

Agenda Item: "B-5"



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2004**

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

Salmon Troll Fishery (FIGURE 1)

The Winter Troll fishery for chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska opened by regulation on October 11, 2004. The fishery closes when the cap of 45,000 treaty fish is reached, or on April 15, 2005, which ever occurs first. The catch to date is slightly behind both the 1986-2004 and the 2000-2004 averages. However, fish tickets are being entered only once per week right now and it is expected that catches will fall in line or even surpass previous averages as additional data is entered into our system. The number of permit holders fishing is higher than the 2000-2004 season average. It is anticipated that the number of participants will increase through the remainder of the season. Prices have been above \$7.00/lb in some parts of the region and virtually all prices are greater than \$6.25/lb. This is the highest price per pound ever recorded for this

fishery, and it is becoming the most valuable winter fishery in Southeast troll history. At this time the Alaska hatchery percentage for the first half of the season was 18%, also one of the highest we have ever seen in this fishery.

Western Aleutian Islands Golden king crab (FIGURE 2)

The Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery opened on August 15, 2004 and closed on August 29, 2004. Harvest is estimated at 2.9 million pounds from a Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds. Nineteen vessels participated, and catch rates were high. The fishery value is approximately \$9.1 million. The golden king crab fishery west of 174° W continued with effort ranging from 2 to 6 vessels. Catches averaged approximately 139,000 pounds per week. Based upon inseason reports, it was determined that the quota would be reached by noon on January 3, 2005. Therefore, the fishery was closed at that time, which was about a month earlier than the previous season's closure date. Preliminary catch data indicates that the final harvest is approximately 2.67 million pounds from a GHL of 2.7 million pounds. The value of the fishery west of 174° W was over \$8.5 million, for a total value of about \$17.6 million. That is slightly below the most recent five-year average of \$18.8 million for golden king crab harvested in Area O.

Bering Sea *C. opilio* crab (FIGURE 3)

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened at noon on January 15, 2005 with a general fishery guideline harvest level (GHL) of 19.36 million pounds. The post-season community development quota was to be 1.57 million pounds. The department, in conjunction with the United States Coast Guard and National Weather Service, assessed weather conditions prior to the start of tank inspections on January 13, 2005 for potential weather-related delay of the season opening, based on search and rescue criteria. As a result of those discussions, the fishery opened as scheduled, and was managed inseason

based upon fleet catch reports. Through 6:00 a.m. January 19, 2005, the total projected harvest was approximately 13.06 million pounds. At that current harvest rate, the 19.362 million pound general fishery guideline harvest level would be reached by 11:59 p.m. on January 20, 2005, and the fishery closed at that time. There were 168 vessels that made landings, and preliminary estimates put the final catch at approximately 22.93 million pounds. Average price per pound was \$1.80, producing an exvessel value of more than \$41 million for the general fishery. Given the estimated total catch, this means that the CDQ allocation will be 1,858,807 pounds. That fishery continues at this time.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 4)

Cook Inlet

In Cook Inlet, the state waters fishery opened January 27, 2005, which was twenty-four hours after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL for the 2005 state waters season has been set at 2.19 million pounds. The GHL is calculated as 3.0% of the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. In the past, the GHL has been split 50 percent to pot and 50 percent to jig gear. However, at their recent meeting, the Alaska Board of Fisheries voted to change the split to 75/25 percent (pot/jig). That split becomes effective on February 13, 2005. There has been no effort to date.

Prince William Sound

The 2005 Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season opened on February 2, 2005, which was seven days after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL has been set at 896,620 pounds, which is calculated as 10% of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. There has been no effort to date.

Westward Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 4)

State waters Pacific cod fisheries in Kodiak and the South Alaska Peninsula areas open to fishing seven days after the closure of the federal fisheries. The Chignik fishery will open by regulation on March 1, 2005. Gear limitations include no more than 60 pots or 5 mechanical jig machines per vessel in all three areas. Harvest guidelines for the 2005 fishery are as follows:

Registration Area	Guideline Harvest Level (millions of pounds)
Kodiak	9.13
South Alaska Peninsula	11.53
Chignik	6.39

The Kodiak fishery opened on February 2, 2005, which was seven days after the closure of the federal Central Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod season. The GHL is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 4.56 million pounds each. Vessel operators fishing with pot gear on vessels that are longer than 58 feet overall length are restricted to 25 percent of the GHL (2.28 million pounds) before September 1, 2005. No effort or landings data was available at the time this report was prepared.

Southeast Groundfish (FIGURE 5)

In the period between November 22, 2004 and January 21, 2005, in the Southeast District, there was activity in the directed longline fishery for demersal shelf rockfish (DSR), the directed jig fishery for black rockfish and the directed longline fishery for Pacific cod. The directed DSR fall fishery opened on November 16, 2004 with 9 vessels participating. They landed a total of 100,489 round pounds. The area season was short in EYKT, with a closure on November 23, 2004. The Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) and Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) subdistricts remained open until closed by regulation on December 31, 2005. There was no directed fishery allowed in Northern Southeast Outside

(NSEO), Central Southeast Outside (CSEO) and Southern Southeast Outside (SSEO) areas. The directed DSR winter fishery opened on January 1, 2005 and 7 vessels participating have landed a total of 90,944 round pounds to date. The area season was short in the East Yakutat (EYKT) area, with a closure on January 6, 2005. The NSEI and SSEI management areas are currently open. There was no directed fishery allowed in NSEO, CSEO and SSEOC.

The directed fishery for Pacific cod in internal state waters and black rockfish in the Southeast District opened on January 1, 2005 and to date there has been little effort in these fisheries.

The 2005 NSEI Sablefish Quota is expected to decrease slightly from last year with the estimated Equal Quota Share for 2005 at approximately 19,000 pounds. This year a number of interested permit holders will be allowed to fish outside of the established NSEI sablefish season (August 15 – November 15). This is in response to a proposal to Board of Fish to extend the NSEI Sablefish season to coincide with the federal IFQ season. The department did not have sufficient information on the Chatham sablefish population during the winter and summer months to justify allowing a season extension of that magnitude. In the interests of research, the department agreed to place staff on commercial vessels to further our knowledge in those waters during the off season. Pending results, it may be possible in the future to allow a more protracted fishery. The department is specifically interested in having vessels fish during two periods, February 16 – 20, 2005 (Period 1) and April 14 to April 18, 2005 (Period 2).

Figure 1.

SE AK Chinook Salmon Winter Troll Fishery, 2005

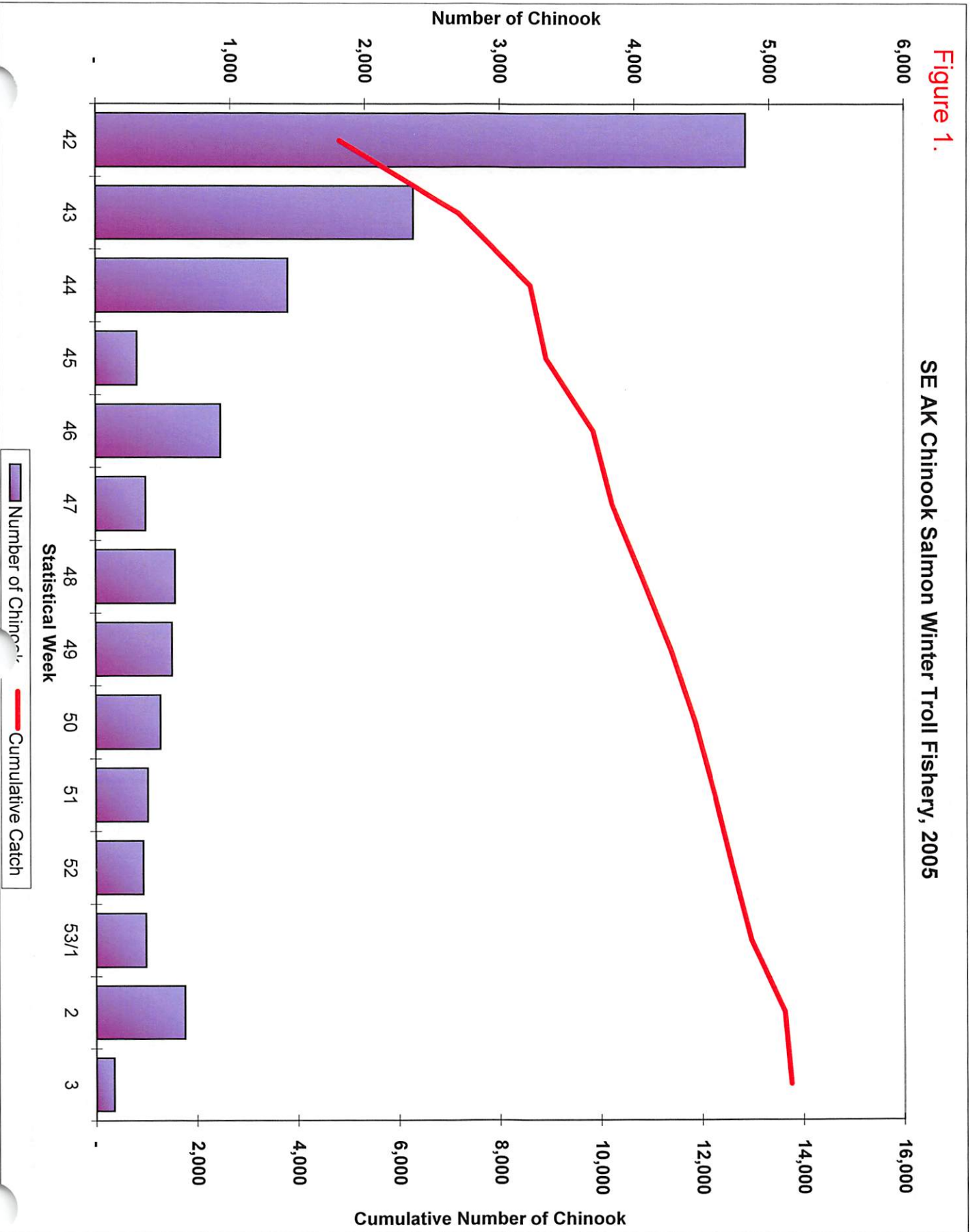


Figure 2.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab Harvests

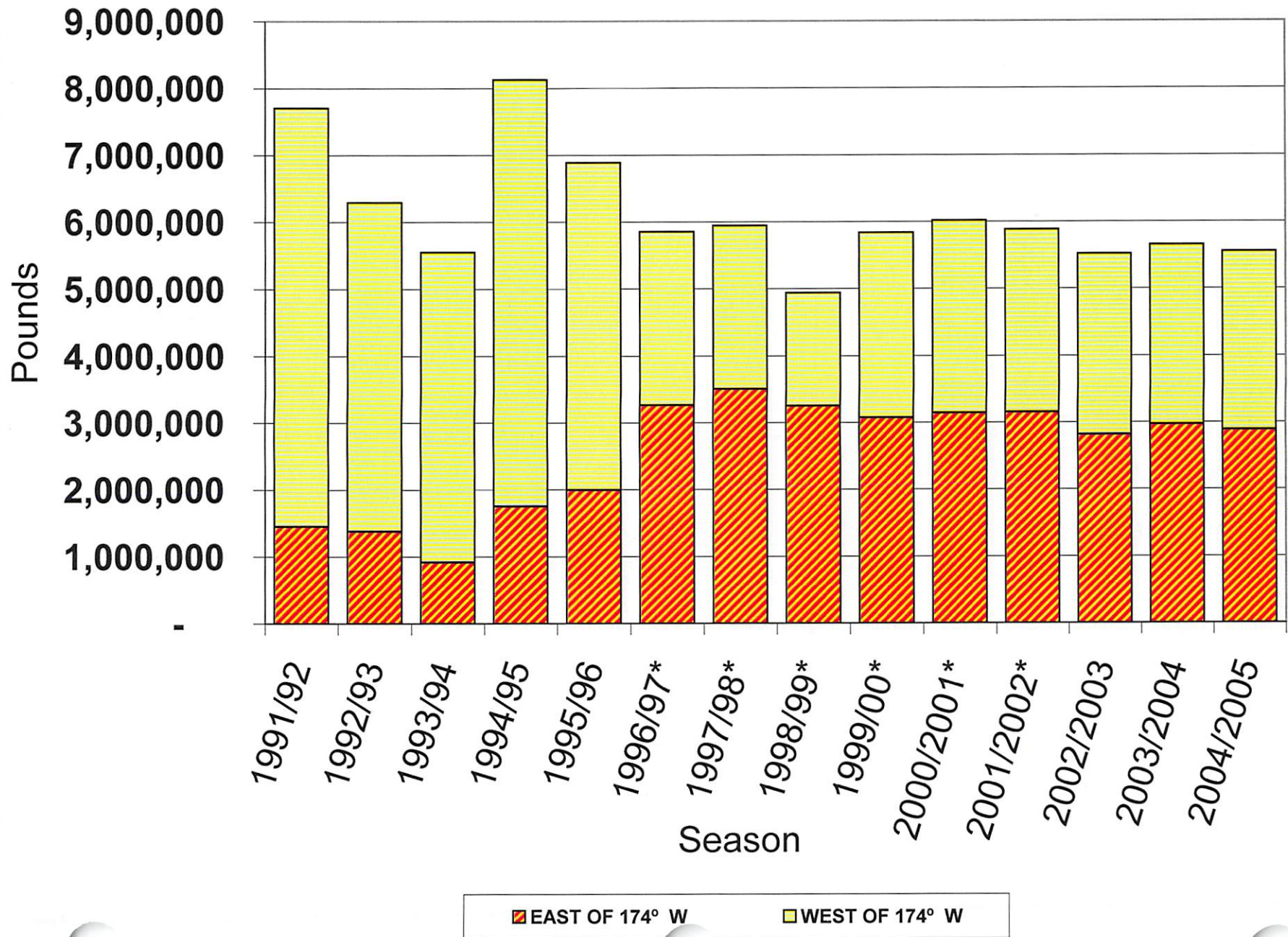
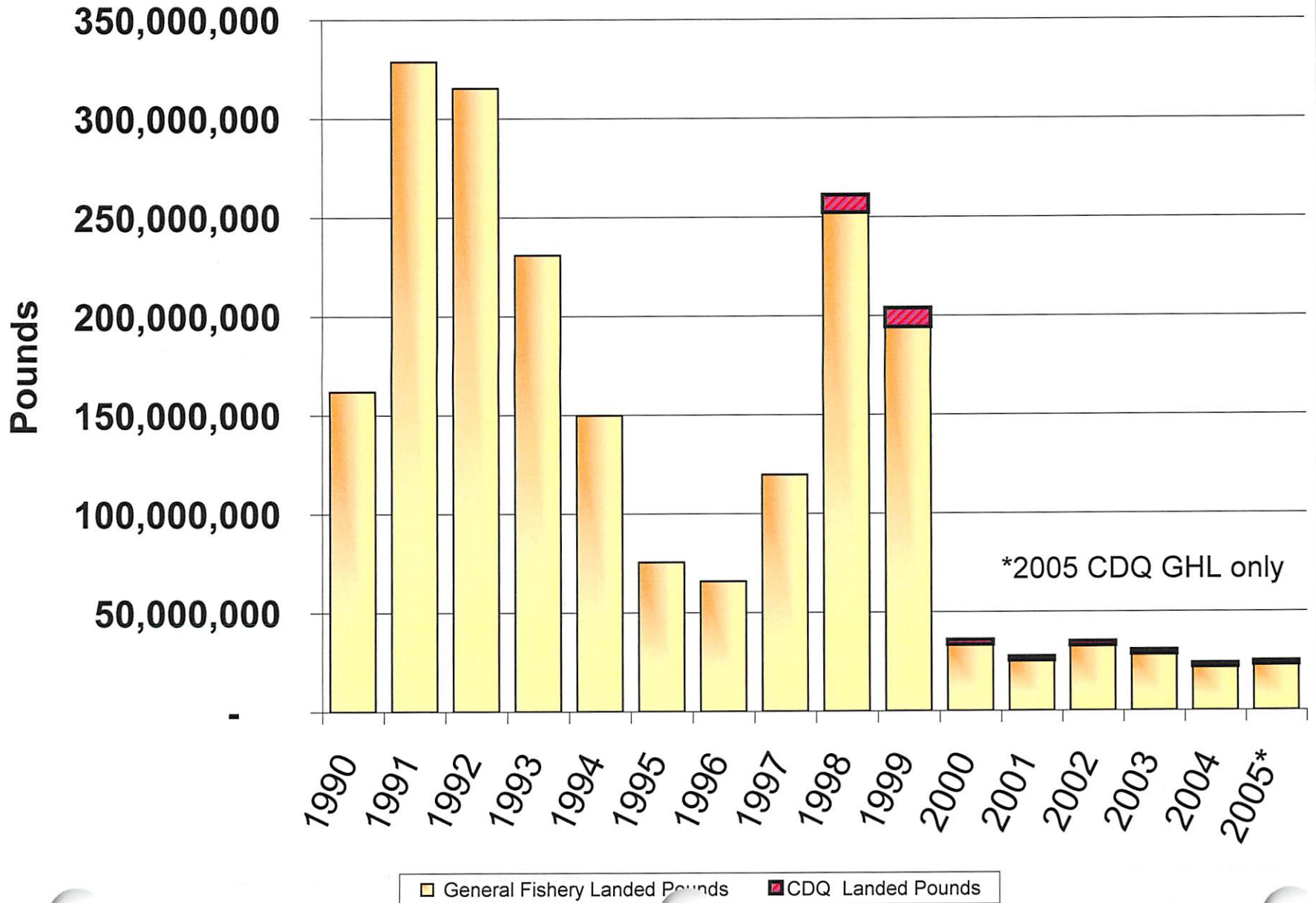
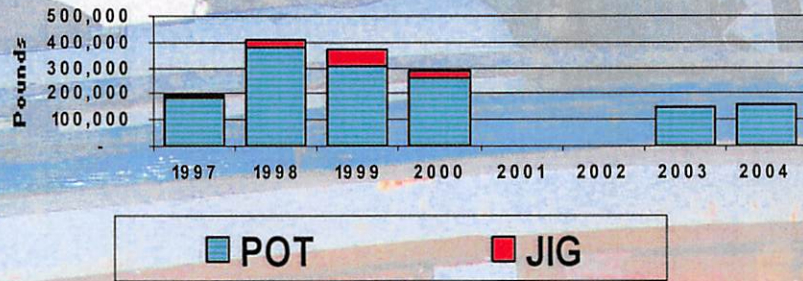


Figure 3.

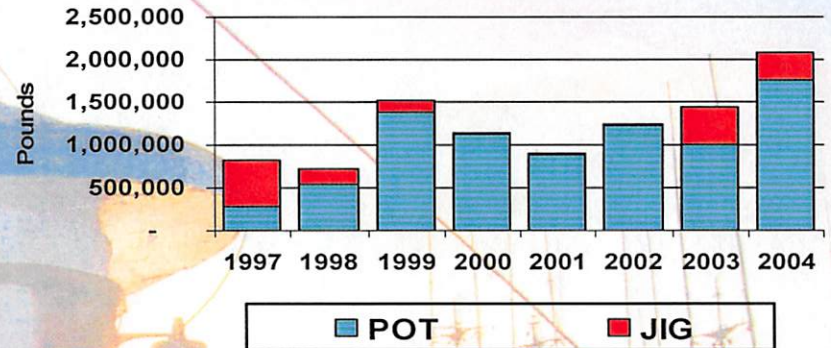
Bering Sea Snow Crab Harvests



PWS State Managed Pcod Harvests



Cook Inlet State Managed Pcod Harvests



Kodiak State Managed Pcod Harvests

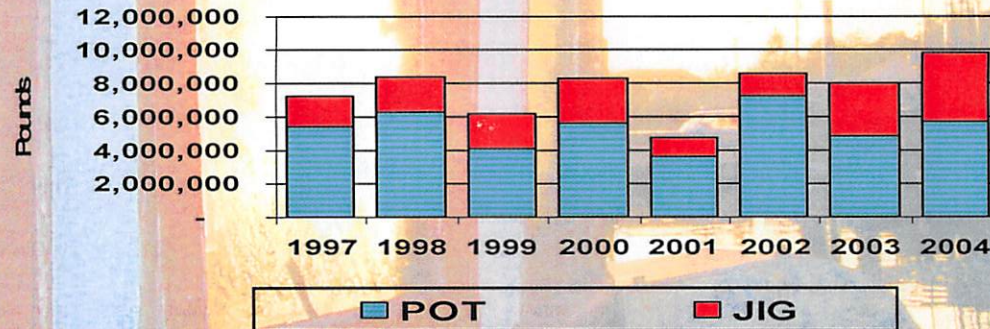
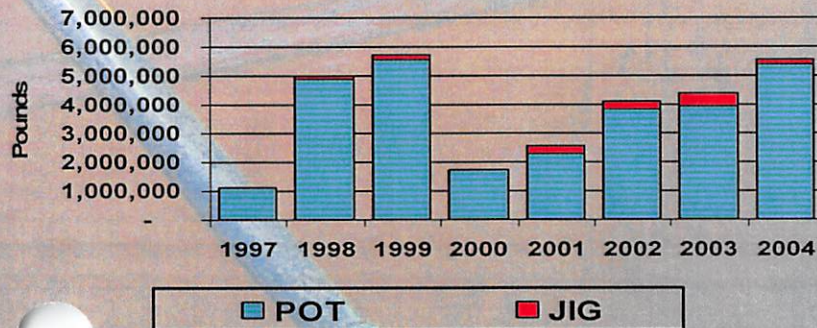
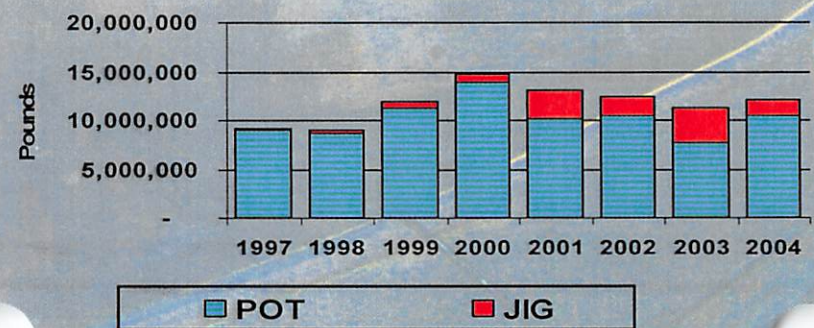


Figure 4.

Chignik State Managed Pcod Harvests



S AK Pen State Managed Pcod Harvests



144 W



EYKT

Southwest Alaska Groundfish Management Areas

Areas

Table 5.

NSEO

NSEI

CSEO

SSEI

SSEO

