



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

October 7, 1998

The State of Alaska is delegated the authority to manage fisheries in federal waters for crab, scallops, troll salmon, and demersal shelf rockfish in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska. Fisheries for lingcod and state waters Pacific Cod are managed by the state. This report summarizes fishery management of these species for the period June 1 to September 22, 1998.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES

Guideline harvest levels (GHL) for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands king and Tanner crab fisheries were set for the 1998/99 season by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The GHLs are as follows:

<u>Registration Area</u>	<u>Guideline Harvest Range</u>
Aleutian golden king crab	5.7 million lbs.
Pribilof Islands red and blue king crab	1.3 million lbs.
St. Matthew Island blue king crab	4.1 million lbs.
Bristol Bay red king crab	16.4 million lbs.
Eastern Bering Sea <i>C. opilio</i> crab	196.0 million lbs.
Eastern Bering Sea <i>C. bairdi</i> crab	Fishery Closed

Notably, the Bristol Bay red king crab stock is "rebuilt". The biomass of spawners is just above the target rebuilding level of 55 million pounds specified by the Alaska Board of Fisheries harvest strategy. The increase is likely due to the above average growth of the 1990 year class coupled to a suite of management measures enacted to conserve the stock. The opposite is true for eastern Bering Sea *C. bairdi* crabs. The stock status is depressed and the stock is designated overfished under the proposed overfishing definition for this stock.

The Norton Sound red king crab fishery opened by regulation July 1 and closed September 3 by regulation. A 80,000 pound GHL was set but only 30,000 pounds were landed. Low effort was attributed to the low GHL, low price, lack of processor, and bad weather. No vessels harvested the Norton Sound CDQ for 1998.

The 1998 Community Development Quota reserves for red and blue king crabs are 3.5% of the commercial harvest and will be harvested after the commercial fishery. The CDQ for *C. opilio* crabs is 5.0% for 1999 and ADF&G had announced a preseason CDQ fishery to harvest ½ the 5% reserve based on the total GHL of 196 million pounds. However, the preseason 1998/99 CDQ

fishery for *C. opilio* crab will not occur in December as planned due to a legal technicality. The NMFS regulations creating crab CDQ reserves state that the reserves are specified by calendar year. NMFS will bring forward a proposed rule to allow management of crab CDQs based on the shellfish management year of September 1 to August 31. An amendment cannot be completed prior to December 1998.

STATEWIDE SCALLOP FISHERY

Weather-vane scallop fisheries in Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Adak, Dutch Harbor, Bering Sea and Adak Area opened July 1 while the Kamishak District of Cook Inlet opened August 15.

The maximum harvest guidelines in the Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, and Bering Sea Areas were reduced from last season's levels to accommodate proposed optimum yield standards in Amendment 6 of the NPFMC Scallop Fishery Management Plan. Guideline harvest ranges and crab bycatch limits are as follows:

<u>Registration Area</u>	<u>Guideline Harvest Range (lbs. of shucked meats)</u>	<u>Bycatch Limits</u>	
		<u>Tanner Crab</u>	<u>King Crab</u>
Yakutat	0 to 250,000	-	-
District 16	0 to 35,000	-	-
Prince William Sound	20,000	500	-
Kodiak	0 to 300,000		
Shelikof	-	33,500	196
Northeast	-	46,500	21
Alaska Peninsula	0 to 200,000	48,500	900
Dutch Harbor	0 to 110,000	10,700	10
Bering Sea	0 to 400,000	<i>C. bairdi</i> 215,000 <i>C. opilio</i> 130,000	500
Adak	0 to 75,000	10,000	50

Yakutat scallops. Eight fishing vessels participated in the Yakutat fishery harvesting approximately 250,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats. The season closed by emergency order at 12:00 noon, July 29, 1998. To date there has been no fishing effort in District 16 of the Yakutat area.

PWS scallops. The guideline harvest levels established for the Kayak Island area scallop fishery were based upon the department's 1998 Kayak Island area scallop survey. The PWS management area east of 146° W. longitude was divided into two sub-management areas, separated by the longitude of the Cape saint Elias lighthouse (144° 35.9W long.). West of the Cape the GHL was 14,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats, east of the Cape the GHL was 6,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats. The Eastern area closed by E.O. at on July 2, 1998 and the western area closed July 4, 1998 when GHLS were reached. Two scallop catcher processors participated in the fishery.

Kodiak Scallops. Initial fishing effort in the Kodiak Registration area began on July 10th in the Shelikof District. Eight scallop vessels participated in the Shelikof District fishery harvesting 180,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats. Crab bycatch estimates based on observer collected data indicated 22,000 Tanner crabs, 20 Dungeness crabs, and zero king crab were caught. The Shelikof District closed by emergency order August 21, 1998. Both the Northeast and Semidi Districts remain open. Three vessels have harvested 40,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats with a Tanner crab bycatch of approximately 200 crabs.

Bering Sea scallops. Four fishing vessels participated in the Bering Sea scallop fishery harvesting 93,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats. Crab bycatch totaled 130,000 *C. opilio* and 36,000 *C. bairdi*. The season closed by E.O. at 6:00 PM, September 4, 1998.

Dutch Harbor scallops. Three vessels participated in this fishery harvesting less than 100 pounds of scallop meats. The Dutch Harbor registration area remains open.

Alaska Peninsula scallops. Four vessels participated in the Alaska Peninsula fishery harvesting approximately 60,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats. The fishery closed by E.O. September 19, after obtaining the bycatch cap of 48,500 *C. bairdi*.

Cook Inlet scallops. The guideline harvest level of 20,000 pounds of shucked scallop meats established for the Kamishak District of the Cook Inlet area was based on the department's 1998 survey. The fishery opened August 15, 1998 and remains open at this time. To date less than three vessels have participated in the fishery therefore fishery statistics are confidential. Catch rates and age composition indicates the stock remains healthy and similar to ADF&G surveys conducted in 1996 and 1998.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY

The spring troll catch (May 5 through June 29) was 21,000 fish, with an Alaska hatchery percentage of 31%. There were 2 chinook retention fishing periods during the summer fishery: July 1 to 11, and August 20 to September 30. Harvest in the first summer opening was 103,000 fish, with about 3,000 fish from Alaska hatcheries. The harvest for the second opening is not yet available. The areas of frequent high abundance were closed from August 20 through September 4 of the second summer opening. According to the Alaska Board of Fisheries management plan, these areas were reopened September 5 because the department determined that the annual troll chinook salmon harvest ceiling might not be taken by September 20. According to the Alaska Board of Fisheries management plan, the troll fishery was extended to the retention of all salmon species from September 21 through September 30 in areas showing strong coho returns.

The 1998/1999 winter fishery will open on October 11.

SE ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH AND LINGCOD FISHERIES

The directed demersal shelf rockfish fishery is closed until the IFQ fishery closes November 15.

The directed lingcod fishery in the East Yakutat (EYAK) management area was closed June 27, 1998 when the annual quota of 160,000 round pounds was taken. Prior to this date, two small area closures were made within this management area in an effort to redistribute harvest and prevent localized depletion. In the Northern Southeast Outside (NSEO) area, 44,000 round pounds

remain out of the 80,800 pounds of lingcod allocated for the summer season. Approximately 27,000 pounds were taken between 1 June and 23 September 1998. In the Central Southeast Outside (CSEO) area, 72,000 round pounds remain out of 152,800 pounds of lingcod allocated for the summer season. Approximately 27,000 pounds were taken between 1 June and 23 September 1998. Of the total 52,500 round pounds taken to-date in the Southern Southeast Outside management area, 51,500 pounds were landed between 1 June and 23 September 1998. The directed lingcod effort increased in this area as the catch per unit effort declined in the NSEO and CSEO areas. The Northern Southeast Inside and Southern Southeast Inside areas continue to have very little effort.

STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD FISHERY

The Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a Pacific cod management plan for State water fishery utilizing pot gear and jig gear. The Pacific cod fishery in Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Kodiak opened at noon on March 17, seven days after the federal closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska. The Chignik area opened by regulation on April 1. The South Alaska Peninsula area opened on March 10, seven days after the closure of the Western Gulf of Alaska. Cook Inlet pot gear closed by regulation on April 7 and re-opened on June 15. The following catch numbers are through September 21, 1998.

Prince William Sound Pacific Cod. The fishery opened March 17, one week after the federal waters closure with a guideline harvest level of 860,000. The harvest through August 31 was 215,000 pounds. Four vessels using jig gear have made 16 landings and statistics for pot gear remain confidential.

Cook Inlet Pacific Cod. The fishery opened March 17 with a guideline harvest of 2,435,000 pounds. The pot fishery harvested 232,000 pounds prior to closure April 7. The jig fishery has harvested 177,000 pounds to date.

Kodiak Pacific Cod. The Kodiak Area cod guideline is 8.1 million pounds split equally between pot and jig gear. The fishery opened March 17 and was closed to pot fishing April 27 with a harvest of 3.9 million pounds. The jig fishery remains open along with the pot fishery which reopened September 1. The total catch through 9/21/98 is 6.0 million pounds.

Chignik Pacific Cod. The guideline harvest level is 5.7 million pounds for the Chignik Area. The fishery was open April 1 through April 23 and the harvest tallied 5.45 million pounds. The fishery was reopened to jig fishing May 20 to allow harvest of the remaining 250,000 pounds of the GHL. To date 150,000 additional pounds have been landed for a total catch of 5.6 million.

South Alaska Peninsula Cod. The fishery opened March 10 with a guideline harvest level of 9.0 million pounds. The fishery closed to pot gear April 16 with a harvest of 8.2 million pounds. The jig fishery remains open with harvest to date of 450,000 pounds.