

Agenda Item: "B-4"



**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: salmon, crab, scallops and groundfish.

Salmon Troll Fishery (FIGURE 1)

The 2003-2004 winter troll chinook salmon fishery opened by regulation on October 11, 2003. This fishery is confined to waters east of the "winter boundary line" (see 5 AAC 29.020(b)) and includes waters of Yakutat Bay. The winter fishery will continue through April 14, 2004, or until 45,000 treaty chinook salmon are harvested. This winter, the weather on the grounds has been particularly nasty, effort has been below average, and chinook abundance in the Sitka area is also down. Most winter fishery catches occur out of Sitka. Catch to date is approximately 13,000 chinook salmon, falling below the most recent 5-year average.

Aleutian Island Golden King Crab (FIGURE 2)

The Aleutian Islands (Area O) opened to commercial fishing for golden king crab on August 15, 2003 with guideline harvest levels (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds east and 2.7 million pounds west of 174° W longitude. Through September 3, 2003, approximately 2.3 million pounds of golden king crab was landed from Area O east of 174° W longitude. Given that the harvest rate at that time was approximately 129,000 pounds per day, the GHL of 3.0 million pounds was projected to be reached by September 8, 2003. Therefore, that portion of Area O east of 174° W longitude was closed to commercial fishing on that date. Final harvest was approximately 2.97 million pounds. The golden king crab fishery west of 174° W longitude continues at this time. Presently, the catch stands at approximately 2.29 million pounds from 4 vessels. Prices are averaging \$3.50 to \$3.60 per pound.

Bering Sea *C. opilio* (FIGURE 3)

The 2004 Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened at noon on January 15, 2004 with a general fishery GHL of 19.27 million pounds. The post-season community development quota is 1.56 million pounds.

ADF&G, 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, 2004 for a potential weather-related delay of the season opening, based on search and rescue criteria. Current and forecast weather and sea conditions in the operational area for vessels involved in the Bering Sea snow crab fishery met United States Coast Guard search and rescue criteria and the season opened as scheduled. Fishermen were advised that the master of each vessel was responsible for the ultimate safety of the vessel. ADF&G managed the 2004 Bering Sea snow crab fishery based on inseason reports from fishermen. Reports were taken once each morning for the previous 24-hour period. Given the lower GHL, pot limits in place were the lowest ever implemented (70 to 90 pots depending upon vessel size category). Catch per unit of effort (CPUE) data was excellent throughout the fishery. Catch rates for the season were as high as 154 crab/pot, declining just prior to the closure. Overall, fleet catches averaged 2 to 3 million pounds per day, which was similar

to vessel performance in 2003. The department announced the closure for 10 pm, Friday, January 23, 2004. The department now estimates that the general fishery harvest was approximately 21.89 million pounds. Prices averaged \$2.05 per pound, surpassed only by 1995 prices which were approximately \$2.25 per pound. The Community Development Quota (CDQ) allocation is 7.5% of the total harvest of snow crab. The total harvest is defined as the general fishery harvest plus the CDQ harvest. The CDQ allocation based on the above harvest amount is estimated at 1.775 million pounds.

Scallops (FIGURE 4)

Scallop fisheries in Alaska opened by regulation on July 1, 2003. During this reporting period the Northeast District of the Kodiak Area closed at 3 pm on November 15, 2003 when the upper end of the 80,000 pound Guideline Harvest Range (GHR) was attained. The Shelikof District of the Kodiak Area closed on January 13, 2004 at 10:00 am. The upper end of the 180,000 pound GHR was fully attained. Crab bycatch was never a factor in either fishery closure. Several areas remain open at this time. Only one vessel is currently fishing. By regulation, scallop fisheries will close for the season on February 15, 2004.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)

Cook Inlet

In Cook Inlet, the state waters fishery will open twenty-four hours after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL for the 2004 state waters season has been set at 2.37 million pounds. The GHL was calculated as 2.25% of the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. This fishery opened February 1, 2004, which is 24 hours after the closure of the federal fishery.

Prince William Sound

The 2004 Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season will open seven days after the close of the federal fishery. The GHL has been set at 970,000 pounds, which is calculated as 10% of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC.

Westward Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has announced the closure of the inshore processing component of the Pacific cod fishery in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) effective at NOON on January 31, 2004. Therefore, the Kodiak Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery will open at NOON on February 7, 2004. The 2004 state-waters guideline harvest level (GHL) is 9.9 million pounds, which is 12.5% of the CGOA ABC. The GHL is allocated 50% to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50% to pot gear, or 4.95 million pounds. Vessel operators fishing with pot gear on vessels that are longer than 58 feet overall length are restricted to 25% of the GHL (2.47 million pounds) before September 1.

The Chignik state waters Pacific cod GHL is 6.9 million pounds. This results as the final 'step up increment' to 8.75% of CGOA ABC.

The South Alaska Peninsula GHL is 12.5 million pounds, which is 25% of the Western GOA ABC.

State waters also open seven days after the federal closures in both Chignik and South Alaska Peninsula areas.

Southeast Groundfish (FIGURE 6)

Since the last report on the Southeast District, there has been 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. Several of Southeast's DSR fisheries have reached their GHLs and closed, while others continue to fish. There has been little effort to date in either Pacific cod or black rockfish fisheries in the region, as groundfish fishermen concentrate on more valuable catches of DSR, specifically yelloweye rockfish, currently selling for about \$1.50 per pound.

FIGURE 1. 2004 COMMERCIAL WINTER TROLL CHINOOK FISHERY

This table was updated January 21, 2004. Numbers below are listed by Troll Year, which begins with the winter fishery in October and ends with the summer fishery in September.

Troll Year	Total Catch to date	Statistics for Jan. 11 - 17				Week 3	
		Week 3 Catch	Permits Fished	Landings	Catch/Landing	Average Weight (lbs.)	Average Price/lb
2004	12,931	140	20	22	6.4	13.3	\$5.20
2003	19,466	501	50	77	6.5	14.1	\$4.68
5-year ave. 99-03	17,215	287	30	46	5.9	15.2	\$4.01

Troll Year 2004 Weekly Chinook Salmon Catch and Effort Data						
Week	Permits	Landings	Number	Pounds	Ave. Price	Ave. Wt.
41	28	29	547	7,386	\$2.96	13.5
42	133	182	4,449	61,532	\$2.96	13.9
43	74	102	1,586	22,398	\$3.38	14.2
44	108	148	1,709	23,229	\$3.42	13.7
45	95	133	1,953	25,488	\$3.74	13.2
46	41	50	457	5,977	\$3.86	13.1
47	41	51	324	4,314	\$4.08	13.3
48	39	47	419	5,941	\$4.24	14.2
49	28	31	218	2,974	\$4.67	13.6
50	71	83	443	6,047	\$4.91	13.7
51	28	33	156	2,012	\$4.83	12.9
52	27	33	108	1,487	\$5.07	13.8
53/1	53	60	322	4,110	\$5.09	13.1
2	17	21	100	1,511	\$5.13	15.1
3	20	22	140	1,844	\$5.20	13.3
Totals	212	1025	12,931	176,250	\$3.48	13.7

Data for troll year 2004 is preliminary and based on fish ticket reports.

FIGURE 1.

SE AK WINTER TROLL FISHERY, 2004

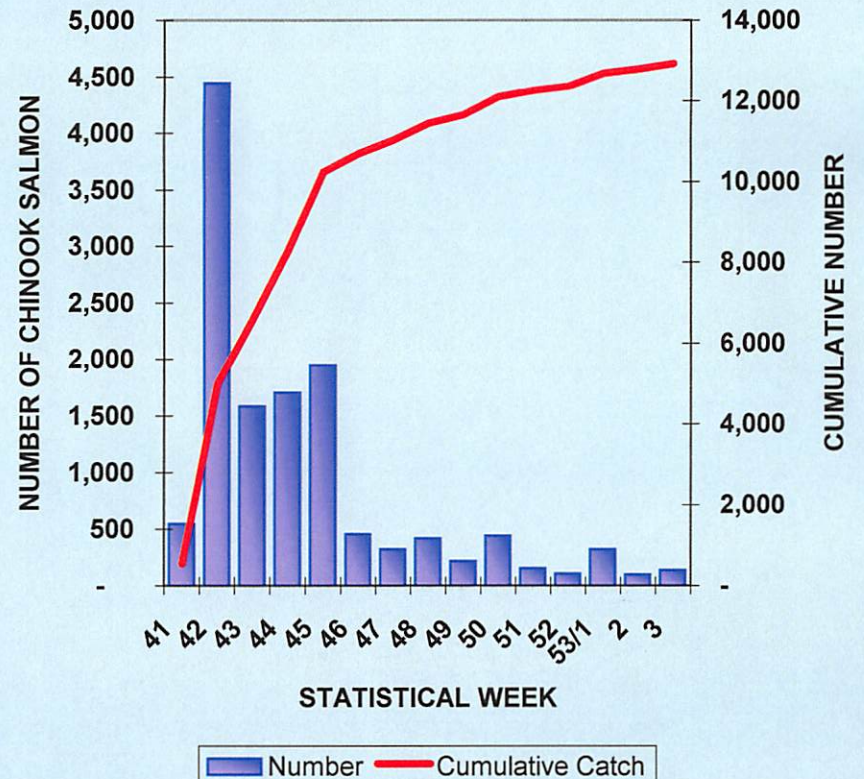
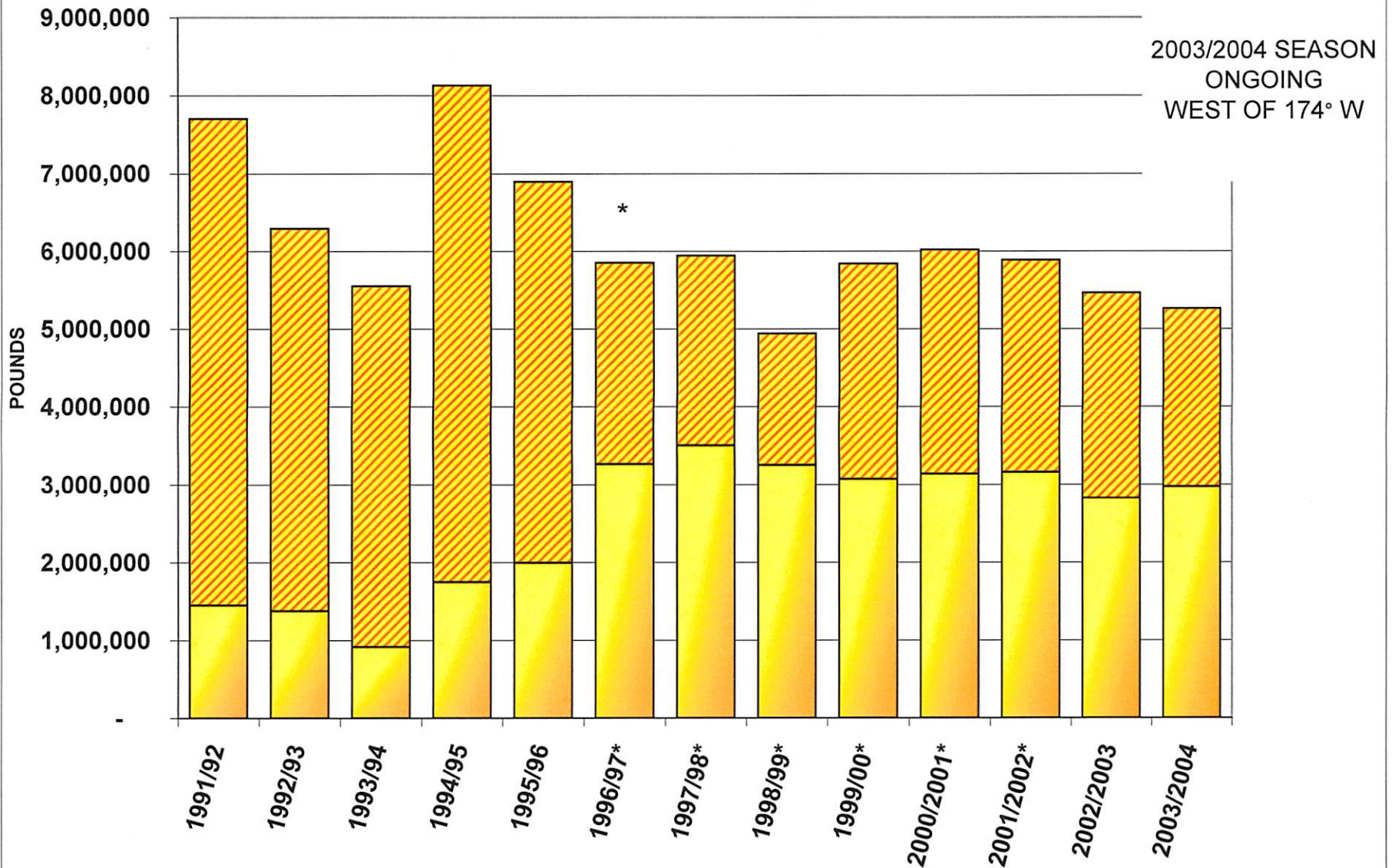


FIGURE 2

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GOLDEN KING CRAB HARVESTS



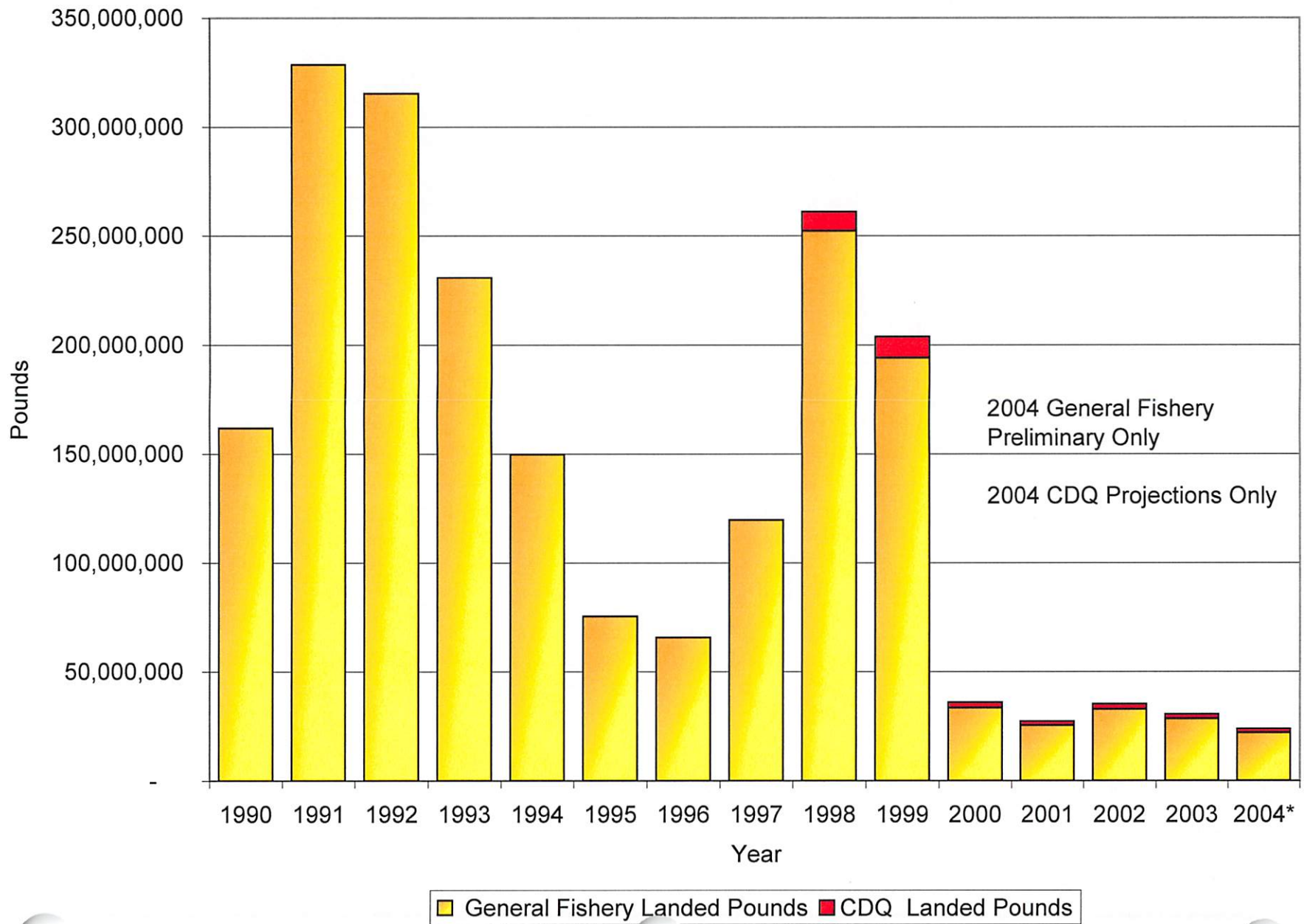
*NOTE: FISHING AREA DESIGNATION MODIFIED IN 1996 @ 174° W

■ EAST OF 174° W

■ WEST OF 174° W

Figure 3.

Bering Sea C. Opilio Harvests



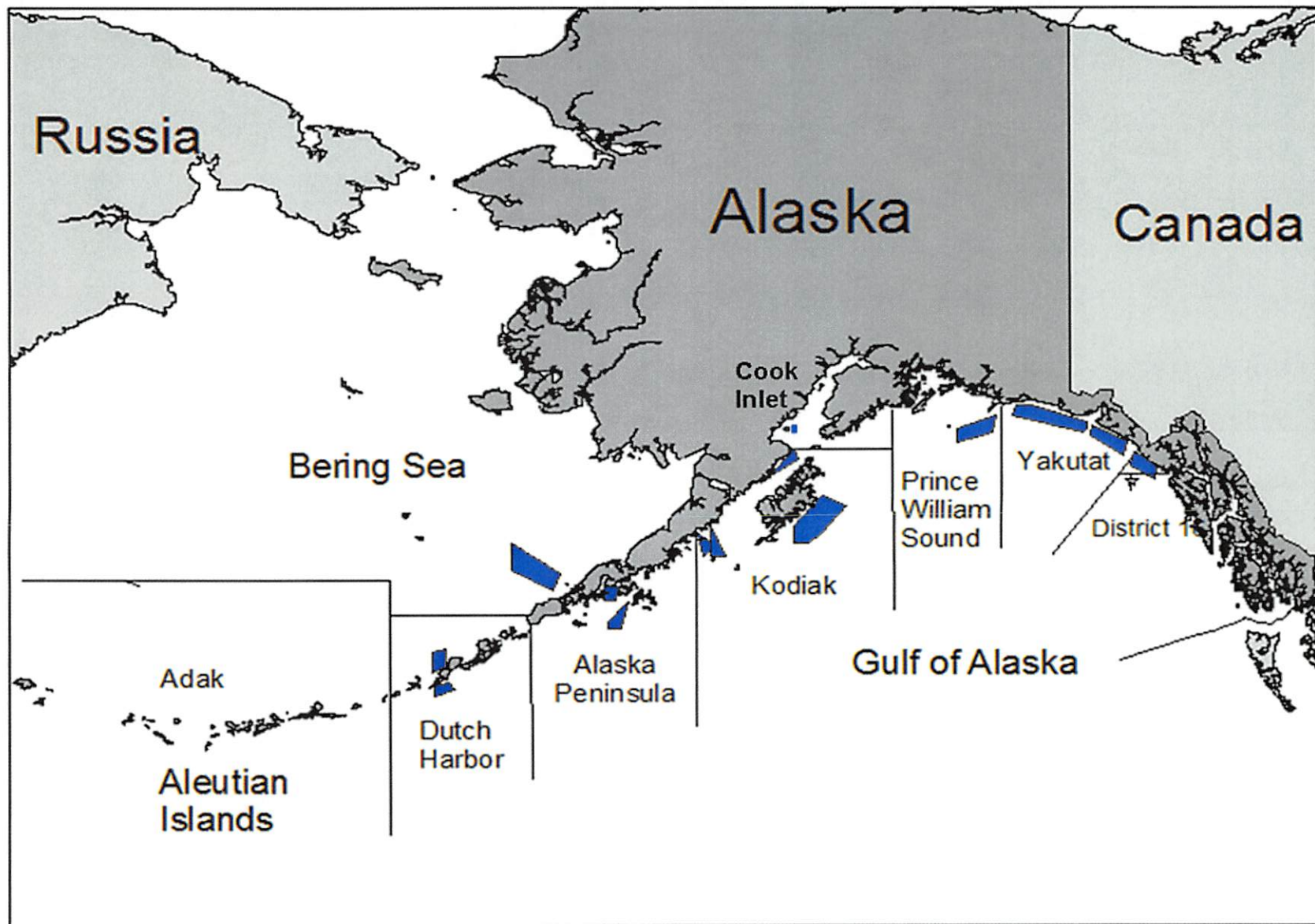
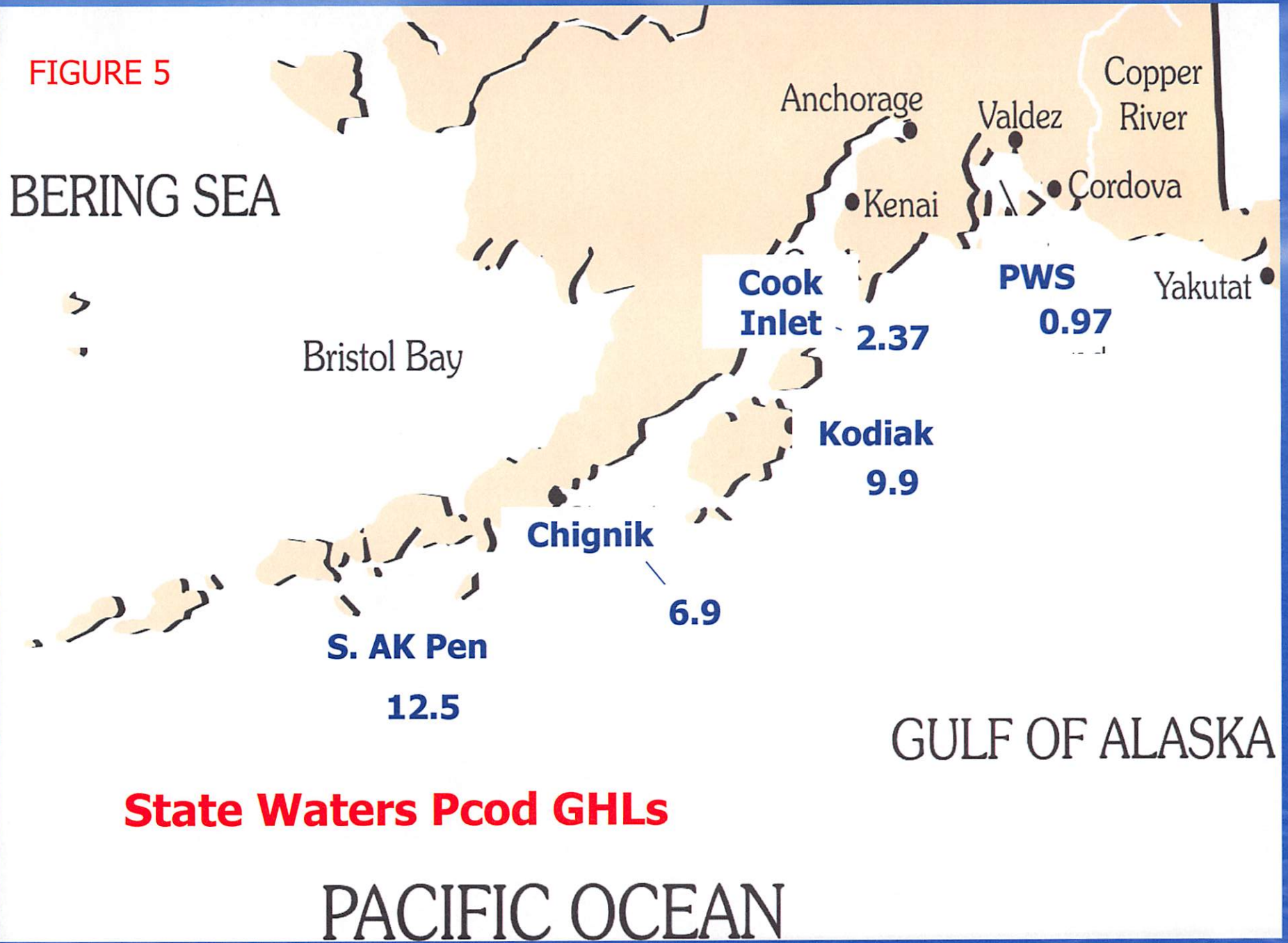


Figure 4. Major weathervane scallop fishing locations in coastal waters of Alaska.

FIGURE 5



State Waters Pcod GHGs

PACIFIC OCEAN

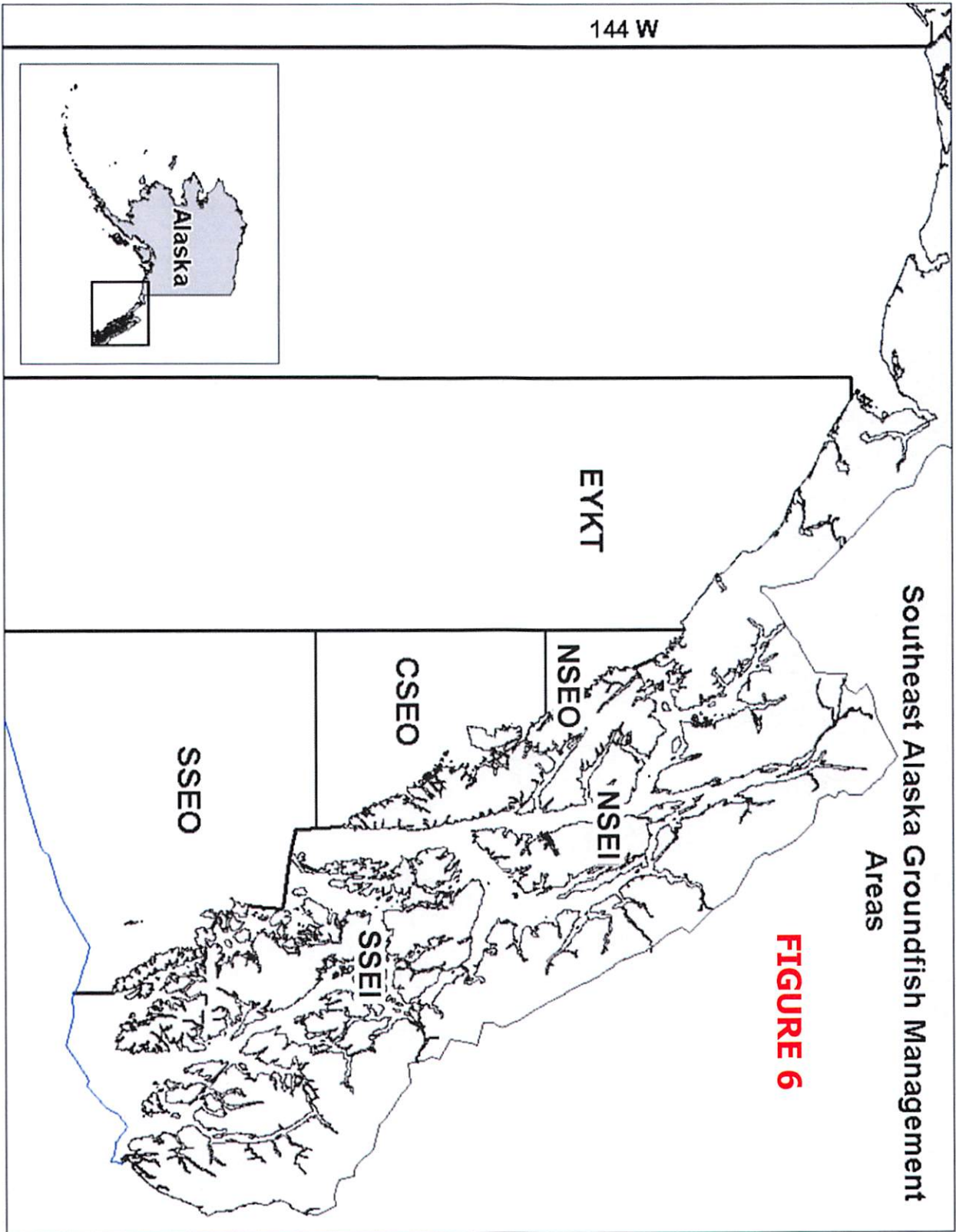


FIGURE 6

Southwest Alaska Groundfish Management Areas