



# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## Advisory Panel MINUTES

DECEMBER 6-9, 2022 – Anchorage, AK

*The Advisory Panel met Tuesday, December 6, through , Friday, December 9, 2022, at the Hilton Hotel, In Anchorage, Alaska. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are ~~stricken~~):*

Briggie, Tamara  
Christiansen, Ruth (Co-VC)  
Gudmundsson, Gretar  
Heuker, Tim  
Johnson, Jim  
Johnson, Mellisa

Kauffman, Jeff  
~~Kavanaugh, Julie~~  
Mann, Heather  
Mitchell, Lauren (Co-VC)  
O'Donnell, Paddy  
O'Neil, Megan

Ritchie, Brian (Chair)  
Upton, Matt  
Wilkins, Paul  
Wilt, Sinclair  
Zagorski, Suzie

The AP approved the minutes from the October 2022 meeting.

## C2 Snow Crab Rebuilding

The Advisory Panel (AP) recommends that the Council select Alternative 2 Option 2 from the initial review as the preliminary preferred alternative for rebuilding Bering Sea snow crab.

In addition, the AP supports the SSC's recommendation on suggested additions to be analyzed in the final review, including adding projected directed fishery harvest levels in the short-term along with economic benefits.

*Motion passed 16-0*

### Rationale:

- *The recommendation to move the analysis forward is in line with the SSC's determination that the rebuilding plan analysis is adequate to proceed to final review. This motion also supports the SSC recommendations regarding the need for more information on the potential economic impacts to the directed fishery with projected harvest levels. Given that the action alternative and options in the rebuilding plan will have severe social and economic impacts on the crab industry and the associated fishing communities, it is important to understand those estimated impacts as much as possible.*
- *The analysis shows that the maximum time to rebuild the snow crab stock is 10 years and that fishing impacts from both directed and bycatch fisheries do not significantly change the timeline to rebuild between the options. As such, in order to provide the opportunity for a direct fishery, which supports harvesters, processors, and communities, Alternative 2 Option 2 is identified as the preliminary preferred alternative. The opportunity for a small directed snow crab fishery is especially important for a community like St. Paul where the continuation of subsistence opportunities is tied to the commercial fishery.*

- *The preliminary preferred alternative retains existing conservation measures within the ADF&G harvest strategy that closes the directed fishery at low levels of abundance. The preliminary preferred alternative best complies with the Magnuson-Stevens Act to rebuild the stock as quickly as possible taking into account the needs of fishing communities.*
- *The rebuilding plan is primarily focused on timeline requirements to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Act as a result of the overfished determination. However, there may be more that can be done, through the analysis and adoption of additional comprehensive management measures, to help snow crab rebuild. While the current suite of rebuilding alternatives and options do not include other potential management measures, these may be needed to err on the side of conservation and give snow crab a better chance at recovery and it will be important for all sectors discuss such potential measures in order to best work together for the recovery of snow crab stock while also keeping all sectors fishing.*

### **C3 Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment**

The AP recommends the Council move the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Initial Review analysis forward for Final Action with updates as identified by staff.

*Motion passed 16- 0.*

#### Rationale:

- *As currently presented, the analysis is sufficient for decision-making amongst the viable action alternatives. Additionally, moving the document forward for final action takes into account the court-mandated time frame for FMP implementation.*
- *Adoption and implementation of a Federal Salmon FMP for Cook Inlet continues to be a highly complicated issue that involves meshing federal and state fishery management requirements. Salmon do not easily fit into the same type of management scheme as groundfish given their unique life history.*
- *The majority of public testimony received hesitantly supported Alternative 2 as the PPA while noting that modifications were needed in order to make the Alternative more workable within federal standards. However, specific modifications to the Alternative were not brought forward for consideration. As such, a PPA was not included as part of the motion. Having concrete suggestions for potential modifications to Alternative 2 would allow them to be incorporated into the analysis for consideration by the AP and Council at the time of final action, which would allow for selection of an alternative that best supports the needs of commercial and recreational salmon fisheries in Cook Inlet.*

## C4 BSAI Groundfish Specifications

### Motion 1

The AP has reviewed the 2022 Ecosystem Report for the EBS and AI. The AP greatly appreciates the work put into this detailed report each year.

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2022 BSAI Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The AP recommends the Council approve the final 2023 and 2024 BSAI groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1 (attached). The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod TACs have been adjusted for the State Water cod fisheries. Additionally, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands TACs for sablefish has been reduced in the BSAI (combined) by 5% to accommodate the State Water GHF fishery.

The AP recommends the Council approve Table 13 the 2023 and 2024 ABC Flatfish Reserves (below).

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2023 and 2024 PSC limits and apportionments as assigned to their respective target fisheries as provided in Tables 14, 15, 16, and 17 (below).

The AP recommends the Council approve the halibut discard mortality rates for 2023 and 2024 as shown in Table 18 (below).

*Motion passed 15-1*

### Rationale in Favor

- *Each December industry members representing the major BSAI groundfish sectors get together to develop a consensus position and recommend proposed TAC levels that take into account any changes from stock assessment updates, Plan Team recommendations, and SSC approved OFLs and ABCs. The proposed TACs take into account deductions for state water fisheries (BSAI cod and BSAI sablefish), statutory minimums (AI pollock @ 19,000 mt) and any adjustments necessary for sea lion protection (543 mackerel maximum of 65% of the ABC). The sum of the TACs cannot exceed 2 million mt and the industry proposed TAC sheet balances to that number this year.*
- *For 2023, sablefish has a 5% state-water set aside and the proposed TAC sheet recommends that 5% be deducted from both the BS and AI sablefish ABCs as the state-water fishery is a BSAI fishery. Consistent with 2022, TAC for sablefish is equal to ABC minus the state-water deduction as a means to reduce regulatory discards and hopefully allow sablefish incidental catch to be retained in more fisheries. The BS sablefish TAC was nearly completely used this year by all sectors. In the AI, the trawl sector caught a large portion of their allocation of sablefish (78% of 25% of TAC).*
- *While concerns have been expressed by members of the public regarding the need to protect small sablefish in the BS (as these fish mature and migrate into the GOA), it is important to note that the proposed TACs are conservative in that they represent the third (75%) stair-step in the full area apportionment scheme.*

- *Flatfish TACs for directed and bycatch species are similar to last year, but in some cases have been adjusted down to accommodate the increase in pollock and several other fisheries (e.g., POP, sablefish).*
- *The POP TAC recommendations are up slightly from 2022, but consistent with past years and industry's recommendation, the 543 POP TAC has been set below the ABC as a means to reduce blackspotted/rougheye catch in the western Aleutian Islands.*
- *Atka mackerel TAC recommendations are up slightly, but the areas are very similar to 2022. Consistent with SSL regulations, the 543 mackerel TAC has been set to 65% of the ABC.*
- *The skate TAC has been adjusted down slightly for 2023 (-9.2%) to account for the drop in P. cod TAC (-9.6%) where most of the skate incidental catch occurs.*

### Rationale in Opposition

- *Concerns have been expressed in public comment and public testimony around the continued high increases in the BSAI Sablefish TAC. At this time there are no alternative harvest control rules for making different recommendations. The option is available to set a more conservative Sablefish TAC for social, economic and/or ecological reasons and still be in alignment with National Standard 1. There is room for conservation of this long lived resource in hopes that it will reach a more robust maturity and meaningfully contribute to the spawning stock biomass in the future.*
- *The average age of sablefish in the BSAI is about 4.5 years old and sablefish are 90 percent sexually mature at age 10. The 2014-2019 year classes make up 60 percent of the spawning biomass despite being only partially mature. This is the portion of the population the BSAI groundfish fisheries are putting the most pressure on with continued increases in TAC. The stock assessment states that "Any impediments to these recent year classes reaching fully mature ages could negatively affect the population and future ABCs."*
- *The increased catch and marketing of juvenile sablefish has negative economic impacts to the fishery by driving down the price. The GOA, aside from Western Gulf, is looking at static to decreasing TAC in 2023 and regional decreases in 2024. This coupled with a depressed price will hurt many participants of the directed fishery in the GOA.*
- *Both the resource and the industry will benefit from allowing the current strong sablefish year classes to reach more maturity and contribute to both the spawning biomass and the economic value of the resource.*

## **Motion 2**

The AP encourages the sablefish stock assessment authors to explore alternative harvest control strategies for sablefish for future consideration by the SSC, AP and Council.

*Motion passed 15-0*

### *Rationale in Favor*

- *This motion is in direct response to the Joint Plan team presentation that the team is recommending consideration of alternative harvest control rules for long lived species like sablefish. The Team requested the SSC recommend the AFSC (and ADF&G, where appropriate) to consider two proposals for working groups one of which is for a working group that addresses current policies affecting harvest control rules and develop new approaches for accounting for changes in ecosystems related to climate change, including the exploration of environmental data to help inform recruitment.*
- *Current harvest control rules are guidelines that determine how much fishing can take place based on indicators of the targeted stock status. With a long-lived stock like sablefish, these harvest control rules do not necessarily place value on age structure and treats partially mature age classes the same as fully mature age classes.*
- *Alternative harvest control rules, such as capped or maximum ABC approach, could aid in stabilizing long-term sablefish dynamics and may help create more stability in sablefish TACs over longer time periods rather than continuing peak and valley management.*

Table 1. Advisory Panel recommended TACs with SSC specified OFL, ABC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2023-2024 12/8/2022

Species	Area	2021				2022				2023			2024		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 12/31/2021	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch as of 11/5/2022	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,594,000	1,626,000	1,375,000	1,376,258	1,469,000	1,111,000	1,111,000	1,103,996	3,381,000	1,910,000	1,300,000	4,639,000	2,275,000	1,302,000
	AI	61,856	51,241	19,000	1,840	61,264	50,752	19,000	2,895	52,383	43,413	19,000	52,043	43,092	19,000
	Bogoslof	113,479	85,109	250	8	113,479	85,109	250	256	115,146	86,360	300	115,146	86,360	300
Pacific cod	BS	147,949	123,805	111,380	109,202	183,012	153,383	136,466	127,885	172,495	144,834	127,409	166,814	140,159	123,295
	AI	27,400	20,600	13,796	7,298	27,400	20,600	13,796	6,178	18,416	13,812	8,425	18,416	13,812	8,425
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	60,426	29,558	n/a		40,432	34,521	n/a		47,390	40,502		48,561	41,539	
	BS	n/a	3,396	3,396	4,169	n/a	5,264	5,264	5,205	n/a	8,417	7,996	n/a	10,185	9,676
	AI	n/a	4,717	4,717	1,578	n/a	6,463	6,463	2,193	n/a	8,884	8,440	n/a	10,308	9,793
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	341,571	313,477	200,000	108,788	377,071	354,014	250,000	149,869	404,882	378,499	230,000	495,155	462,890	230,656
	BSAI	8,568	7,326	6,025	1,597	7,687	6,572	6,572	1,477	4,645	3,960	3,960	3,947	3,364	3,364
Greenland turbot	BS	n/a	6,176	5,125	1,130	n/a	5,540	5,540	1,038	n/a	3,338	3,338	n/a	2,836	2,836
	AI	n/a	1,150	900	467	n/a	1,032	1,032	439	n/a	622	622	n/a	528	528
	BSAI	90,873	77,349	15,000	9,014	94,445	80,389	20,000	7,626	98,787	83,852	15,000	103,070	87,511	15,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	10,630	8,982	8,982	6,667	10,903	9,214	9,214	8,349	8,946	7,579	7,579	8,776	7,435	7,435
Northern rock sole	BSAI	145,180	140,306	54,500	14,393	214,084	206,896	66,000	18,242	166,034	121,719	66,000	196,011	119,969	66,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	75,863	62,567	25,000	10,259	77,967	64,288	35,500	14,559	79,256	65,344	35,500	81,167	66,927	35,500
Alaska plaice	BSAI	37,924	31,657	24,500	15,862	39,305	32,697	29,221	11,006	40,823	33,946	17,500	43,328	36,021	18,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	22,919	17,189	6,500	2,638	22,919	17,189	10,000	2,550	22,919	17,189	4,500	22,919	17,189	4,500
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	44,376	37,173	35,899	35,479	42,605	35,688	35,385	22,629	50,133	42,038	37,703	49,279	41,322	38,264
	BS	n/a	10,782	10,782	10,693	n/a	10,352	10,352	9,665	n/a	11,903	11,903	n/a	11,700	11,700
	EAI	n/a	8,419	8,419	8,288	n/a	8,083	8,083	5,924	n/a	8,152	8,152	n/a	8,013	8,013
	CAI	n/a	6,198	6,198	5,993	n/a	5,950	5,950	5,823	n/a	5,648	5,648	n/a	5,551	5,551
	WAI	n/a	11,774	10,500	10,505	n/a	11,303	11,000	10,882	n/a	16,335	12,000	n/a	16,058	13,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	18,917	15,557	13,000	6,212	23,420	19,217	17,000	7,801	22,776	18,687	11,000	22,105	18,135	11,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	576	482	482	515	598	503	503	386	703	525	525	763	570	570
	EBS/EAI	n/a	313	313	196	n/a	326	326	137		359	359		388	388
	CAI/WAI	n/a	169	169	319	n/a	177	177	249		166	166		182	182
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	722	541	500	496	722	541	541	284	706	530	530	706	530	530
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,751	1,313	916	1,002	1,751	1,313	1,144	1,224	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,680	1,260	1,260
	BS	n/a	919	522	392	n/a	919	750	647		880	880		880	880
	AI	n/a	394	394	610	n/a	394	394	577		380	380		380	380
Atka mackerel	BSAI	85,580	73,590	62,257	61,354	91,870	78,510	66,481	54,311	118,787	98,588	69,282	101,188	86,464	66,855
	EAI/BS	n/a	25,760	25,760	25,183	n/a	27,260	27,260	15,504	n/a	43,281	27,260	n/a	37,958	30,000
	CAI	n/a	15,450	15,450	15,308	n/a	16,880	16,880	16,599	n/a	17,351	17,351	n/a	15,218	15,218
	WAI	n/a	32,380	21,047	20,863	n/a	34,370	22,341	22,208	n/a	37,956	24,671	n/a	33,288	21,637
Skates	BSAI	49,297	41,257	18,000	20,029	47,790	39,958	30,000	27,799	46,220	38,605	27,441	44,168	36,837	27,927
Sharks	BSAI	689	517	200	221	689	517	500	125	689	450	250	689	450	250
Octopuses	BSAI	4,769	3,576	700	170	4,769	3,576	700	254	4,769	3,576	400	4,769	3,576	400
<b>Total</b>	BSAI	<b>3,945,315</b>	<b>2,747,727</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>1,795,049</b>	<b>2,953,182</b>	<b>2,383,653</b>	<b>1,871,000</b>	<b>1,586,764</b>	<b>4,859,585</b>	<b>3,155,268</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>6,219,700</b>	<b>3,590,412</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

Sources: 2021 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs and 2022 OFLs and ABCs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2020 and December 2021 respectively; 2021 catches through December 31, and 2022 catches through November 5, 2022 from AKR Catch Accounting.

Table 13–Final 2023 and 2024 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, Community Development Quota (CDQ) ABC Reserves, and Amendment 80 ABC Reserves In the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector	2023 Flathead sole	2023 Rock sole	2023 Yellowfin sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Flathead sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Rock sole	2024 <sup>1</sup> Yellowfin sole
ABC	65,344	121,719	378,499	66,927	119,969	462,890
TAC	35,500	66,000	230,000	35,500	66,000	230,656
ABC surplus	29,844	55,719	148,499	31,427	53,969	232,234
ABC reserve	29,844	55,719	148,499	31,427	53,969	232,234
CDQ ABC reserve	3,193	5,962	15,889	3,363	5,775	24,849
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	26,651	49,757	132,610	28,064	48,194	207,385

<sup>1</sup> The 2024 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2023.

Table 14–Final 2023 And 2024 Apportionment of Prohibited Species Catch Allowances to Non-Trawl Gear, the CDQ Program, Amendment 80, and the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors

PSC species and area and zone <sup>1</sup>	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve <sup>2</sup>	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector <sup>3</sup>	BSAI trawl limited access sector	BSAI PSC limits not allocated <sup>3</sup>
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,515	710	315	n/a	1,745	745	-
Herring (mt) BSAI	3,444	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	32,000	n/a	3,424	28,576	14,282	8,739	5,555
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	4,350,000	n/a	465,450	3,884,550	1,909,256	1,248,494	726,799
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	830,000	n/a	88,810	741,190	312,115	348,285	80,790
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,520,000	n/a	269,640	2,250,360	532,660	1,053,394	664,306

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

<sup>3</sup> The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits for crab below the total PSC limit. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

Table 15–Final 2023 And 2024 Herring and Red King Crab Savings Subarea Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for all Trawl Sectors

Fishery Categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	200	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish <sup>1</sup>	99	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	10	n/a
Rockfish	10	n/a
Pacific cod	18	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	3,066	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>2,3</sup>	41	n/a
2023 Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>4</sup>	n/a	-
2024 Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>5</sup>	n/a	8,000
Total trawl PSC	3,444	32,000

<sup>1</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

<sup>3</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

<sup>4</sup> Section 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B) establishes criteria under which an annual red king crab bycatch limit must be specified for the Red King

<sup>5</sup> If the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery remains closed in the 2023/2024 crab season, the RKCSS specification will be zero. If the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery is open in the 2023/2024 crab season, NMFS, after consultation with the Council, will specify an annual red king crab bycatch limit for the RKCSS, which is limited by regulation to up to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (§

**Note:** Species allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 16–Final 2023 And 2024 Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector

BSAI trawl limited access fisheries	Prohibited species and area and zone <sup>1</sup>				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	265	7,700	1,192,179	293,234	1,005,879
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish April 15 - December 31	5	-	1,006	-	849
Pacific cod	300	975	50,281	50,816	42,424
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>3</sup>	175	65	5,028	4,235	4,243
Total BSAI trawl limited access PSC	745	8,739	1,248,494	348,285	1,053,394

**Note:** Seasonal or sector allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

<sup>3</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

Table 17–Final 2023 And 2024 Halibut Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI				
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Total Pacific cod	648	13	661
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 13	162	2	n/a
	August 13-December 31	98	2	n/a
Non-Pacific cod non-trawl	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	49
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710

**Note:** Seasonal or sector allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 18–2023 and 2024 Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMR) For The BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	85
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	62
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Pot	All	26



## C5 GOA Groundfish Specs

The AP recommends that the Council approve the 2022 Gulf of Alaska SAFE report.

The AP recommends that the Council approve the final 2023 and 2024 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The TACs for both GOA Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water Guideline Harvest Level fisheries. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in Table 2 in the action memo.

The AP recommends that the Council set the final 2023 and 2024 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances and apportionments in the GOA as shown in Tables 14 – 16 in the action memo.

The AP recommends the Council approve the updated halibut discard mortality rates for 2023 and 2024 as shown in Table 17.

*Motion passed 16-0*

### Rationale

- *The recommended TACs presented in Table 1 reflect GOA groundfish industry recommendations.*
- *Some species' TACs are set below the ABC recommendations. These species include flatfish species complexes in some regulatory areas, other rockfish in SE, and Atka Mackerel GOA wide.*
- *For sablefish, the TAC is set to equal ABC in all GOA regulatory areas. These TAC amounts are almost identical to the values set in 2022.*

Table 1. SSC recommended OFL and ABC and AP recommended TAC for Final Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications (metric tons) for 2023 and 2024

12/10/2022

Species	Area	2022				Catch as of 11/5/2022	2023			2024		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL		ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC	
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	3,327	n/a		n/a	3,723	n/a	n/a	4,027	n/a	
	W (610)	n/a	23,714	23,714	23,595	n/a	26,958	26,958	n/a	29,156	29,156	
	C (620)	n/a	69,250	69,250	69,341	n/a	77,005	77,005	n/a	83,283	83,283	
	C (630)	n/a	30,068	30,068	30,499	n/a	33,729	33,729	n/a	36,478	36,478	
	WYAK	n/a	6,722	6,722	6,441	n/a	7,523	7,523	n/a	8,136	8,136	
	Subtotal		154,983	133,081	129,754	129,876	173,470	148,938	145,215	186,101	161,080	157,053
	EYAK/SEO	15,150	11,363	11,363	-	15,150	11,363	11,363	15,150	11,363	11,363	
	Total	170,133	144,444	141,117	129,876	188,620	160,301	156,578	201,251	172,443	168,416	
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	9,942	6,959	4,926	n/a	7,464	5,225	n/a	6,873	4,811	
	C	n/a	19,752	14,814	13,070	n/a	14,830	11,123	n/a	13,655	10,241	
	E	n/a	3,117	2,338	279	n/a	2,340	1,755	n/a	2,155	1,616	
	Total		39,555	32,811	24,111	18,275	29,737	24,634	18,103	27,507	22,683	16,668
Sablefish	W	n/a	3,727	3,727	2,799	n/a	4,473	4,473	n/a	4,626	4,626	
	C	n/a	9,965	9,965	7,342	n/a	9,921	9,921	n/a	8,819	8,819	
	WYAK	n/a	3,437	3,437	2,643	n/a	3,205	3,205	n/a	2,669	2,669	
	SEO	n/a	5,665	5,665	4,747	n/a	5,602	5,602	n/a	4,981	4,981	
	GOA Total	n/a	22,794	22,794	17,531	n/a	n/a	23,201	n/a	n/a	21,095	
	AK Total		40,432	34,521	n/a	n/a	47,390	40,502	n/a	48,561	41,539	n/a
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	21,256	13,250	33	n/a	22,485	13,250	n/a	23,299	13,250	
	C	n/a	25,305	25,305	1,251	n/a	26,769	26,769	n/a	27,737	27,737	
	WYAK	n/a	2,531	2,531	8	n/a	2,677	2,677	n/a	2,774	2,774	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,518	1,518	2	n/a	1,606	1,606	n/a	1,664	1,664	
	Total		62,273	50,610	42,604	1,294	65,736	53,537	44,302	68,015	55,474	45,425
Deep-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	256	256	2	n/a	256	256	n/a	255	255	
	C	n/a	2,139	2,139	117	n/a	2,105	2,105	n/a	2,068	2,068	
	WYAK	n/a	1,431	1,431	3	n/a	1,407	1,407	n/a	1,383	1,383	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,082	2,082	-	n/a	2,048	2,048	n/a	2,013	2,013	
	Total		7,026	5,908	5,908	122	6,918	5,816	5,816	6,802	5,719	5,719
Rex Sole	W	n/a	2,981	2,981	40	n/a	3,236	3,236	n/a	3,314	3,314	
	C	n/a	12,076	12,076	654	n/a	13,110	13,110	n/a	13,425	13,425	
	WYAK	n/a	1,361	1,361	-	n/a	1,439	1,439	n/a	1,453	1,453	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,723	2,723	-	n/a	2,879	2,879	n/a	2,905	2,905	
	Total		23,302	19,141	19,141	694	25,135	20,664	20,664	25,652	21,097	21,097
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	n/a	33,658	14,500	438	n/a	30,469	14,500	n/a	30,093	14,500	
	C	n/a	68,394	68,394	10,926	n/a	65,000	65,000	n/a	64,200	64,200	
	WYAK	n/a	6,707	6,707	36	n/a	7,886	7,886	n/a	7,789	7,789	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	11,020	6,900	56	n/a	16,130	6,900	n/a	15,932	6,900	
	Total		143,100	119,779	96,501	11,456	142,749	119,485	94,286	141,008	118,014	93,389
Flathead Sole	W	n/a	14,755	8,650	42	n/a	12,793	8,650	n/a	13,033	8,650	
	C	n/a	22,033	15,400	521	n/a	21,487	21,487	n/a	21,892	21,892	
	WYAK	n/a	1,511	1,511	-	n/a	2,320	2,320	n/a	2,363	2,363	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,876	1,876	-	n/a	2,880	2,880	n/a	2,934	2,934	
	Total		48,928	40,175	27,437	563	48,161	39,480	35,337	49,073	40,222	35,839
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	2,602	2,602	2,506	n/a	2,529	2,529	n/a	2,461	2,461	
	C	n/a	30,806	30,806	25,039	n/a	29,940	29,940	n/a	29,138	29,138	
	WYAK	n/a	1,409	1,409	1,398	n/a	1,370	1,370	n/a	1,333	1,333	
	W/C/WYAK	41,470	34,817	34,817	28,943	40,308	33,839	33,839	39,229	32,932	32,932	
	SEO	4,110	3,451	3,451	-	3,994	3,354	3,354	3,888	3,264	3,264	
	Total		45,580	38,268	38,268	28,943	44,302	37,193	37,193	43,117	36,196	36,196
Northern Rockfish	W	n/a	1,944	1,944	474	n/a	2,614	2,614	n/a	2,497	2,497	
	C	n/a	3,202	3,202	1,405	n/a	2,350	2,350	n/a	2,244	2,244	
	E	n/a	-	-	-	n/a	-	-	n/a	-	-	
	Total		6,143	5,146	5,146	1,879	5,927	4,964	4,964	5,661	4,741	4,741
Shortraker Rockfish	W	n/a	51	51	7	n/a	51	51	n/a	51	51	
	C	n/a	280	280	287	n/a	280	280	n/a	280	280	
	E	n/a	374	374	149	n/a	374	374	n/a	374	374	
	Total		940	705	705	443	940	705	705	940	705	705
Dusky Rockfish	W	n/a	269	269	106	n/a	149	149	n/a	141	141	
	C	n/a	4,534	4,534	2,455	n/a	7,647	7,647	n/a	7,264	7,264	
	WYAK	n/a	427	427	6	n/a	90	90	n/a	85	85	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	142	142	1	n/a	31	31	n/a	30	30	
	Total		8,614	5,372	5,372	2,568	9,638	7,917	7,917	9,154	7,520	7,520
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W	n/a	184	184	95	n/a	180	180	n/a	180	180	
	C	n/a	235	235	183	n/a	232	232	n/a	231	231	
	E	n/a	369	369	160	n/a	363	363	n/a	361	361	
	Total		947	788	788	438	930	775	775	927	772	772
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	579	365	365	163	376	283	283	376	283	283	
Thornyhead Rockfish	W	n/a	352	352	108	n/a	314	314	n/a	314	314	
	C	n/a	910	910	173	n/a	693	693	n/a	693	693	
	E	n/a	691	691	74	n/a	621	621	n/a	621	621	
	Total		2,604	1,953	1,953	355	2,170	1,628	1,628	2,170	1,628	1,628
Other Rockfish	W/C	n/a	940	940	1,134	n/a	940	940	n/a	940	940	
	WYAK	n/a	370	370	76	n/a	370	370	n/a	370	370	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,744	300	56	n/a	2,744	300	n/a	2,744	300	
	Total		5,320	4,054	1,610	1,266	5,320	4,054	1,610	5,320	4,054	1,610
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	3,000	880	6,200	4,700	3,000	6,200	4,700	3,000	
Big Skate	W	n/a	591	591	163	n/a	591	591	n/a	591	591	
	C	n/a	1,482	1,482	668	n/a	1,482	1,482	n/a	1,482	1,482	
	E	n/a	794	794	113	n/a	794	794	n/a	794	794	
	Total		3,822	2,867	2,867	944	3,822	2,867	2,867	3,822	2,867	2,867
Longnose Skate	W	n/a	151	151	58	n/a	151	151	n/a	151	151	
	C	n/a	2,044	2,044	482	n/a	2,044	2,044	n/a	2,044	2,044	
	E	n/a	517	517	400	n/a	517	517	n/a	517	517	
	Total		3,616	2,712	2,712	940	3,616	2,712	2,712	3,616	2,712	2,712
Other Skates	GOA-wide	1,311	984	984	822	1,311	984	984	1,311	984	984	
Sharks	GOA-wide	5,006	3,755	3,755	2,112	6,521	4,891	4,891	6,521	4,891	4,891	
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,307	980	980	111	1,307	980	980	1,307	980	980	
TOTAL		626,738	520,038	448,118	221,675	646,826	539,072	468,796	658,311	550,224	476,537	

Sources: 2022 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2021, 2022 catches through Nov 5, 2022, from AKR Catch Accounting. Note: The sablefish ABC total for the GOA is not included in the grand total. The Alaska-wide sablefish OFL and ABC are included in the grand total.

**Table 2. GOA TAC and GHL Considerations for State Waters Pacific Cod**

**Final 2023 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and State Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) in metric tons.**

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	7,464	14,830	2,340	24,634
State GHL	2,239	3,708	585	6,532
(%)	30%	25%	25%	25-30
Federal TAC	5,225	11,123	1,755	18,103

Note: The Federal TAC is only for Federal fisheries. It does not include the State GHL within it.

**Final 2024 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and State Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) in metric tons.**

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	6,873	13,655	2,155	22,683
State GHL	2,062	3,414	539	6,014
(%)	30%	25%	25%	25-30
Federal TAC	4,811	10,241	1,616	16,669

Note: The Federal TAC is only for Federal fisheries. It does not include the State GHL within it.

**Table 14--Final 2023 and 2024 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments (Values are in metric tons)**

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear <sup>1</sup>				
			Other than DSR			DSR	
Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	30.4	519	January 1 - June 10	86	221	January 1 - December 31	9
April 1 - July 1	20	341	June 10 - September 1	2	5		
July 1 - August 1	27	462	September 1 - December 31	12	31		
August 1 - October 1	7.5	128					
October 1 - December 31	15	256					
Total		1,705			257		9

<sup>1</sup> The Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for hook-and-line gear is allocated to the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and fisheries other than DSR. Since 1995, the Council has recommended and NMFS proposed that the hook-and-line sablefish fishery, and the pot and jig gear groundfish fisheries, be exempt from halibut PSC limits.

**Table 15--Final 2023 and 2024 Seasonal Apportionments of the Pacific Halibut PSC Limit Apportioned Between the Trawl Gear Shallow-Water and Deep-Water Species Fisheries (Values are in metric tons)**

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water <sup>1</sup>	Total
January 20 - April 1	384	135	519
April 1 - July 1	85	256	341
July 1 - August 1	121	341	462
August 1 - October 1	53	75	128
Subtotal, January 20 - October 1	643	807	1,450
October 1 - December 31 <sup>2</sup>			256
Total			1,705

<sup>1</sup> Vessels participating in cooperatives in the Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 through August 1) deep-water species fishery halibut PSC apportionment.

<sup>2</sup> There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fisheries during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

**Table 16--Final 2023 and 2024 Apportionments of the “Other hook-and-line fisheries” Halibut PSC Allowance Between the Hook-and-Line Gear Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Sectors (Values are in metric tons)**

“Other than DSR” allowance	Hook-and-line sector	Sector annual amount	Season	Seasonal percentage	Sector seasonal amount
257	Catcher Vessel	150	January 1 - June 10	86	129
			June 10 - September 1	2	3
			September 1 - December 31	12	18
	Catcher/Processor	107	January 1 - June 10	86	92
			June 10 - September 1	2	2
			September 1 - December 31	12	13

**Table 17--Final 2023 and 2024 Discard Mortality Rates for Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Alaska  
(Values are percent of halibut assumed to be dead)**

Gear	Sector	Groundfish fishery	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	All	100
	Catcher/processor	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	Rockfish Program	55
	Catcher vessel	All others	74
	Mothership and catcher/processor	All	83
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	All	13
	Catcher vessel	All	9
Pot	Catcher vessel and catcher/processor	All	27

## C6 2023 Charter Halibut Management Measures

For IPHC Areas 2C and 3A, the AP Recommends the Council adopt the following management measures:

### In IPHC Area 2C:

- A reverse slot with an upper size limit fixed at O80, and a lower size limit decreased until the allocation is reached, but no lower than U40; Yield 0.867 – 1.121 million pounds (**Table 2C.5**).
- If the allocation is insufficient to maintain at least a U40 on the lower size limit, add Monday closures starting September 18 and work consecutively toward the beginning of the season until the allocation is reached; Yield 0.867 - 0.734 million pounds (**Table 2C.8.b**).
- If a lower size limit of U40 can't be reached after closing all Mondays, add an annual limit of 3 fish as necessary to meet the allocation (Yield 0.693 million pounds); if possible, use any unused allocation to increase the lower size limit above U40 until the allocation is reached; Yield 0.686 – 0.723 million pounds (**Table 2C.10.b**).
- If the allocation is not reached by closing all Mondays and a 3-fish annual limit, allow the lower size limit to decrease from U40 until the allocation is reached; Yield 0.564 – 0.686 million pounds (**Table 2C.10.b**).

If an annual limit is adopted in IPHC Area 2C, implement a requirement for charter anglers to record, immediately upon retaining a halibut, the date, location (IPHC regulatory area), and species (halibut) on their harvest record card, consistent with the past reporting requirement in Area 3A.

### For IPHC Area 3A:

All allocations shown below include, unless otherwise specified: a daily bag limit of 2 halibut; with no annual limit per charter angler; 1 trip per halibut charter vessel per day; and 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.

- If the allocation is less than 2.37 Mlb, but greater than or equal to 2.075 Mlb:
  - a daily bag limit of 2 halibut, with one fish of any size, and one fish less than or equal to 28 inches;
  - Adjust the number of Wednesdays closed to retention of halibut, with a second fish of 28" or less, according to **Table 3A.13 (page 74)** in ADF&G analysis of proposed charter halibut management measures for 2023, to bring the projected removals within the Area 3A charter halibut allocation.
- If the allocation is less than 2.075 Mlb, but greater than 1.75 Mlb: in addition to all closed Wednesdays, close as many Tuesdays as needed to keep the charter removals within their allocation (**Table 3A.5, page 65**)
  - Should the allocation be below 1.75 Mlb: lower the size of the second fish to as low as 26 inches associated with an allocation of 1.69Mlb

*Motion passed 16-0*

Rationale:

- *All of the recommended management measures reflect the recommendations made by the Charter Halibut Committee.*
- *Area 2C Committee members stated that recommending these types of restrictions are not taken lightly by the Committee and that they understand these measures (e.g., annual limits, day of the week closures, etc.) will have real durable impacts on businesses. Members noted the Catch Sharing Plan was a blunt tool that does not allow for more refined business-specific economic responses and therefore the impacts to individual businesses are varied as a result of management measures chosen.*
- *Area 3A Committee members noted the proposed recommendations represent the easiest ways to cover the very large range of allocations that could be set at the IPHC. They emphasized that it was alarming to look at the extreme measures but felt optimistic that these would not need to apply for 2023. Members stated that providing consistent regulations was a big part of the strategy behind what was proposed. Consistent management measures allow for better ADF&G projections and are desirable from a business and marketing standpoint.*
- *Given the lack of an interim harvest strategy from the IPHC, both IPHC areas were required to cover a wide range of circumstances, which included bringing in some very undesirable measures to the list. Members stated they arrived at the proposed hierarchy of measures as a compromise, including all the available tools.*

## D1 Salmon Bycatch

### Motion 1

The AP recommends the Council initiate an analysis to examine a range of alternatives, ~~including a PSC limit of zero~~, to set a PSC limit for Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch.

In developing this analysis, the Council should work collaboratively with Tribal governments, consult with Tribes and include Traditional and Indigenous knowledge as a key component of the analysis.

*Amendment 1 (to strike the language "including a PSC limit of zero") passed 13-3*

*Amendment 2 (to add the Purpose and Need Statement as well as a PSC limit range of 100K to 400K) failed 8-8*

### Purpose and Need

~~Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards direct management Councils to balance achieving optimum yield with bycatch reduction as well as to minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. Non-Chinook salmon (primarily made up of chum salmon) prohibited species bycatch (PSC) in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery is of concern because chum salmon are an important stock for subsistence and commercial fisheries in Alaska. There is currently no limitation on the amount of non-Chinook PSC that can be taken in the directed pollock trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea. The potential for high levels of chum salmon bycatch as well as longterm impacts of more moderate bycatch levels on conservation and abundance, may have adverse impacts in fishery dependent communities.~~

~~Non-Chinook salmon PSC is managed under chum salmon savings areas and the voluntary Rolling Hot Spot (RHS) Program. Hard caps, area closures and enhanced RHS may be needed to ensure that non-Chinook PSC is limited and remains at a level that will minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. The Council should structure non-Chinook PSC management measures to provide incentive for the pollock trawl fleet to improve performance in avoiding non-Chinook salmon while achieving optimum yield from the directed fishery and objectives of the Amendment 91 Chinook salmon PSC management program. NonChinook salmon PSC reduction measures should focus, to the extent possible, on reducing impacts to Alaska chum salmon as a top priority.~~

~~The AP recommends the Council initiate an analysis to set a PSC limit for Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch with a PSC limit of 100K to 400K.~~

~~In developing this analysis, the Council should work collaboratively with Tribal governments, consult with Tribes and include Traditional and Indigenous knowledge as a key component of the analysis.~~



## **Substitute Motion**

The AP recommends the Council support continued engagement of the Salmon Bycatch Committee, including adoption of its terms of reference (as modified), proposed meeting schedule, and itemized list of information requests for future consideration.

*Substitute Motion Passed 12-4*

### *Rationale in Favor of Amendment 1*

- *Including an option for a PSC limit of zero chum salmon would violate several of the National Standards contained in the MSA. It would not meet National Standard 9 for minimizing bycatch to the greatest extent practicable. Given that a PSC limit of zero chum salmon would result in a closure of the BS pollock fishery, inclusion of this option also does not meet National Standard 1 for achieving optimum yield. The pollock fishery supports processors, which in turn support communities, throughout the Bering Sea. If it were to be shut down, the negative downstream effects would not meet National Standard 8 for consideration of coastal fishery-dependent communities (without the pollock fishery, processors wouldn't be available to buy other species as their operations would be shut down).*

### *Rationale in Opposition to Amendment 1*

- *Including an option for a PSC limit of zero chum salmon is responsive to the numerous comment letters and public testimony provided by those stakeholders directly feeling the significant impacts from decreased chum salmon returns in western Alaska.*
- *Tribes and Alaska Native communities have been consistently asking for zero salmon bycatch, and a PSC limit of zero should be analyzed as an alternative among other PSC limit numbers and alternatives (non-PSC limits) to reduce chum salmon bycatch.*

### *Rationale in Favor of Amendment 2*

- *The addition of the Purpose and Need was intended to outline that the main concern in this agenda item is salmon bycatch. The concerns expressed in this Purpose and Need are on salmon bycatch in the eastern bering sea pollock fishery. This P & N statement originated from the 2012 Council analysis on the same topic and 10 years later it is still relevant. 10 years ago it was determined that priority would be placed on chinook salmon and no action was taken. Now is the time to place priority on all species of salmon, not just chinook.*
- *The addition of a range of 100,000 to 400,000 chum salmon for a chum salmon PSC cap is intended to assist the staff and Council in developing a more specific analysis. While public testimony and comment letters expressed the desire to see a range starting at zero, it is recognized that it would result in a full closure of the EBS pollock fishery and that is not the intention of this amendment. A PSC limit for chum is absolutely necessary as the pollock industry has demonstrated they are not capable of meaningfully reducing bycatch when chum stocks are low.*
- *The starting point of 100,000 chum salmon for analysis was derived through the historic mean chum salmon bycatch from 1991-2021 as 200,000 chum and the assumption that +/- 50% is Asian hatchery chum salmon. The 400,000 high mark was to leave enough room for meaningful consideration and analysis as to the overall effect on both potential salmon returns as well as negative impacts on the pollock industry.*

### Rationale in Opposition to Amendment 2

- *While the Council did consider management actions related to chum salmon PSC management 10 years ago, that previous Purpose and Need statement (and its intended goals) is not necessarily applicable to potential Council action now. Information and data available from over the last 10 years, applied to the current situation, should be used to develop a new Purpose and Need statement that clearly outlines its new/updated management goals.*
- *Given that the Salmon Bycatch Committee has only had one meeting, it is premature to request an analysis and signal to the public that the establishment of a chum salmon PSC cap is the only management measure to be considered by the Council. The Salmon Bycatch Committee should be given the opportunity to develop other potential management measures so that the Council has a broad suite of alternatives for analysis and consideration. In discussing a suite of potential management alternatives, the Committee could also make recommendations related to the development of a Purpose and Need statement.*

### Rationale in Favor of Substitute Motion

- *The Council responded positively to the AP's recommendation for the establishment of a Salmon Bycatch Committee. This Committee has only had the opportunity to meet once and this was primarily an introductory meeting setting the stage for moving forward with the charge outlined in the Terms of Reference. It's important to note that the Committee wasn't able to review the Governor's Bycatch Taskforce recommendations. Any action at this time to initiate a single specific chum salmon management action (PSC cap) usurps the Committee process and seemingly prevents the opportunity for the diverse membership of the Committee to develop consensus recommendations regarding chum salmon.*
- *The Salmon Bycatch Committee should be viewed as the more direct and efficient process for developing alternatives for analysis. All stakeholders on the committee need the chance to fully explain their fishery and their fishery operations so that better understanding and appreciation amongst its members, and the stakeholders they represent, can be developed. It was noted in public testimony how complex the pollock IPAs are and pollock industry representatives want the opportunity to fully explain the execution and benefits these IPAs provide and how they may be more effective for reduction of chum salmon bycatch than a hard cap. Similarly, there is a desire to have other members of the Committee bring forward local and traditional knowledge to help provide an understanding of that knowledge base and how it may best be utilized. Continuation of the Committee should not simply be to discuss or recommend chum salmon PSC caps and what they could or could not be based on; continuation of the Committee should be to develop a full range of potential management options (beyond just a hard cap), to the best of their ability over multiple meetings, for consideration by the Council.*
- *The motion is not intended to delay potential Council action. It is important to note that establishment of the Committee and continuation of Committee meetings are actionable steps being taken by the Council and the Committee process could expedite the process. While understanding and appreciating the urgency voiced by WAK representatives, whether an analysis is initiated in December or April will have a negligible impact on timing of a potential final action. However, it will take away valuable timing and opportunity for the Salmon Bycatch Committee. One of the key benefits of a Council Committee is its ability to operate and function in a more intimate and focused environment allowing for improved communication and understanding. Given the highly charged nature of salmon bycatch management, the Committee process should be seen as critical and should be supported.*

Rationale in Opposition to Substitute Motion

- *The crisis being faced by subsistence salmon fisheries and communities throughout western Alaska warrants the Council initiating immediate action now and not waiting until some time in 2023 (or later). The loss of chum salmon on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers and in the Norton Sound region is having a devastating impact on subsistence communities that rely on these runs for the bulk of their food. In addition to threatening the food security of subsistence communities, the salmon crashes are disrupting the cultural traditions.*
- *The Salmon Bycatch Committee is a welcome and important aspect of this discussion and a motion to look at options for a chum salmon PSC cap wouldn't undermine their process. There is expressed interest in seeing their work continue and to provide other alternatives for analysis aside from a chum salmon PSC cap. The Committee process should not be fully relied on as it would result in delayed action.*
- *Had this substitute motion been proposed as an amendment to be included in the original motion there could have been more support. However, in passing the substitute motion rather than considering the original motion, the asks of the Alaska Native Tribal citizens and organizations who commented and testified are not being addressed.*
- *The substitute motion dismisses the urgency to initiate action to protect chum salmon, especially given the crisis being experienced in Western and Interior Alaska. Chum salmon on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers are now in their third year of extreme decline. Chum salmon are critical for food security throughout the AYK region, they're one of the primary salmon species harvested by Norton Sound and Yukon families, and they're one of the only salmon species that reach Kuskokwim headwaters communities to feed families.*

## E Staff Tasking

### Motion 1

The AP recommends the *Council ask staff* to revise the small sablefish release document to include, as appropriate, the analysis provided by Dr. Knuckey and the added uncertainty associated with allowing the release of small sablefish in the context of existing uncertainty in the stock assessment process.

*Motion passed 14-0*

#### Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *Public comment and testimony indicated that this remains a high priority item for the fixed gear industry. The proposed alternative in the staff tasking memo regarding the use of escape rings as a mechanism for replacing small sablefish release does not respond to the needs in the directed fishery. Not all vessels are utilizing pots at this time and the majority of vessels using pots are already utilizing escape rings for this exact purpose.*
- *The AP recognizes that staff has to prioritize its time and the assessment of Council projects indicates that this is a low priority item that could require considerable staff time and effort to come up with DMRs for sablefish. However, the statewater sablefish fisheries in Alaska as well as in British Columbia and on the West coast have provisions for small sablefish release. These fisheries utilize DMR data to estimate discard mortality in their current fisheries. It is recommended that NMFS work with state agencies to alleviate the effort needed to collect and analyze this data*
- *There is a conservation component of releasing small sablefish by allowing the juvenile fish to reach a meaningful age of maturity to contribute to the spawning stock biomass.*

### Motion 2

The AP recommends that the Council prioritize the analysis of the regulation for the C-share participation requirements that was passed as an emergency rule and will expire before the next IFQ issuance, at which time many crew may lose their QS.

*Motion passed 16-0*

#### Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *The current small TACs for most of the crab fisheries have reduced the number of vessels harvesting resulting in less capacity for crew participation. Because of this reduced fishery participation, C-Share participation/landing requirements are not being met by many C-Share holders.*
- *There is a discrepancy on the timing of the requirement and the issuance of the QS that does not line up with the recent emergency rule request. Time is of the essence in this issue as each year passes and more C-Share holders could potentially lose some part or all of their QS if they are unable to make a landing.*

### **Motion 3**

The AP recommends the Council ask staff to initiate a discussion paper exploring the removals and impacts of halibut mortality in IPHC areas 2C & 3A in the unguided rental boat sector.

*Motion passed 16-0*

#### *Rationale in Favor of Motion*

- *Public testimony expressed concern around halibut removals from the unguided rental boat sector that are not currently subjected to the same bag limits as the charter sector nor is effective catch accounting being considered in their total removals. Most of these vessels are outfitted as a charter vessel and instructed and led as a charter vessel but without the actual guide on board. In effect this has created a bit of a loophole around annual/daily bag limits, logbook reporting, and size restrictions that are placed on the guided sector to manage and inform the halibut resource.*
- *Halibut stocks across most IPHC areas, but especially in 2C and 3A, have and will continue to experience declines and it is important that the impacts of this sector in regards to removals, and discard mortality as well as impacts to communities and competing industries, are examined and properly accounted for in future management. The current survey mechanism for counting these removals, the Creel Survey, has been defunded and is unable to be physically present in the remote regions and communities where this is occurring.*
- *The unguided sector is also growing in scope and size as many charter operators are offering this as an alternative to guided fishing. Overall it is most important that all impacts and removals to this important resource be properly documented and considered in future management.*

### **Motion 4**

Move to approve the AP minutes from the October 2022 Meeting.

*Motions passed 16-0*