 2004 at



894 mt. Relative to 2005, the 2006 halibut mortality is higher in the Pacific cod, pollock/Atka mackerel/other species, and Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/sablefish targets and lower in the rock sole and yellowfin sole targets.

Year	Pcod	Plck	Gtrb	Rsol	Ysol	Total
2005	337	44	23	526	257	1,187
2006	416	72	42	472	173	1,174

On February 21, NMFS closed directed fishing for rock sole/other flatfish/flathead sole and Alaska plaice due to the attainment of the first seasonal allocation of halibut mortality. The fishery reopens on April 1, 2006. So far in 2006, this is the only PSC closure affecting this sector of the groundfish fishery.

**Atka mackerel**

Six catcher/processors registered for the A season harvest limitation area (HLA) fisheries in areas 542 and 543. The Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea subarea fishery was closed to directed fishing since the TAC was considered necessary as incidental catch in other fisheries.

The Atka mackerel fishery took place entirely in the Central Aleutian District. Under the HLA fishery, half the fleet is assigned to the HLA in the Western Aleutian District and half the fleet to the Central Aleutian District. The fleets are allowed to switch after a predetermined time. This A season, the portion of the Atka mackerel fleet assigned to the first fishery in the Western Aleutian District abandoned that area and fished in the Central Aleutian District outside the HLA until it was their turn to fish the inside fishery. The entire Central Aleutian District closed to directed fishing on February 18. Catch in the Central Aleutian District is estimated at 18,956 mt, in the Western Aleutian District at 59 mt, and in the Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea subarea at 1,185 mt. Most of the Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea subarea catch (797 mt) came from area 519. Of that, 758 mt was caught in the Atka mackerel target and 84% was retained.

**Pacific cod**

On March 1, 2006, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced by emergency regulation a Pacific cod guideline harvest level (GHL) equal to 3% of the Pacific cod ABC established in the Federal final harvest specifications. The GHL was made available in State waters west of 170 degrees in the Aleutian Islands subarea. On March 14, NMFS issued an inseason adjustment responding to the State fishery. The TAC was reduced by 3% to prevent exceeding the Pacific cod ABC. The fishery began on March 15 and closed on March 24. Currently, NMFS estimates 22 mt of halibut mortality was incurred during the fishery. Of that halibut mortality, hook-and-line gear took 5 mt and trawl gear took 17 mt.

**Hook-and-Line Catcher/Processors**

The hook-and-line catcher processor fishery closed on February 18. Catch rates were slightly higher than in 2005 which also had high rates. In 2005, the average weekly catch was 6,111 mt, the maximum weekly catch was 6,852 mt, and the maximum catch per unit

effort (CPUE) by week was 180 mt. In 2006, the average weekly catch was 6,520 mt, the maximum weekly catch was 7,425 mt, and the maximum CPUE by week was 190 mt. Thirty-nine processors participated in 2005 and 2006. The adjusted A season apportionment is 42,372 mt. The A season catch was 45,667 mt. The 3,330 mt overage will be deducted from the B season (August 15 start) allocation of 28,248 mt. The hook-and-line catcher/processor fishery usually receives a rollover from trawl and jig gear in September. The 2005 rollovers to this fishery totaled 22,175 mt.

The Pacific cod CDQ catch totals 7,057 mt as of March 31, 2006. Ninety five percent was taken with hook-and-line gear in the directed fishery, and the remainder was taken in the pelagic trawl pollock fishery. About 5,800 mt was taken in the four weeks after the closure of the 'open access' hook-and-line catcher processor fishery.

#### Hook-and-Line/Pot Catcher Vessels < 60' and Hook-and-line/Pot Catcher Vessels

The A season hook-and-line catcher vessel adjusted allocation is 159 mt. This fishery closed on March 10 with the entire allocation taken by vessels < 60' length overall (LOA).

The 2006 Pacific cod allocation to vessels < 60' LOA using hook-and-line or pot gear was supplemented from unused jig allocation and is now 2,536 mt. Five hook-and-line vessels accounted for 144 mt and 11 pot vessels accounted for 1,584 mt. The catch by pot vessels < 60' LOA is deducted from the pot catcher vessel allocation while that fishery is open and the catch by hook-and-line vessels < 60' LOA is deducted from the hook-and-line catcher vessel allocation. Current catch rates indicate the fishery will probably close on or before April 6. In 2005, the fishery closed on April 19 with 2,200 mt of Pacific cod. In 2005, several reallocations to the < 60' LOA quota category were made. However, pot vessels that did fish in the fall did so when the catcher vessel pot quota was available after September 1.

#### Jig Gear

Two metric tons have been taken by 3 vessels so far in 2006. In 2005, 19 catcher vessels accounted for 117 mt for the year. Most of the effort is in May-July.

#### Trawl Catcher Vessels

The A season directed fishery closed on March 8. The A season catch is 28,049 mt, of which 10% was taken in the pollock fishery. The remaining 585 mt of the 28,634 mt adjusted A season allocation rolls over to the B season allocation of 4,091 mt and becomes available at noon on April 1.

#### Trawl Catcher/Processors

The A season directed fishery closed on March 12. The fishery took about 19,700 mt. Since the closure, incidental catch, primarily in the yellowfin sole fishery, increased the A season catch to 20,548 mt. The adjusted A season allocation is 20,453 mt. The overage will be deducted from the 12,272 mt B season allocation which becomes available at noon April 1.

*Something here about  
change in March = not  
closed yet, that was last year*

## **Gulf of Alaska (GOA)**

### **Skates and "Other Species" Management**

Skates closed to directed fishing with the filing of the 2006/2007 final harvest specifications. The closure was in response to considerations in the GOA skate assessment in the 2005 North Pacific Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report for 2006. The assessment estimated the combined skate catch in the halibut and groundfish fisheries as potentially approaching the ABC.

Amendment 69 for "other species" has been approved and published. A final rule implementing the amendment becomes effective April 12, 2006. This amendment allows the TAC for "other species" to be set equal to or less than 5% of the combined GOA TACs. A proposed rule and an IRFA to revise the 2006 and 2007 "other species" TACs to 4,500 mt are in regional review. After the proposed rule is published in April, a 30-day public comment period follows. The final rule is expected in late May-early June. The 4,500 mt TAC is sufficient to allow for a directed fishery targeting "other species" of about 500 mt annually.

### **Western GOA Pacific cod**

The A season directed fishery for inshore component closed on March 3. The total A season catch, including incidental catch after the fishery closed, was 12,176 mt out of a 10,876 mt A season allocation. The overage will be deducted from the B season fishery. The directed fishery catch of about 12,130 mt was distributed between catcher processors using hook-and-line gear (9%) and catcher vessels using non-pelagic trawl gear (45%) and pot gear (45%). One percent came from hook-and-line catcher vessels and non-pelagic catcher processors.

### **Central GOA Pacific cod**

The A season inshore component directed fishery closed on February 28. The A season catch was 14,158 mt out of the 15,339 mt TAC. The directed fishery catch of about 13,900 mt was distributed between catcher vessels using hook-and-line gear (31%), non-pelagic trawl gear (26%), pot gear (42%), and the pelagic trawl and jig fisheries (1%). NMFS expects the April and May flatfish fisheries to catch the remaining A season allowance of Pacific cod.

### **Pollock**

#### **Area 610**

The A season fishery opened for two days and the catch limited to 4,229 mt of the 4,210 mt TAC. The B season fishery was allowed to open for four days based on 2005 catch rates and the expectation of limited effort. Catch rates and effort were higher than expected. The 4,210 mt TAC was exceeded by 3,600 mt in the B season. The 10,249 mt C season TAC will be reduced by the overage. While the effort was somewhat lower than in the A season, the average CPUE in the A season (76 mt per trip) was 60% higher in the B season (126 mt per vessel per trip). Some vessels completed more trips than in the A season through the use of tenders.

### **Area 620**

The A season fishery was slow. The fishery did not close and was able to extend into the B season (March 10) fishery. The B season fishery closed on March 21 based on a combined A and B season TAC of 24,586 mt. Catch is under the TAC by about 600 mt.

### **Area 630**

The A season fishery closed on February 15. Initially catch was slow at a 200-400 mt per week rate until the week ending February 18 when the catch accelerated to 1,100 mt per day. The A season allocation of 4,062 mt was exceeded by 588 mt which is about half a day's catch. When the overage and the B season estimated incidental catch (about 800 mt) are deducted from the B season allocation (1,848 mt), the remainder (about 800 mt) is not enough to sustain a directed fishery. The remainder will rollover to the C season fishery.

The C season pollock fisheries in statistical areas 610, 620, and 630 open August 25.

### **Area 640**

The annual West Yakutat TAC is 1,792 mt. Two Kodiak vessels explored the district without finding fish. This fishery is typically hit or miss. In 2005, the fleet caught a similar TAC in a few days. Inseason management does not expect additional effort in the near future.

### **Deep Water Complex Trawl Fishery**

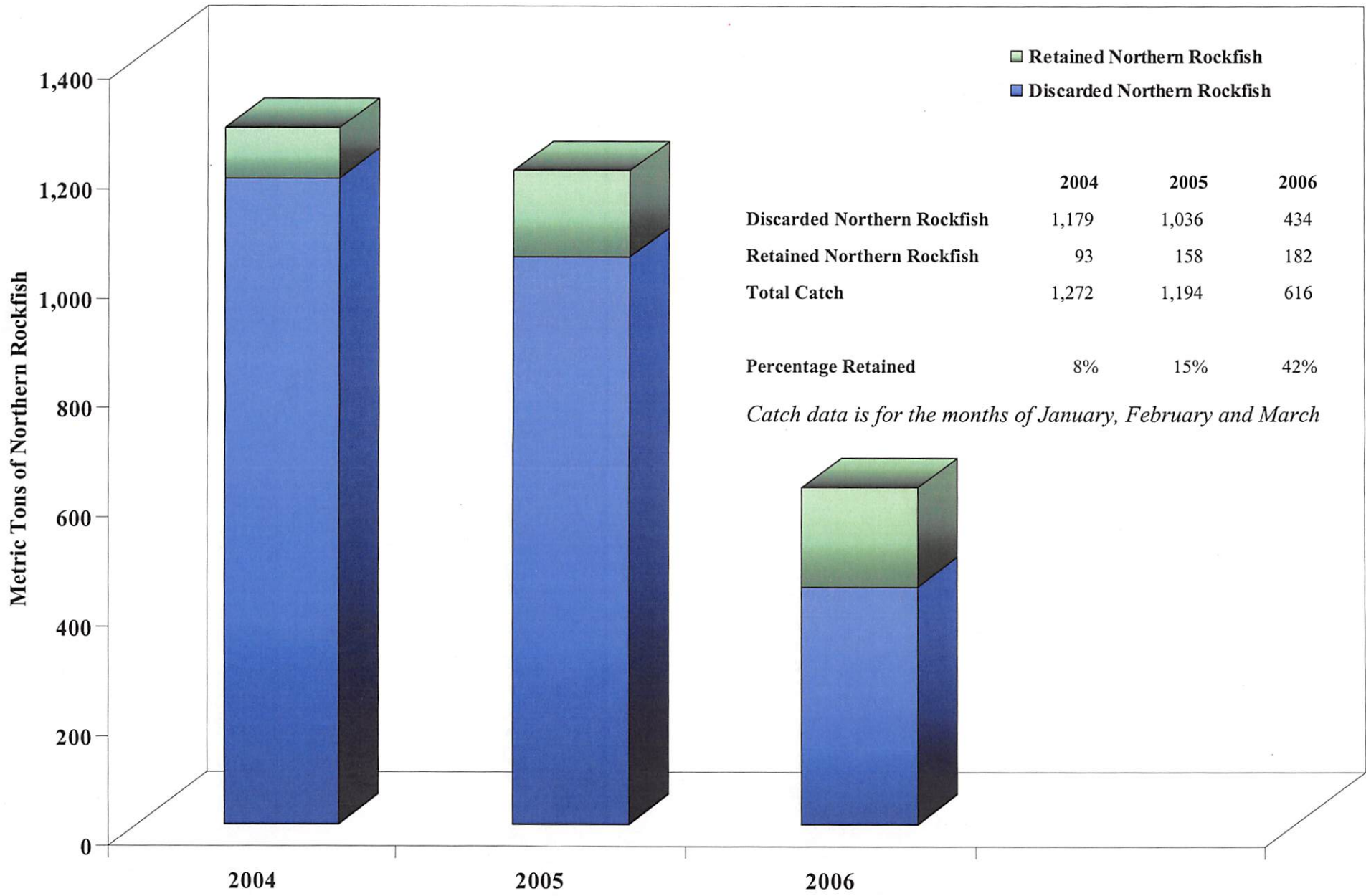
The trawl deep water complex fishery remains open in 2006. In recent weeks shore side effort increased in the arrowtooth flounder target. The first season allocation of halibut mortality is 100 mt and an additional 300 mt becomes available April 1. At sea catcher/processors are expected to target rex sole and flathead sole in April.

### **Shallow Water Complex Trawl Fishery**

The trawl shallow water complex fishery closed on February 23 based on very high observed rates. Once additional information was available, the estimate dropped, and the fishery reopened on February 27. The shallow water fishery remains open. There has been little effort through March, but effort is expected to increase in April and May.

*Surveys*

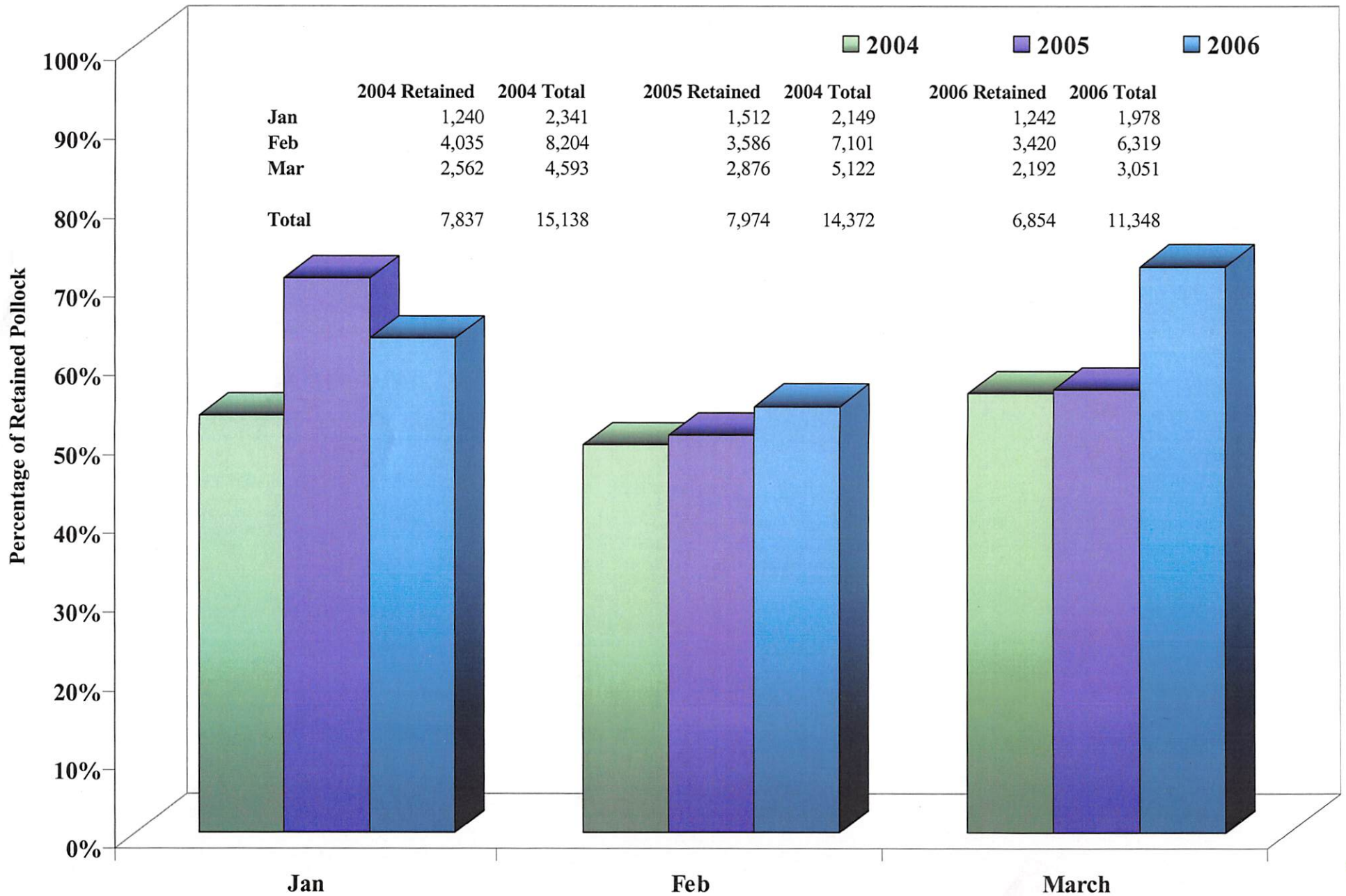
# Northern Rockfish Catch in the BSAI



B-2



# 2004-2006 Retention Rates of Pollock By the H&G Fleet



B-2  
muse

structured to account for the interactions between healthy and overfished stocks, and between the different fisheries and particular overfished stocks. Not all overfished stocks are incidentally caught in all fishery sectors. Therefore, management measures will differ by sector in order to allow access to healthy stock harvest while ensuring that overfished stocks are rebuilt as quickly as possible.

#### **Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues**

A principal objective of the scoping and public input process is to identify potentially significant impacts to the human environment that should be analyzed in depth in the EIS. This process is also intended to eliminate from detailed study the issues that are not significant, or which have been covered in prior environmental reviews. Narrowing the scope of analysis is intended to allow greater focus on those impacts that are potentially most significant. NMFS and the Council will evaluate the impacts of the proposed action on these components of the biological and physical environment: (1) Essential fish habitat and ecosystems; (2) protected species listed under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act and their habitat; and (3) the fishery management unit, including target and non-target fish stocks. Socioeconomic impacts, which may be considered under NEPA, or under the RFA and E.O. 12866, are also considered in terms of the effect changes will have on the following groups: (1) those who participate in harvesting the fishery resources and other living marine resources (for commercial, subsistence, or recreational purposes); (2) those who process and market fish and fish products; (3) those who are involved in allied support industries; (4) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area; (5) those who consume fish products; (6) those who benefit from non-consumptive use (e.g., wildlife viewing); (7) those who do not use the resource, but derive benefit from it by virtue of its existence, the option to use it, or the bequest of the resource to future generations; (8) those involved in managing and monitoring fisheries; and (9) communities.

#### **Public Scoping Process**

Public scoping will primarily occur during the Council's decision-making process. All decisions during the Council process benefit from written and verbal comments delivered prior to or during the Council meetings. NMFS and the Council consider these public

comments as integral to scoping for developing this EIS. The Council developed its preliminary range of 2007–2008 harvest specifications and management measures at its October 31–November 4, 2005, meeting in San Diego, CA. This was the same meeting at which the Council decided to expand the scope of this EIS. The Council will select the preferred range of management measures at the April 2–7, 2006, meeting in Sacramento, CA, at the Double Tree Hotel, 2001 Point West Way, 9815–4702; telephone: 800–227–6963 or 1–800–222–8733. The Council expects to select the preferred alternative at the June 11–16, 2006, meeting in Foster City, CA at the Crowne Plaza Mid Peninsula Hotel, 1221 Chess Drive, 94404; telephone 1–800- 227–6963 or 650–570–5700. Public comment may be made under the agenda items, when the Council will consider these proposed actions. The agendas for these meetings will be available from the Council website, or by request from the Council office in advance of the meetings (see ADDRESSES). Written comments on the scope of issues and alternatives may also be submitted as described under ADDRESSES.

NMFS invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis to be included in the DEIS. The scope includes the range of alternatives to be considered, and potentially significant impacts to the human environment that should be evaluated in the DEIS. NMFS and the Council plan to make the DEIS available for public comment following the Council's June 2006 meeting. The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability appears in the *Federal Register*. To be most helpful, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible and should address the adequacy of the statement or merits of the alternatives discussed. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the DEIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the DEIS. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points). Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

#### **Special Accommodations**

These meetings are accessible to people with physical disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Carolyn Porter 503–820–2280 (voice) or 503–820–2299 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Dated: March 9, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,  
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.  
[FR Doc. E6–3634 Filed 3–13–06; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

##### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 030806B]

##### **Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; intent to prepare an environmental impact statement; request for written comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces its intent to prepare the Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries. The scope of the EIS will be to determine the impacts to the human environment resulting from setting groundfish harvest specifications. NMFS will hold a public scoping meeting and accept written comments from the public to determine the issues of concern and the appropriate range of management alternatives to be addressed in the EIS. **DATES:** Written comments must be received by May 15, 2006. A scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 4, 2006, from 7 to 9 p.m., Alaska local time.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on issues and alternatives for the EIS should be sent to Sue Salveson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Records Officer. Comments may be submitted by:

• E-mail:  
*EIS.Specifications.Intent@noaa.gov*.  
Include in the subject line the following

document identifier: Harvest Specs. E-mail comments, with or without attachments, are limited to 5 megabytes.

• Mail: P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802.

• Hand Delivery to the Federal Building: 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

• Fax: 907-586-7557.

*Meeting address:* The meeting will be held in the Dillingham/Katmai room at the Hilton Hotel, 500 West 3rd Street, Anchorage, AK.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ben Muse, (907) 586-7228 or [ben.muse@noaa.gov](mailto:ben.muse@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS is initiating this scoping process for the Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications EIS. NEPA requires preparation of an EIS for major Federal actions that may significantly impact the quality of the human environment. NMFS will incorporate into the EIS the written comments on the scope of the analysis generated during this scoping process.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the United States has exclusive fishery management authority over all living marine resources found within the exclusive economic zone. The management of these marine resources, with the exception of certain marine mammals and birds, is vested in the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary).

NMFS is seeking information from the public through the EIS scoping process on the range of alternatives to be analyzed, and on the environmental, social, and economic issues to be considered in the analysis.

#### Proposed Action

The proposed action is to set the harvest specifications in compliance with Federal regulations, the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries, and the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Harvest specifications include the establishment of annual total allowable catches (TACs), and their seasonal apportionments and allocations, and prohibited species catch limits. TACs are harvest quotas that include retained and discarded catch.

Each year, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) recommends to the Secretary harvest specifications for the BSAI and the GOA groundfish fisheries. The Council establishes the harvest specifications using the overfishing levels and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) established by the Council's Groundfish

Plan Teams and Scientific and Statistical Committee, and the optimum yield ranges established in the FMPs. After Secretarial review and approval, NMFS publishes the harvest specifications in the *Federal Register*. NMFS uses these harvest specifications to manage the groundfish fisheries.

The intent of the harvest specifications is to balance fish harvest during the fishing year with established total optimum yields and ecosystem needs. The harvest specifications are necessary for the management of the groundfish fisheries and the conservation of marine resources, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act and as described in the management policy, goals, and objectives in the groundfish FMPs.

#### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to assist the public in understanding the proposed action. These definitions are summarized from the FMPs, please refer to the FMPs for the exact language and additional details.

*Optimum yield (OY)* is the amount of fish that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, taking into account the protection of marine ecosystems.

*Overfishing level (OFL)* is set annually for a stock or stock complex following the criteria in the FMPs. Overfishing occurs when the harvest exceeds the overfishing level.

*Acceptable biological catch (ABC)* is an annual sustainable target harvest for a stock or stock complex. It is derived from the status and dynamics of the stock, environmental conditions, and other ecological factors, given the prevailing technological characteristics of the fishery.

*Total allowable catch (TAC)* is the annual harvest limit for a stock or stock complex, derived from the ABC by considering social and economic factors.

#### Alternatives

NMFS will evaluate a range of alternative harvest levels. Alternatives may include those identified here, and those developed through the public scoping process and through the Council process.

The alternatives in this analysis are based on a range of potential TACs because the harvest specifications are driven by the available ABCs and the Optimum Yield ranges that the Council considers each year when recommending TACs to NMFS. Each of the four alternatives represents different amounts of TAC that could be specified for managed species and species groups for each fishing year. The alternatives

have been selected to display a wide range of TACs and their impacts on the environment. The four potential alternatives identified for analysis include:

*Alternative 1:* Set TACs to produce harvest levels equal to the maximum permissible ABCs, unless the sum of the TACs is constrained by the Optimum Yield established in the FMPs.

*Alternative 2:* Set TACs that fall within the range of ABCs recommended by the Council's Groundfish Plan Teams and TACs recommended by the Council.

*Alternative 3:* For stocks with a high level of scientific information, set TACs to produce harvest levels equal to the most recent five-year average actual fishing mortality rates. For stocks with insufficient scientific information, set TACs equal to the most recent five-year average actual catch.

*Alternative 4:* Set TACs equal to zero. This is the no action alternative, but does not reflect the status quo.

#### Preliminary Identification of Issues

A principal objective of the scoping and public input process is to identify potentially significant impacts to the human environment that should be analyzed in the EIS process. NMFS has conducted an initial screening to identify potentially significant impacts resulting from the harvest specifications. The analysis will evaluate the effects of the alternatives for all resources, species, and issues that may directly or indirectly interact with the groundfish fisheries within the action area, as a result of specified harvest levels. Impacts to the following components of the biological and physical environment may be evaluated: (1) Essential fish habitat; (2) species listed under the Endangered Species Act and their critical habitat, and species protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act; (3) target and non-target fish stocks, including forage fish and prohibited species; (4) seabirds; and (5) the ecosystem.

Social and economic impacts also are considered in terms of the effects that changes in projected harvests will have on the following groups of individuals: (1) Those who participate in harvesting the fishery resources and other living marine resources; (2) those who process and market fish and fish products; (3) those who consume fish products; (4) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area, either for subsistence needs or for recreational benefits; (5) those who benefit from non-consumptive uses of living marine resources; and (6) fishing communities.

**Public Involvement**

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an EIS and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action. A principal objective of the scoping and public involvement process is to identify a reasonable range of management alternatives that, with adequate analysis, will delineate critical issues and provide a clear basis for distinguishing between those alternatives and for selecting a preferred alternative. In addition, NMFS is notifying the public that it is beginning an EIS and decision-making process for this proposed action so that interested or affected people may participate in the EIS and contribute to the final decision.

NMFS is seeking written public comments on the scope of issues that should be addressed in the EIS and alternatives that should be considered in establishing the harvest specifications. NMFS will accept comments in writing at the address above (see ADDRESSES). Written comments should be as specific as possible to be the most helpful. Written comments received during the scoping process, including the names and addresses of those submitting them, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

The public is invited to attend the scoping meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2006, in Anchorage, AK. The scoping meeting will be held in conjunction with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting.

Please visit the NMFS Alaska Region web page at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov> for more information on this EIS, guidance for submitting effective public comments, and to order a draft EIS. NMFS estimates that a draft EIS will be available in September 2006.

**Special Accommodations**

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ben Muse, NMFS, (see ADDRESSES), (907) 586 7228, at least five days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 9, 2006.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E6-3628 Filed 3-13-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[Docket No. 030602141-6032-35; I.D. 022706A]

**Announcement of Funding Opportunity for the California Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program, Adult and Community Watershed Education in the Monterey Bay**

AGENCY: National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), the National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; availability of funds.

SUMMARY: The California B-WET Program, Adult and Community Watershed Education in the Monterey Bay is accepting proposals that provide meaningful watershed education to adults and communities. The Monterey Bay is susceptible to impacts from urban, rural, and agricultural sources of pollution. Projects funded under this program will be outcome-based programs that educate citizens about their role in protecting water quality and demonstrate behavioral changes that improve water quality and promote environmental stewardship.

DATES: Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on April 13, 2006. The deadline for applying through Grants.gov is April 13, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Paper applications, a signed original and 2 copies (submission of eight additional hard copies is strongly encouraged to expedite the review process, but it is not required) may be submitted to Attn: Seaberry Nachbar, B-WET Program Manager, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Office, 299 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940. For electronic submissions, see Electronic Submission section under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: B-WET Program Manager: Seaberry Nachbar, 831-647-4204, via Internet at [Seaberry.Nachbar@noaa.gov](mailto:Seaberry.Nachbar@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Summary Description**

The California B-WET Program, Adult and Community Watershed Education, is a competitively based program that supports existing environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new programs, and encourages the development of partnerships among environmental education programs throughout the

Monterey Bay watershed. Funded projects provide meaningful watershed education to adults and communities. The term "meaningful watershed education" is defined as outcome-based programs that educate citizens about their role in protecting water quality and demonstrate behavioral changes that improve water quality and promote environmental stewardship.

**Funding Availability**

This solicitation announces that approximately \$100,000 may be available in FY 2006 in award amounts to be determined by the proposals and the available funds. The National Marine Sanctuary Program anticipates that approximately two to four grants will be awarded with these funds. The National Marine Sanctuary Program anticipates that typical project awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

**Electronic Submission**

It is strongly preferred that you submit your application through Grants.gov at the internet site: <http://www.grants.gov>. You may access, download, and submit an electronic grant application through Grants.gov. The full funding announcement is available via the Grants.gov web site: <http://www.grants.gov>. The announcement will also be available at the NOAA web site <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bwet> or by contacting the program official outlined in this Federal Register notice. Applicants must comply with all requirements contained in the full funding opportunity announcement. NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov. Statutory Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1440, 15 U.S.C. 1540 CFDA: 11.429, Marine Sanctuary Program

**Eligibility**

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, and Indian tribal governments. The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that service undeserved areas.

**Cost Sharing Requirements**

No cost sharing is required under this program; however, the National Marine



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

AGENDA B-2  
Supplemental  
APRIL 2006

March 31, 2006

**RECEIVED**  
MAR 31 2006

**N.P.F.M.C.**

Ms. Stephanie Madsen, Chair  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Stephanie,

This letter is to inform you that on March 31, 2006, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) approved the final rule to implement a groundfish retention standard (GRS) program in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island management area (BSAI) for trawl catcher/processor vessels (C/Ps) that are 125 ft (38.1 m) length overall (LOA) or greater and that are not listed American Fisheries Act (AFA) catcher/processors at 50 CFR 679.4(l)(2)(i). The final rule implementing the GRS program will be published in the *Federal Register* by the end of next week. The effective date for the GRS program is January 1, 2008. This is a delay from the effective date envisioned under the proposed rule. This change from the proposed rule, as well as several others, is discussed below.

The proposed rule prepared for this action proposed implementing the GRS in 2006 at the 75 percent level, which was consistent with the schedule in the Council's June 2003 motion, but NMFS specifically asked for public comment on this aspect of the proposed rule. In June 2005, the Council asked NMFS to start implementation of the GRS at the 65 percent level and assumed the start date for implementation would be delayed to 2007. The Council clarified that it did not intend implementation of a particular GRS percentage on a date certain basis. Rather, it intended a gradual increase of the GRS percentage, regardless of the year the program was implemented. The Council clarified that this was necessary to allow vessel owners to adjust fishing and business operations to accommodate gradually increased groundfish retention over time. The Council also was concerned that inadequate time would be available to purchase and install the required monitoring equipment before the 2006 fishing season.

Because the Council clarified its intent to implement the GRS at the 65 percent level regardless of the calendar year, and public comment documented the extent to which some vessels may incur an additional burden to meet a GRS of 75 percent for the first year of the program, the final rule is adjusted to implement the first year of the GRS program at 65 percent. The analysis prepared for this action analyzed the effects of implementing the GRS at the 65 percent level, and this change is consistent with the analysis.

Other public comment also was helpful in determining the implementation date for the GRS. Some fishing companies noted that factory modifications would be more significant for some

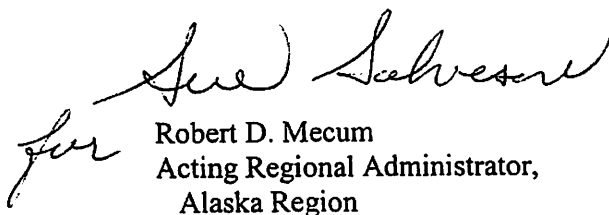


vessels than others. The time required to develop architectural and engineering contracts, scope and budget for capital modifications and schedule one or more shipyard visits for significant modifications could take months. NMFS has responded to these concerns by starting the GRS program in 2008. Shifting the effective date of the GRS program to 2008 will provide the owners and operators of affected vessels with additional time to make such changes, enhancing their flexibility in making arrangements for factory modifications and planning for associated costs in their business plans. In addition to extending the time vessel owners and operators would have to plan and make these modifications, NMFS anticipates that the goals of the monitoring program are more likely to be achieved with this additional time by improving the quality of monitoring spaces, ease of observer access and viewing, and accuracy of catch accounting.

Some members of industry affected by this action also expressed concern with observer workload restrictions. As revealed by public comments, non-AFA trawl catcher/processors typically retrieve hauls throughout a 12-hour period. Limiting observers to the proposed nine hours of sampling within each 12-hour shift could require vessels to alter their operations to allow observers to remain within this limit. To provide non-AFA catcher/processors with increased flexibility to maximize their operational efficiencies, the final rule eliminates the 9-hour sampling restriction. Observers will continue to be limited to a 12-hour work day, and vessel operators must ensure that all hauls are available to an observer to sample. Routine fishing practices that do not allow for 2 observers working 12-hour shifts to complete all required sampling duties would not meet this standard, and additional observers may be required.

The final rule summarizes and responds to 38 unique public comments on the proposed GRS program. The agency's justification and rationale for approving this program are based on these responses and the justification for the program as presented in the analysis supporting it. NMFS staff will be available to respond to further questions the Council may have at the April 2006 meeting.

Sincerely,

  
for Robert D. Mecum  
Acting Regional Administrator,  
Alaska Region