



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL
December 2007**

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

Salmon Troll Fishery (FIGURE 1)

The winter fishery opened on October 11, 2007. The season remains open through April 30, 2008 unless 45,000-treaty chinook salmon are harvested prior to that date. The fishery is confined to those waters of Southeast that are east of the winter boundary line and includes the waters of Yakutat Bay. To date, 208 permits have made 551 landings totaling approximately 3,700 chinook salmon. This season has been slow and the catch is only about 30 percent of the 2003-07 average. The number of permits and landings are approximately 70-75 percent of average. Weather, which has been exceptionally poor in the area, may be causing both the reduced effort and catches. Price remains the highest seen for this period and is averaging more than \$7.40 per pound, about \$2.25 higher than the 2003-07 average.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab (FIGURE 2)

The 2006/07 Area O (Aleutian Islands) commercial golden king crab fishery opened Tuesday, August 15, 2007. The total allowable catch (TAC) is 5.7 million pounds. The TAC is apportioned east and west of 174° W longitude. There have been 32 landings in this fishery, and approximately 93 percent of the eastern Individual Fishing Quota IFQ TAC of 2.7 million pounds has been harvest at this time. The western IFQ TAC is 2.43 million pounds. To date, about 47 percent of the IFQ TAC has been harvested in 17 landings. The golden king crab fishery in the Aleutian Islands remains open through May 15, 2008.

Bristol Bay Red King Crab (FIGURE 3)

The IFQ TAC for this season is 18.3447 million pounds. To date, 78 permits on 65 vessels have made 215 landings, which produced about 16.8 million pounds (92 percent) of red king crab. The fishery remains open through January 15, 2008.

Bering Sea Snow Crab (FIGURE 4)

The 2007/08 Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2007 and will remain open through May 15, 2008 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2008 in the Western Subdistrict. Only one fisherman has made a landing to date.

Bering Sea Tanner Crab (FIGURE 5)

The season opened on October 15, 2007 and will remain open through March 31, 2008. The Bering Sea District Tanner crab stock is managed east and west of 166° W longitude, with a separate total allowable catch (TAC) for each area. The catch to date for the eastern district is about 320,000 pounds (10 percent of the TAC). The catch from the western district is confidential at this time.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 6)

Prince William Sound

The Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season opened on March 6, 2007, which was seven days after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL had been set at 910,730 pounds, which was calculated as 10 percent of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. The state water fishery produced a harvest of about 340,000 cod. It closed and the parallel season reopened on September 1, 2007 in order to allow participation by other gear groups. The parallel Pacific cod season coincides with the season and gear restrictions established by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). All federal requirements including the use of VMS, where required, are in place. The parallel Pacific cod fishery will close by emergency order when NMFS closes the CGOA.

Cook Inlet

The Cook Inlet state managed Pacific cod season opened on February 28, 2007, which was 24 hours after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL had been set at 3,131,088 pounds. That GHL is calculated as 3.75 percent of the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. There were 5 jig vessels and 14 pot vessels registered to participate in the fishery. The harvest through late August was approximately 1.4 million pounds. As was the case in Prince William Sound, the department closed the state waters fishery and reopened the parallel season to allow additional harvesters access to the remaining quota. Federal requirements are enforced during the parallel season.

Westward Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 7)

Kodiak Pacific Cod (FIGURE 8)

For the Kodiak area, the GHL is 10.43 million pounds, which is 12.5 percent of the Central Gulf of Alaska ABC. The GHL is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear. The fishery opened on March 6, 2007,

which was 7 days after the close of the federal fishery. There were 35 fishermen registered to fish using pot gear. The pot fishery closed on April 8, 2007. The harvest was 5.16 million pounds. The jig gear fishery started very slowly, likely due to poor weather. There were 76 fishermen registered to fish using jig gear. Catch reached 1.25 million at the end of August. The state-waters Pacific cod seasons in the Kodiak area closed on September 1, 2007. The Central Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod federal 'B' seasons opened on September 1, 2007. State waters of the Kodiak area opened concurrent to the federal season on September 1, 2007 under parallel rules. Federal requirements are enforced during the parallel season.

Chignik Pacific Cod (FIGURE 9)

The Chignik area Pacific cod season opened by regulation on March 1, 2007. The GHL is 7.3 million pounds, which is calculated as 8.75 percent of the Central Gulf of Alaska ABC. The GHL is split to allow pot fishermen 90 percent of the quota. Sixteen fishermen using pot gear harvested about 5.2 million pounds by the end of August, or approximately 85 percent of their allocation. Although three jig fishermen registered, no landings were made by jig gear by the end of August. The state-waters Pacific cod seasons in the Chignik area closed on September 1, 2007. The Pacific cod federal 'B' seasons opened on September 1, 2007. State waters of the Chignik area opened concurrent to the federal season on September 1, 2007 under parallel rules.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod (FIGURE 10)

The GHL is 14.8 million pounds, which is 25 percent of the Western Gulf of Alaska ABC. The harvest is allocated 85 percent to pot gear and 15 percent to jig gear. This fishery opened on March 15, 2007, which was 7 days after the closure of the federal fishery in the western Gulf. There were 47 fishermen registered to fish using pot gear. The fishery closed to the use of pot gear on April 17, 2007. Catch was approximately 12.4 million pounds. Harvest with jig gear was slow at the start of the season, again, similar to Kodiak because of brutal weather. Catch at the end of August was only about 241,000 pounds. As with the case of Kodiak and Chignik, the department closed the fishery on September 1, 2007 to allow additional gears

access to the fish under the federal 'B' season. Fishermen operating under parallel rules are reminded of VMS requirements when appropriate.

Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod (FIGURE 11)

The state-waters B season Pacific cod fishery in the Aleutian Islands District west of 170° W longitude reopened on October 1, 2007. The remaining portion of the 2007 state-waters guideline harvest level (GHL) is 1,239,222 pounds. The state-waters B season opened on June 10, 2007 with a GHL of 3,410,357 pounds and closed by regulation on September 1, 2007 after 2,143,310 pounds were harvested. The B season reopened by regulation after the closure of the parallel/federal Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Pacific cod catcher-vessel (CV) pot fishery for vessels over 60 feet overall length (OAL). National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) announced a closure for the federal BSAI CV pot fishery for vessels over 60 feet OAL on September 26, 2007 for a closure effective September 28 at noon. Therefore the state-waters Pacific cod fishery west of 170° W long. opened on October 1 at 12:01 a.m., allowing fishermen participating in the parallel fishery time to offload their product prior to registering for the B season. The fishery closed at 12:00 p.m. (noon) December 3, 2007. Based on catch reports received through 8:00 a.m. November 30, 2007 the state-waters B season Pacific cod harvest was approaching the remaining guideline harvest level (GHL) of 1.27 million pounds and at the current catch rate the GHL would have been met by 12:00 p.m. (noon) December 3, 2007.

The state-waters fishery is open to jig and longline vessels 58 feet or less in OAL and pot vessels not greater than 125 feet OAL. Vessels using non-pelagic trawl gear may not exceed 100 feet OAL.

Southeast Groundfish (FIGURE 12)

The state fisheries for sablefish closed by regulation on November 15, 2007.

Preliminary catch for the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) or Chatham Straits longline fishery is 1,502,385 rounds pounds, slightly over the harvest objective of 1,488,000, due to allowable overages.

The preliminary catch for the Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) or Clarence Strait fishery was 620,167 round pounds and below the harvest objective of 696,000 pounds.

In the directed fishery for lingcod, there has been some recent activity in the Central Southeast (CSEO) area, about 25 percent of the allocation remains. There has been no activity in the waters of either Northern Southeast Outside (NSEO) or Southern Southeast Outside (SSEO). The directed fishery closed by regulation on November 30.

Landings of Pacific cod are beginning to pick up. There currently is a lot of interest locally and it appears that there will be more effort than normal this winter in NSEI.

The fall Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) fishery opened on November 16, 2007 in NSEI and the inner portion of SSEI. The entire 25mt annual quota is available in each area as there was practically no harvest during the winter fishery. The Department should announce any plans for the 2008 fishery by mid-December once we get the preliminary International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) quotas and can make a prediction about what the bycatch of yelloweye rockfish will likely be next year. The updated stock assessment for DSR was recently submitted to the Groundfish Plan Team.

Alaska Board of Fisheries (FIGURES 13a,b,c)

The Alaska Board of Fisheries met in Homer, AK on November 13-15, 2007. Five proposals of interest to the Council were covered. These included the following:

Proposal 395 – 5 AAC 28.073. Trip Limits for commercial pollock vessels. This proposal passed 7-0 creating daily trip limits, and closes loopholes in existing law.

5 AAC 28.073 is repealed and readopted to read:

5 AAC 28.073. Trip limits for commercial Pollock vessels. In the state waters between 140° W. long. and 170° W. long. a person may not harvest, off-load, or retain on board a catcher vessel, during a calendar day, more than 300,000 pounds of unprocessed Pollock, or retain on board a tender vessel, during a calendar day, more than 600,000 pounds of unprocessed Pollock, harvested in the state waters adjacent to the federal waters of the Western, Central, and a portion of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area described in 50 CFR

6.7.9. Figure 1. (Eff. 9/27/99, Register 152; am ___/___/2008, Register ___)

Authority: AS 16.05.251

- **Proposal 396 – 5 AAC 28.654 Aleutian Islands District Walleye Pollock Management Plan.** This proposal was generated by the board at the request of the NMFS. You will recall that NMFS may issue an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) for up to 3,000 metric tons in the area. Any existing balance may then be taken in a state fishery. However, NMFS expressed concerns with low abundance of pollock in the area as well implications for Steller sea lions (SSL). After committee deliberations, it passed 7-0, repealing the plan.

In your packets, you also have a letter on this proposal from Mel Morris, Chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Mr. Morris requests that the Council direct NMFS PR to evaluate a modified Aleutian Island State waters pollock fishery based on the information presented to the board as described in the document attached to his letter. This would permit a fishery at amounts less than 3,000 metric tons, if appropriate. Chairman Morris asks that the evaluation remain informal, and further, should the process result in the need for a formal consultation, that it be halted at that point.

- **Proposal 397 - 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.** This proposal to reduce the maximum size limit of all participating vessels to 60 feet overall length failed 0-7. Opposition to the

proposal focused on safety concerns as well as the documented history in the fishery by larger boats.

- **Proposal 398 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.** This proposal was to provide for a pot gear reopening of the A-season fishery after that season's Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) had been attained, with catches being attributed to the B-season. Largely because of concerns over changes to the 70/30 seasonal split put in place for SSL protection, it failed 0-7.
- **Proposal 399 – 5 AAC 28.050(e). Lawful gear for groundfish.; and 5 AAC 28.647 Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.** This proposal requested an increase in the tunnel-size opening for groundfish pots used in the Aleutian Islands District from a maximum of 36 inches in perimeter to 48 inches in perimeter. Because of enforcement concerns, this proposal failed 0-7.
- **Proposal 400 – 5 AAC 39.xxx. New section.** This proposal would modify the definition of vessel length to exclude a bulbous bow when calculating length. It would apply to all fisheries except Korean hair crab that currently have less than 58 foot length restrictions in place. The proposal passed 7-0. It is presented here to notify you that implications may or may not exist for vessels with bulbous bows holding LLPs that may also fish in federal fisheries under the less than 60-foot definition. There are 156 vessels with "under 60 foot" LLP status. The federal definition follows:

"Length overall (LOA) of a vessel means the centerline longitudinal distance, rounded to the nearest foot, measured between:

- (1) The outside foremost part of the vessel visible above the waterline, including bulwarks, but excluding bowsprits and similar fittings or attachments, and*
- (2) The outside aftermost part of the vessel visible above the waterline, including bulwarks, but excluding rudders, outboard motor brackets, and similar fittings or attachments (see Figure 6 to this part)."*

Waterline is not defined in NMFS regulation Section 679.2. However, relevant to this discussion, dictionaries define it as:

1. a line corresponding to the surface of the water when the vessel is afloat on an even keel; often painted on the hull of a ship
2. Any of several lines parallel to this line, marked on the hull of a ship, and indicating the depth to which the ship sinks under various loads.

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REPORT TO THE NPFMC Agenda Item B-4



December 2007

Figure 1.

SE AK Winter Troll Chinook Salmon Harvest

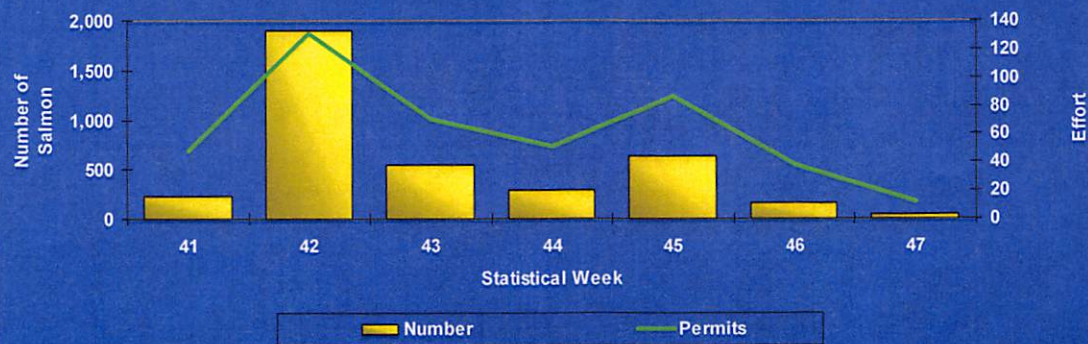


Figure 1a.

SE AK Winter Troll Chinook Salmon 2001-2007

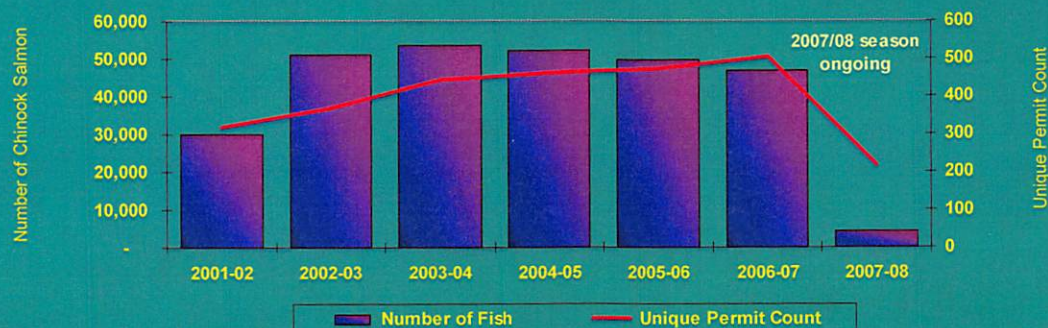
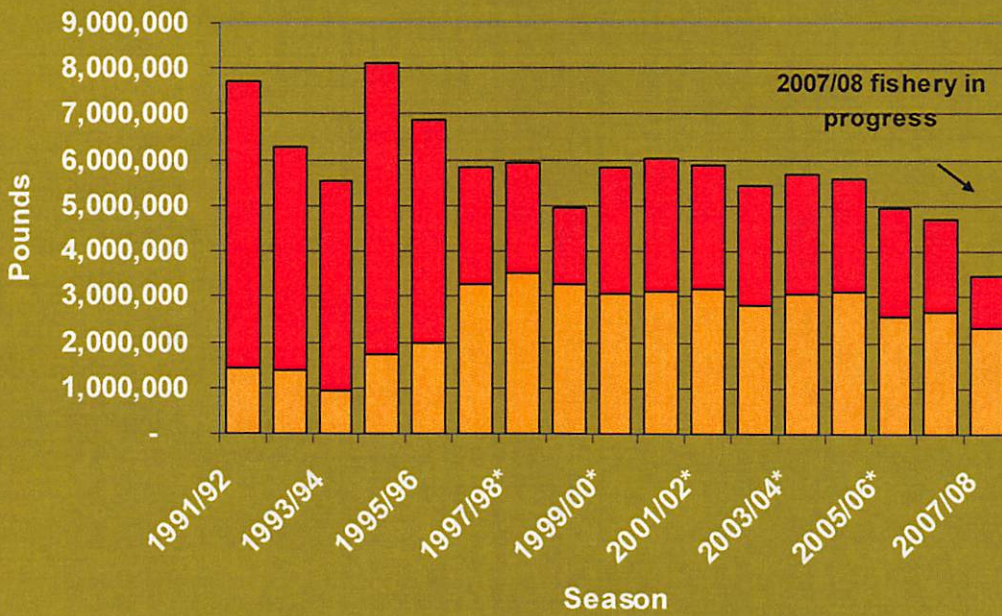


Figure 2.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab



After 1995/96 boundary moved from 171 W to 174

■ EAST OF 174° W ■ WEST OF 174° W

Figure 3.

Bristol Bay Red King Crab

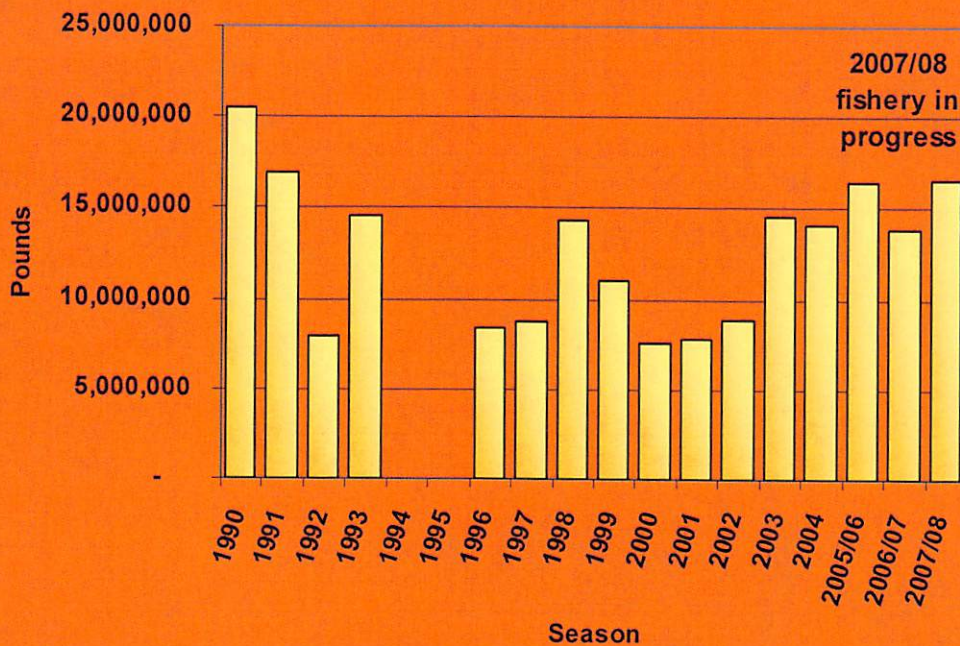


Figure 4.

Bering Sea Snow Crab

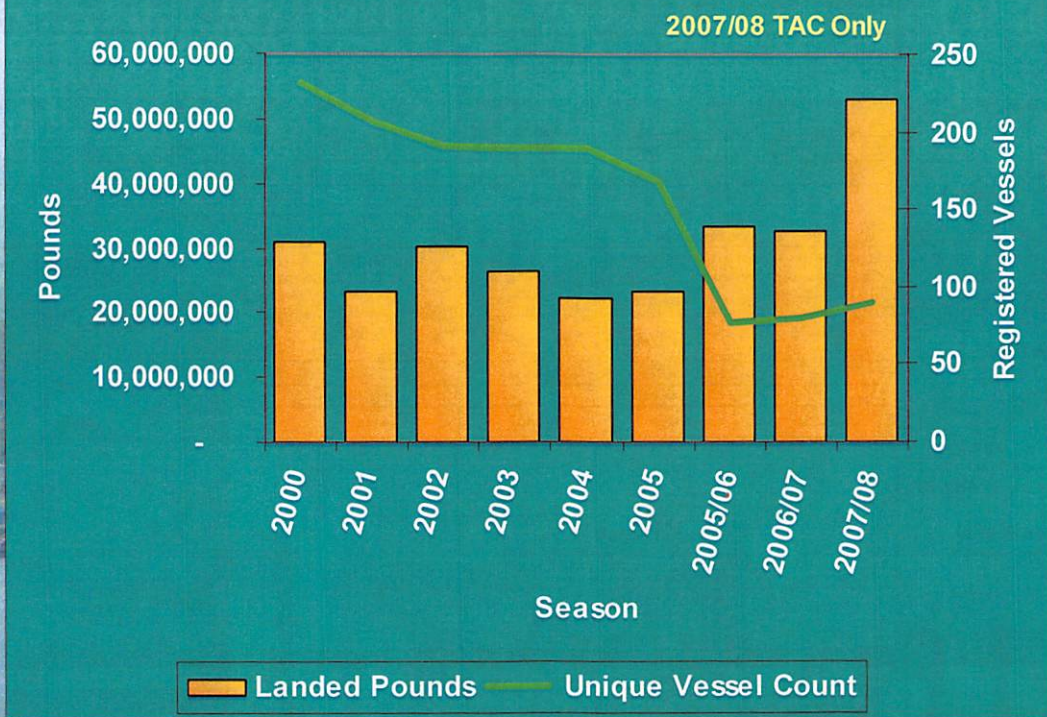


Figure 5.

Bering Sea Tanner Crab

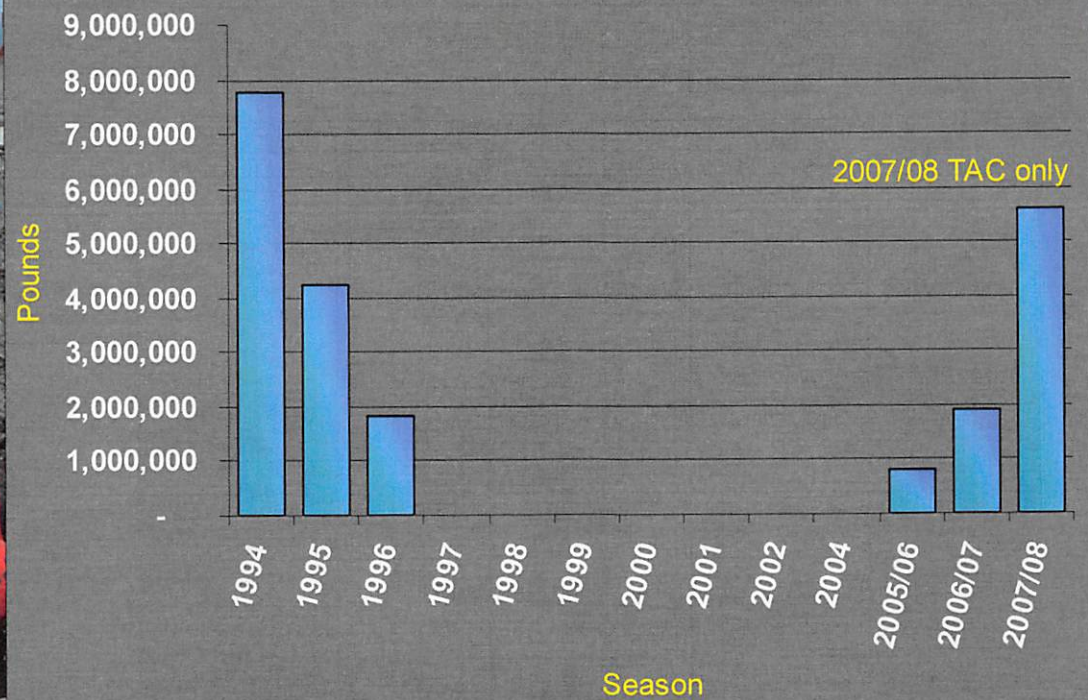


Figure 8.

Kodiak State Waters Pcod Harvests

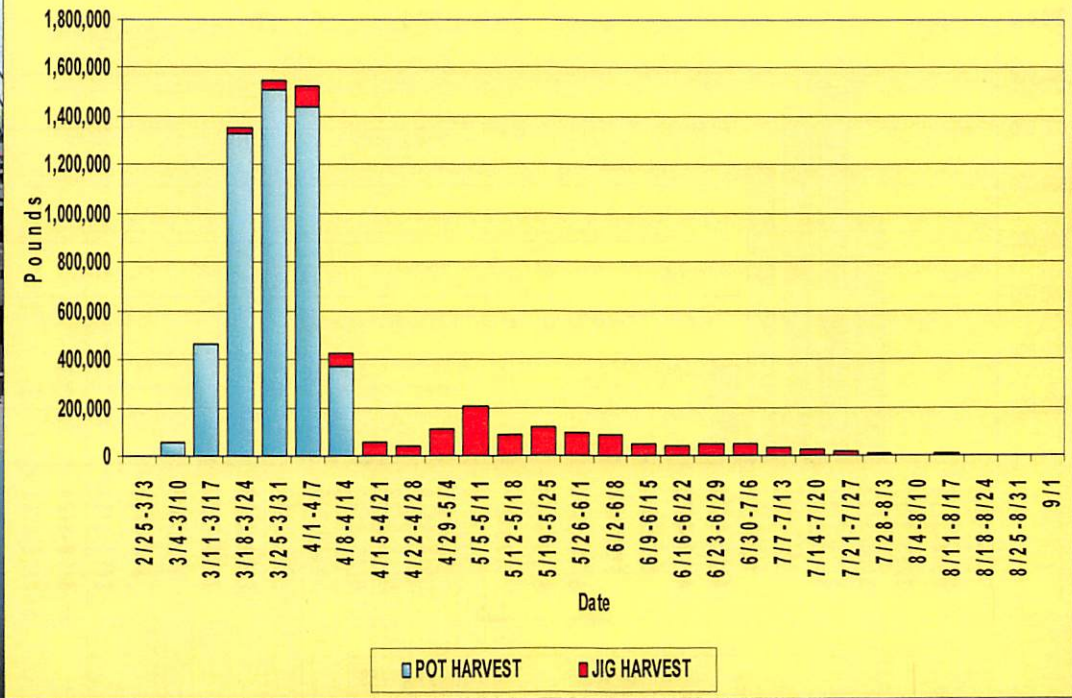


Figure 9.

Chignik State Waters Pcod Harvest

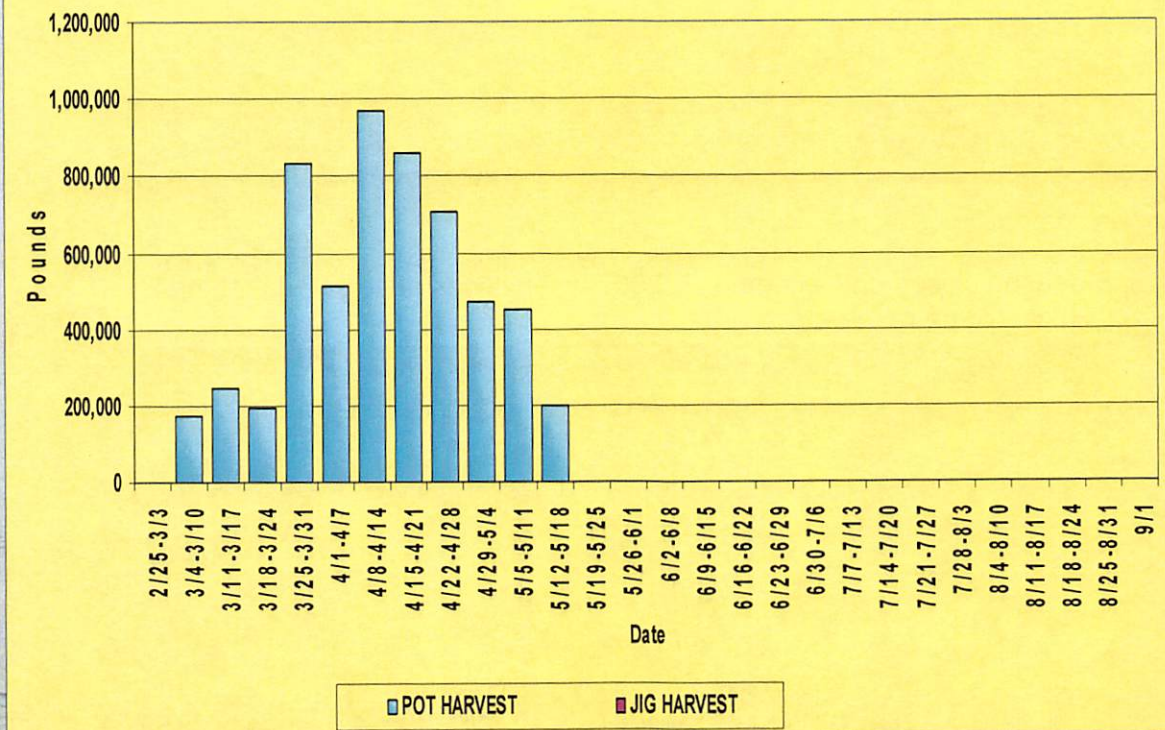


Figure 10.

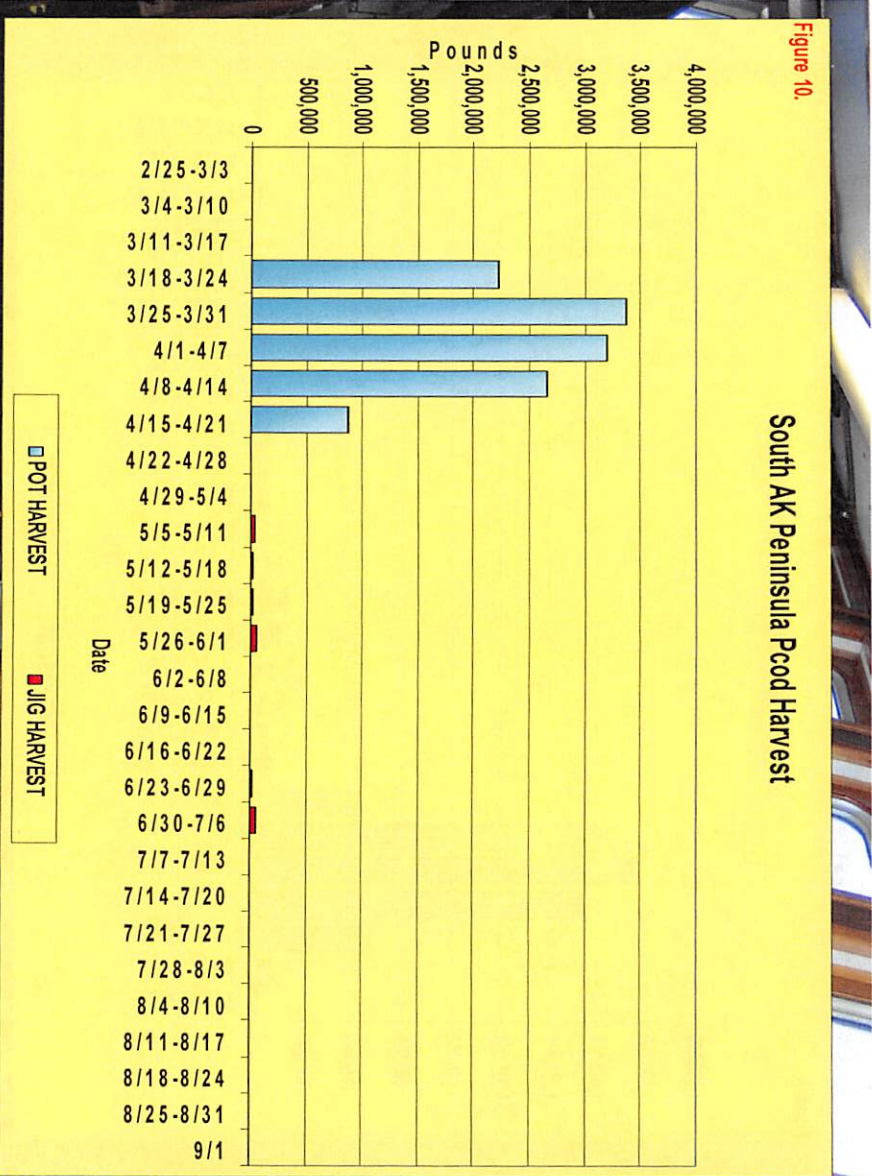


Figure 11.

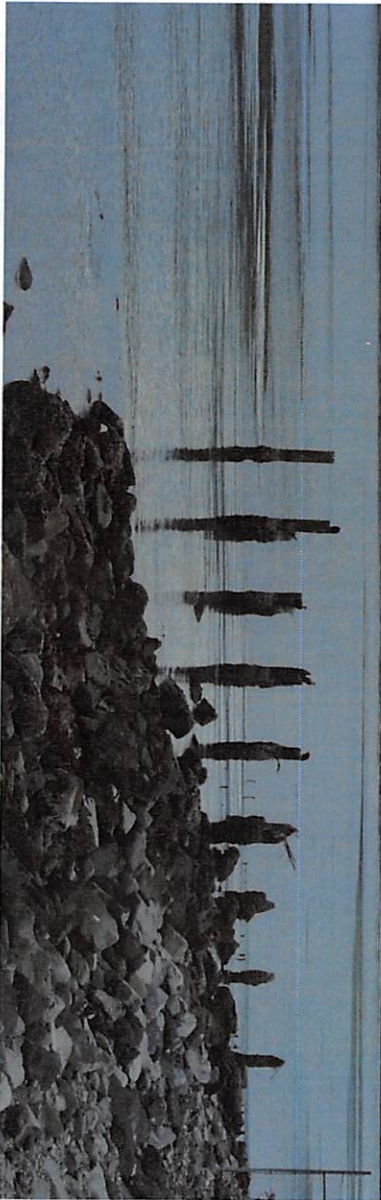
Aleutian Islands District state waters Pacific cod fishery:

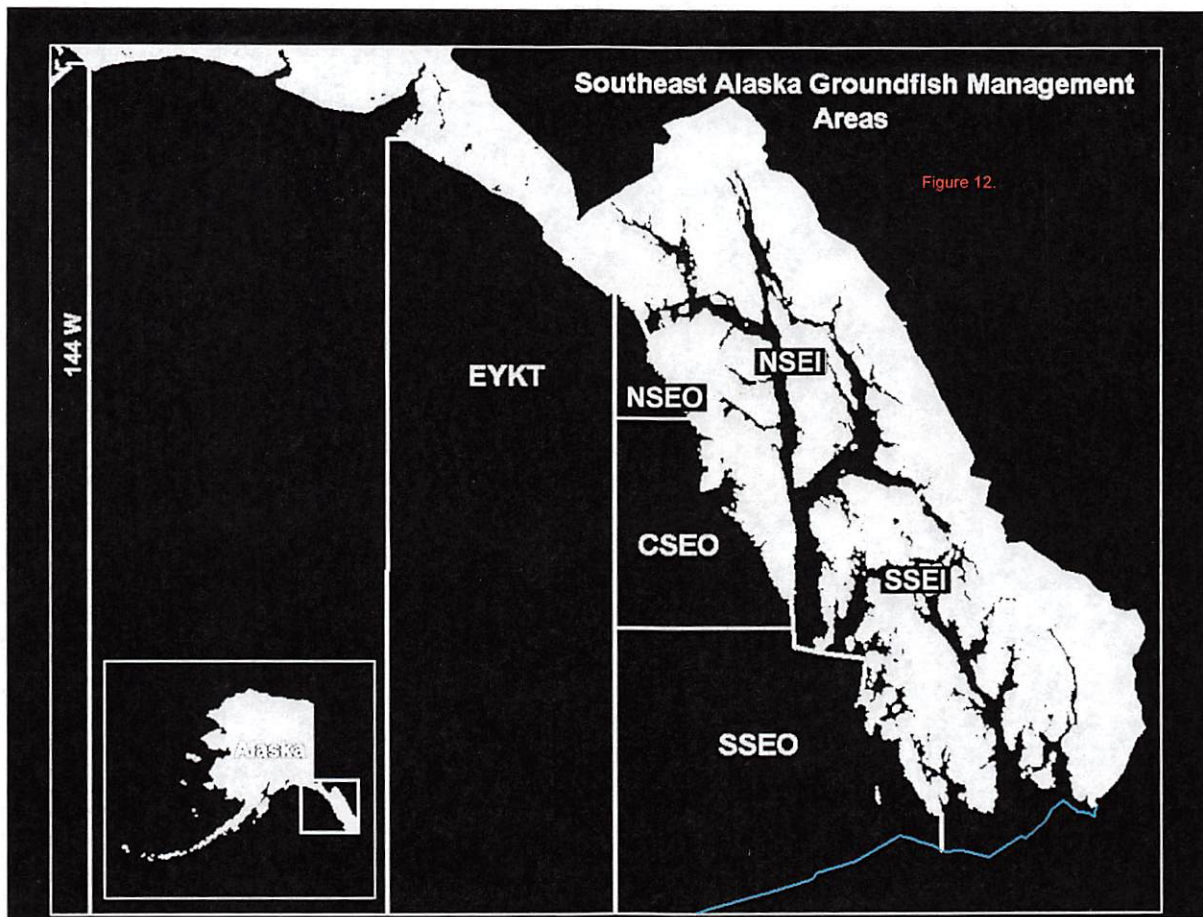
B-season opened on June 10, 2007 with a GHL of 3.4 million pounds

B-season closed by regulation on September 1, 2007

B-season reopened on October 1, 2007 with 1.27 million pounds remaining on the GHL.

B-season closed on December 3, 2007 when it was anticipated that the GHL would be reached.





Alaska Board of Fisheries, November 2007 actions

Proposal 395 – 5 AAC 28.073. Trip Limits for Commercial Pollock Vessels.

In the state waters between 140° West Longitude and 170° West Longitude a person may not harvest, off-load, or retain on board a catcher vessel, during a calendar day, more than 300,000 pounds of unprocessed pollock, or retain on board a tender vessel, during a calendar day, more than 600,000 pounds of unprocessed pollock, harvested in the state waters adjacent to the federal waters of the Western, Central, and a portion of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area described in 50 CFR 679. Figure 1.

PASSED 7-0

Proposal 396 - 5 AAC 28.645. Aleutian Islands District Walleye Pollock Management Plan.

Amend or repeal the Adak state-waters walleye Pollock fishery.

PASSED 7-0

Alaska Board of Fisheries, November 2007 actions

Figure 13b.

Proposal 397 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Reduce maximum size limit to 60 feet overall length for all vessels participating in the fishery.

FAILED 0-7

Proposal 398 - 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Provide for a pot gear reopening of the A-season fishery with catch deductions occurring in the B-season.

FAILED 0-7

Alaska Board of Fisheries, November 2007 actions

Figure 13c.

Proposal 399 - 5 AAC 28.050(e) Lawful Gear for Groundfish.; and 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Increase the tunnel openings for groundfish pots used in the Aleutian Islands District state waters Pacific cod fishery (48" perimeter rather than current 36" perimeter).

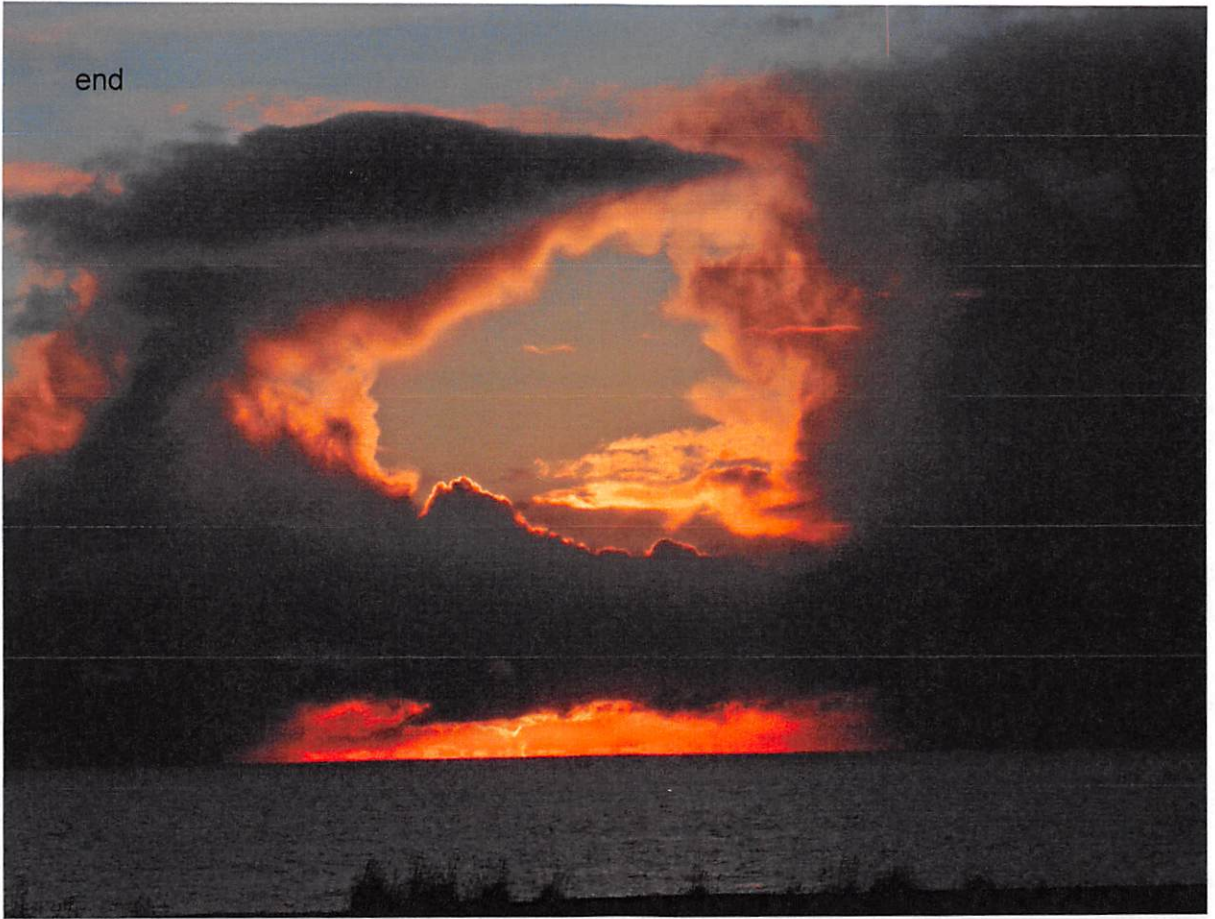
FAILED 0-7

Proposal 400 - 5 AAC 39.XXX. New section.

Modify vessel length definition to exclude bulbous bow in vessel length calculations.

PASSED 7-0

end



Technical Paper No. 333

Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2006

by,

James A. Fall,

David Koster,

and

Michael Turek

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

November 2007

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Subsistence



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings of a study designed to estimate the subsistence harvest of Pacific halibut *Hippoglossus stenolepis* in Alaska in 2006. The Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game conducted the study through NOAA Award No. NA04NMF4370314 from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). In May 2003, NMFS published federal regulations implementing a subsistence halibut fishery in Alaska for qualified individuals who are residents of 117 rural communities or members of 123 Alaska Native tribes with traditional uses of halibut. The year 2006 was the fourth in which subsistence halibut fishing took place under these regulations. Subsistence fishers are required to obtain a subsistence halibut registration certificate (SHARC) from NMFS before fishing. At the end of 2006, 14,206 individuals held SHARCs, compared to 14,306 by the end of 2005 (a decrease of 1% from 2005 to 2006); 13,813 by the end of 2004 (an increase of 3% from 2004 to 2006); and 11,635 by the end of 2003 (a 22% increase from 2003 to 2006).

Harvest information was collected by means of a mail-out survey. The one-page survey form was mailed to all SHARC holders in early 2007, with two follow-up mailings. Household visits supplemented the mailings in selected communities. In total, 8,416 surveys were returned, a response rate of 59%. Participation in the survey was voluntary.

According to the study findings, an estimated 5,860 individuals participated in the subsistence halibut fishery in 2006, compared to an estimated 5,621 in 2005; 5,984 in 2004; and 4,942 in 2003. The estimated harvest in 2006 was 54,206 halibut (+/- 2.8%) comprising 1,128,015 pounds (+/- 2.9%) net weight. ("Net weight" is 75% of "round" or live weight; the estimated harvest was 1,504,020 pounds round weight.) This compares to a harvest estimate of 55,875 fish (+/- 3.0%) comprising 1,178,222 pounds (+/- 3.0%) net weight in 2005; 52,412 fish (+/- 1.6%) comprising 1,193,162 pounds (+/- 1.5%) in 2004; and 43,926 halibut comprising 1,041,330 pounds net weight (+/- 3.9%) in 2003. The 2006 harvest was about 4% lower than the estimated harvest for 2005. The 2005 harvest was about 1% lower than the estimated harvest for 2004, whereas the 2004 harvest estimate was 15% higher than the 2003 harvest estimate. The 2006 estimated harvest was 8% higher than the estimate for 2003.

Of the total subsistence halibut harvest in 2006, 784,559 pounds (70%) were harvested with setline (stationary) gear (longlines or skates) and 343,456 pounds (30%) were harvested with hand-operated gear (rod and reel or handline). This was similar to the harvest by gear type in 2005 (70% setline and 30% hand-operated gear), 2004 (74% setline and 26% hand-operated gear), and 2003 (72% setline and 28% hand-operated gear). Of those subsistence fishers using setline gear in 2006, the most (38%) usually fished with 30 hooks, the maximum number allowed by regulation in all areas except Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E (where regulations establish no hook limit).

Subsistence fishers also harvested an estimated 16,965 rockfish *Sebastes* spp. and 3,489 lingcod *Ophiodon elongatus* in 2006 while fishing for halibut. In 2005, subsistence halibut fishers harvested an estimated 12,395 rockfish and 2,355 lingcod. In 2004, subsistence halibut fishers

harvested 19,001 rockfish and 4,407 lingcod. In 2003, subsistence halibut fishers had an estimated incidental harvest of 14,870 rockfish and 3,298 lingcod.

Based upon fishing locations, the largest portion of the Alaska subsistence halibut harvest in 2006 occurred in Regulatory Area 2C (Southeast Alaska), 51% (580,122 pounds); followed by:

- Area 3A (Southcentral Alaska), 34% (381,927 pounds);
- Area 4E (East Bering Sea Coast), 6% (70,743 pounds);
- Area 3B (Alaska Peninsula), 4% (48,561 pounds);
- Area 4A (Eastern Aleutian Islands), 2% (27,075 pounds);
- Area 4C (Pribilof Islands), less than 1% (8,529 pounds);
- Area 4D (Central Bering Sea), less than 1% (8,297 pounds); and
- Area 4B (Western Aleutian Islands), less than 1% (2,761 pounds).

In 2005, 2004, and 2003 as well, Area 2C and Area 3A accounted for over 85% of the subsistence halibut harvests. The proportion of the statewide subsistence halibut harvest occurring in Area 2C declined to 51% in 2006 and 2005, compared to 57% in 2004 and 60% in 2003. Correspondingly, the portion occurring in Area 3A increased to 34% in 2006, 36% in 2005, and 34% in 2004, compared to 27% in 2003.

Preliminary data from the International Pacific Halibut Commission combined with the findings of this study indicate that 78.625 million pounds (net weight) of halibut were removed from Alaskan waters in 2006. Of this total, the subsistence harvest accounted for 1.5%. Commercial harvests took 70.1% percent of the halibut, followed by bycatch in other commercial fisheries (14.5%), sport harvests (11.7%), and wastage in the commercial fishery (2.2%).

This report describes the results of the fourth annual study to estimate the subsistence halibut harvest in Alaska since NMFS adopted rules governing subsistence halibut fishing in May 2003. The harvest estimates based on the SHARC surveys for the 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 fishing seasons serve as a basis for understanding the overall harvest, annual variability in catch, and whether any increase in harvest may be associated with implementation of the new regulations. Demonstrating changes in the magnitude of the Alaska subsistence halibut harvest resulting from the new regulations using the results of the SHARC surveys for 2003 through 2006 is problematic, however, because of the limitations of earlier harvest estimates at the statewide level. The subsistence harvest estimates for 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 for some of the larger communities, such as Sitka, Petersburg, and Kodiak, which account for the majority of the harvest, are similar to harvest estimates based on household surveys prior to the new regulations. The higher overall harvest estimates for 2006, 2005, and 2004 compared to 2003 may be due to more thorough registration of subsistence fishers, hence better harvest documentation. Additional years of harvest data will be necessary for shedding light on these and other factors that shape the subsistence halibut harvest in Alaska.

The report concludes that 1.13 million net pounds is a sound estimate of the Alaska subsistence halibut harvest in 2006. The estimate is based upon a scientific sampling of SHARC holders and a relatively high response rate. The total estimated harvest falls below the 1.5 million net pounds estimated for the subsistence harvest when the current regulations were developed by the North

Pacific Fishery Management Council (see www.fakr.noaa.gov/frules/70fr16742.pdf , page 16748). Although the 2006 harvest estimate is about the same as the 2004 and 2005 estimates and somewhat higher than the 2003 estimate, there are no certain trends in the harvest based on these four study years. The report recommends that research be continued for at least one more year, so that at least five years of data under the current set of regulations governing gear, participation requirements, and daily harvest limits can be evaluated.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME BOARD OF FISHERIES

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November 15, 2007

Mr. Eric Olson
Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Olson:

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) is considering a proposal to rescind the State waters pollock fishery in the Aleutian Islands (AI). As you know, the Board approved this fishery for 2007 and 2008, with the GHL for the 2007 partly fishery contingent on approval by the Council of an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) for 3000 mt. Since the EFP was approved for 2007, the State fishery did not occur. As currently authorized, the fishery is scheduled to occur again in 2008, but the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has requested that the BOF rescind the authorization for the fishery based on pollock stock conservation and SSL issues.

Therefore, the Board has developed a Board-generated proposal, Proposal 396, to consider rescinding authorization for this fishery, and the BOF deliberated this issue at its meeting in Homer on November 13-15, 2007. During its November meeting, the BOF received testimony from the public that acknowledged the NMFS concerns over a 3000 mt fishery in 2008, but suggested that perhaps a smaller quota could still have economic benefits and at the same time avoid pollock stock conservation issues and avoid SSL concerns.


The BOF is sympathetic to the public comments received, and has reviewed a suggested alternative fishing strategy for AI pollock that may have merit. This alternative fishery is outlined in the attached report. The BOF is sensitive to the SSL issues involved, and wishes to avoid any action that could result in a jeopardy decision from NMFS. But the BOF also is concerned over the continuing lack of authorization for a pollock fishery in the AI region, and hopes that this alternative might be a satisfactory compromise. The attached discussion paper recommends a GHL of 454 MT to be harvested in the A season with the fishing season starting on March 1, 2008 and the fishing activity restricted to Kanga Sound.

We recognize that the Council's Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee is working to develop a set of recommendations for change in SSL protection measures, but we also recognize that this process may not conclude for several years. In the mean time, the BOF would like to implement some fishery measures that would benefit the AI region as soon as possible.

Therefore, the BOF asks that the Council request NMFS to evaluate a modified AI State waters pollock fishery based on the information presented to the BOF as described in the attached document. We ask that this occur on an informal level at this time, and if the result of this informal review requires that a formal consultation occur, the BOF asks that the consultation process stop at that point. We do not wish to complicate or otherwise sidetrack the Council's ongoing FMP level consultation by diverting resources to a formal consultation process.

We request that the Council take up this issue at its December 2007 meeting and in turn request that NMFS prioritize an analysis of the attached proposal. We look forward to continued cooperation between the BOF and the Council in managing marine fisheries in both state and Federal waters.

Sincerely,


Mel Morris
Board of Fisheries, Chairman

Discussion paper - prepared by dave fraser

Consultation on Aleutian Island Statewater Pollock

NMFS Protected Resources may be asked for an opinion on whether the 3000 metric ton pollock state water fishery between 174° W and 178° W longitude will result in Jeopardy or Adverse Modification of Steller sea lion (SSL) Critical Habitat.

The answer to the question rests in part upon an analysis of whether there is competitive limitation of SSL foraging success.

Competition that limits SSL foraging success for pollock in the Aleutian Islands (west of 170° W longitude) would require the existence of overlap in multiple dimensions.

1. Is the fishery target species (pollock) an important SSL prey species in the region?
2. Will fishery removals of pollock substantially reduce overall prey biomass?
3. Are the fishery removals of pollock the same sizes consumed by SSL?
4. Does the fishery occur in the same depths as SSL foraging depths?
5. Is the fishery's spatial distribution the same as the SSL foraging spatial distribution?

For competitive limitation to occur, it is necessary for overlap to take place in more than one dimension. For example, if there was an unlimited biomass of pollock and it rarely occurred in the diet of SSL, overlap in sizes consumed or overlap in depths of foraging and fishing would be of little importance. Similarly, if the spatial distribution didn't overlap, then overlap in depth would be of little importance.

The answers to the five questions are unlikely to be simple "yes/no" answers. Degree of overlap needs to be considered in each of the dimensions. Logically, small degrees of overlap are less of a concern than large degrees of overlap.

This discussion paper looks at each of the five questions.

Is the fishery target species (pollock) an important SSL prey species in the region?

Two major studies have been conducted on SSL scat in the AI, one covering 1990-1998 (Sinclair and Zeppelin 2002), and the other covering 1999-2005 (NMFS 2006b)

The 1990-1998 study found 15 other prey species in SSL scat in the Central/Western Aleutians (Region IV) in winter with equal or greater frequency of occurrence than pollock.

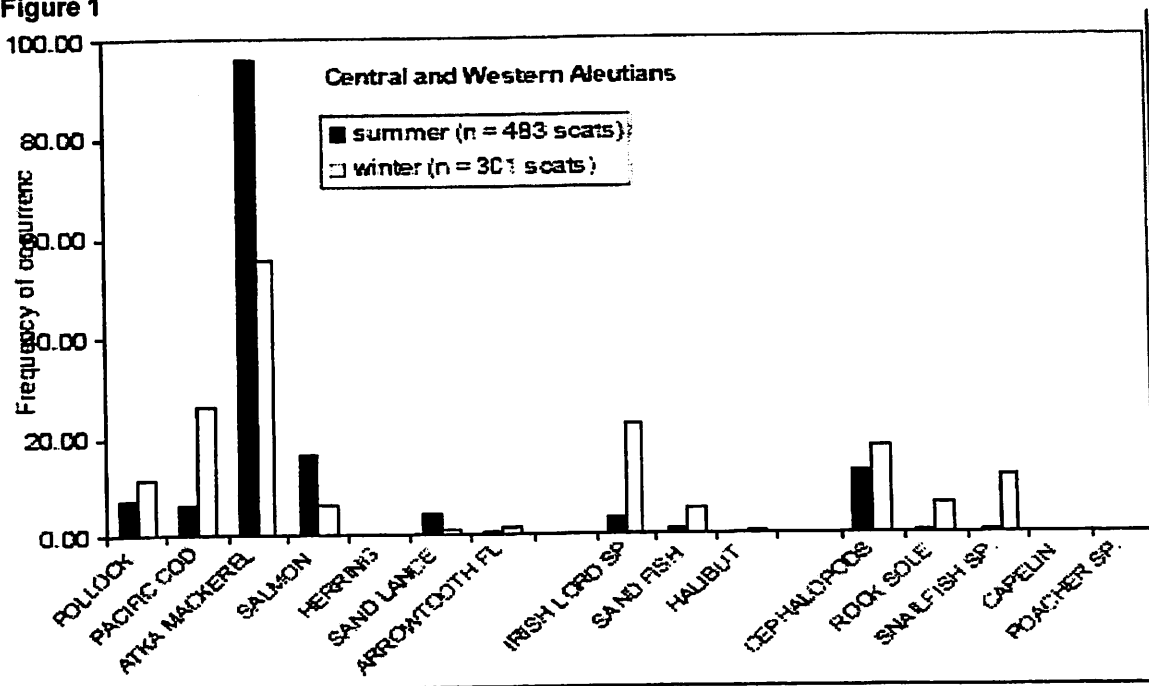
The following tables are condensed from Table 2 in Sinclair and Zeppelin and from Table 3.21 in the draft BiOp.

Table 1

from Sinclair and Zeppelin 2002		from NMFS 2006b	
Prey Species	FO in Scat	Prey Species	FO in Scat
Atka Mackerel	64.9%	Atka Mackerel	55.0%
Pacific cod	16.9%	Pacific cod	26.0%
Salmon,	23.6%	Irish Lords,	23.0%
Rock Greenlings,	21.6%	Cephalopods,	18.0%
Irish Lords,	12.8%	Snailfish,	12.0%
Snailfish,	11.5%	Pollock	12.0%
Cephalopods,	11.5%	Salmon,	6.0%
Kelp Greenlings,	4.1%	Rocksole,	6.0%
Other Greenlings,	3.4%	Arrowtooth	1.0%
Other flatfish	3.4%	Rock Greenlings,	na
Rockfishes,	3.4%	Kelp Greenlings,	na
Lumpsuckers,	2.7%	Other Greenlings,	na
Gunnels,	2.7%	Other flatfish	na
Rocksole,	2.7%	Rockfishes,	na
Arrowtooth	2.7%	Lumpsuckers,	na
Pollock	2.7%	Gunnels,	na

The following figure is take from the Central/Western Aleutian Island portion of figure 3.20 in the September 7, 2006 draft Biological Opinion.

Figure 1



Will fishery removals of pollock substantially reduce overall prey biomass?

Pollock is a relatively minor diet item for SSL in the AI. As shown in the scat data, at least fifteen other species are also present in the SSL diet.

Aleutian Island biomass estimates are available from the SAFE documents for some alternative prey species. However, for many of the prey species in the above table there are no biomass estimates available for the AI.

The combined AI biomass of 3 prey species for which separate estimates are available (Atka mackerel, P. cod, and POP) sum to roughly one million metric tons.

AI pollock biomass estimates are presented in the table below:

Table 2

Aleutian Island Pollock Biomass	
AI Pollock 2007 biomass (model 1 2006 SAFE)	141,000 tons
AI Pollock 2007 biomass (model 2A 2006 SAFE)	363,000 tons
AI Pollock biomass (2006 bottom trawl survey)	94,000 tons
AI Pollock 2007 ABC	44,500 tons
AI Pollock 2007 TAC	19,000 tons
Pollock statewater GHLL	3,000 tons

The statewater GHLL accounts for between 1% to 3% of the estimated pollock age 3+ biomass. This is far less than 1% of the overall biomass of prey species for which AI biomass estimates are available, and even less when other prey species are considered.

Are the fishery removals of pollock the same sizes consumed by SSL?

A paper by Zeppelin et al. 2004, presents a comparison of pollock and Atka mackerel sizes consumed by SSL and taken in commercial fisheries. The mean size of pollock consumed by SSL was shown to be 39.3 centimeters in that study. The mean size of pollock harvested by the commercial fishery was approximately 50 centimeters. The study estimated that there was a 56% overlap in the sizes of pollock harvested in the commercial fishery compared to those consumed by SSL.

This estimate of overlap does not reflect the overlap in the Aleutian Islands. Few, if any, of the pollock taken by the commercial fishery were harvested in the Aleutian Islands. This is due to the overwhelming dominance of Bering Sea hauls in the observer data base and that the directed pollock fishery was closed beginning in 1999.

The size composition of pollock in commercial harvests in the AI tends to have a much higher mean size than the pollock harvested in the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska. During the 2006 Aleutian Island Cooperative Acoustic Survey Study, size data was collected by

Steve Barbeaux from the pollock harvested. The mean size of pollock in the AICASS study was approximately 58 centimeters. The overlap for commercial pollock fisheries in the Aleutian Islands is substantially less than that presented in Zeppelin et al 2004.

The draft Biological Opinion presents a figure 3.21 taken from Zeppelin et al. 2004, portraying the overlap in sizes of pollock consumed by fisheries. The figure is presented below together with a graph of the pollock harvested in the 2006 AICASS study.

Figure 2

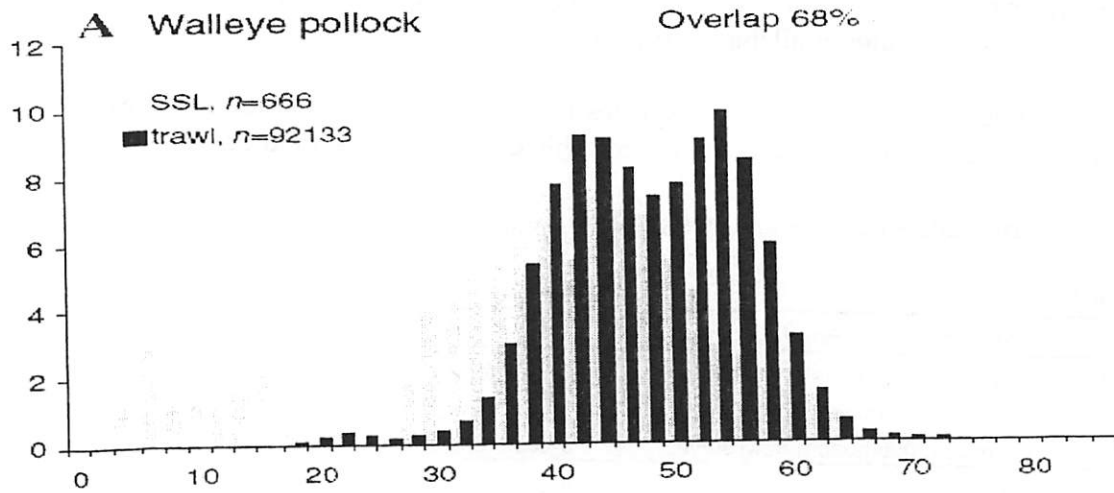
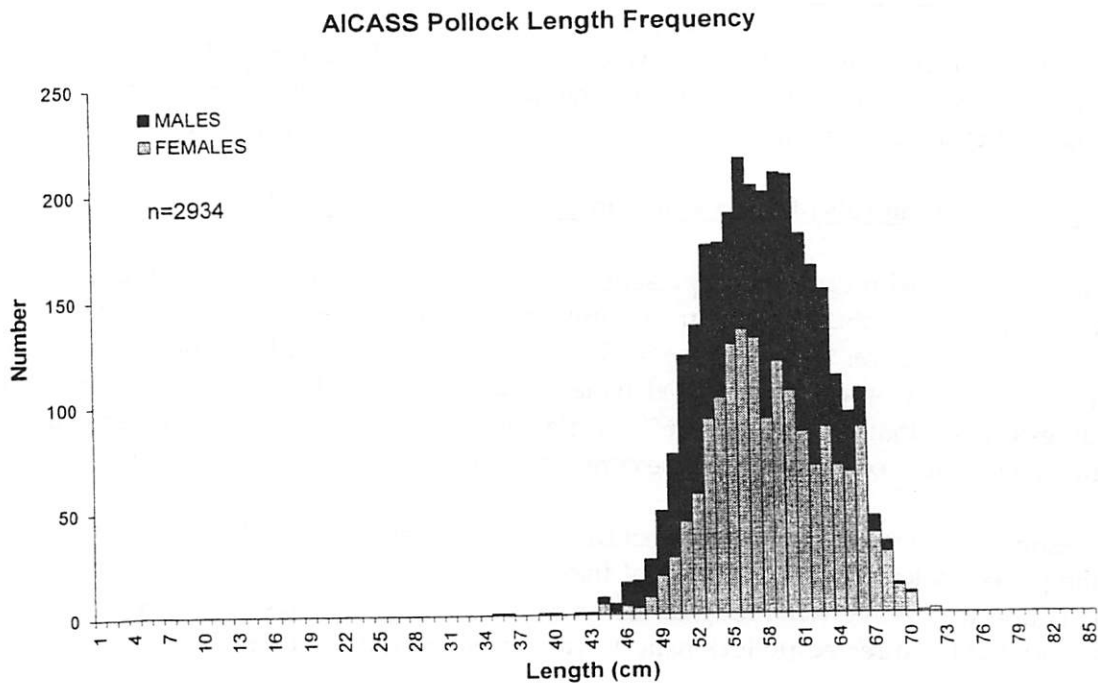


Figure 3



Does the fishery occur in the same depths as SSL foraging depths?

The draft Biological Opinion (Sept. 7th, 2006) presents summary data on SSL dive depths from several studies in table 3.13.

Table 3

Steller Sea Lion Dive Depths for Dives Greater than 4 Meters - from table 3.13, draft BiOp 9/7/06	
Mean dive depth in winter of adult female SSL (Alaska)	24 meters
Mean dive depth in summer of adult female SSL (Russia)	53 meters
Mean dive depths of juvenile SSL (4 studies)	13 to 39 meters
Mean Maximum dive depth of juvenile SSL (Washington)	144 meters
Mean Maximum dive depth of juvenile SSL (Alaska)	63 meters
Maximum dive depth in winter of adult female SSL (Alaska)	>250 meters
Percentage of dives deeper than 155 meters by adult female SSL in winter	4%
Percentage of Pollock trawls deeper than 200 meters in Kanaga Sound	80%

While the summary table only presents mean and mean maximum dive depths, some of the underlying papers provide dive data by depth bins which allows further examination of the degree of overlap between commercial fishing depths and SSL dive depths.

SSL dive information from two studies - "Diving Behaviour of Adult Female Steller Sea Lions in the Kuril Islands, Russia," Loughlin, 1998, (Table 3, page 28) and "ADF&G Wildlife Technical Bulletin No. 13," May 1996, (Table 2, pg. 144) - was used to examine potential overlap between SSL foraging depths and commercial pollock fishing depths in the Aleutian Islands.

The data on SSL dives depths from these studies was used to plot the cumulative proportion of dives deeper than a given depth.

An examination of NMFS observer program data (provided by Ren Narita at ASFC) for 4800 hauls in the Aleutian Island pollock fishery between 1990 and 1998 found less than 5% of pollock trawl hauls shallower than 150 meters

Two subsets of these hauls were plotted for the areas where most harvest under the EFP is expected - one in the Kanaga Sound area and one in the Atka Island/North Cape area. Less than 5% of the hauls in the Atka area were shallower than 150 meters, and more than 50% were deeper than 350 meters (figure 4). The Kanaga area was used to plot the cumulative proportion of trawl hauls for pollock shallower than a given depth in that area (figure 5).

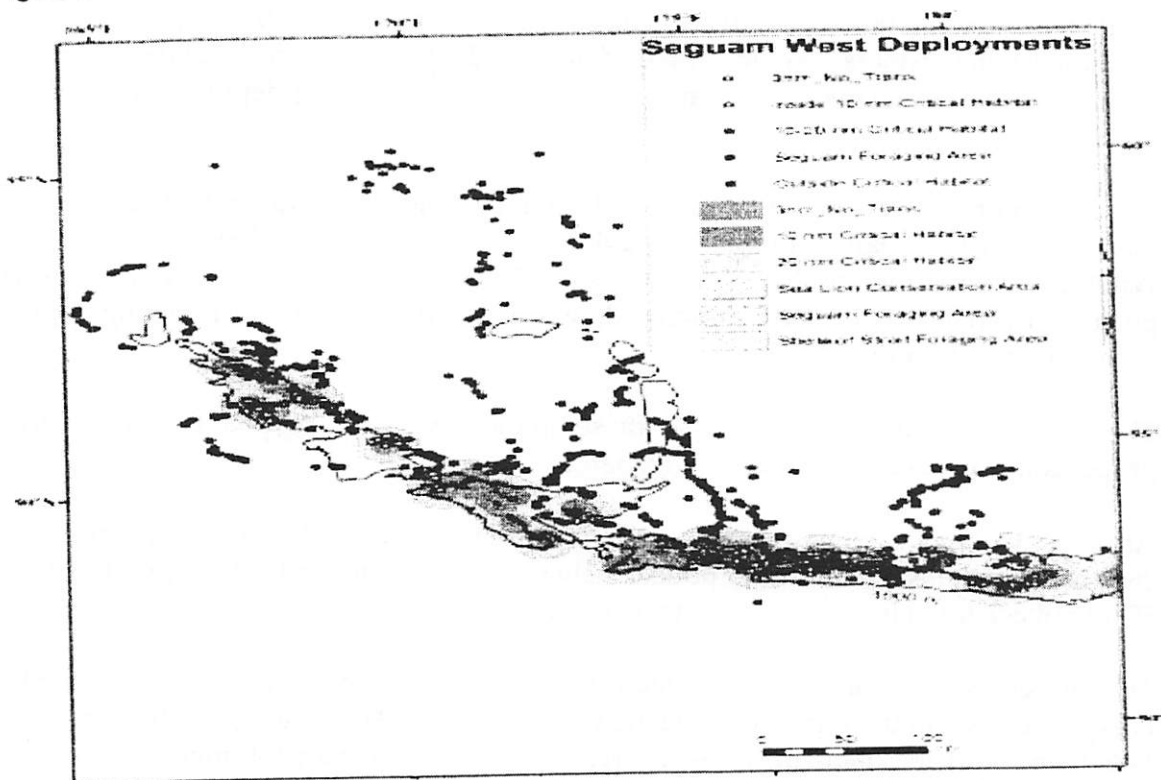
The plots of SSL dives and trawl hauls cross at approximately 150 meters. About 5% of SSL dives (excluding dives less than 4 meters) exceeded 150 meters, while less than 10% of Aleutian Island pollock hauls in Kanaga Sound were shallower than 150 meters.

Is the fishery's spatial distribution the same as the SSL foraging spatial distribution?

The best source of information on SSL foraging distribution is the satellite telemetry data. In February of 2000, four SSL were tagged at Seguam Pass. In April 2005 fifteen SSL were tagged in the Adak area. The data from these two sets of deployments are available to be viewed on line.

The draft Biological Opinion (September 7th 2006) presents an overview map (figure 3.19) of the data from all of these deployments. Given the scale of the map in the figure it is difficult to draw many inferences. However it is clear that at least some SSL spend a significant amount of time outside the 1000 meter isobath, well beyond the continental shelf.

Figure 6



As Bowen, et al, (September 2001) noted, "Data on SSL dive depth would be more useful if they were linked to bathymetry such that one could then estimate the fraction of benthic habitat available to different age and sex-classes."

In the final report by Bowen, et al, the authors discussed the use of satellite telemetry data. The panel stated (pg.35), "It should also be recognized that the appropriate sampling unit in these studies is the individual."

With the GIS tools available from the "Alaska Ecosystem Program Telemetry Research Page" (<http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov/AlaskaEcosystems/sslhome/satellite/default.htm>) it is possible to view the 19 Aleutian Island satellite tag deployments individually and to "zoom in" to a fine local scale.

GIS maps of the Seguam Pass deployments are at:

<http://afscmaps.akctr.noaa.gov/website/seg2000feb/viewer.htm>

GIS maps of the Adak deployments are at:

<http://afscmaps.akctr.noaa.gov/website/eal2005apr/viewer.htm>

By looking at fine scale maps it becomes clear that the vast majority of satellite "hits" occur inside the 100 meter isobath. (*Unfortunately, the image capture function of ArcView software didn't seem to work - the reader will have to go on line and "zoom in" on the various deployments to view the area covered by the EFP in discreet segments.*) This is consistent with the dive data presented in the several studies referenced in the draft Biological Opinion (September 7th, 2006) indicating that the vast majority of dives are shallower than 100 meters.

Figure 7, (from Halflinger and Fraser, 2001) below traces the movement of SSLID74, an 11 month old male pup, during period from 5/28 to 6/10. It is an example of a foraging trip well beyond the continental shelf.

During this time he wanders offshore far past the continental shelf break, then circles back to the west, making landfall at the west end of Atka Island, then he follows closely along the shoreline heading east for a few days, and finally heads back out past the shelf break again. He shows no interest in the portion of the shelf between 100 and 200 meters where commercial groundfish are targeted. Rather he appears to be foraging where the more likely prey is salmon, mictophids, and squid.

There is no indication of spatial overlap or temporal overlap with the cod and Pollock fishery which are winter fisheries, since this animal doesn't begin going offshore until summer.

The same animal is shown in figure 8 (also below) during the winter months from March through May when it rarely goes beyond the 100 meter isobath

This image in figure 8 zooms in on SSLID74, the male pup from figure 7, at Seguam Island. All at-sea locations from the time of tagging (2/29/2000) for the next 2 months (until 5/4/200) are contained in this image, and only one location during that period is significantly outside 3 miles.

Given the narrow shelf in the Aleutian Islands, spatial separation between SSL foraging locations and commercial pollock fishing activity may not be dramatic when measured in miles. However, when "data on SSL dive depth" is "linked to bathymetry" and examined by "individual," as suggested by Bowen, et al, it become clear that there is significant 3 dimensional spatial separation that is tied to bathymetry.

Conclusion

The picture that emerges from consideration of the data related to the multiple dimensions of overlap is not one that suggests competition with pollock fishing in the Aleutian Islands limits SSL foraging success.

In contrast to the conclusions of Sinclair and Zeppelin, which may be valid in the context of the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska, there is nothing in the Aleutian Island data that suggests spawning aggregations of pollock are an important target species for Aleutian Island SSL. Rather it appears that dispersed pollock form a minor opportunistic component of the prey field in the Aleutians (west of 170° W longitude). The fishery is separated in space both vertically (depth) and horizontally (distance from shore and bathymetry). Finally, to the minor degree that pollock are part of a much larger SSL prey field, the sizes of pollock harvested by the fishery are significantly larger than those consumed by SSL.

Each of the five dimensions of overlap examined show a very limited degree of overlap. Taken together, it is difficult to imagine that pollock fishery in the Aleutian Islands harvesting the full TAC, let alone 3000 metric tons, occurring 3 miles or more from listed SSL sites would result in either Jeopardy or Adverse Modification of SSL Critical Habitat.

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Haflinger, K., Fraser, D., 2001. Expanded Analysis of Telemetry Data, Comment on August 2000 DSEIS. Submitted by High Seas Catchers' Co-op.

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Figure 7

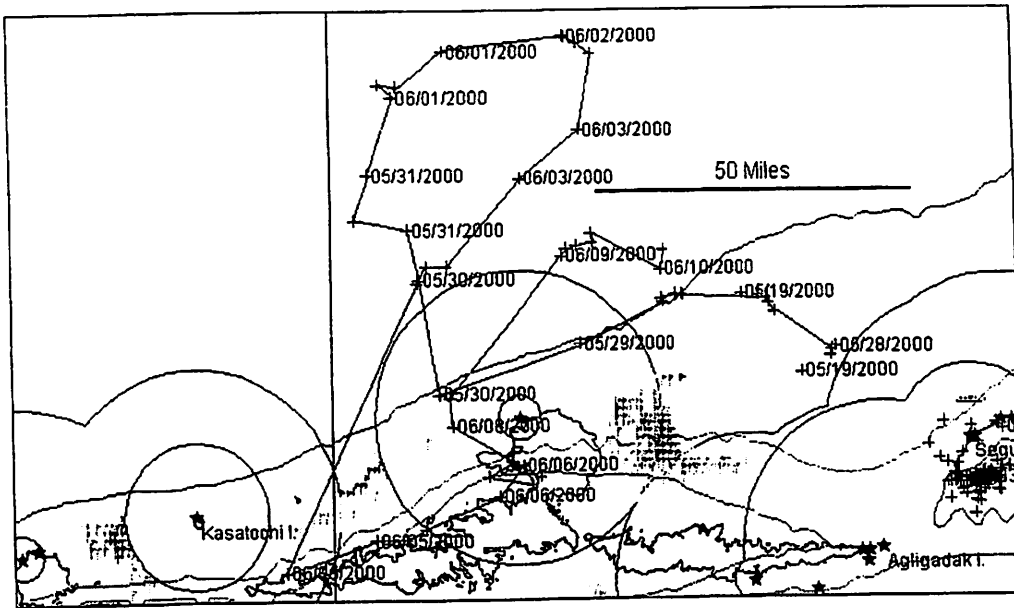
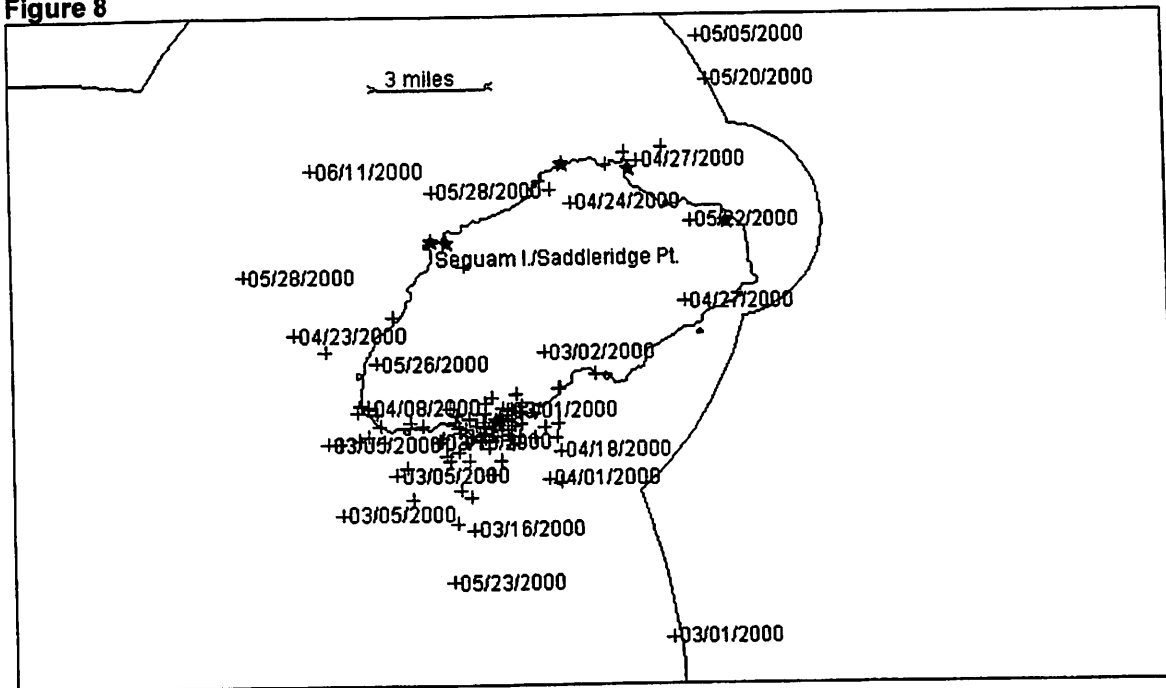


Figure 8



These two patterns noted above can be seen for each of the 19 deployments when viewed online. Three SSL make long offshore trips. The remainder of the satellite "hits" are almost exclusively found inside the 100 meter isobath. It is evident from the telemetry data that there are two modes of SSL spatial distribution in the Aleutian Islands. One mode is long trips far beyond the continental shelf edge. The other mode appears to be "beach-combing" very close to shore, inside 100 meters.

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Zeppelin, T. K., D.J. Tollit, K.A. Call, T.J. Orcharred, and C.J. Gudmundson. 2004. Sizes of walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*) and Atka mackerel (*Pleurogrammus monopterygius*) consumed by the western stock of Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) in Alaska from 1998 to 2000. *Fish. Bull., U.S.* 102(3):509-521.

Responses to Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee Questions on BOF Proposal # 396 – AI State Water Pollock

Prepared by dave fraser – Adak Fisheries

The BOF decision under proposal #396 is whether to close the state water fishery or leave it open. Alternatively the BOF might reduce the 3,000 ton catch limit and further restrict where and when fishing could occur. The BOF could consider a GHL for just Kanaga Sound, based on a 14.27% exploitation rate applied to the 7,956 tons survey biomass for that block which would produce a local GHL of about 1135 tons.

Last year NMFS did an EA and Biological Opinion on an EFP for harvest of up to 3,000 tons in the area from 173-179 longitude. The EFP allowed fishing in the portions of statewater between 174-178 longitude that would be open in the fishery addressed by proposal #396.

That Biological Opinion addressed most of the questions posed by the SSLMC and found no jeopardy or adverse modification, so long as harvest was limited to 1000 tons in any one degree of longitude.

Notes on Board of Fish Proposal #396 and SSLMC “Objectives Questions”

1. Continue to avoid jeopardy and adverse modification.

- Is there additional fishing effort inside of SSL critical habitat?

Absent the statewater fishery, there is currently no directed pollock fishery inside AI SSLCH.

- Does the proposal provide trade-offs that reduce the total negative effects to SSL?
- Does the proposal open a substantial amount of critical habitat?

No.

The proposal only allows pollock fishing between 174 to 178 longitude inside that portion of state water that is not inside 3 miles from a haulout or 20 miles of a rookery. Given the bathymetry in that area, only a very small percent of the open area of state water would actually be subject to any pollock fishing. NMFS staff (Steve Lewis) could do a GIS analysis of the intersection of fishable depths, state water and SSL CH, which would probably show that less the 1% of AI SSL CH would be open to pollock fishing.

- Does proposal indirectly provide protection to additional sites?
- Does proposal indirectly affect nearby SSL sites?

There are SSL sites in the region. The affects were described in the NMFS EA and Biological Opinion on the 2007 EFP fishery.

- Does proposal affect important research site? (e.g. Chiswell)
- Does proposal offer additional measures to control fishing rate or effort?

Yes.

Fishing is limited to vessels 58' or less. There is also a limit on total removals (3000 tons) that is substantially less than the AI pollock ABC (19,000 tons). However, the statewater GHL does not contain the sub-area limitation that was included in the 2007 EFP.

The BOF could further reduce the amount of the state water GHL based on the 2007 survey of Kanaga Sound.

The preliminary results of the survey indicate roughly 7,956 tons of pollock biomass in Kanaga Sound. The draft stock assessment indicates total AI pollock biomass of 197,280 tons and an ABC of 28,160 tons which equates to an exploitation rate of about 14.27%.

The BOF could consider a GHL for just Kanaga Sound based on a 14.27% exploitation rate applied to the 7,956 tons survey biomass for that block which would produce a local GHL of about 1135 tons. This would be consistent with the Biological Opinion produced for the 2007 EFP fishery.

One further precautionary step would be to limit the statewater GHL to 40% of the 1135 tons for the A season, *OR 454 MT.*

- Does the proposal reduce the no-fishing time between end of year (December) and first of year (January) fisheries at a critical time for SSL?

The proposal does not open the statewater pollock fishery until March 1st. It expands the winter closure.

- Does the proposal affect the number of fishing days required to harvest the quota?

No.

The AI pollock TAC is currently un-harvestable given the total closure of SSL CH. Allowing a small GHL in a limited portion of statewater will not result in the TAC being attained.

2. Encourage development of a sound experimental design for monitoring.

NA

3. Minimize adverse social and economic impacts.

- Does the proposal provide economic benefits?

Yes.

Little, if any, AI pollock will be harvested under federal regulations until modifications are made to the total closure of SSL CH. Any pollock harvested in a statewater fishery provides economic benefit that would not otherwise be provided. These benefits would accrue to the participating harvesters, to the processing plant and to the community of Adak.

Beyond that direct value of a small amount of harvest from a statewater pollock fishery, this would be the 1st opportunity for 58' boats to test their equipment against AI pollock fishing conditions which differ substantially from what they are familiar with in the WGOA.

Because the sizes of AI pollock are substantially larger than what is typical in the Bering Sea the processing plant invested in specially designed processing machines last year to handle the larger sized pollock. This equipment did not perform as well as hoped and has been modified by the manufacturer. A small statewater fishery would provide an opportunity to further test and refine the equipment.

- What is the impact upon harvesting and/or processing efficiency?

Harvesters with small (<60') vessels would have an opportunity to catch pollock.

- Does the proposal have any effects on other fisheries?

No.

- Will the proposed action be further affected by recent or pending council actions?

No – except to the extent it provides a limited fishery that would be superceded when the new Biological Opinion is completed and SSL mitigation measures are restructured.

4. Minimize bycatch of PSC and other groundfish.

- Does the proposal potentially create bycatch issues in other SSL prey species?
- Does the proposal potentially create bycatch issues in PSC species?

No bycatch impacts are likely to occur. (see 2007 EFP EA/Biop)

5. Promote safety at sea.

- Does the proposal reduce or increase safety for the fleet?

State waters are much safer for small vessels than the area outside CH, 20 miles from SSL sites.

6. Minimize adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species in the BSAI and GOA

A state water pollock fishery in the AI is unlikely to impact any other endangered species. (see 2007 EFP EA/Biop)

Preliminary Report on 2007 AI EFP Survey, a Synopsis

NMFS is preparing an analysis of the 2007 AI EFP pollock survey to be presented to the Council in December. All of the information in this synopsis is preliminary.

The 1st leg of the survey began mid March with two vessels (the Muir Milach doing hydro-acoustic transects and the Intrepid Explorer doing verification hauls). The vessels spent just over a week. The area surveyed began at 173.00 degrees and ended at 179.00 degrees.

The Intrepid Explorer had to withdraw from the survey after the 1st leg of the survey. On the 2nd leg of the survey beginning in mid-April the Muir Milach did both hydro-acoustics and verification tows.

Between the two vessels, they devoted about 3 weeks of vessel time to the two legs of the survey.

The following table is summary of survey verification hauls.

VESSEL	DATE	OTC - kilograms	TYPE	LAT	LONG	Start Time	Block
Leg 1							
Intrepid Explorer	3/14/2007	510.2	verification	5207.6	17603.0	1630	D
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	1.8	verification	5215.4	17507.1	1503	C
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	768.9	verification	5214.5	17453.2	1854	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	401.4	verification	5218.7	17444.4	2123	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	854.8	verification	5226.8	17347.5	1339	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	291.8	verification	5225.1	17343.1	1749	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	332.1	verification	5217.6	17332.6	2127	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/17/2007	19.8	verification	5218.3	17449.7	915	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/17/2007	175.5	verification	5204.9	17615.3	2016	D
Intrepid Explorer	3/18/2007	350.9	verification	5158.1	17703.1	833	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/18/2007	213.6	verification	5151.5	17716.7	1224	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	379.2	verification	5149.9	17724.2	124	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	174.1	verification	5148.7	17732.3	929	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	396.8	verification	5155.0	17736.7	2221	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	11.1	verification	5154.9	17748.6	106	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	44.9	verification	5139.2	17826.0	1407	F
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	54.6	verification	5140.0	17832.3	1844	F
Leg 2							
Muir Milach	4/15/2007	336.85	verification	5153.1	17728.8	1212	E
Muir Milach	4/15/2007	358.06	verification	5151.4	17717.2	1844	E
Muir Milach	4/16/2007	1057.84	verification	5202.7	17619.8	1100	D
Muir Milach	4/17/2007	752.99	verification	5218.2	17446.4	345	B
Muir Milach	4/17/2007	1814.4	verification	5226.8	17347.6	2415	A

The cost of the survey was to be funded with "compensation" fishing by the survey vessels. However, with the loss of the Intrepid Explorer from the survey, it was necessary to recruit a third vessel for the compensation fishing. The maximum catch limit for the compensation fishing was 3000 tons of groundfish, with a maximum of 1000 tons to be harvested in any one degree block.

During the compensation fishing the Bristol Explorer had a generator failure which forced them to withdraw from the project. They were replaced by the Northwest Explorer.

The following table is a summary of the compensation hauls:

VESSEL	DATE	OTC - tons	TYPE	LAT	LONG	Start Time	Block
Bristol Explorer	3/16/2007	72.96	compensation	5219.0	17447.0	1	B
Bristol Explorer	3/16/2007	102.15	compensation	5216.0	17449.0	315	B
Bristol Explorer	3/18/2007	66.33	compensation	5213.0	17458.0	43	B
Bristol Explorer	3/18/2007	61.22	compensation	5219.0	17446.0	1658	B
Bristol Explorer	3/19/2007	112.24	compensation	5219.0	17445.0	12	B
Bristol Explorer	3/19/2007	107.14	compensation	5219.0	17446.0	432	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	102.58	compensation	5217.0	17448.0	1	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	97.92	compensation	5219.0	17445.0	303	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	116.57	compensation	5216.0	17451.0	700	B
Bristol Explorer	3/25/2007	9.44	compensation	5154.0	17733.0	131	E
Bristol Explorer	3/25/2007	0.94	compensation	5154.0	17734.0	543	E
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	28.53	compensation	5215.1	17451.8	600	B
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	33.28	compensation	5218.6	17456.3	800	B
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	47.55	compensation	5218.0	17446.8	1130	B
Northwest Explorer	4/5/2007	30.87	compensation	5159.0	17621.0	825	D
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	0.77	compensation	5216.0	17344.0	320	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	38.59	compensation	5217.0	17303.0	1055	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	84.89	compensation	5216.0	17311.0	1305	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	84.89	compensation	5216.0	17303.0	1555	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	69.46	compensation	5217.0	17318.0	1945	A

There were 20 commercial hauls resulting in an average haul size of over 50 tons per haul.

The following table presents a preliminary summary of species composition of all samples (including both survey verification hauls and targeted compensation fishing):

Verification Hauls Sample Weights	kilograms	percent
Total	15,163	100.00%
Pollock	10,549	69.57%
POP	4,301	28.37%
Other	312	2.06%

All the catch from the verification hauls (approximately 9.3 tons) was discarded. All of the catch from the compensation fishing was delivered to Adak.

The following table presents the fish ticket data for pollock delivered to Adak under the EFP:

AI EFP SURVEY COMPENSATION CATCH BY DELIVERY						
Date	Vessel	Fish Ticket #	Lbs Pollock	Lbs POP (including at sea discard)	Total Lbs	% POP
3/16/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07014811	349,226	36,799	386,025	10%
3/19/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015063	729,371	35,471	764,842	5%
3/23/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015476	656,152	42,867	699,019	6%
3/25/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015671	22,899	0	22,899	0%
3/26/2007	Muir Milach	E07015782	105,239	3,361	108,600	3%
3/27/2007	Muir Milach	E07015992	203,408	37,695	241,103	16%
4/7/2007	N W Explorer	E07017001	512,335	167,792	680,127	25%

Compensation Catch Summary	
total tons pollock	1,170 tons
total tons (from OTC)	1,268 tons
Incidental (POP, etc.)	98 tons
average POP bycatch rate	8%

While the survey was completed successfully, the compensation fishery did not work out well for the participants. A variety of factors contributed to this outcome.

One of the major factors was a result of having to recruit additional vessels during the compensation fishery. The pre-season agreement was that the proceeds from the fishery were to be divided based on number of days a vessel participated in either the survey or the compensation fishery. Unfortunately this worked as a direct disincentive for the replacement vessel. The Northwest Explorer caught 20% of the compensation fish in during a single trip, almost all of which was caught during a little over 12 hours. However, given the other vessels had 40 days into the project, the Northwest Explorer received little benefit from continuing to fish and chose not to continue fishing.

NMFS's 9/17 letter to The Board of Fish states "EFP fishery participants were unable to find enough pollock to meet the 3000 mt limit." Though vessels did face a challenge avoiding POP, the pollock CPUE's encountered by the vessels in the compensation fishery were not the reason that the full 3000 tons were not harvested.

The problems of the economic disincentives built into the pooled compensation, were exacerbated by logistical problems working around the cod season and the loss of participating vessels. There were further problems related to dealing with POP bycatch in the processing plant and as well as problems with newly installed processing equipment designed to handle the larger average pollock that are encountered in the AI pollock fishery.

**ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
LOWER COOK INLET FINFISH
November 13-15, 2007, Homer**

Preliminary Summary

- CIA 1 Open Anchor River king salmon fishery 6 days per week.
Amendment: added Wednesdays.
- NA 2 Open Anchor River king salmon fishery 5 days per week.
- NA 3 Modify king salmon season opening date on the Anchor River.
- CIA 4 Increase the annual limit for king salmon on the Anchor River and Deep Creek. *Amendment: Specified annual bag limit of 5 fish.*
- F 5 Allow catch and release fishing after retaining a king salmon on the Anchor River and Deep Creek.
- F 6 Reduce the conservation corridor dates in the Early-Run King Salmon Special Harvest Area around the Anchor River.
- C 7 Reduce closed area at mouth of Anchor River from 4 miles to 2 miles in the Early-Run King Salmon Special Harvest Area.
- NA 8 Reduce closed area at mouth of Anchor River and Deep Creek in the Early-Run King Salmon Special Harvest Area.
- NA 9 Reduce closed area at mouth of Anchor River and Deep Creek in the Early-Run King Salmon Special Harvest Area.
- CIA 10 Allow fishing for hatchery king salmon in the Ninilchik River 7 days per week. *Amendment: 7 days per week July 1-Dec. 31 for hatchery kings only.*
- NA 11 Allow harvest of hatchery king salmon 7 days per week on Ninilchik River.
- NA 12 Reduce king salmon bag limit on Ninilchik River.
- CIA 13 Prohibit use of weighted hooks in the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon.
Amendment: During periods of snagging, the use of weighted hooks or weighted flotation devices that follow a hook or hooks are prohibited.
- F 14 Increase bag limit of king salmon under 20 inches in Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon.
- F 15 Prohibit personal use gill nets within a thousand yards of the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon.
- CIA 16 Prohibit sport fishing in Tutka Bay Lagoon and near the Tutka Bay lagoon hatchery net pens. *Amendment: Applied to all sport fishing.*
- NA 17 Close sport and personal use sockeye fishing in Tutka Bay Lagoon.
- F 18 Remove spiny dogfish from the sport bag limit for sharks.

- C/A 19 Reduce daily possession limit of rockfish between Gore Point to Cape Puget. *Amendment: Daily bag limit of 4 rockfish of which 1 can be non-pelagic, possession limit is two bag limits.*
- C/A 20 Establish a youth only fishery in the Seward lagoon area.
- C 21 Open a sockeye salmon fishery in the Resurrection River.
- C 22 Allow retention of rockfish and lingcod in subsistence fisheries.
- C/A 392 Allow subsistence harvest of shellfish in Kachemak Bay. (formerly ACR 12) *Amendment: Made positive customary and traditional finding and set amount necessary for subsistence.*
- C 393 Have state sportfishing regulations for halibut mirror federal regulations for consistency with the North Pacific Halibut Act and international treaty. (formerly ACR 24)
- C 394 Modify reporting requirements for proxy fishing in subsistence, sport, and personal use shellfish fisheries. (formerly ACR 25)
- C/A 395 Modify Pollock trip limits for vessels in a 24-hour period. *Amendment: Established daily trip limits of 300,000 lbs of unprocessed Pollock or 600,000 lbs on a tender vessel.*
- C 396 Amend or repeal the Adak state-waters walleye Pollock fishery. *Board clarified intent is to repeal management plan.*
- F 397 Reduce maximum vessel size to 60 feet for all permitted gear types in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- F 398 Provide for a pot-gear reopening of the A season fishery and in the B season in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- F 399 Increase the size of tunnel openings for groundfish pots used in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- C/A 400 Modify vessel length definition to exclude bulbous bow in vessel length calculation statewide. *Amendment: Excluded bulbous bow from vessel length specifications.*

Other

The Board of Fisheries directed its BOF/BOG coordination committee to work with Board of Game members in February to see if there are grounds for scheduling a joint Board meeting.

The board changed the location of the December 2008 Prince William Sound meeting from Valdez to Cordova.

C = Carried; C/A = Carried as amended; F = Failed; NA = No action

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Additional proposals for the November 13-15, 2007 meeting:

(Includes agenda change requests accepted by the board and board generated proposals)

Proposal 392 (was ACR 12) - 5 AAC 02.310 Subsistence Shellfish Fishery; 5 AAC 02.311. Customary and traditional subsistence uses of shellfish stocks. Allow subsistence harvest of shellfish in Kachemak Bay.

The rural community members of Port Graham, Nanwalek, and Seldovia have historically harvested hard shell clams for subsistence use in the Kachemak Bay. The regulations currently in place do not accurately reflect the traditional use area to the Port Graham Sub-district; this regulation makes it impossible to participate in the hard shell clam harvest as there are no harvestable clam populations in the Port Graham Sub-district since the 1964 earthquake.

Sections of the regulations that apply include:

5 AAC 02.310. Subsistence shellfish fishery

(a) In the nonsubsistence area described in 5 AAC 99.015(a) (3), and except as otherwise provided in this section, no person may take shellfish for subsistence purposes.

(b) Clams may be taken in the Port Graham Subdistrict.

5 AAC 02.311. Customary and traditional subsistence uses of shellfish stocks

The Alaska Board of Fisheries finds that clams in the Port Graham Subdistrict are customarily and traditionally used for subsistence.

Proposed by: Herman N. Moonin Jr., Port Graham Village Council

Proposal 393 (was ACR 24) - 5 AAC 75.xxx. New regulation. Have state halibut regulations mirror federal regulations for consistency with the North Pacific Halibut Act and international treaty.

Halibut are managed under an international treaty and the North Pacific Halibut Act. As a result the state has very limited regulatory authority over halibut. State halibut regulations that are not identical to federal regulations are considered preempted by federal law. The National Marine Fisheries Service, under direction of the North Pacific Management Council, recently changed regulations for people sport fishing from charter boats in southeast Alaska and are considering changes in south central Alaska. As a result, the state halibut sport fishing regulations are inconsistent with federal regulations in southeast Alaska. This causes significant enforcement issues and results in confusion amongst anglers due to conflicting and invalid state regulations. Given the possibility of future changes, the state could find that our regulations are out of sync with federal regulations in some areas at any time. To correct this, the Department proposes to have state sport fishing regulations for halibut mirror federal regulations. This approach closely mirrors that of commercial fisheries which are dually managed, *See 5 AAC 28.092.*

Proposed by: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Proposal 394 (was ACR 25) - 5 AAC 02.011. Subsistence fishing by proxy; 5 AAC 75.011. Sport fishing by proxy; and 5 AAC 77.016. Personal use fishing by proxy. Modify reporting requirements for subsistence, sport, and personal use shellfish fisheries.

During the 2006-07 statewide meeting the board amended the finfish proxy fishing regulations in the subsistence, sport and personal use fisheries. However, due to legal notice issues only proxy fishing regulations for finfish could be changed. Given that there is proxy fishing for shellfish this agenda change request is necessary to eliminate the confusion of having two different proxy reporting requirements and regulations that apply only to finfish.

Proposed by: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Proposal 395 - 5 AAC 28.073. Trip limits for commercial pollock vessels. Modify Pollock trip limits for vessels in a 24-hour period as follows:

5 AAC 28.073. Trip limits for commercial pollock vessels. (a) In the state waters between 144° W. long [147° W. LONG.] and 170° W. long., a person may not retain on board a catcher vessel, daily [AT ANY TIME], more than 300,000 pounds [136 METRIC TONS] of unprocessed pollock, or retain on board a tender vessel, daily [AT ANY TIME], more than 600,000 pounds [272 METRIC TONS] of unprocessed pollock, harvested in the state waters adjacent to the federal waters of the Western, [AND] Central, and a portion of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Areas described in 50 C.F.R. 679, Figure 3.

(b) The cumulative amount of pollock landed by a catcher vessel harvesting pollock taken from the state waters adjacent to the federal waters of the Western, Central, and a portion of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska area described in 5 CFR 679, Figure 3, during a directed fishing season may not exceed the daily trip limit specified in subsection (a) of this section, times the number of calendar days the directed pollock fishery is open.

(b) For the purpose of this section daily means from 12:01 a.m. through 11:59 p.m.

This proposal was presented to give the board the opportunity to re-evaluate the trip limits for commercial pollock fishing vessels.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Proposal 396 - 5 AAC 28.645. Aleutian Islands District Walleye Pollock Management Plan. Amend or repeal the Adak state-waters walleye Pollock fishery.

This proposal is presented to give the board the opportunity to re-evaluate the state managed Adak pollock fishery established by the board in October 2006. The National Marine Fisheries

Service has raised concerns regarding the allowable harvest level because of pollock abundance levels in the area.

Sections of the regulations that apply include:

5 AAC 28.645. Aleutian Islands District Walleye Pollock Management Plan

- (a) This management plan governs the directed harvest of walleye pollock in that portion of the Aleutian Islands District between 174° long. and 178° long.
- (b) The commissioner will establish the guideline harvest level for the directed harvest of walleye pollock under this section at 3,000 metric tons, reduced by the amount of walleye pollock authorized to be taken by the federal exempted fishery permit fishery inside critical habitat areas in the Aleutian Islands District between 174° long. and 178° long., described in C.F.R. 226.202, revised as of October 1, 2005.
- (c) Seven days after the beginning of the federal exempted fisheries permit fishery, or on or after March 1, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, the walleye pollock fishery under this section if the commissioner determines that the available guideline harvest level is sufficient to allow a manageable fishery. The commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the walleye pollock fishery under this section when the guideline harvest level is projected to be taken or on June 10 if the commissioner determines that the guideline harvest level will not be taken by June 10.
- (d) Walleye pollock may be taken under this section only with pelagic trawl gear and on a vessel that is no more than 58 feet in overall length.
- (e) Before a person uses a vessel to operate gear to take walleye pollock under this section, the vessel owner, the owner's authorized agent, or the vessel operator shall validly register the vessel with the department office in Dutch Harbor.
- (f) A vessel operator must notify a local representative of the department daily between the business hours of 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. to report the amount, by weight, of unprocessed walleye pollock on board the vessel. Cod end transfers are prohibited. The vessel operator must land the walleye pollock on board the vessel at a processing plant that has observer coverage where the unsorted catch may be observed by the observer.
- (g) The following waters are closed to the direct harvest of walleye pollock under this section:
 - (1) all state waters within 20 miles around a Steller sea lion rookery, excluding the waters of the bay on the northwest side of Kanaga Island;
 - (2) all waters within three miles around a Steller sea lion haulout.
- (h) In this section,
 - (1) "overall length" means the straight line length between the extremities of the vessel, excluding the anchor rollers;
 - (2) "Steller sea lion haulout" means a site listed as a Steller sea lion protection area in Table 4 of 50 C.F.R. 679, revised as of October 1, 2005, adopted by reference, but not listed in Table 12 of 50 C.F.R. 679, revised as of October 1, 2005, adopted by reference;
 - (3) "Steller sea lion rookery" means a site listed as a Steller sea lion protection area in Table 12 of 50 C.F.R. 679, revised as of October 1, 2005, adopted by reference.
- (i) The provisions of this section do not apply after December 31, 2008.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Proposal 397 - 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan. Reduce maximum vessel size to 60 feet for all permitted gear types in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery as follows:

5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan

...

(d) During a state waters season,

...

(3) a vessel used to harvest Pacific cod with

(A) non-pelagic trawl gear may not be more than 60 [100] feet in overall length;

(B) mechanical jigging machines and longline gear may not be more than 60 [58] feet in overall length;

(C) pot gear may not be more than 60 [125] feet in overall length;

...

The board was requested to take up this matter and it generated this proposal for public review and consideration. This proposal seeks to reduce the maximum vessel size limit to 60 feet for all permitted gear types.

The Aleutian Islands District Pacific cod fishery began in 2006. The fishery takes place in state-waters of the Aleutian Islands west of 170° W long. The state-waters fishery harvest level is based upon 3% of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands federal acceptable biological catch (ABC).

The state-waters guideline harvest level is apportioned 70% to the A season and 30% to the B season. The state-waters fishery A season opens after the initial catcher-vessel trawl sector parallel/federal Pacific cod season is closed, and remains open until the A season GHL is attained, or no later than June 9. Beginning June 10, the state-waters B season opens. There are no harvest allocations by gear type.

During the 2006 season there were no vessel size limits. The 2007 Aleutian Islands District state-waters A season Pacific cod fishery was the first in which vessel size limits of 125 feet or less for pot vessels, 100 feet or less for trawl vessels and 58 feet or less for longline and jig vessels were in effect.

During 2007, the state-waters A season opened to commercial fishing for Pacific cod on March 16, 2007, and closed on March 23, a 7-day fishery. The harvest was 8,229,931 pounds of Pacific cod taken by 27 vessels, although 29 vessels registered for the fishery. Three floating-processor vessels and two shore-based processors participated. No catcher processor vessels (CPs) participated in 2007 whereas six CPs participated in the 2006 A season. Average fishing vessel size was 89' overall length during 2007.

Only two gear types participated in the 2007 A season; non-pelagic trawl gear harvested 85% of the A season total catch and pot gear 15%. Of the 20 trawl vessels that participated, 13 trawl vessels (>60 feet) accounted for 72% of the trawl harvest. All pot vessels that participated were over 60 feet. Overall for both gear types, 76% of the 2007 A season harvest was taken by vessels over 60 feet and 24% was taken by vessels 60 feet or less.

During 2007, a daily and trip harvest-limit of 150,000 pounds applied to each vessel. During 2006, the daily harvest-limit was 150,000 pounds, with a vessel trip harvest-limit of 300,000 pounds. The vessel size limits and daily harvest-limit during 2007 were not effective in slowing the pace of the 2007 harvest compared to the 2006 fishery and overages of the daily and trip limits occurred in both seasons. The 2006 fishery lasted 9 days whereas the 2007 fishery lasted 7 days. Fishery catches indicate that most trawl vessels in the fleet, including those less than 60 feet, are capable of catching and holding onboard quantities of Pacific cod very near to or exceeding the current daily harvest limit.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Proposal 398 - 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan. Provide for a pot-gear reopening of the A season fishery and in the B season in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery as follows:

5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan

...

(d) During a state waters season,

(1) the guideline harvest level for Pacific cod in the Aleutian Islands District west of 170° W. long. is three percent of the estimated total allowable harvest of Pacific cod for the federal Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area; the guideline harvest level will be available for harvest as follows:

(A) a maximum of 70 percent of the guideline harvest level will be available for harvest in the state waters A season before June 10 as follows:

(i) if the state waters A season guideline harvest level has not been taken by April 1, when the federal catcher-vessel trawl fishery season opens, the commissioner will close, by emergency order, the state waters A season and immediately reopen a parallel season;

(ii) if the commissioner determines that an adequate state waters season A guideline harvest level is available after the federal catcher-vessel trawl fishery season closes, and before June 10, the commissioner may reopen, by emergency order, the state waters A season;

(B) a total of 30 percent of the guideline harvest level plus any unharvested amount from the state waters A season under (1)(A) of this subsection, up to a maximum of 70 percent, will be rolled over on June 10 and available for harvest in the state waters B season; **except that the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, a state waters season to pot vessels only in the Aleutian Islands District west of 170° W. long. four days after the initial Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands state waters A season is closed and any catch by pot vessels in the pot-only season prior to June 10 will be accounted against the B season GHL;** the guideline harvest level will be available as follows:

(i) if the state waters B season guideline harvest level has not been taken by September 1, when the federal catcher-vessel **fixed gear** [POT] fishery season for vessels **under** [OVER] 60 feet in overall length opens, the commissioner will close, by emergency order, the state waters B season and immediately reopen a parallel season;

(ii) if the commissioner determines that an adequate state waters season B guideline harvest level is available after the federal catcher-vessel **fixed gear** [POT] fishery season for vessels **under**

[OVER] 60 feet in overall length closes, the commissioner may reopen, by emergency order the state waters B season;

...

(h) For the purposes of this section,

...

(2) "state waters A season" means the state waters season conducted from January 1 through June 9;

(3) "state waters B season" means the state waters season conducted from June 10 through December 31.

The board was requested to take up this matter and it generated this proposal for public review and consideration. The proposal seeks to amend the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod management plan (5 AAC 28.647) to potentially harvest more than 70% of the A season GHL prior to June 10 (current allocation: A season 70% GHL, B season 30% GHL). This additional A season harvest would be allocated to vessels fishing with pot gear and does not propose any vessel size limit. The proposal also changes the gear sector in the parallel/federal fishery that is linked to closing and reopening the state-waters B season fishery. The state-waters B season would close when the parallel/federal fishery for Pacific cod by vessels less than 60 feet using fixed gear (longline and pot gear) opened rather than by catcher vessels over 60 feet using pot gear. The state-waters B season could reopen after the fixed gear parallel/federal fishery by vessels less than 60 feet closed.

The 2006 state-waters B season was open for 82 days, however there was limited harvest due to a lack of fishing activity. To date, the 2007 B season has been open for 82 days and approximately 63% of the GHL was taken by August 31. The parallel/federal Pacific cod fishery for over 60 feet pot gear catcher vessels was open September 1 – 28. The state-waters B season will reopen October 1. The fishery may remain open until December 31, however if catch rates are similar to the first portion of the B season then the entire GHL could be taken before December 31.

The Aleutian Islands District Pacific cod fishery began in 2006. The state-waters fishery is based upon 3% of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands federal acceptable biological catch (ABC).

The state-waters guideline harvest level is apportioned 70% to the A season and 30% to the B season. The state-waters fishery A season opens after the initial catcher-vessel trawl parallel/federal Pacific cod season is closed, and remains open until the A season GHL is attained, or no later than June 9. Beginning June 10, the state-waters B season opens.

The proposal asks for a change in the seasonal allocation in Pacific cod in the state-waters fishery. The current A & B season allocations were adopted for Steller sea lion conservation when the management plan was originally adopted. If the proposal is adopted the annual harvest percentage taken from the A season would increase, however staff cannot predict what that magnitude of increase would be. Potentially the entire year's GHL could be taken in the A season.

The second part of the proposal requests a change in gear sector of the parallel/federal fishery that is linked to closing and reopening the state-waters B season. Currently the gear-sector for closing and reopening the state-waters B season on September 1 is the over 60 feet catcher-vessel pot gear sector. The petition proposes to specify the less than 60 feet fixed-gear catcher vessel sector to determine closure and reopening of the state-waters B season when coordinating with the parallel/federal September 1 opening.

In 2008, as a result of federal groundfish FMP Amendment 85, the overall allocation to the less than 60 feet fixed-gear catcher vessel sector is expected to be less than the over 60 feet catcher-vessel pot sector allocation; 2% of federal total allowable catch (TAC) for less than 60 feet fixed gear and 8.4% of TAC for over 60 feet pot catcher vessels. This change in federal Pacific cod allocation would have the expected effect of providing additional fishing time in the state-waters B season if the parallel/federal less than 60 feet fixed-gear catcher vessels reach their sector allocation first.

There are no harvest allocations by gear type in the state-waters fishery. During the 2006 season there were no vessel size limits. The 2007 Aleutian Islands District A season Pacific cod fishery was the first in which vessel size limits of 125 feet or less for pot vessels, 100 feet or less for trawl vessels and 58 feet or less for longline and jig vessels were in effect.

During 2007, state-waters of the Aleutian Islands west of 170° W long. opened to commercial fishing for Pacific cod on March 16, 2007, and closed on March 23, a 7-day fishery. The harvest was 8,229,931 pounds of Pacific cod taken by 27 vessels, although 29 vessels registered for the fishery. Three floating-processor vessels and two shore-based processors participated. No catcher-processor vessels (CPs) participated in the 2007 A season whereas six CPs participated in the 2006 A season. Average fishing vessel size was 89 feet during 2007.

Only two gear types were used in the 2007 A season; non-pelagic trawl gear harvested 85% of the A season total catch and pot gear 15%. Of the 20 trawl vessels that participated, 13 trawl vessels (>60 feet) harvested 72% of the trawl harvest. All pot vessels that participated were over 60 feet. Overall for both gear types, 76% of the 2007 A season harvest was taken by vessels over 60 ft and 24% was taken by vessels 60 ft or less.

B season harvest through August 31, 2007 was 2.14 million pounds from the B season GHIL of 3.41 million pounds. Ten of the thirteen registered vessels made landings in the first portion of the 2007 B season. Individual landings have ranged in size from less than 1,000 pounds to over 300,000 pounds and have averaged approximately 179,000 pounds per week. The state-waters B season will reopen October 1. The fishery may remain open until December 31, however if catch rates are similar to the first portion of the B season then the entire remaining GHIL of 1.27 million pounds could be taken before December 31. Harvest to date during the 2007 B season has been split between longline (46%), pot (54%) and jig (<1%) gear types.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Proposal 399 - 5 AAC 28.050(e). Lawful gear for groundfish.; and 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan. Increase the size of tunnel openings for groundfish pots used in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery as follows:

5 AAC 28.050(e). Lawful gear for groundfish.

...

(e) A groundfish pot is a pot with individual tunnel eye openings with perimeters 36 inches or less, except in the Aleutian Islands Management area where tunnel eye openings with perimeters up to 48 inches is allowed.

5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands District Pacific Cod Management Plan

...

(d) During a state waters season,

...

(2) Pacific cod may be taken only with groundfish pots, mechanical jigging machines, longline, non-pelagic trawl, and hand troll gear;

...

The board was requested to take up this matter and it generated this proposal for public review and consideration. The proposal asks to increase the tunnel-size opening for groundfish pots from a maximum of 36 inches in perimeter to 48 inches in perimeter, to permit the capture of larger Pacific cod that may not be able to enter a 36 inch perimeter tunnel. The current groundfish pot opening definition helps to distinguish groundfish pot gear from other pot gear and to reduce bycatch. Changing the tunnel size opening perimeter dimension would impact other pot fishery gear definitions. For example, the statewide king crab pot gear definition states that king crab pot tunnel-eye openings are individually more than 36 inches in perimeter. Increasing the pot tunnel-size-opening may also impact the amount and type of bycatch in the Pacific cod fishery, however the department does not collect bycatch data in this fishery.

The Aleutian Islands District Pacific cod fishery began in 2006. The state-waters fishery is based upon 3% of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands federal acceptable biological catch (ABC).

The state-waters guideline harvest level is apportioned 70% to the A season and 30% to the B season. The state-waters fishery A season opens after the initial catcher-vessel trawl parallel/federal Pacific cod season is closed, and remains open until the A season GHL is attained, or no later than June 9. Beginning June 10, the state-waters B season opens. The A season fishery GHL has been taken in the initial two years of the fishery. The B season fishery has a slower harvest rate than the A season, however the B season GHL may be taken in 2007.

There are no harvest allocations by gear type in the state-waters fishery. Increasing tunnel size opening on pot gear may provide more harvest opportunity for vessels using pot gear. Larger fish may have a higher market value. If the Board changed the tunnel-size-opening for groundfish pot gear, then the state definition for tunnel-size-opening of groundfish pot gear would be larger than current federal definition for groundfish pot gear tunnel-size-opening.

During the 2006 season there were no vessel size limits. The 2007 Aleutian Islands District A season Pacific cod fishery was the first in which vessel size limits of 125 feet or less for pot vessels, 100 feet or less for trawl vessels and 58 feet or less for longline and jig vessels were in effect.

During 2007, the A season state-waters Pacific cod fishery opened to commercial fishing on March 16, 2007, and closed on March 23, a 7-day fishery. The harvest was 8,229,931 pounds of Pacific cod taken by 27 vessels, although 29 vessels registered for the fishery. Three floating-processor vessels and two shore-based processors participated. No catcher processor vessels (CPs) participated in the 2007 A season whereas six CPs participated in the 2006 A season. Average fishing vessel size was 89' overall length during 2007.

Only two gear types participated in the 2007 A season; non-pelagic trawl gear harvested 85% of the A season total catch and pot gear 15%. Of the 20 trawl vessels that participated, 13 trawl vessels (>60 ft) harvested 72% of the trawl harvest. All pot vessels that participated were over 60 feet. Overall for both gear types, 76% of the 2007 A season harvest was taken by vessels over 60 feet and 24% was taken by vessels 60 feet or less.

B season harvest through August 31, 2007 was 2.14 million pounds from the GHL of 3.41 million pounds. Ten of the thirteen registered vessels made landings in the first portion of the 2007 B season (Table 3). Individual landings have ranged in size from less than 1,000 pounds to over 300,000 pounds and have averaged approximately 179,000 pounds per week. The state-waters B season will reopen October 1. The fishery may remain open until December 31, however if catch rates are similar to the first portion of the B season then the entire remaining GHL of 1.27 million pounds could be taken before December 31. Harvest to date during the 2007 B season has been split between longline (46%), pot (54%) and jig (<1%) gear types.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Proposal 400 - 5 AAC 39.xxx. New section. Modify vessel length definition to exclude bulbous bow in vessel length calculation.

Current method for measuring vessel length includes the added length of a bulbous bow modification made to a vessel. A bulbous bow modification can enhance the fuel economy of a vessel and the seaworthiness of a vessel without adding any unfair fishing capacity advantage in a fishery subject to vessel length limitations. This proposal seeks to change the method of defining vessel length to exclude a bulbous bow.

Proposed by: Alaska Board of Fisheries
