



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

April 6, 2015

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report online

Status of Actions report is provided in **Attachment 1** and is updated daily at:
<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/status/amendments.pdf>.

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the February 2015 meeting include:

- Final Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Harvest Specifications
BSAI -- March 5, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr11919.pdf>
GOA – February 25, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr10250.pdf>
- Final rule for halibut annual management measures – includes commercial catch quotas and charter halibut management measures in Areas 2C and 3A.
Effective March 13, 2015: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr13771.pdf>
- Final rule for Amendment 100 to the BSAI FMP & Amendment 91 to the GOA FMP– Management of Grenadiers
Effective April 6, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr11897.pdf>
- Final rule for Amendment 31 to the BSAI Crab FMP – C-Share Active Participation Requirements and Modification of Cooperative Application Deadline
Effective May 1, 2015: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr15891.pdf>
- Notice of Availability for Amendment 108 to the BSAI FMP, Amendment 100 to the GOA FMP & Amendment 46 to the King and Tanner Crabs FMP – LLP Exemption Correction
Notice of Availability – February 12, 2015 – Comment through April 13, 2015
<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/80fr7816.pdf>



Consultation with the Council on Changes from Proposed to Final Rules

NMFS anticipates publishing a final rule for Amendment 45 to the King and Tanner Crab FMP, and a final rule to revise the definition of sport fishing guide services for charter halibut fishing in Areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3A (Southcentral Alaska) between the February 2015 and April 2015 Council meetings. Consistent with past practice and our requirements under section 304(b)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, we are consulting with the Council before publishing final rules that may make revisions to the proposed regulations. NMFS has not identified any substantive changes that would be made between the proposed and final regulations. We note that these rules are still under review, and we will consult with the Council if there are substantive changes.

Emergency Rule Petition

On December 18, 2014 NMFS received a petition for emergency rulemaking from the State of Alaska co-signed by all six voting members on the Council from Alaska. The petition asked NMFS to “promulgate emergency regulations to reduce the BSAI halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for the North Pacific groundfish fisheries by 33 percent in 2015.” The petition stated that “data indicate that a reduction in the BSAI halibut PSC limit by 33 percent, which equates to about 20 percent reduction in actual BSAI bycatch from 2014, would result in an Area 4CDE catch limit of about 0.96 mlbs [960,000 pounds].” Area 4CDE corresponds to a large area of the eastern and northern Bering Sea. NMFS denied the petition, finding that the emergency did not exist. Please refer to the March 20, 2015 letter from Assistant Administrator Sobeck for additional detail under the B-1 agenda.

Exempted Fishing Permit to Reduce Halibut Mortality

NMFS and the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC) signed an exempted fishing permit on March 23, 2015. The permit allows 17 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) trawl catcher/processors to test the feasibility of sorting halibut bycatch on deck and return halibut to sea as quickly as possible to reduce halibut mortality (i.e., “deck sorting”). Most of the trawl/catcher processor fleet with the largest proportion of halibut bycatch is participating in this research. This research will be critical in the likely development of regulations to implement deck sorting procedures on all trawl catcher/processors.

On March 30, 2015, the Pollock Conservation Cooperative (PCC) submitted an application for an exempted fishing permit for a nearly identical research plan for two vessels participating in the yellowfin sole fishery. We determined that this application did not warrant further consideration because it would duplicate the research being conducted by AKSC and the additional research would not sufficiently improve deck-sorting data quality to justify approval of a second EFP. We have encouraged PCC to coordinate with AKSC on common experimental objectives for research in 2016.

Charter halibut annual limit regulation

NMFS published a final rule to implement the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) 2015 annual management measures on March 13, 2015. The annual management measures

include a suite of measures recommended by the Council to limit charter halibut harvest to the sector allocations established under the Area 2C and 3A Catch Sharing Plan. The 2015 charter management measures include an annual limit of 5 halibut for charter anglers in Area 3A. The annual limit management measure does not include a reporting requirement for anglers in Area 3A to record all halibut caught on a charter vessel on their State of Alaska sport fishing license. The Council recommended this reporting requirement to facilitate enforcement of the annual limit. The IPHC adopted the Council recommendation for the 5-fish annual limit but did not adopt the angler reporting requirement because it was inadvertently omitted from the suite of charter management measures presented to the IPHC at its January 2015 Annual Meeting.

The reporting requirement was intended to facilitate enforcement of the annual limit during charter vessel enforcement boardings and dockside monitoring checks. Although the requirement for anglers to record retained halibut on their sport fishing license will not be implemented for 2015, Alaska Department of Fish and Game logbook data collected for all charter fishing trips will be analyzed to monitor compliance with the 5-fish annual limit by individual anglers. This analysis will be presented to the Council in December 2015 as part of the annual process to recommend charter management measures for 2016. If the Council recommends an annual limit for charter anglers to the IPHC in the future, NMFS will work with the Council and IPHC to coordinate implementation of the reporting requirement as an accompanying management measure.

Tribal Consultation Update

On April 6, NMFS and the Department of State held a tribal consultation with representative from the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Association of Village Council Presidents. These tribal governments had requested a consultation to discuss the Council's salmon bycatch management measures before the Council meeting. A brief oral summary of the results of the tribal consultation will be provided to the Council under the C-4 (Salmon PSC) Agenda. Once a summary of the meeting has been reviewed and approved by all governments, it will be posted on the Alaska Region website and a link provided to the Council.

Staffing Changes

Ben Muse will retire on April 30, 2015. Ben has been the Sustainable Fisheries Division's economist since 2000. Ben is a highly valued colleague who will be greatly missed. He has contributed enormously to the Alaska Region and the Council process with his outstanding analytical skills, excellent writing, warm and welcoming attitude, and outstanding work ethic. I particularly want to highlight Ben's work on the economic analysis for Steller sea lion protection measures and his work on analyzing important observer coverage, equipment, and operational requirement to support management of Alaska fisheries. Ben exemplifies the qualities of a great analyst. Ben has also been a tremendously gifted mentor to dozens of staff throughout his career with the State of Alaska and NMFS.

Ben received a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Master's degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Cornell. While pursuing his Ph.D. he took a year and a half off to work in Alaska. One of his professors knew Don Collingsworth who was then Commissioner of the

Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Ben started with the then new Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission as a fishery economist. Ben worked at CFEC from 1977 until he came to work for NMFS in 2000. Ben also has taught economics courses at the University of Alaska Southeast for many years and was a Boy Scout pack and troop leader for more than 10 years. Ben and his wife Cathy have four children and one grandchild. We are pleased that Ben will be able to spend more time with his family.

Sustainable Fisheries has offered positions to two fishery management specialist positions. New staff will fill positions in our Catch Share Branch and Observer Program Liaison position. We hope to complete the hiring process in the next month and will announce the new staff as soon as that process is complete.

Inseason Management Report

2015 catch (metric tons) is through March 28, and 2014 catch is through March 29. Additional information from daily catch reports and information bulletins are available at:

<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/catchstats.htm>

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ and 2,554 mt of Aleut Corporation pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to the CDQ and non-CDQ Bering Sea TACs.

Bering Sea	2015 A season allocation	2015 A season catch	Percent Taken
Inshore	226,879	207,747	92%
C/P	181,503	179,767	99%
Mothership	45,376	42,816	94%
CDQ	53,160	53,043	100%
Total	506,918	483,373	95%

Salmon Bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2015		2014		2015		2014	
Year	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
CDQ	781	1.45%	692	1.34%	340	0.63%	27	0.05%
Non-CDQ	10,959	2.50%	10,108	2.39%	4,059	0.93%	361	0.09%
Total	11,740	2.39%	10,800	2.28%	4,399	0.89%	388	0.08%

Pacific Cod

Aleutian Islands Pacific cod

Sixteen (9 in the Pacific cod target) vessels have reported non-CDQ Pacific cod relative to 14 (7 in the Pacific cod target) vessels in 2014. In 2015, no vessels delivered Pacific cod to shoreside processors. NMFS closed the Federal Aleutian Islands Pacific cod directed fishery on February 7 in 2015 compared to March 16 in 2014.

BSAI Hook-and-line catcher/processors

This sector has similar catch rates in 2015 relative to 2014.

Year	2015	2014
Total catch	38,736	37,531
A season TAC	55,116	56,108
Remaining A season TAC	16,380	18,577
Number of vessels	28	27

BSAI Pot catcher vessels (CVs) greater than or equal to 60 feet length overall

In 2015, less vessels targeted Pacific cod relative to 2014.

Year	2015	2014
Total catch	9,042	9,602
A season TAC	9,507	9,678
Remaining A season TAC	465	76
A season closure	n/a	January 24
Number of vessels	15	29

Pot catcher/processors

Year	2015	2014
Total catch	1,880	1,711
A season TAC	1,698	1,728
Remaining A season TAC	-182	17
A season closure	February 4	January 26
Number of vessels	4	4

Hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 feet length overall

NMFS reallocated 1,700 mt of the A season jig allocation to the less than 60 feet allocation.

Year	2015	2014
Total catch	6,910	7,495
Annual TAC	6,138 (4,438 + 1,700 from jig)	6,218 (4,518 + 1,700 from jig)
Remaining TAC	-772	-1,277
Closure	February 2	February 4
Number of vessels	20 (3 hook-and-line, 17 pot)	19 (5 hook-and-line, 14 pot)

Trawl catcher vessels

In 2015, 46 CVs targeting Pacific cod reported 27,900 mt of harvest relative to 46 CVs reporting 34,827 mt of harvest in 2014. The 2015 B season allocation of 5,415 mt becomes available April 1. In 2014, the fishery remained open until the regulatory closure on November 1, 2014.

Year	2015	2014
Total Catch	29,793 (27,900 in Pacific cod)	35,745 (34,827 in Pacific cod)
A season TAC	36,426	37,079
Remaining TAC	6,633	1,334
A season closure	None	None
Number of vessels	Pacific cod target 46	Pacific cod target 46
	All targets 94	All targets 84

BSAI Flatfish, Atka mackerel, and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)

The total catch for most flatfish species is lower than in 2014. In 2015, more effort focused on Atka mackerel in January and February compared to rock sole in 2014. Atka mackerel TACs are higher in 2015 and more Atka mackerel fishing grounds are accessible in 2015 compared to 2014. Halibut PSC avoidance (e.g., increased use of halibut excluders, limiting harvest in areas with higher halibut PSC) likely contributed to decreased catch of rock sole and yellowfin sole.

Species	2015	2014
Alaska plaice	1,614	6,237
Arrowtooth flounder	807	1,601
Other flatfish	443	642
Flathead sole	4,223	5,420
Greenland turbot	50	30
Kamchatka flounder	98	154
Rock sole	28,984	35,961
Yellowfin sole	29,884	39,102
Total Flatfish	66,103	89,147
Atka mackerel	18,421	8,131
Pacific ocean perch	1,632	1,793

Gulf of Alaska

Pacific cod Western GOA

Sector	2015				2014			
	A season allocation	Catch March 28	A season closed	# of vessels March 28	A season allocation	Catch March 29	A season closed	# of vessels March 29
Hook-and-line C/P	2,850	2,730	Apr 2	5	2,436	2,772	Mar 4	7
Hook-and-line CV	183	61	n/a	3	156	109	Mar 13	3
Jig	569	55	n/a	6	344	64	Jun 10	7
Pot CV/CP	5,176	5,506	Feb 12	38	4,425	4,152	Jan 22	35
Trawl CV	7,242	6,929	Mar 11	24	6,191	6,435	Feb 23	25
Trawl C/P	235	0	Jan 20	0	201	0	Jan 20	0
Total	16,255	15,281		73	13,753	13,458		77

Pacific cod Central GOA

Sector	2015				2014			
	A season allocation	Catch March 28	A season closed	# of vessels March 28	A season allocation	Catch March 29	A season closed	# of vessels March 29
Hook-and-line C/P	1,851	1,012	n/a	4	1,603	1,433	Apr 4	5
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	4,241	3,691	n/a	26	3,636	3,435	Mar 11	52
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	2,554	774	n/a	14	2,189	1,243	Mar 15	16
Jig	276	343	Mar 2	38	478	170	Jun 10	35
Pot CV/CP	8,118	8,350	Feb 16	51	6,959	6,652	Feb 13	37
Trawl CV	9,623	6,935	n/a	49	8,249	6,594	Apr 1	56
Trawl C/P	912	66	Jan 20	3	782	186	Mar 14	3
Total	27,594	21,171		182	23,896	19,712		201

GOA Pollock

The A season fisheries remained open until the B season allocations became available on March 10, 2015. Catch in the 610 pollock fishery has been low in 2015 at 1,210 mt relative to 2,569 mt in 2014. For Areas 620 and 630, catch rates increased the end of February and March, and currently total catch in the Central GOA is lower in 2015 at 55,828 mt relative to 2014 at 68,041 mt.

2015 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	3,632	30,503	11,316	4,719 (annual)
A season catch	125	28,580	8,886	163
A season closure	Mar 10	Mar 10	Mar 10	n/a
B season allocation ¹	4,358	43,513	4,800	n/a
B season catch	1,085	16,056	2,311	n/a
B season closure	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

¹NMFS revised the B season allocations to account for unharvested TAC in the A season.

Salmon in the GOA

Chinook salmon PSC catch and rates are higher in 2015 relative to 2014. Observer data and fleet reports indicate that many fisheries and areas are experiencing higher Chinook salmon PSC rates.

Chinook Salmon	Limit	2015	2014
Total	n/a	6,743	3,305
Western GOA pollock	6,684	271	100
Central GOA pollock	18,316	5,379	2,784
Western/Central non-pollock trawl CV ¹	2,700	1,070	280
Western/Central non-pollock trawl CP ¹	1,200	0	Conf.

¹The Western/Central trawl CV and CP limits were implemented in 2015.

Non-Chinook Salmon	2015	2014
Total	61	41

Halibut Mortality in Groundfish Fisheries

In 2015 relative to 2014, the total halibut mortality in the BSAI is 289 mt lower and in the GOA it is 37 mt lower. In the BSAI, all 2015 rates are lower than 2014, and in the GOA some 2015 are lower than 2014.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2015			2014		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	974	615,544	0.16%	1,263	621,551	0.20%
Non-pelagic trawl CP	633	97,757	0.65%	778	109,302	0.71%
Non-pelagic trawl CV	177	32,682	0.54%	239	42,957	0.56%
Pelagic trawl CP	36	184,983	0.02%	63	183,242	0.03%
Pelagic trawl CV	13	253,368	0.01%	13	239,349	0.01%
Hook-and-line CP	86	46,071	0.19%	110	45,278	0.24%
Hook-and-line CV	2	684	0.23%	4	1,423	0.27%
CDQ	28	65,276	0.04%	56	67,884	0.08%
GOA Total	262	85,287	0.31%	299	100,860	0.30%
Non-pelagic trawl	143	19,016	0.75%	187	21,666	0.86%
Pelagic trawl	3	55,508	0.01%	0	67,276	0.00%
Hook-and-line CP	37	4,419	0.83%	40	4,557	0.87%
Hook-and-line CV	80	6,344	1.26%	72	7,361	0.98%

Attachment 1: Status of Actions

FMP Amendment Status	Lead Council and SF Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Proposed FMP Amendment Notice of Availability Published in Federal Register	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in Federal Register
Amendment 31 (KTC) – C – Share Active Participation and IFQ/IPQ application deadline modification Approved: March 8, 2015	Fina Baker	April 2008	PR: 08/22/11 FR: 02/19/15	PR: 09/13/11 FR: 02/23/15	PR: 12/09/14 FR: 03/09/15	December 15, 2014 79 FR 74058 EOC: 02/13/15	December 24, 2014 79 FR 77427 EOC: 01/23/15	March 26, 2014 80 FR 15891 Effective: 05/01/15
Amendment 44 (KTC) BSAI Crab ROFR	Marrinan Baker	October 2014	PR: 01/05/15	PR: 01/08/15				
Amendment 45 (KTC) GOA Pacific Cod non-AFA crab sideboards FLL Decision Date: May 1, 2015	McCracken Baker	June 2013	PR: 05/23/14 FR: 04/06/15	PR: 05/29/14	PR: 01/27/15	February 2, 2015 80 FR 5499 EOC: 04/03/15	February 12, 2015 80 FR 7817 EOC: 03/16/15	
Amendments 100 (BSAI) and 91 (GOA) Management of Grenadiers Approved: August 04, 2014	DiCosimo Harrington	February 2014	PR: 04/01/14 FR: 11/13/14	PR: 04/01/14 FR: 11/14/14	PR: 04/29/14 FR: 02/12/15	May 5, 2014 79 FR 25558 EOC: 07/07/14	May 14, 2014 79 FR 27557 EOC: 06/13/14	March 5, 2015 80 FR 11897 Effective: 04/06/15
Amendment 108 (BSAI) 100 (GOA) 46 (KTC) LLP Exemption Correction -- FMP Only Decision Date: May 13, 2015	Marrinan Baker	December 2014	PR: 01/12/15	PR: 01/14/15	PR: 02/05/15	February 12, 2015 80 FR 7816 EOC: 04/13/15	N/A	
Amendment 109 (BSAI) - CDQ Small Vessel Groundfish Fishery	Marrinan Bibb	February 2015						

Regulatory Amendment Status	Lead Council and SF Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Cost recovery for AFA, Amendment 80, AI pollock, and CDQ program	Brannan Merrill	NMFS initiated -MSA Mandate-	PR: 08/22/14	PR: 08/29/14	PR: 12/09/14	January 7, 2015 80 FR 936 EOC: 02/06/15	
Revise definition of sport fishing guide services	MacLean Scheurer	February 2014	PR: 08/15/14 FR: 03/13/15	PR: 09/02/14 FR: 03/18/15	PR: 11/13/14	December 3, 2014 79 FR 71729 EOC: 01/02/15	
BSAI 2015-2016 harvest specifications	Stram Whitney	October 2014	PR: 10/23/14 FR: 01/05/15	PR: 10/29/14 FR: 01/06/15	PR: 11/20/14 FR: 02/12/15	December 8, 2014 79 FR 72571 EOC: 01/07/15	Mar 5, 2015 80 FR 11919 Effective: 03/05/15
GOA 2014-2015 harvest specifications	Armstrong Davis	October 2014	PR: 10/22/14 FR: 01/08/15	PR: 10/23/14 FR: 01/12/15	PR: 11/17/14 FR: 02/06/15	December 8, 2014 79 FR 72593 EOC: 01/07/15	Feb 25, 2015 80 FR 10250 Effective: 02/25/15
Revise Skate MRAs for GOA Groundfish	MacLean Murphy	December 2014					
2015 Annual Halibut Management Measures	Scheurer	January 2015 (IPHC)	FR: 02/24/15	FR: 02/25/15	FR: 03/02/15	N/A	Mar 17, 2015 80 FR 13771 Effective: 03/13/15