

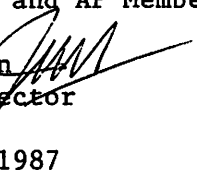
D-2 GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH CHECKLIST

The Council needs to review and take action on the following items at this meeting.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>TAB</u>
1. Overview of rockfish management.	D-2(a)
2. Review PT and SSC ABC recommendations. Set 1987 ABCs.	D-2(b) D-2(b)
3. Review DAP and JVP survey results.	C-9, C-10
4. Set initial TACs.	
5. Set initial DAPs, JVPs, and TALFFs.	D-2(b)
6. Examine potential bycatches of halibut given initial TACs. Set a halibut PSC limit for domestic bottom trawl gear. Apportion halibut PSC limit to DAP and JVP. Adjust groundfish TACs to provide additional halibut protection if necessary.	D-2(c) D-2(c)
7. Identify zero-TALFF/zero-JVP species and provide bycatch amounts to joint venture and foreign fisheries from ABC if necessary.	D-2(d)
8. Review TACs, DAPs, JVPs, TALFFs, and PSCs; adjust as necessary.	D-2(d)
9. Approve 1988 TACs, DAPs, JVPs, TALFFs, and PSCs.	D-2(d)
✓ 10. Council review of Interim Action Committee Report on changing sablefish season. Consider emergency rule to to implement the decision.	D-2(e)
✓ 11. Reaffirm Council intent on use of pot gear for groundfish. Consider emergency rule to clarify legal gear restrictions.	D-2(f)

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC, and AP Members

FROM: Jim H. Branson 
Executive Director

DATE: November 30, 1987

SUBJECT: Overview of Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Management

ACTION REQUIRED

None; for information only.

BACKGROUND

In September the Advisory Panel (AP) indicated that there was some confusion over federal and state management roles with rockfish, in particular, the Southeast demersal shelf rockfish fishery (Figure 1). The AP requested NMFS and ADFG staff to work together on a discussion paper to clarify the current management approach for rockfish and the role each agency has with rockfish management. A discussion paper was sent to you as an attachment to the November Gulf of Alaska Resource Assessment Document. An extra copy of the paper is provided for your information as item D-2(a)(1). Representatives of both NMFS and ADFG are available to answer any questions.

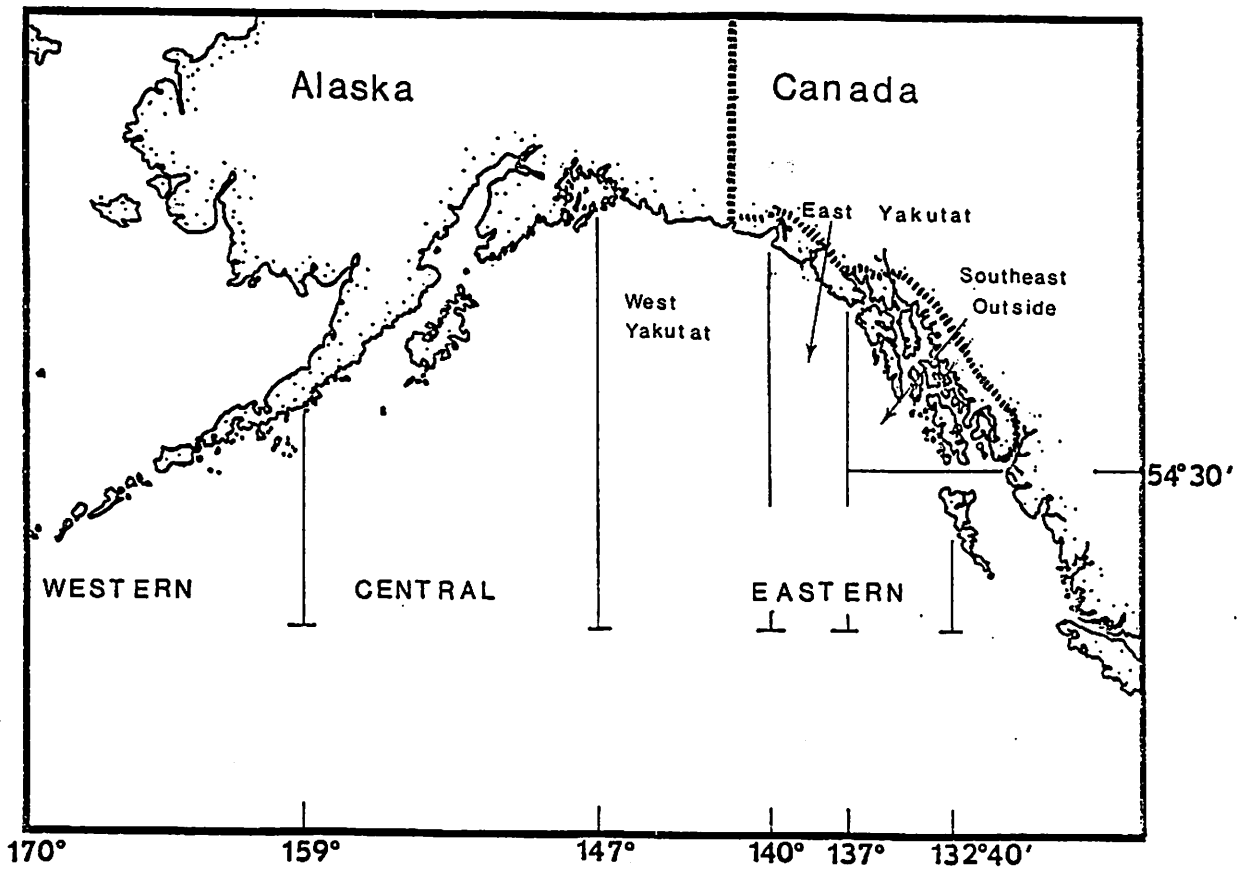


Figure 1.-- Regulatory areas of the Gulf of Alaska FMP

DISCUSSION PAPER

Management of Rockfish and Pacific Ocean Perch (POP)
 in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Gulf of Alaska
 for the 1988 Fishing Year

Prepared and revised by the
 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team
 November 1987

I. INTRODUCTION

"Other rockfish", POP, and demersal shelf rockfish were among the ten species or species groups of groundfish for which total allowable catches (TACs) were specified in 1987. For 1987, the group "POP" meant Sebastes alutus (Pacific ocean perch), S. polyspinus (northern rockfish), S. aleutianus (rougeye rockfish), S. borealis (shortraker rockfish), and sharpchin rockfish S. zacentrus. The group "demersal shelf rockfish" meant, and continues to mean, species listed in the Attachment. For the Southeast Outside District of the Eastern Regulatory Area "other rockfish" meant, those species that were not included in either the POP or demersal shelf rockfish categories. However, in the rest of the Eastern Regulatory Area and in the Central and Western regulatory areas, "other rockfish" meant all Sebastes species, excluding the POP group.

1987 TACs for the rockfish groups were as follows:

"Other rockfish"	Gulf of Alaska-wide	4,000 mt
POP	Western	1,500 mt
	Central	1,500 mt
	Eastern	2,000 mt
Demersal shelf	Southeast Outside	1,250 mt

POP and "Other Rockfish"

On July 15, 1987, the TAC of 4,000 mt for "other rockfish" was reached. The Secretary closed fishing for "other rockfish" throughout the Gulf of Alaska, and in addition closed the Eastern area to trawling for all species. The difference in the management response in the Eastern Regulatory Area was based on the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center's 1984 triennial survey information that indicated that in that area POP occurred in depths shallower than 100 fm, where "other rockfish" also occur. Further trawling for POP might have caused additional mortality on "other rockfish". Based on confidence of the industry that POP could be harvested in the Eastern Regulatory Area with minimal catches of "other rockfish", the fishery was reopened to allow the remaining 1,600 mt of the POP TAC to be harvested. "Other rockfish" were treated as a prohibited species during this fishery. The Alaska Factory Trawlers Association (AFTA) conducted a voluntary observer program during the reopening, which provided at least 40% vessel coverage. Observers were trained by the NWAFC's Observer Program with special emphasis in rockfish identification. The TAC was reached on November 21, and the POP fishery was closed.

Shelf Demersal Rockfish

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has divided Southeast Alaska into five management subdistricts for groundfish management. Two of these are in internal waters and three are along the outer coast. The three outer coastal subdistricts, the Southern Southeast Outside, the Central Southeast Outside, and the Northern Southeast Outside, include both state and federal waters and make up the Southeast Outside District. Separate rockfish harvest limits have been established for each management subdistrict based on the best available data. Preliminary harvest limits for the directed fishery for demersal shelf rockfish in the three outer coastal areas total 625 mt. Under authority contained in the FMP (see discussion under "State Regulation of Shelf Rockfish), below, the ADF&G has been managing the demersal shelf rockfish fishery in the Southeast Outside District. Under direction from the Alaska Board of Fisheries, ADF&G has established an October - September fishing year. In 1986/87, the Southeast Outside District was closed to further fishing after about 690 mt of demersal shelf rockfish were harvested. During the first few weeks of the 1987/88 fishing year, about 27 mt have been harvested.

The following FMP section outlines State involvement in the management of demersal shelf rockfish.

Section 8.3.1.1. "Domestic Season, Gear, Area, and Catch Restrictions.

(I) State Regulation of Shelf Rockfish

The State of Alaska's management regime for demersal shelf rockfish is directed at managing these rockfish stocks within smaller management units than are provided for by the FMP. Such State regulations are in addition to and stricter than Federal regulations. They are not in conflict with the FMP as long as they are (1) consistent with specific provisions of the FMP and (2) limited to establishing smaller areas and quotas, which would result in a harvest of shelf demersal rockfish in each FMP management area at levels no greater than that provided in the FMP. Such State regulations may apply only to those vessels registered/licensed under the laws of the State of Alaska.

Under the above authority, the Council intends for the State to manage demersal shelf rockfish in any area where where a TAC has been specified. At present, a TAC for demersal shelf rockfish has been specified for only the Southeast Outside District of the Eastern Regulatory Area.

II. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Management of rockfish stocks in the Gulf of Alaska is hampered by inadequate information on their abundance and distribution. Certain of the "other rockfish" species are red in color and, thus, may at times be reported by the industry as being in the POP category. The reverse is also true. Some of the POP catches are reported as being "other rockfish". Information from the fishing industry suggests that the POP complex is distributed in deeper water -

throughout the Gulf of Alaska, i.e. deeper than 115 fathoms, than "other rockfish". Initial management actions in 1987, which closed all trawling in the Eastern Regulatory, were based on limited data that showed POP in the Eastern Regulatory Area to occur in shallower water in the Eastern Regulatory Area and thus were mixed with the "other rockfish".

III. PROPOSED 1988 MANAGEMENT

Because the groundfish OY for the Gulf of Alaska is expressed as a range, the Council may reorganize the rockfish assemblages and recommend changes in the TACs for them without invoking an FMP amendment. Under Amendment 16 to the FMP, three categories of rockfish species are identified in the genus *Sebastes*: (1) demersal shelf rockfish, (2) pelagic shelf rockfish, and (3) slope rockfish (see attachment).

For the 1988 fishing year, reorganizing rockfish groups is intended to reflect new information obtained on the biomasses of each of the three rockfish assemblages. In the Western, Central, and Eastern Regulatory Areas, TACS will be established for the pelagic shelf assemblage and "other rockfish". Demersal shelf species will be included with the slope assemblage. If a TAC for shelf pelagic or "other rockfish" in a regulatory area is reached, further retention of those rockfish species groups will be prohibited in the applicable area. Further fishing will be allowed if the Regional Director finds that the additional fishing mortality inflicted on the pelagic shelf rockfish or "other rockfish" would not cause overfishing.

In the Southeast Outside District of the Eastern area, however, a separate TAC for demersal shelf rockfish will be established. The Council will continue to recognize the State of Alaska's role in the management of demersal shelf rockfish as it did in 1987, limited by the FMP as discussed above. After the TAC for the Southeast Outside District is established by the Council at its December 1987 meeting and implemented by the Secretary, the State may further apportion that TAC among the State subdistricts listed above, for purposes of better managing local fisheries. Once a portion of the TAC for demersal shelf rockfish is reached in any of the State's subdistricts, the State will close the fishery to target fishing for that species group. The State will inform NMFS of the progress of the demersal shelf rockfish fishery, including current catch information. When the State closes all or part of the Southeast Outside District, the State will issue a news release and will inform NMFS of the closure. The NMFS Regional Director will then issue a Federal news release that supports the State's action. If the State of Alaska closes one or more of the subdistricts in the Southeast Outside District, further retention of demersal shelf rockfish equal to 10% of the total groundfish catch aboard a vessel would be allowed by State regulation, only as long as the total demersal shelf rockfish catch is less than the Council's TAC for this assemblage. However, under Federal Regulations, once the catch reaches the Council's TAC, further catches must be treated as prohibited species. The State's October 1 fishing year for demersal shelf rockfish would commence as scheduled only if the Council's TAC has not been reached by that date. Once the catches reach the Council's TAC, further fishing for demersal shelf rockfish could not resume until January 1, 1989.

Fishermen should benefit by this proposed 1988 management approach. Separate TACs for pelagic shelf rockfish will allow that assemblage to be fished -

independently of the "other rockfish" species and conversely, with separate TACs, harvests from a developing fishery on pelagic shelf rockfish would not be counted against the "other rockfish" TAC. Combining the POP complex with the slope species is a simpler approach than that used in 1987. A TAC for this species assemblage should ameliorate rockfish management problems. Fishermen will also benefit from the two assemblage approach in the Eastern Regulatory Area. The more commonly fished demersal shelf rockfish species can be managed with more attention to local stocks in this area. The combined "other rockfish" species grouping should reduce species identification problems and increase the accuracy of catch reporting in the deeper water trawl fishery.

IV. CONCLUSION

For the 1988 fishing year, the five species of the POP complex will be included in the slope assemblage to form a revised "other rockfish" category. In all areas other than the Southeast Outside District demersal shelf rockfish will also be included in the "other rockfish" management category. Separate TACs for "other rockfish" will be established for the Eastern, Central, and Western Regulatory Areas. In the Southeast Outside District of the Eastern Regulatory Area, demersal shelf rockfish will be managed with a separate TAC, which might be apportioned among the State's three management subdistricts as it was in 1987. Within the Southeast Outside District, the ADF&G will manage demersal shelf rockfish in both State and Federal waters, under FMP authority. Separate TACs will also be established for pelagic shelf rockfish for the three Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Areas based upon information from the 1987 triennial trawl survey.

ATTACHMENT

Rockfish species in the genus *Sebastes* contributing to the rockfish assemblages adopted in amendment 16 to the FMP.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

Boccacio (*S. paucispinus*)
Canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*)
China rockfish (*S. nebulosus*)
Copper rockfish (*S. caurinus*)
Quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*)
Redstripe rockfish (*S. proriger*)
Silvergray rockfish (*S. brevispinus*)
Yelloweye rockfish (*S. ruberrimus*)

Pelagic Shelf Rockfish

Black rockfish (*S. melanops*)
Blue rockfish (*S. mystinus*)
Dusky rockfish (*S. ciliatus*)
Rosethorn rockfish (*S. helvomaculatus*)
Tiger rockfish (*S. nigrocinctus*)
Widow rockfish (*S. entomelas*)
Yellowtail rockfish (*S. flavidus*)

Slope Rockfish

Aurora rockfish (*S. aurora*)
Blackgill rockfish (*S. melanostomus*)
Chilipepper rockfish (*S. goodei*)
Darkblotch rockfish (*S. crameri*)
Greenstriped rockfish (*S. elongatus*)
Harlequin rockfish (*S. variegatus*)
Northern rockfish (*S. polyspinus*)
Pacific ocean perch (*S. alutus*)
Pygmy rockfish (*S. wilsoni*)
Red banded rockfish (*S. babcocki*)
Rougheye rockfish (*S. aleutianus*)
Sharpchin rockfish (*S. zacentrus*)
Shortbelly rockfish (*S. jordani*)
Shortraker rockfish (*S. borealis*)
Splitnose rockfish (*S. diploproa*)
Stripetail rockfish (*S. saxicola*)
Vermilion rockfish (*S. miniatus*)
Yellowmouth rockfish (*S. reedi*)