



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 8, 2014

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report

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 since October 2014 Council Meeting

- Final Rule to revise regulations for Federal Fisheries Permit and Federal Processor Permit
Effective November 20, 2014: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr62885.pdf>
- Final Rule for Amendment 96 to the GOA FMP – Ability for Community Quota Entity (CQE) to buy small blocks of Quota Share (QS)
Effective December 8, 2014: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr66324.pdf>
- Final Rule for at-sea scale regulatory amendments
Effective December 18, 2014: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr68610.pdf>
- Final Rule to revise Steller sea lion protection measures
Effective December 26, 2014: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr70286.pdf>
- Final rule for Amendment 97 to the GOA FMP – Chinook salmon PSC limits for non-pollock trawl in the Central and Western GOA
Effective January 1, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr71350.pdf>
- Final rule for Amendment 43 to the King and Tanner Crab FMP & Amendment 103 to the BSAI FMP – Pribilof Islands blue king crab rebuilding and area closures
Effective January 1, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr71344.pdf>



- Final rule for GOA Trawl Economic Data Report (EDR)
Effective January 1, 2015: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/79fr71313.pdf>
- Proposed Rule for revisions to charter halibut guided angler definition
Proposed Rule – December 3, 2014 – Comment through January 2, 2015
<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/prules/79fr71729.pdf>
- Proposed Rule for the 2015-2016 BSAI Groundfish Annual Harvest Specifications
Proposed Rule – December 8, 2014 – Comment through January 7, 2015
<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/prules/79fr72571.pdf>
- Proposed Rule for the 2015-2016 GOA Groundfish Annual Harvest Specifications
Proposed Rule – December 8, 2014 – Comment through January 7, 2015
<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/prules/79fr72593.pdf>

Consultation with the Council on Changes from Proposed to Final Rules

NMFS anticipates publishing a final rule for Amendment 107 to establish transit areas through Walrus Protection Areas at Round Island and Cape Peirce in Northern Bristol Bay, and a final rule for Amendments 100/91 for grenadier management between the December 2014, and February 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.

Review of Halibut and Sablefish IFQ Program and American Fisheries Act

NMFS recommends that the Council initiate formal and comprehensive reviews of the Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program and the American Fisheries Act (AFA) Program. NMFS is recommending that the program reviews be initiated by 2017 to meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Specifically, section 303A(i)(1)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the Council and NMFS to review all catch share programs that have been approved by the Secretary of Commerce, including those programs approved prior to the enactment of the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2007. Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies that reviews of these catch share programs should occur no less frequently than once every 7 years. We would coordinate with the Council and provide staff support to facilitate the review process.

The Halibut and Sablefish IFQ and AFA Programs were implemented prior to 2007. Although the Council has regularly reviewed fisheries performance and developed a number of fishery management plan and regulatory amendments for the programs since implementation, the Council has not completed a formal and comprehensive review of these programs since they were implemented. Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies that formal and comprehensive review should review the operations of the program, including determining progress in meeting the goals of the program and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and any necessary modification of the program to meet these goals. We note that in October 2014, the Council completed a review of the Amendment 80 Program that was consistent with the requirements of Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Final 2015 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)

The Final ADP is available on the Alaska Region website at:
<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/>

The ADP describes how observers will be deployed in the partial coverage category of the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program. The draft ADP was released in September 2014 and was reviewed by the Council's Groundfish Plan Teams and Observer Advisory Committee (OAC). The Council reviewed and expressed its support of the draft ADP during its October 2014 meeting. The final ADP incorporates a recommendation by the Council on the conditional release from observer coverage for specific vessels and trips.

In the 2015 ADP, NMFS will use the trip-selection method as the sole method of assigning observers to fishing events in 2015. Trip-selection is separated into two selection pools: small vessel trip-selection and large vessel trip-selection. The small vessel trip-selection pool is comprised of catcher vessels that are fishing hook-and-line or pot gear and are greater than or equal to 40 foot, but less than 57.5 foot in length overall (LOA). The large vessel trip-selection pool comprises three classes of vessels: (1) all catcher vessels fishing trawl gear, (2) catcher vessels fishing hook-and-line or pot gear that are also greater than or equal to 57.5 foot LOA, and (3) catcher-processor vessels exempted from full coverage requirements.

NMFS projects a deployment rate of 12% of trips for the small vessel trip-selection pool and 24% of the trips for vessels for the large vessel trip-selection pool. This represents an identical selection rate in the former vessel-selection pool (small vessel pool) and a 50% increase in the selection rate in the large vessel trip-selection pool relative to the coverage rate in 2014.

Final Report on use of Guided Angler Fish

We are providing a final report on the use of guided angler fish (GAF) in the charter halibut fishery. This report includes minor revisions to the preliminary report presented to the Council in October. Approximately 41,000 pounds of GAF were transferred to over 40 charter halibut permit holders operating in Areas 2C and 3A. See Attachment 2 for additional details.

Enhancing Socioeconomic Research

On November 20, leadership from Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), and Council staff met to discuss possible methods to enhance the applicability and awareness of socioeconomic research conducted through AFSC. We identified a range of improvements that could be made with available staff resources including: (1) enhancing communication of planned research efforts; (2) providing a more timely opportunity for Council and Alaska Region input into funding proposals; (3) clearly identifying research priorities and tailoring research to those needs; and (4) providing an opportunity for a more focused review of economic research and direction through an annual staff workshop. We anticipate providing a list of our specific initiatives prior to the Council's February 2015 meeting to coincide with the review of the Economic SAFE Chapter.

Request for Tribal Consultation

On December 9, NMFS will hold a tribal consultation with representatives from the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Association of Village Council Presidents. These organizations had requested a consultation to discuss the Council's salmon bycatch management measures before the Council meeting. We will provide a brief oral summary of the meeting to the Council.

Upcoming Meeting with International Pacific Halibut Commission Staff

During the IPHC Interim meeting on December 2 and 3, 2014, IPHC and NMFS staff identified potential discrepancies in the data used in the estimation of halibut bycatch used by the IPHC and NMFS. The IPHC Commissioners requested that IPHC and NMFS staff try to reconcile and resolve these discrepancies via an inter-agency technical working group before the IPHC annual meeting in January 2015. We anticipate that the results of this technical working group will be incorporated into IPHC staff reports provided for the January 2015 Annual Meeting.

Staffing Changes

Seanbob Kelly will be transitioning from Sustainable Fisheries to the Habitat Conservation Division effective April 1, 2015. Seanbob will continue to work out of the Anchorage Field Office. Seanbob will bring his skills and experience to the Habitat Conservation Division by serving as a coordinator for habitat-related fishery management plan and regulatory amendments recommended by the Council and developed by NMFS. Additionally, Seanbob will be taking on new challenges by working on environmental review activities focusing on coastal development and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) issues. While we will miss Seanbob as a member of Sustainable Fisheries staff, we are pleased that he will continue to be part of the Alaska Regional Office team. We look forward to continued coordination with Seanbob in his new role.

We anticipate an announcement for two, possibly three, new fishery management specialist positions in Sustainable Fisheries in early January 2015. These positions could fill a variety of analytical and rule making roles within Sustainable Fisheries depending on the specific expertise of the applicant. These positions could fill gaps we have in our Catch Share Branch, Ecosystem Branch, and in our vacant Observer Program Liaison position. These vacancies will be posted at: www.usajobs.gov.

Inseason Management Report

Mary Furuness will provide the Inseason Management Report (see B-2 Supplemental).

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	Fina Palmigiano	April 2008	PR: 08/22/11	PR: 09/13/11	PR: 12/8/14			
Amendment 43 (KTC) and Amendment 103 (BSAI) Pribilof blue king crab rebuilding Approved: November 14, 2014	Stram Eich	June 2012	PR: 03/25/13 FR: 10/27/14	PR: 04/08/13 FR: 10/29/14	PR: 08/15/14 FR: 11/10/14	August 21, 2014 79 FR 49487 EOC: 10/20/14	August 29, 2014 79 FR 51520 EOC: 09/29/14	December 2, 2014 79 FR 71344 Effective: 1/1/15
Amendment 44 (KTC) BSAI Crab ROFR	Marrinan Palmigiano	October 2014						
Amendment 45 (KTC) GOA Pacific Cod non-AFA crab sideboards FLL	McCracken Kelly	June 2013	PR: 05/23/14	PR: 05/29/14				
Amendment 96 (GOA) – Ability for CQE to buy small blocks of QS Approved: October 21, 2014	Cunningham Murphy	April 2013	PR: 03/05/14 FR: 09/29/14	PR: 03/06/14 FR: 09/30/14	PR: 07/22/14 FR: 10/17/14	July 25, 2014 79 FR 43377 EOC: 09/23/14	August 7, 2014 79 FR 46237 EOC: 09/08/14	November 7, 2014 79 FR 66324 Effective: 12/8/14
Amendment 97 (GOA) Chinook PSC management measures for non-pollock fisheries trawl Approved: September 3, 2014	Cunningham Hartman	December 2013	PR: 03/06/14 FR: 09/17/14	PR: 03/07/14 FR: 09/23/14	PR: 05/30/14 FR: 11/10/14	June 5, 2014 79 FR 32525 EOC: 08/04/14	June 25, 2014 79 FR 35971 EOC: 07/25/14	December 2, 2014 79 FR 71350 Effective: 01/01/15
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	May 5, 2014 79 FR 25558 EOC: 07/07/14	May 14, 2014 79 FR 27557 EOC: 06/13/14	
Amendment 104 (BSAI) HAPC skate sites – FMP only Decision Date: January 7, 2014	Witherell Olson/Kelly	February 2013	FMP: 07/28/14	FMP: 07/29/14	FMP: 10/01/14	October 8, 2014 79 FR 60802 EOC: 12/08/14	N/A	

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Amendment 107 (BSAI) Establishing transit areas through walrus protection areas (Round Island) Decision Date: December 24, 2014	MacLean Eich	April 2014	PR: 07/15/14 FR: 12/1/14	PR: 07/21/14 FR: 12/3/14	PR: 09/18/14	September 24, 2014 79 FR 57041 EOC: 11/24/14	October 3, 2014 79 FR 58222 EOC: 11/03/14	

Attachment 1: Status of Actions

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
At-sea scales regulatory amendments	Watson	NMFS initiated	PR: 03/13/14 FR: 09/16/14	PR: 03/20/14 FR: 09/23/14	PR: 07/08/14 FR: 10/24/14	July 31, 2014 79 FR 44372 EOC: 09/02/14	November 18, 2014 79 FR 44372 Effective: 12/18/14
BSAI 2015-2016 harvest specifications	DiCosimo Whitney	October 2014	PR: 10/23/14	PR: 10/29/14	PR: 11/20/14	December 8, 2014 79 FR 72571 EOC: 01/07/15	
GOA 2015-2016 harvest specifications	Stram Davis	October 2014	PR: 10/22/14	PR: 10/23/14	PR: 11/17/14	December 8, 2014 79 FR 72593 EOC: 01/07/15	
Cost recovery for AFA, AI Pollock, Amendment 80, and CDQ program	Brannan Palmigiano	NMFS initiated -MSA Mandate-	PR: 08/22/14	PR: 08/29/14	PR: 12/8/14		
Federal fisheries permit and Federal processor permit revisions	Bearden	NMFS initiated	PR: 05/30/13 FR: 08/05/14	PR: 06/25/13 FR: 08/19/14	PR: 03/31/14 FR: 10/01/14	April 18, 2014 79 FR 21882 EOC: 05/19/14	October 21, 2014 79 FR 62885 Effective 11/20/14
GOA trawl data collection (EDR)	Brannan Hartman	October 2013	PR: 06/02/14 FR: 09/30/14	PR: 06/09/14 FR: 10/06/14	PR: 07/21/14 FR: 11/16/14	Aug 11, 2014 79 FR 46758 EOC: 09/10/14	December 2, 2014 79 FR 62885 Effective: 01/01/15
Halibut IFQ – Establish new minimum vessel ownership criteria for using hired skipper of 12 months and 20% interest	DiCosimo McKeen	December 2007	PR: 01/20/12 FR: 05/14/13	PR: 02/03/12 FR: 05/16/13	PR: 10/12/12 FR: 01/29/14	October 31, 2012 77 FR 65843 EOC: 11/30/12	February 24, 2014 79 FR 99958 Effective: 03/23/15
Revise definition of sport fishing guide services	DiCosimo Scheurer	February 2014	PR: 08/15/14	PR: 09/02/14	PR: 11/13/14	December 3, 2014 79 FR 71729 EOC: 01/02/15	
Steller sea lion protection measures	MacLean Harrington	October 2013	PR: 05/02/14 FR: 09/30/14	PR: 05/08/14 FR: 10/07/14	PR: 06/05/14 FR: 11/04/14	July 1, 2014 79 FR 37486 EOC: 08/15/14	November 25, 2014 79 FR 70286 Effective: 12/26/14

Attachment 2

Guided Angler Fish (GAF) Program

Final 2014 Report

Prepared by Julie Scheurer and Alexander Kotlarov
NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region

In 2014, NMFS implemented the guided angler fish (GAF) program to authorize limited annual transfers of commercial halibut IFQ as GAF to qualified charter halibut permit holders for harvest by charter vessel anglers in International Pacific Halibut Commission Regulatory Areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3A (South Central Alaska). Using GAF, qualified charter halibut permit holders may offer charter vessel anglers the opportunity to retain halibut up to the limit for unguided anglers when the charter management measure in place limits charter vessel anglers to a more restrictive harvest limit.

For 2014, charter vessel anglers in Area 2C are limited to one halibut per day that is less than or equal to 44 inches or greater than or equal to 76 inches total length. In Area 3A, charter vessel anglers are allowed to keep two fish per day, one of which must be less than or equal to 29 inches total length. Using GAF, charter vessel anglers may harvest up to two halibut of any size per day.

NMFS processed 111 transfers totaling 41,152 lb of IFQ to 43 different charter halibut permit holders. These transfers allowed the harvest of up to 2,027 additional halibut as GAF by charter vessel anglers (Table 1). Overall, nearly 20% of all GAF transfers were “self-transfers,” i.e., the same person held both the IFQ and the charter halibut permit and transferred the IFQ to himself (Table 1). In Area 3A, 47% of all transfers were self-transfers, while only 14% were self-transfers in Area 2C. No transfers of IFQ to GAF occurred after September 15.

GAF participants are given the option of self-reporting cost information for GAF transfers. Of the transfers for which price information was reported, and excluding self-reported prices for self-transfers, lease prices averaged \$5.62/lb in Area 2C and \$5.01/lb in Area 3A (weighted averages). The overall weighted average price per pound of IFQ leased was \$5.46.

Charter vessel anglers harvested 1,068 GAF (53%) in 2014, mostly in Area 2C (Table 2). The high percentage of self-transfers in Area 3A may partially explain why a lower proportion of GAF were harvested in Area 3A. The GAF/IFQ holder would still have an opportunity to harvest those pounds in the commercial fishery after the automatic return date. Three voluntary returns of GAF to IFQ were processed in September. Another six voluntary return applications were denied because they arrived after the August 31 deadline. Unused GAF were automatically returned to the IFQ account from which they originated on October 23, 2014. Approximately, 8,300 lb of Area 2C IFQ and 6,100 pounds of Area 3A IFQ were returned from the charter sector to the commercial sector under the automatic return provision.

NMFS issues GAF in numbers of halibut based on a conversion factor from IFQ pounds. In this first year of the GAF program, the conversion factors were based on the average weight of charter halibut harvested by area in the most recent year without a size limit in effect. The 2014 conversion factors were 26.4 lb IFQ per GAF in Area 2C and 12.8 lb IFQ per GAF in Area 3A. For future years, the conversion factor will be based on the average net weight of GAF harvested by area. The average length of GAF harvested in 2014 was 55 inches in Area 2C and 45 inches in Area 3A (Table 2 and

Figure 1). Using the IPHC halibut length weight conversion table, these lengths translate into estimated average net weights of 67.3 lb in Area 2C and 38.4 lb in Area 3A. The 2015 conversion factors will increase in 2015 compared to 2014. NMFS will announce the official GAF conversion factors early in 2015.

NMFS' costs associated with management, data collection, and enforcement of the GAF Program are recoverable through IFQ Program Cost Recovery fees. NMFS does not track fees associated with GAF separately from other IFQ Program fees. Even with the additional costs to develop and implement the GAF Program, total NMFS costs associated with the IFQ program were less in 2014 than in 2013. NMFS collected cost information for the development of the database and electronic reporting systems for the GAF Program. These costs totaled \$78,700 across multiple years and were subject to IFQ Program Cost Recovery fees.

Table 1. Summary of 2014 IFQ to GAF transfers

IPHC Regulatory Area	IFQ Pounds Transferred	Number of GAF Transferred	Number of Transfers (Permits Issued)	Avg. price per pound	Percentage of self-transfers
2C (Southeast)	29,498	1,117	92	\$ 5.62	14%
3A (South Central)	11,654	910	19	\$ 5.01	47%
Total	41,152	2,027	111	\$ 5.46	20%

Table 2. 2014 GAF harvest summary

IPHC Regulatory Area	Number of GAF harvested (% of total)	Average Length in inches (range)	Estimated 2015 conversion factor (net lb)	2014 Conversion Factor (net lb)
2C (Southeast)	800 (72%)	55 (18-77)	67.3	26.4
3A (South Central)	269 (30%)	45 (30-75)	38.4	12.8
Total	1068 (53%)			

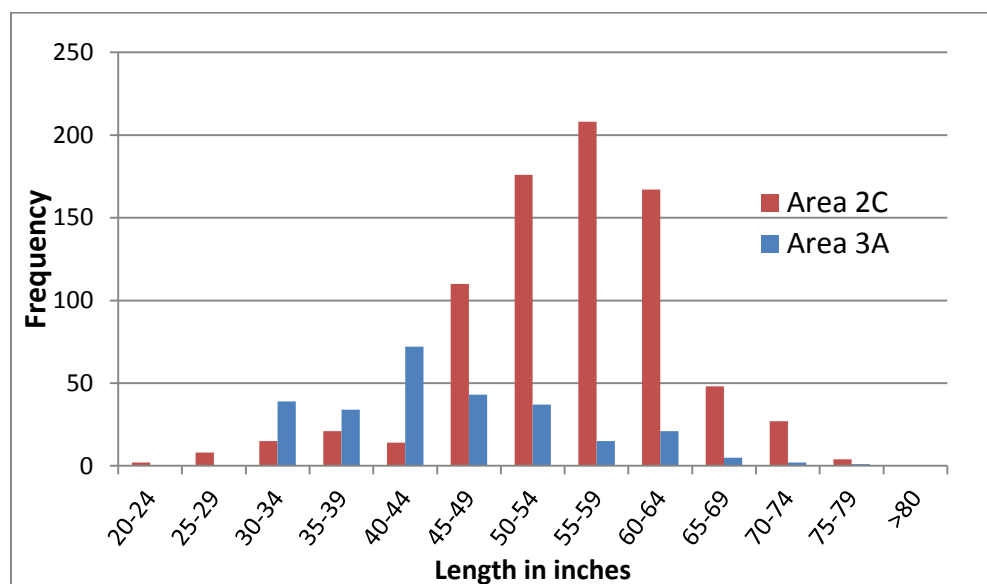


Figure 1. 2014 GAF length distribution by IPHC regulatory area