

and until further notice, NOAA intends to proceed

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February 2012

manage and enforce federal fisheries based upon the

JAN 23 2011



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

Ms. Cora Campbell
Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
1255 W. 8th Street
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Ms. Campbell:

manage and enforce federal fisheries based upon the

This letter follows up on a letter I sent to you dated February 28, 2011, regarding fishery management issues raised by changes in the Alaska area baseline and resulting changes to the 3-nautical-mile line on certain NOAA charts. In that letter, I noted that the effect of the changes on existing fishery management regimes raises complex issues that could not be resolved before the end of the 2011 seasonal fishery. I indicated that NOAA would proceed for the remainder of the 2011 fishing year by maintaining the status quo—that is, as though the change in the 3-mile line had no impact on the existing federal fishery management plan and regulations and their geographic extent.

Since last winter, NOAA has worked to resolve the underlying issues and the U.S. Baseline Committee has made significant progress toward addressing the State of Alaska's concerns with the 2006 revisions in certain areas. However, I understand that Alaska may identify other areas of concern to the Baseline Committee for review, and additional questions remain to be answered. Accordingly, for fishing year 2012 and until further notice, NOAA intends to proceed as described below.

For the specific areas listed below, we will manage and enforce federal fisheries based upon the most recent decisions of the U.S. Baseline Committee, as reflected in the minutes of their September 30, 2011, meeting, which generally adopt Alaska's proposals:

- Kachemak Bay
- Uyak Bay
- Akun Bay
- Aniakchak and Amber Bays
- Imuya Bay
- Portage Bay
- Port Dick (the only area in which the 2006 revision was allowed to stand)

manage and enforce federal fisheries based upon the

With regard to one of these areas (Kachemak Bay), we note that in October and November 2011, NOAA's Office of Coast Survey produced a new edition of its charts 16640, 16645, and 16647 that reflect the Baseline Committee decision for Kachemak Bay. Charts for the other areas listed above are not expected to be revised prior to FY 2013. To assist with administration of the federal and state fisheries, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Region will produce chartlets for those areas, for information purposes, and post them on its website at www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov.

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



Recognizing that the State may have concerns in other areas, for the 2012 fishing year and until further notice, NOAA intends to proceed in all areas not specifically listed above as it has in 2011. That is, we will maintain the status quo, and proceed, with respect to Alaska, as though any changes in the 3-mile line as a result of prior Baseline Committee decisions in 2006 had no impact on the existing federal fishery management plan and regulations and their geographic extent. The approach described in this paragraph will apply to two specific areas that the Baseline Committee has reviewed but for which it has not yet finalized decisions: for Chignik and Castle Bays and for Kalekta Bay. We hope the State of Alaska will take a similar approach going forward pending resolution of additional issues.

NOAA continues to examine issues related to the interpretation and implementation of the inner limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. We are acting expeditiously to resolve these complicated issues and will continue to cooperate with the State, the North Pacific Council, and other agencies as we consider what, if any, further action may be appropriate regarding the identification and description of state and federal fisheries jurisdiction. As we continue this process, we would welcome further engagement with the State to identify areas of particular concern and solutions to minimize disruption or confusion in the fishery.

Sincerely,



Samuel D. Rauch III
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries

Agenda Item B-3



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
February 2012

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last council report includes those for scallops, crab, and groundfish.

Scallops (FIGURE 1)

Weathervane scallop fisheries in Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, and the Bering Sea registration areas opened on July 1, 2011. The Kamishak District of Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound opened in mid-August. The cumulative guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2011/12 season is 493,400 pounds of shucked meats, a 6% decrease from 2010/11.

Total harvest to date is approx. 446,000 pounds or 90% of the total GHL. Fishing is closed in all areas except Yakutat; the regulatory closure date for scallop fishing is February 15.

Bering Sea Snow Crab (FIGURE 2)

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2011 and will remain open through May 15, 2012 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2012 in the Western Subdistrict. The 2011/12 snow crab TAC is 88.894 million pounds with 80 million pounds apportioned to the IFQ fishery and 8.89 million pounds to the CDQ fishery. Catch through Friday, January 27 was 16 million pounds for both IFQ and CDQ combined (20% of TAC). Fifty-five vessels are currently registered and average catch is 295 crabs per pot.

Catch rates and fishing effort have slowed this past week due to the extent of ice coverage in the Bering Sea. Despite a few miles of sea ice to navigate through, vessels continue to deliver crab to St. Paul Island. As of Monday, January 31, approximately 20 vessels (+/- 5) continue to harvest crab, the remaining vessels have either removed their gear from the fishing grounds and are standing down or have just completed fishing for Pacific cod and have not yet begun fishing for opilio.

Central Region Pacific Cod

Prince William Sound (FIGURE 3)

The state-waters jig season will open 24 hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery. The state-waters pot season will open 24 hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery. The state-waters longline season will open seven days after the closure of the CGOA <50' HAL sector or concurrent with the IFQ Halibut season opening date, whichever occurs later. The GHL increased slightly from last year to 1.448 million pounds and is calculated as 15 percent of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. The Prince William Sound state-waters season has an exclusive registration designation.

Cook Inlet (FIGURE 4)

The state-waters jig season in Cook Inlet will open 24 hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery. The state-waters pot season will open 24 hours after the closure of the federal A-season pot fishery. The GHL is calculated as 3.75 percent of the ABC for the federal Central Gulf of Alaska Area and is allocated 75% to pot gear and 25% to jig gear. Pot vessels larger than 58 feet are limited to 25% of the total GHL prior to September 1. The 2012 GHL is 4.707 million pounds, a 6% increase from last year. In addition to the directed fishery, Pacific cod may be retained in state waters as bycatch to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries at a maximum of 20%. Cook Inlet is designated as an exclusive registration area for Pacific cod.

Westward Region Pacific Cod

Kodiak Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)

State-waters pot fishery in the Kodiak area will open 7 days after the CGOA Federal A-season pot fishery close. State-waters jig fishery will open 48 hours after the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery closes or on/after March 15, based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, or remaining federal Pacific cod quota. The 2012 state-waters guideline harvest level (GHL) is 15.69 million pounds and is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 7.845 million pounds each. Vessel operators fishing with pot gear on vessels longer than 58 feet overall length are restricted to 25% of the GHL before September 1. The Kodiak Area is designated exclusive registration for the state-waters Pacific cod season.

Chignik Pacific Cod (FIGURE 6)

State-waters jig fishery in Chignik will open on March 15. The state-waters pot season opens seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closes or on March 7, whichever is later. The 2012 GHL is 10.98 million pounds, with pot vessels targeting 90 percent of that amount. The area is designated superexclusive registration for the state-waters Pacific cod season.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod (FIGURE 7)

The state-waters pot season opens seven days after the closure of the WGOA federal A-season pot fishery or March 7, whichever is later. State-waters jig fishery opens 48 hours after the WGOA federal A-season jig fishery closes or on/after March 15, based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, or remaining federal Pacific cod quota. The 2012 GHL is 15.45 million pounds, with 85 percent targeted by pot gear. A 58-foot vessel length limit is in effect in the South Alaska Peninsula Area and the area has an exclusive registration designation.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Southeast and Yakutat Finfish, February 24 - March 4, 2012, Ketchikan

#206 Create a commercial spiny dogfish pot fishery in the Ketchikan area. (Ketchikan Advisory Committee)

Figure 1

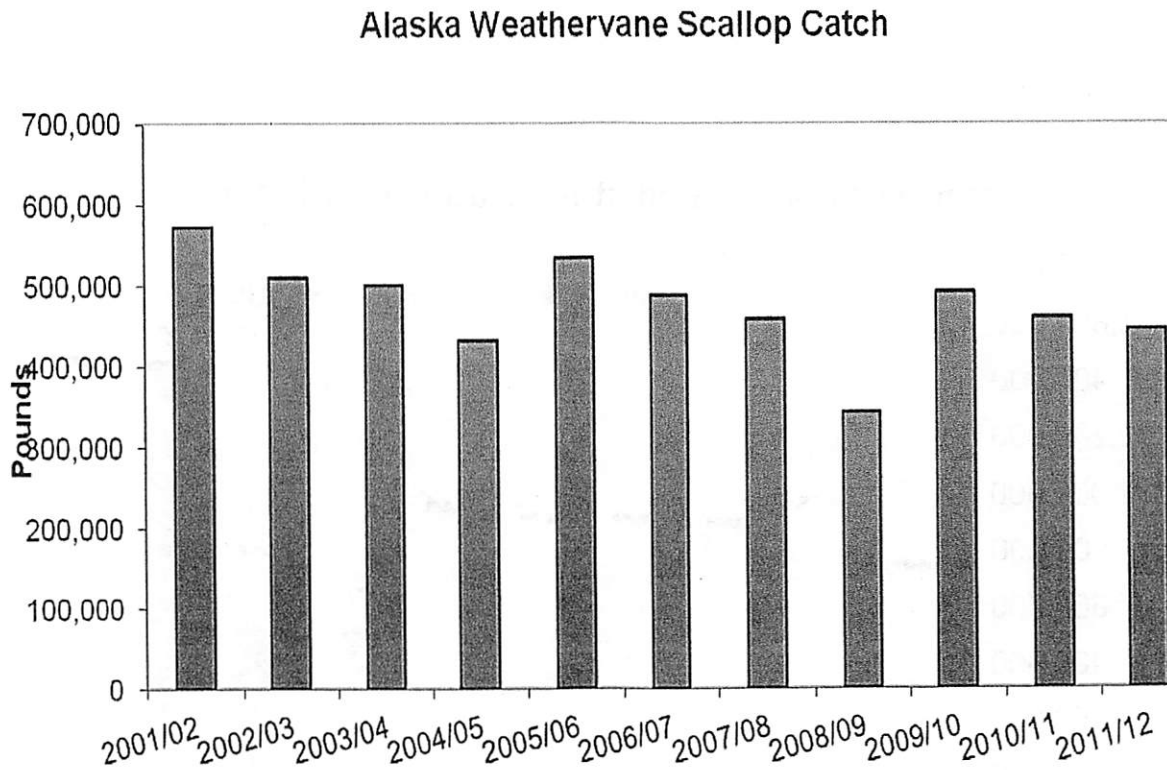


Figure 2

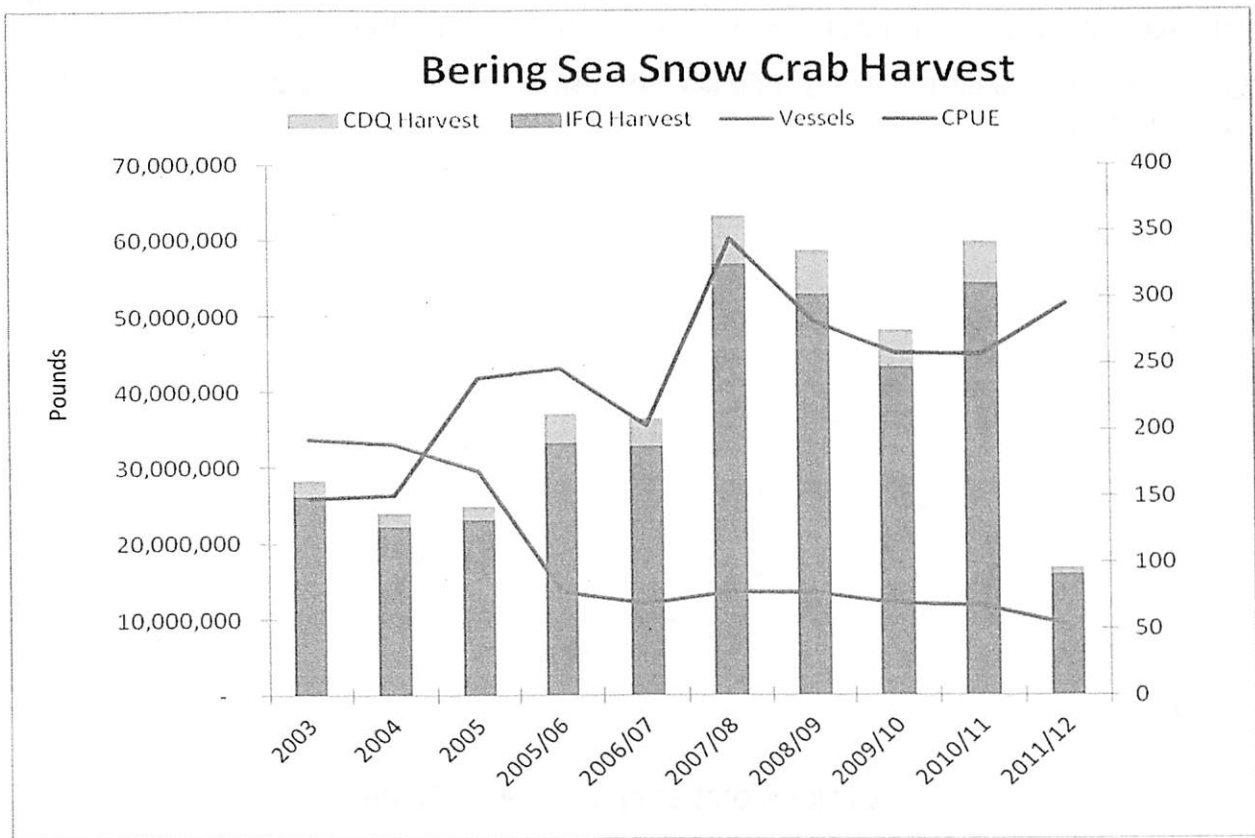


Figure 3

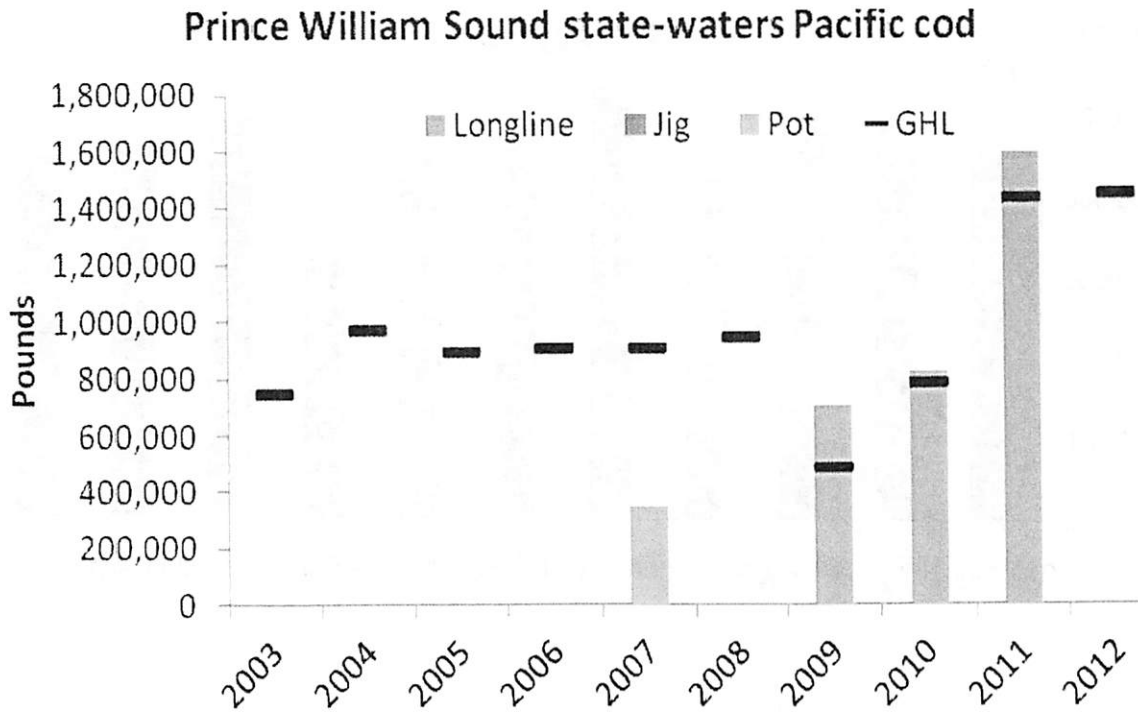


Figure 4

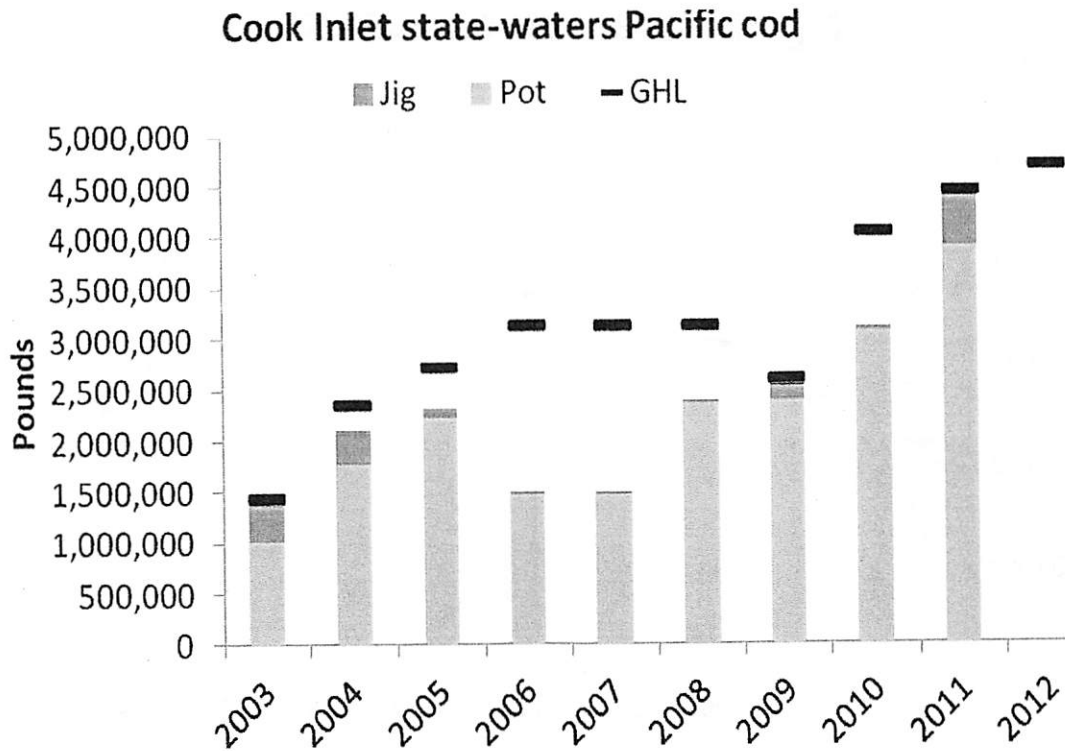


Figure 5

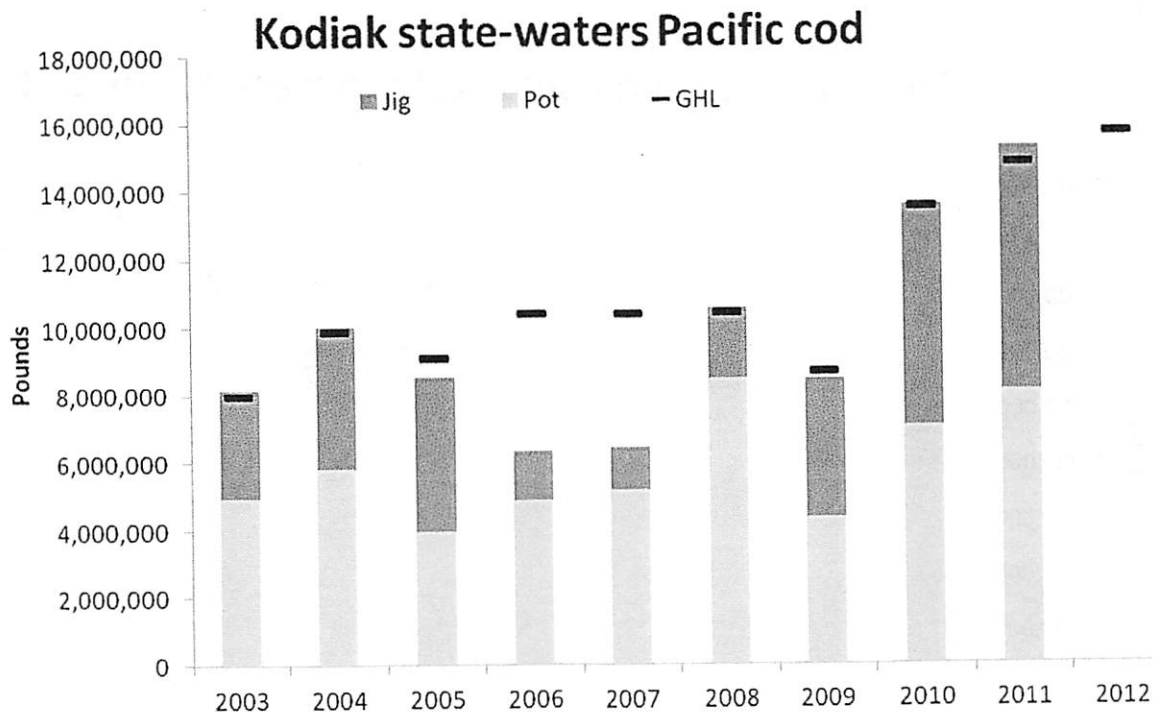


Figure 6

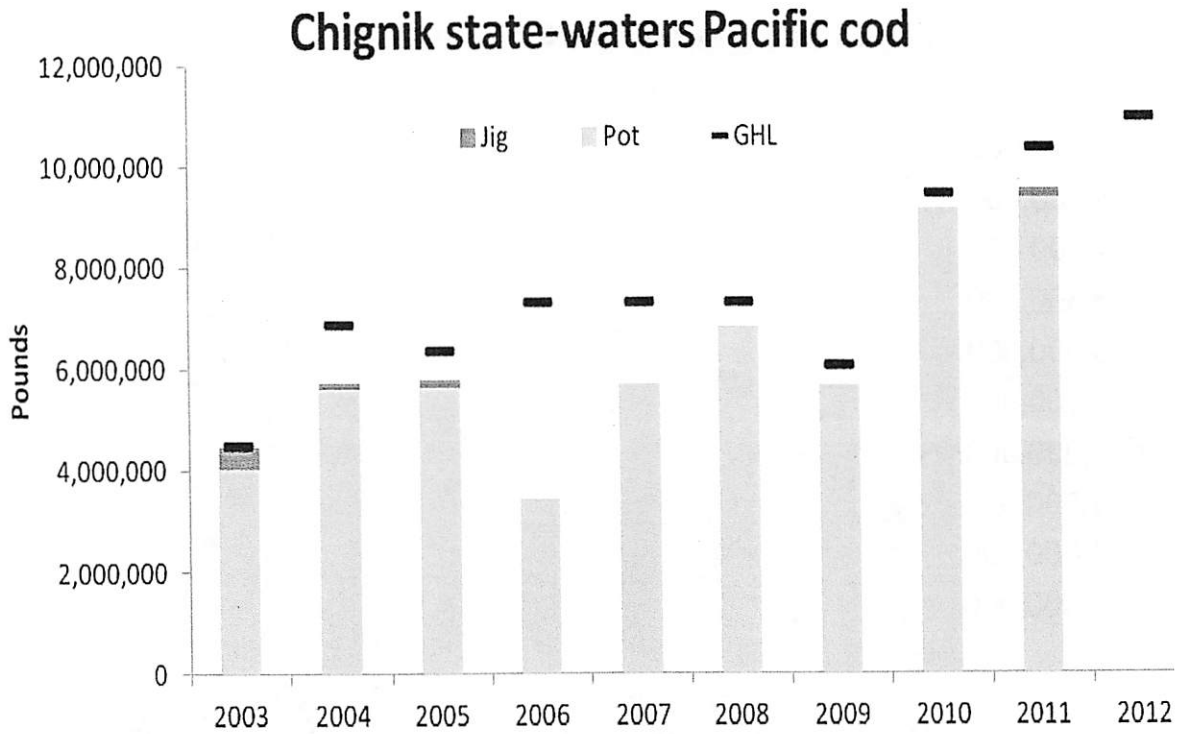


Figure 7

