



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

June 3, 2019

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report Online

Updated daily at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/amendments.pdf> (NEW LINK)

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the April 2019 meeting include:

- Proposed rule to implement Halibut Deck Sorting monitoring requirements on Non-Pollock Trawl Catcher/Processors and Motherships published: **April 16, 2019**. Comment period closed on **May 16, 2019**. The final rule is expected to be published this fall.
- The Mixed Guided and Unguided halibut sport fishing final rule is expected to publish soon.
- See **Attachment 1** provides additional detail.

Update on National Web Site

The Alaska Region website migration to the National website was mostly completed in May.

These sites will continue to link to the Alaska Region's website:

- eFISH: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/webapps/efish/login>
- eLandings: <https://elandings.alaska.gov/>
- Observer Sampling Station, Video Monitoring, and At-Sea Scales Inspection Calendar: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/webapps/forms/inspection.jsp>
- Alaska Essential Fish Habitat web application: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bf2254ed51f444a8a16c564add54250>
- Subsistence Halibut Maps: http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/mapping/non_subsistence_Areas/
- ShoreZone: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/mapping/szflex/>
- ESA species mapper: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0c4a81f75310491d9010c17b6c081c81>
- Status of Fisheries: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/status-of-fisheries>
- Observer Deploy and Declare System (ODDS): <http://odds.afsc.noaa.gov/>



Halibut Deck Sorting EFP and Regulatory Amendment - Update

In June 2018, NMFS staff presented a draft of the Regulatory Impact Review for this NMFS-led action. This action would allow halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) to be sorted on deck of trawl catcher/processors (C/Ps) and motherships when operating in non-pollock groundfish fisheries off Alaska. Sorting on deck would reduce halibut discard mortality, potentially maximizing harvest of allocated groundfish species before reaching the halibut PSC limit. This action would establish regulatory requirements for catch handling and monitoring equipment necessary to ensure accurate accounting for halibut PSC sorted on deck.

We are in the process of addressing comments and incorporating them into the final rule that we expect to publish by late September 2019. This timeframe will provide time for installation and inspection of monitoring equipment prior to the 2020 fishery. Deck sorting is continuing under an exempted fishing permit (EFP) in 2019.

Proposed Exempted Fishing Permit Annual Application Process

The Alaska Regional Office is considering establishing an annual application process for EFPs, starting in 2020. Currently, we receive EFPs on an *ad hoc* basis and planning for processing EFPs with other work requirements can be difficult. Other regions and Councils have adopted an annual EFP process to improve planning and processing of EFPs. In April, we heard feedback from the Council and AFSC that additional flexibility may be beneficial for some applicants who are in the process of securing project funding. To provide additional flexibility and accommodate variable EFP fishing start dates, we are now proposing 2 application periods, as described below. We appreciate any feedback on this approach from the public and the Council.

Application Deadline: May 1 or September 1, each year.

Presentation to and Review by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council:

- October meeting for May applicants
- February meeting for September applicants

Review Process: Applicants should plan on at least 8 to 12 months from the date of application submittal before the EFP is issued. For more complex projects, contact NMFS Alaska Regional Office at least 12 months ahead of desired EFP fishing start date. Review time depends on the complexity of the project, the type of NEPA review, and [North Pacific Fishery Management Council's](#) meeting schedule. If you plan to do an experiment, the design must be approved by the [Alaska Fisheries Science Center](#) before a permit may be issued. Applicants should work with the AFSC on the experimental design before submitting an EFP application.

Each EFP undergoes NEPA review. NMFS may be able to issue a categorical exclusion (which takes a minimal amount of time) or may need to write an environmental analysis of the impacts of issuing the EFP (which could take a long time). The application and NEPA

document would support the decision-making and inform the public of the EFP project. There may be an ESA consultation required.

The Regional Administrator is also required to consult with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council before issuing an EFP. This required a **Federal Register** notice of the receipt of your application (published by NMFS) and may require a presentation of the EFP project to the Council by the applicant.

EFP Issuance Timeline* - Option 1

Dates	w/ EA or ESA Sect 7	w/ Categorical Excl & no ESA Sect 7
May	Initial contact by applicant; initial application submitted; NEPA Analysis / ESA Consultation initiated	Initial contact by applicant; determination on NEPA analysis & ESA consultation
June	Refine application as needed; EA & ESA analyses on-going	Initial Application submitted; Categorical Exclusion drafted
July	Draft NEPA analysis completed; ESA consultation completed; final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested	Final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested
August	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified
September	FR Notice published	FR Notice published
October	Public comment period on application and EA ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted	Public comment period on application ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted
November	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review
December	Permit Issued	Permit Issued
January	EFP fishing can begin	EFP fishing can begin

* Timing could be longer depending on project complexity. For more complex projects, contact NMFS Alaska Regional Office at least 12 months ahead of desired EFP fishing start date.



EFP Issuance Timeline * - Option 2

Dates	w/ EA or ESA Sect 7	w/ Categorical Excl & no ESA Sect 7
September	Initial contact by applicant; initial application submitted; NEPA Analysis / ESA Consultation initiated	Initial contact by applicant; determination on NEPA analysis & ESA consultation
October	Refine application as needed; EA & ESA analyses on-going	Initial Application submitted; Categorical Exclusion drafted
November	Draft NEPA analysis completed; ESA consultation completed; final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested	Final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested
December	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified
January	FR Notice published	FR Notice published
February	Public comment period on application and EA ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted	Public comment period on application ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted
March	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review
April	Permit Issued	Permit Issued
May	EFP fishing can begin	EFP fishing can begin

* Timing could be longer depending on project complexity. For more complex projects, contact NMFS Alaska Regional Office at least 12 months ahead of desired EFP fishing start date.



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Small C/P Partial Coverage Request Deadline

The deadline for small catcher processors that wish to be placed in the partial coverage category for the 2020 fishing year is **July 1, 2019**. This application is available at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries-applications>. Please contact Alicia M Miller (alicia.m.miller@noaa.gov) with any questions.

Fisherman’s Finest Sideboard Limits

On December 4, 2018, the President signed the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018 (Coast Guard Act) into law (Pub. L. 115-282). Sections 835 and 836 of the Coast Guard Act contain sideboard limit provisions that apply to vessels owned, and a License Limitation Program (LLP) Permits held, by Fishermen’s Finest. NMFS calculated the sideboard limits and created a report in eFish for Fisherman’s Finest to track these limits. Sustainable Fisheries also is monitoring these sideboard limits. The sideboard limits and catch accruing to the limits are confidential. None of the 2019 limits have been reached.

Staff Changes

I am very pleased to announce that two new staff are joining the SF team – Dr. Maggie Chan and Phil Ganz. Both Maggie and Phil will work in the Catch Accounting and Data Quality Branch in SF led by Jennifer Mondragon.

Maggie Chan graduated from University of Alaska Fairbanks with a PhD in Fisheries. Her research examined changes in fishing behavior and harvest patterns in sport and subsistence

Pacific halibut sectors in four communities in Alaska. Maggie recently completed the Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Sea Grant Fellowship) in DC where she worked with the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Maggie's start date will be July 22.

Phil Ganz received a Master's degree in Fisheries from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He worked with Terry Quinn and evaluated incorporating time-varying natural mortality into groundfish stock assessment models. For the past one-and-a-half years Phil has been a Data Analyst with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission working closely with Observer Program and SF staff on observer deployment. Phil's first day will be May 28. One of his first tasks with us will be attending the June Council meeting to present the Observer Program Annual Report. Phil will be working out of Seattle for the first two months, and then join us in Juneau by the end of July.

Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory Actions

Changes since April 2019 are noted in **Bold Red** EOC = End of Comment Period

Action Status	Lead Council, SF, and GCAK Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Notice of Availability (FMP) Published in Federal Register	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in Federal Register
FMP Amendments								
Amendment 118 Halibut Retention in BSAI IFQ Pot Gear	Cleaver Warpinski M.Watson	October 2018	PR: 5/29/19	PR: 6/3/19				
Amendment 120 (BSAI) 108(GOA) Limit CPs acting as motherships taking directed non-CDQ Pacific cod deliveries from trawl CVs	McCracken Mansfield Fortenbery	April 2019	PR: 5/28/19	PR: 5/30/19				
Amendment 119 (BSAI) and Amendment 107 (GOA) to require retention of rockfish by catcher vessels using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear in the BSAI and GOA fisheries.	McCracken Keaton Fortenbery	April 2019						
Regulatory Amendments								
Halibut Deck Sorting on NonPollock Trawl Catcher/Processors and Motherships	N/A Krieger Meyer	N/A	PR: 12/16/18	PR: 2/05/19	PR: 03/18/19	N/A	Apr 16, 2019 84 FR 15566 EOC: 05/16/19	
Charter Halibut Permit annual renewal requirement	Marrinan Duncan Lepore	April 2018	PR: 3/12/2019	PR: 3/14/19	PR: 5/21/19	N/A		
Mixing of halibut from guided and unguided fishing; regulation change	McCracken Iverson Lepore	April 2018	PR: 8/27/18 FR: 4/26/19	PR: 9/05/18 FR: 4/29/19	PR: 11/20/18	N/A	Feb 12, 2019 84 FR 3403 EOC: 3/14/19	
BSAI Amendment 113 revision Aleutian Islands Pacific cod	McCracken Davis Fortenbery	December 2018				N/A		
IFQ Beneficiary and Medical Transfer Provisions	Cunningham Warpinski Meyer	April 2019				N/A		

Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2019 is through May 25, 2019 and is compared to catch during 2018 through May 26, 2018. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information from daily catch reports and information bulletins are available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/fisheries-catch-and-landings-reports>

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

The 2019 Bering Sea pollock total allowable catch (TAC) is 1,397,000 mt compared to 1,364,341 mt in 2018. NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to CDQ pollock TAC in the Bering Sea. The B season opens at noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), June 10, 2019.

Bering Sea	2019 A season allocation	2019 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	272,425	262,264	96%
C/P	217,940	214,951	99%
Mothership	54,485	54,424	100%
CDQ	63,729	63,294	99%
Total	608,579	594,933	98%

Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

In 2019 relative to 2018, salmon PSC and rates are higher except for Non-Chinook CDQ.

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2019		2018		2019		2018	
Year	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	1,660	3.38%	933	2.96%	47	1.03%	54	1.90%
Non-CDQ	14,078	3.18%	7,600	2.06%	1,162	0.11%	333	0.03%
Total	15,738	3.20%	8,533	2.13%	1,209	0.11%	387	0.04%

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

Aleutian Islands (AI) Pacific cod

The 2019 AI non-CDQ Pacific cod catch is 8,060 mt or 63% of the 12,693 mt TAC. The 5,000 mt AI shoreplant set-aside was in place for 2019. NMFS reported by information bulletin that the AI shoreplant landing requirement of 1,000 mt was reached by February 28, 2019. On March 15, 2019, NMFS reported that the 2019 AI set-aside had not reached 5,000 mt.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

BSAI Sector	2019				2018			
	A Season Allocation ¹	Catch May 25	A season closed ²	# of vessels May 25	A Season allocation	Catch May 26	A season closed ²	# of vessels May 26
CDQ	11,702	10,912	n/a	37	13,086	12,612	n/a	37
Hook-and-line C/P	39,912	39,718	n/a	21	45,045	42,832	n/a	24
Pot C/P	1,229	1,295	Jan 20	4	1,387	1,407	Jan 20	5
Pot CV >= 60 ft	6,884	6,373	Jan 15	34	7,770	7,709	Jan 19	31
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	4,414	3,579	Jan 19	34	5,027	5,522	Jan 23	23
Jig	607	0	n/a	0	639	0	n/a	0
Trawl CV	30,311	29,770	Feb 1, Mar 16	96	34,193	36,487	Feb 11, Mar 4	100
AFA C/P	3,711	2,835	n/a	15	4,187	3,634	n/a	16
Amendment 80 C/P	21,621	11,774	n/a	20	24,391	13,552	n/a	19
Hook-and-line/Pot ICA	400	74	n/a	27	400	38	n/a	31
Total	120,791	106,330		288	136,125	123,793		286

¹NMFS reallocated 1,200 mt in 2019 and in 1,400 mt in 2018 of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot CVs less than 60 ft annual allocation. The B season allocations are included for the jig and trawl sectors.

²Trawl CV A season closures show the Bering Sea Limitation closure and BSAI A season closure.

Pacific cod target - trawl catcher vessels

In 2019 for the BSAI A season Pacific cod target, 58 trawl CVs reported 22,626 mt relative to 61 trawl CVs reporting 27,747 mt in 2018. Of those amounts, in 2019, 14 CVs delivered 5,793 mt (26%) to seven motherships, and 47 CVs delivered 16,833 mt (74%) to nine shoreside/stationary floating processors.

The 2019 BSAI B season for trawl CVs opened for 24 hours April 1, 2019 with 38 CVs reporting 3,379 mt in the Pacific cod target. Of those amounts, 6 CVs delivered 631 mt (19%) to 4 motherships, and 32 CVs delivered 2,748 mt (81%) to 10 shoreside/stationary floating processors.

Pacific cod for < 60 ft hook-and-line and pot catcher vessels

In 2019, six hook-and-line CVs continue directed fishing for Pacific cod inside 3 miles after the federal closure reporting 808 mt or 23% of the total catch.

BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)

In 2019 relative to 2018, overall BSAI flatfish catch is 11% higher. Most of the increase is from higher yellowfin sole catch.

NMFS closed directed fishing May 29, 2019, for the BSAI trawl limited access sector yellowfin sole allocation to prevent exceeding the halibut PSC limit for the sector's yellowfin sole fishery. The 12 vessels participating caught 91% of the 18,351 mt yellowfin sole allocation with 1,741 mt remaining, and total halibut PSC is 149 mt of the 150 mt limit for yellowfin sole.

Species	2019			2018		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC ¹	% Taken
Alaska plaice	11,469	18,000	64%	14,421	16,100	90%
Arrowtooth flounder	968	8,000	12%	1,115	13,621	8%
Flathead sole	4,651	14,500	32%	4,199	14,500	29%
Greenland turbot	55	5,294	1%	114	5,294	2%
Kamchatka flounder	493	5,000	10%	331	5,000	7%
Other flatfish	2,256	6,500	35%	3,038	4,000	76%
Rock sole	21,461	47,100	46%	21,521	47,100	46%
Yellowfin sole	81,361	154,000	53%	65,860	154,000	43%
Total	122,714	258,394	47%	110,599	259,615	43%

BSAI Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)

The 2019 total catch is lower relative to 2018.

Species	2019			2018		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	21,323	57,951	37%	28,810	65,000	44%
Pacific ocean perch	1,292	44,069	3%	1,801	71,000	11%

Gulf of Alaska**Pot gear for IFQ sablefish fishery in the GOA**

Currently for 2019, 25 vessels have registered for 9,923 pot tags. In 2019, 18 vessels reported 1,095 mt of catch relative to 13 vessels reporting 374 mt in 2018. Also, in 2019, 59% of the pot gear catch thus far is from area 630 relative to 39% of the catch from area 630 in 2018.

Pacific cod - Western GOA

All sectors are closed for the A season. The B season opens at noon, September 1, except jig gear opens at noon, June 10, 2019.

Sector	2019				2018			
	A season allocation	Catch May 25	A season closed	# of vessels May 25	A season allocation	Catch May 26	A season closed	# of vessels May 26
Hook-and-line C/P	568	548	Mar 18	<3	607	591	Mar 16	<3
Hook-and-line CV	36	27	Jan 1	16	39	33	Jan 1	26
Jig	80	76	Mar 13	9	51	19	n/a	4
Pot CV/CP	1,031	981	Mar 23	14	1,103	1,208	Feb 1	14
Trawl CV	1,443	1,415	Feb 25	17	1,543	1,350	Feb 23	19
Trawl C/P	47	0	Jan 20	0	50	0	Jan 20	0
Total	3,206	3,047		56	3,395	3,201		63

Pacific cod - Central GOA

All sectors are closed for the A season. The B season opens at noon, September 1, except for jig gear opens at noon, June 10, 2019.

Sector	2019				2018			
	A season allocation	Catch May 25	A season closed	# of vessels May 25	A season allocation	Catch May 26	A season closed	# of vessels May 26
Hook-and-line C/P	234	203	Mar 5	3	248	266	Mar 6	3
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	530	648	Feb 7	58	562	522	Mar 2	51
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	319	308	Feb 27	70	338	353	Mar 14	60
Jig	35	30	Mar 12	13	37	0	Jan 1	0
Pot CV/CP	1,015	863	Mar 24	13	1,075	1,161	Feb 14	14
Trawl CV	1,203	1,008	Jan 20	42	1,274	363	Jan 20	47
Trawl C/P	114	79	Jan 20	<1	121	113	Jan 20	<3
Total	3,450	3,139		199	3,653	2,778		175

Pollock

2019 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	848	23,236	7,593	5,748 (annual)
A season catch	813	23,808	5,340	6,424
A season closure	March 6	February 8	February 10	February 26
B season allocation	848	27,306	3,522	
B season catch	654	26,152	3,603	
B season closure	March 26-28	March 21	March 11	

Chinook Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

In 2019 relative to 2018, Chinook salmon PSC is 517 salmon higher for fisheries with PSC limits.

Chinook Salmon	2019 Limit	2019 PSC (Rate ²)	2018 PSC (Rate ²)
Total	n/a	6,703 (8%)	6,186 (7%)
Western GOA pollock	6,684	251 (18%)	177 (6%)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	3,970 (7%)	5,152 (7%)
Western/Central trawl CV ¹	3,060	2,252 (11%)	704 (6%)
Western/Central trawl CP ¹	4,080	0	0
Rockfish Program	1,200	230 (3%)	153 (2%)

¹Includes incentive buffers for 2018 and 2019 Western/Central trawl CV limit (360 Chinook), and Western/Central trawl CP limit (480 Chinook).

²Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish

Non-Chinook Salmon PSC

Non-Chinook Salmon	2019 PSC (Rate)	2018 PSC (Rate)
Total	617 (0.64%)	73 (0.07%)

Halibut Mortality Data

In 2019 relative to 2018, the total halibut mortality in the BSAI is 250 mt higher mostly from Amendment 80 yellowfin sole and BSAI trawl limited access Pacific cod fisheries. In the GOA, 2019 bycatch is 64 mt lower mostly from the deep-water trawl fisheries. The 2019 BSAI rate is 0.02% higher than 2018, and the 2019 GOA rate is 0.05% lower than 2018.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2019			2018		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	1,391	998,091	0.14%	1,141	979,321	0.12%
Amendment 80	727	238,603	0.30%	623	215,733	0.29%
BSAI trawl limited access	573	621,863	0.09%	407	621,881	0.07%
Non-trawl	36	49,749	0.07%	56	54,247	0.10%
CDQ	55	87,877	0.06%	56	87,460	0.06%
GOA Total	393	101,509	0.39%	457	103,742	0.44%
Trawl, Deep-water	334	19,134	1.74%	398	11,322	3.51%
Trawl, Shallow-water	28	72,598	0.04%	19	83,398	0.02%
Trawl, Rockfish Program	4	7,158	.06%	5	6,802	0.07%
Hook-and-line CP/CV	27	2,618	1.04%	35	2,220	1.57%