

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Management Report

to the NPFMC

October 6, 2004



NOAA Fisheries

National Marine Fisheries Service



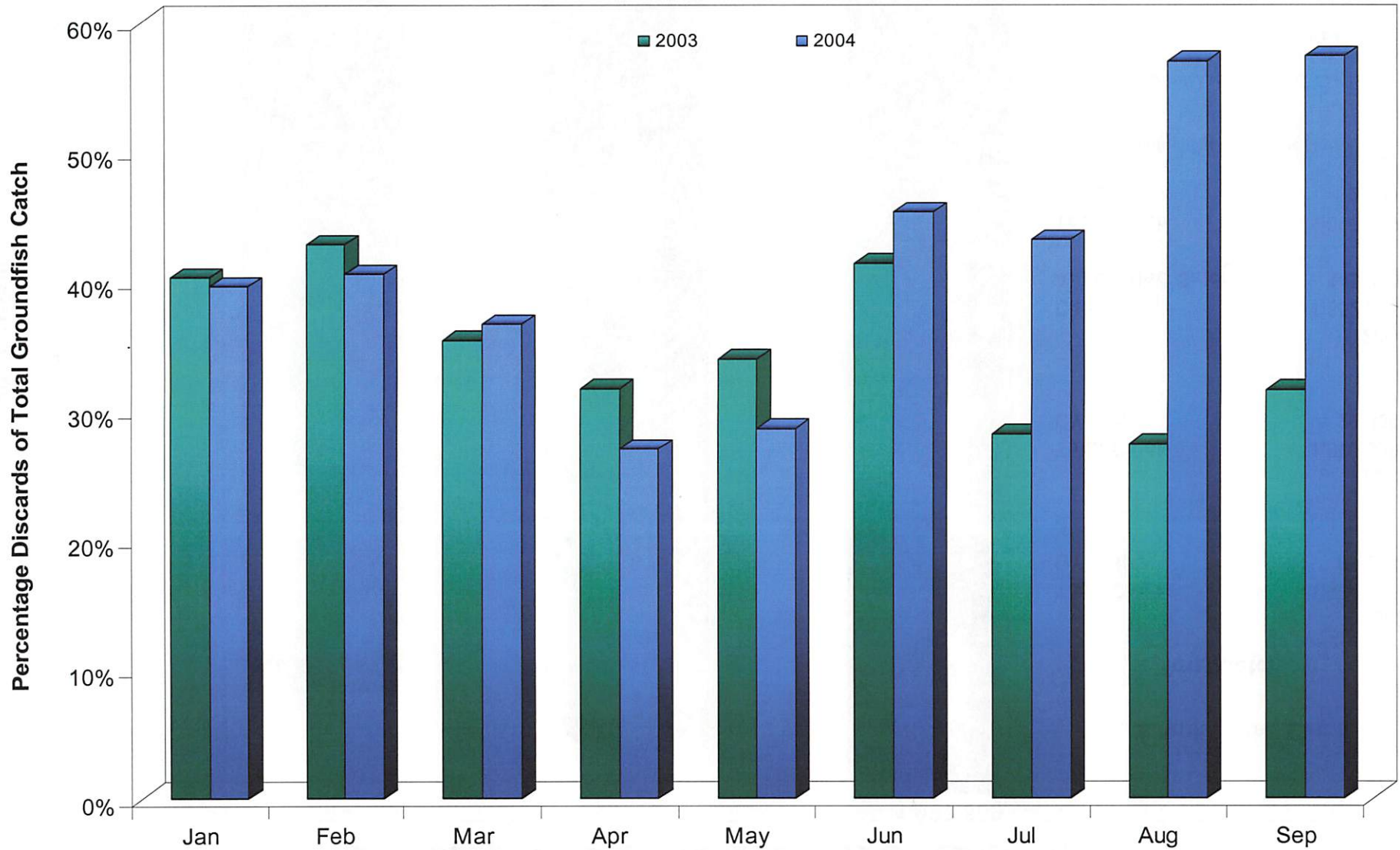
B-2

FMP Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since June 2004</u> <u>Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Proposed FMP Amendment Notice of Availability Published	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Amendment 18/19 (KTC): Rationalization of the BSAI King and Tanner Crab Fisheries Scheduled FMP decision date is Dec 1, 2004		PR: 6/24/04	NOA submitted Aug 25, 2004 PR submission scheduled for Oct 5, 2004	September 1, 2004 69 FR 53398 <u>Comment period ends November 1, 2004</u>		
Amendment 48/48: Revised harvest specification process	Oct 2003	PR: 4/20/04 FR: 9/24/04	PR: July 6, 2004	July 14, 2004 69 FR 42128 <u>Comment period ends September 13, 2004</u>	July 27, 2004 69 FR 44634 <u>Comment period ends September 10, 2004</u>	
Amendments 62/62: Single Geographic Location and AFA housekeeping	Oct 2002					
Amendment 66 (GOA): Approval of collection-of-information requirements		FR: 5/20/04	FR: June 4, 2004			June 22, 2004 69 FR 34613 Effective July 22, 2004
Amend. 71a (BSAI): CDQ non-fisheries investments	June 2002	PR: 9/12/04				
Amend. 71b (BSAI): CDQ oversight	June 2002					
Amendment 72 (GOA): Remove flatfish IR/IU provisions	April 2003					
Amendment 79 (BSAI): Groundfish Retention Standard	June 2003					
Amendments 81/74: PSEIS		NOA: 4/19/04	NOA: May 25, 2004 Notice of Approval: August 23, 2004	June 2, 2004 69 FR 31091 <u>Comment period ends August 2, 2004</u>		

Regulatory Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since June 2004 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review of Rule	Transmittal Date of Rule to NMFS Headquarters	Proposed Rule in <i>Federal Register</i>	Final Rule Published in <i>Federal Register</i>
Groundfish Regulations					
Adjust BSAI pollock maximum retainable allowance	June 2003	PR: 11/10/03 FR: 3/24/04	PR: December 18, 2003 FR: May 13, 2004	January 29, 2004 69 FR 4281 <u>Comment period ends March 1, 2004</u>	June 14, 2004 69 FR 32901 Effective July 14, 2004
Clarify Prohibited Species Donation Program to allow processing of fish waste	NMFS	PR: 11/3/03 FR: 6/16/04	PR: April 20, 2004 FR: July 30, 2004	May 5, 2004 69 FR 25056 <u>Comment period ends June 4, 2004</u>	August 27, 2004 69 FR 52609 Effective September 27, 2004
DSR full retention and donation rule	June 1999 Reconsidered January 2003	PR: 11/3/03 FR: 7/21/04	PR: December 15, 2003	January 21, 2004 69 FR 2875 <u>Comment period ends February 20, 2004</u>	
Observer regulations: technical corrections					June 14, 2004 69 FR 33581 Effective June 16, 2004
Revise species codes (Table 2)	NMFS	PR: 10/10/03			
Revise SSL protection measures in GOA	June 2004	PR: 6/23/04	PR: August 26, 2004	September 21, 2004 69 FR 55782 Comment period ends October 21, 2004	
Revision to harvest restrictions for the HLA Atka mackerel fishery in the Aleutian Islands	NMFS	PR: 4/20/04 FR: 6/18/04	PR: May 14, 2004 FR: July 23, 2004	June 2, 2004 69 FR 31085 <u>Comment period ends June 17, 2004</u>	August 18, 2004 69 FR 51191 Effective September 17, 2004

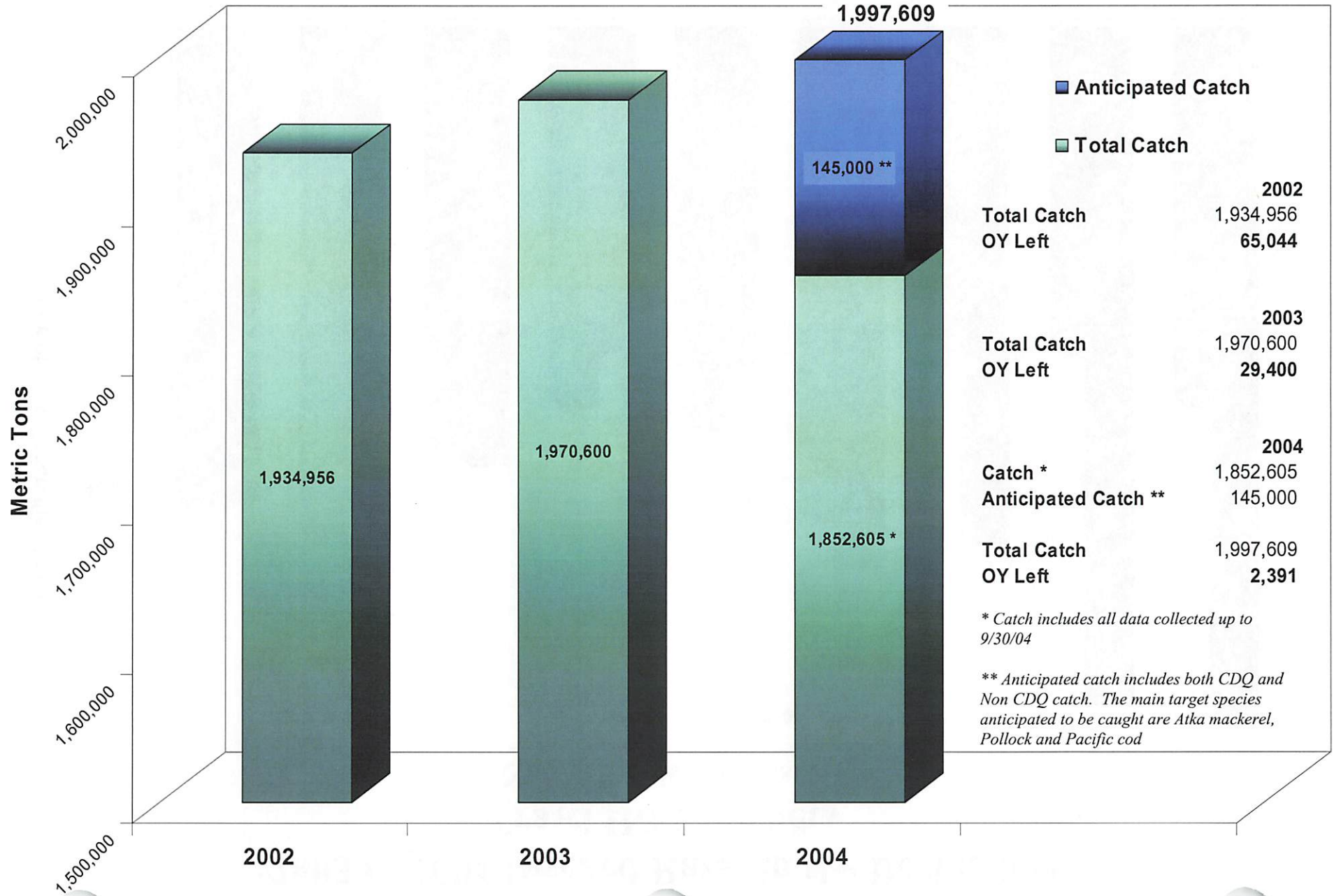
Regulatory Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since June 2004 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review of Rule	Transmittal Date of Rule to NMFS Headquarters	Proposed Rule in <i>Federal Register</i>	Final Rule Published in <i>Federal Register</i>
Revise CDQ regs. on quota transfers, eligible vessels and alternative fishing plans	June 2002	PR: 6/14/04			
Halibut Regulations					
Halibut charter boat IFQ	April 2001; October 2001				
Subsistence Halibut II	April 2002; Oct. 2002	PR: 1/28/04	PR: May 18, 2004	July 9, 2004 69 FR 41447 <u>Comment period ends August 9, 2004</u>	
Crab Regulations					
Fishing Capacity Reduction Program & Fee System					September 1, 2004 69 FR 53359
Harvest Specifications					
Notices					
Alaska Groundfish Final Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement		Filed with EPA 5/28/04			June 4, 2004 69 FR 31613
Notice of Availability of Final Crab Environmental Impact Statement					September 3, 2004 69 FR 53915 Wait period ends October 4, 2004

2003 vs 2004 Discard Rates in the Bering Sea Trawl H&G Fishery (Non-AFA listed vessels)



Note: Yellowfin sole closed in June, several flatfish species were prohibited to retention in Aug/Sep

Total Catch in the BSAI



Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

The shoreside and offshore processors are completing their 2004 harvest. Nineteen catcher/processors (c/ps), eight shore plants using eighty five catcher vessels, and three motherships have so far taken 1,222,874 mt of their 1,229,160 mt directed fishery allocation. As the fishery approaches October the offshore catcher/processors are nearly complete with their allocation, the mother ships have about 14,000 mt and the shoreside fleet about 60,000 mt remaining in their annual allocations. 2004 is the first year since the implementation of the American Fisheries Act that no allocations from the incidental catch account to the directed fisheries have been made. The amount allocated to the account (43,641 mt) was reduced relative to 2003 (46,990 mt). Both the chinook and chum salmon savings areas closed late this summer.

Flatfish/trawl catcher/processor Pacific cod

The trawl 'head & gut' (H&G) fleet has had an exceptional year. The directed fishery for yellowfin sole, which usually closes due to halibut bycatch mortality in September/October closed in early June, based on the attainment of the directed fishing allowance. Several high valued and incidentally caught species are now prohibited to retention as their TAC's have been taken. During the month of August, rocksole, flathead sole, and arrowtooth flounder became prohibited to retention. These species would normally not be taken in excess of their TACs because the trawl halibut mortality caps normally limit catch.

Twenty one non-AFA, H&G trawl vessels usually target yellowfin sole with incidental catch of other flatfish species and to a lesser extent Pacific cod through the end of October. Two of these vessels now are fishing Pacific cod, eight are targeting Atka mackerel and the rest have quit the field. While the Pacific cod fishery (which normally has low participation during the fall by this component of the fleet) is still open, much of the value of the fishery has been lost as many of the flatfish that could otherwise be retained are prohibited to retention. Most of the H&G trawl fleet that is remaining is expected to stop fishing in the next few weeks or fish on groundfish available under the CDQ program. In 2003, the non-AFA listed catcher/processors targeting groundfish in the Bering Sea subarea took about 186,000 mt of groundfish & discarded 34%. In 2004 the total groundfish for that component of the fishery is about 220,000 mt with a discard rate of 38%. The total amount retained by this fleet in 2004 increased from 123,000 mt in 2003 to 136,000 mt a 12% gain. Monthly discard rates for the Bering Sea subarea and all targets for the 21 non-AFA H&G trawl vessels are displayed in the attached graph.

Atka mackerel

Nine catcher/processors registered for the B season harvest limitation area (HLA) fisheries in the Central Aleutian District, reporting area 542 . Of those, 8 registered for the Western Aleutian District, reporting area 543 HLA fishery. Preliminary catch data indicates the fisheries have taken the HLA limits. The Central Aleutian District directed fishery closed September 23; the Western Aleutian District fishery closes October 3rd.

Pacific cod

Hook-and-Line Catcher Processor

The hook-and-line c/p fishery opened August 15. They have taken about 65,000 mt of their current Pacific cod allocation of 80,930 mt. The average weekly catch from mid August through mid September is about 3,100 mt with about 37 c/ps participating. In 2003 fewer boats (32) participated during the August/September time period with an average weekly catch of 3,200 mt indicating a higher CPUE for 2003. An action to allocate about 12,500 mt from trawl and jig gear to hook-and-line catcher/processors and pot gear (a split of 95% H&L and 5%Pot) is in the regulatory process. It is expected the H&G fishery will continue into mid-late November. Depending on the activity of other fisheries an additional allocation of Pacific cod may be made later this year thereby extending fishing time.

Pot Gear

Pot catcher vessels

A total of 76 catcher vessels have delivered about 11,000 mt of Pacific cod with pot gear in 2004. The strong (relative to 2002 and prior) 2004 participation by pot gear in the fall fishery is continuing, though with slightly fewer boats than in 2003. In mid September 2003 the fleet averaged 21 catcher vessels delivering 1,000 mt/week, vs an average of 19 vessels delivering 780 mt/week in 2004. If the fleet has a strong showing after the October red king crab fishery, they may take the remaining 4,000 mt of their 15,174 mt annual allocation.

Pot catcher processors

Four catcher/processors have reported about 2,400 mt of Pacific cod catch so far this year, about 850 mt more than in all of 2003. The B season, starting September 1 has seen a little lower effort than in 2003, though some of the vessels are expected to fish into November when the remainder of their 3,338-mt allocation will be available.

Trawl Gear

Both catcher vessels and catcher/processors have taken about 85% of their annual allocations of 46,844 mt (each). Most of this catch occurs in January-April. Of the 14,000 mt left in the combined allocations enough will be set aside to cover any lingering trawl fisheries for Pacific cod (the trawl Pacific cod fishery closes by regulation on November 1) and incidental catch in trawl fisheries for Atka mackerel and pollock. The remainder will be allocated to the catcher/processor hook-and-line and pot gear component as noted above.

Trawl catcher vessels

Four vessels have been active since mid September delivering about 400 mt of cod. In 2003 seven vessels delivered 450 mt in the same general season and wound up fishing by the end of September.

Hook-and-Line Catcher Vessel

Effort in this fishery has comprised almost entirely of vessels less than 60'. One landing occurred in early September by a vessel over 60'. Catch by vessels less than 60' are deducted from this category until it is closed. At that point the less than 60' vessels can continue to fish under the following fishery. About 70% of the 303 mt quota has been taken.

Hook-and-Line and Pot Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 ft Length Overall

Seventeen vessels have taken a total of about 3,000 mt in this fishery so far this year. Just less than 20% of the catch was by hook-and-line vessels, the remainder by pot gear. Activity was relatively strong in March through early May and in mid June through July with minimal landings through August and late September. In April the annual allocation of 1,416 mt was supplemented with 1,545 mt originally specified to the first seasonal jig fishery. An additional allocation from jig to the < 60' category is not expected as hook-and-line fishing in this category is not active and catch by the pot component is deducted from the catcher vessel pot allocation while that fishery remains open.

Jig

Jig gear has taken a total of 214 mt this year. The fishery initiated in February and March but gained its greatest momentum in April through July with average weekly deliveries at 11 mt. Deliveries from jig vessels have stopped at the end of August though there may be more activity in the fall by a few vessels as weather permits.

Greenland Turbot

A total of about 1,700 mt has been taken in the Bering Sea subarea of the 2,295 mt TAC. Seventy percent of the quota was taken by hook-and-line catcher/processors predominately in July though catch is being reported in September indicating that it is being taken incidentally to Pacific cod or perhaps as a second target as the H&L c/p cod fishery is relatively slow.

Total catch and Optimum Yield

The total catch of groundfish in the BSAI has been increasing in recent years. The attached graph indicates the percentage of the 2,000,000 mt OY cap that has been taken in 2002, 2003 and 2004 which includes projections for catch in October through December.

Gulf of Alaska

Skates

The Central GOA TAC for big and longnose skates is 3,284 mt of which about 1,000 mt are available to the directed fishery. The current estimate of total catch is 1,450 mt of which 476 mt has been taken in the directed fishery; 60 % by non-pelagic trawl gear and the remainder by hook-and-line. The lack of effort (relative to last year) in the directed fishery has been attributed to lower prices. Of the total catch 32% was taken by hook-and-line vessels, a little more than half of which in the Pacific cod target. The remainder was taken by non-pelagic trawl gear predominately in the skate, shallow water flatfish, and arrowtooth targets in that order.

The "other skates" category has a GOA-wide TAC of 3,709 mt and a directed fishing allowance of 1,000 mt. The "other skates" catch is currently 1,379 mt with 261 mt taken in the directed fishery. As opposed to the Central big and longnose fishery, sixty percent of the catch in this category was taken by hook-and-line gear and most of the remainder in non-pelagic trawls. Within the hook-and-line fishery most catch came in the Pacific cod target followed by sablefish and the directed fishery. Within trawl most of the catch was in the arrowtooth flounder target.

Pacific cod

The B season fisheries for offshore and inshore Pacific cod in the Western and Central GOA opened on September 1.

Western Gulf

Inshore Pacific cod

The total catch to date is nearly 13,000 mt leaving about 2,200 mt. Catch has declined each week since the beginning of the B season during which about 2,600 mt has been taken. Pot gear has caught about 80% of the quota followed by inshore hook-and-line catcher processors, trawling, jig, and hook-and-line catcher vessels. Effort by smaller vessels is declining as the weather deteriorates into the fall. Most pot vessels are expected to cease fishing by Oct 1 as they make preparations to enter the October red king crab fishery in the Bering Sea.

Offshore Pacific cod

A total of 238 mt of the 925 mt B season quota has been caught. Currently two H&L c/p vessels are participating, 686 tons remain in the quota.

Central Gulf

In the Central GOA the B season began on September 1st with 7,679 mt and 1,229 mt remaining in the annual TAC for processing by the inshore and offshore component respectively.

Inshore Pacific cod

Inshore P. cod closed to directed fishing September 10, 2004 and reopened September 28, 2004 for fixed gear only. The fishery will remain open to pot gear after hook-and-line gear closes October 2 due to halibut mortality. So far about 6,600 mt of the remaining B season TAC has been taken, leaving 700 mt. Vessels using non-pelagic gear have taken more than 80% of the catch, followed by hook-and-line and pot gear.

Offshore Pacific cod

The total catch for the year is 1,947 mt of a 2,712 mt TAC. Seventy percent was taken by hook-and-line vessels during the month of January the remainder by non-pelagic trawl vessels in July.

Rockfish

The trawl season for rockfish in the GOA opened on July 4 as the third seasonal apportionment of trawl halibut mortality became available.

Western Gulf

Catcher/processors took about 2,200 mt of Pacific Ocean perch TAC and 850 mt of northern rockfish during the July fishery. Nine vessels targeted either species until late July.

Central Gulf

During July about 8,200 mt of Pacific ocean perch were taken, 40% by seven catcher processors and 60% by 32 catcher vessels. The Pacific ocean perch fishery closed on July 12. With the closure of the deep-water complex on July 25, the northern and pelagic shelf rockfish TAC categories did not receive additional trawl effort and remain open to directed fishing. Several fishermen using jig gear have expressed an interest in targeting these species, principally light dusky rockfish, later this year. Only modest additional catch is expected.

Pollock

The C season for pollock opened across the Western and Central Gulf on August 25. The D season opened on October 1.

Area 610

The C season fishery closed on August 30 after 5 days. Eighteen vessels harvested 7,720 mt with a daily average harvest rate of 1,523 mt. Both participation and catch rates were higher than in the March fishery. Nineteen vessels are anticipated in the D season. Assuming a daily rate of about 1,600 mt (which is consistent with the 2004 C, and 2003 D season fisheries) the remaining TAC of 7,895 mt should last five days. The fishery could be extended, given that a high proportion of this fleet are less than 60' LOA and could be hindered by poor weather conditions.

Area 620

Area 620 has 5,286 mt remaining of the annual TAC of 26,490 mt. The D season fishery is expected to take about 10 days. Initial effort is likely to focus on the 630 fishery given that it will be open for only one day.

Area 630

Area 630 has 2,767 mt remaining of the annual TAC of 14,040 mt. A closure for this fishery has been announced for October 2 allowing 24 hours. Catch data from previous years indicates the October fishery can have highly accelerated rates compared to the September and August fisheries which averaged about 750 mt/day in 2004. The fishery will be monitored in the days following the closure to determine if an additional opening is warranted.

Flatfish

About 21,000 mt of flatfish have been taken so far this year with non-pelagic gear. This should represent most of the catch for 2004 since trawling is closed for the remainder of the season. It is a marked decrease from 2003 when a total of about 40,000 mt was taken. The biggest difference is in the arrowtooth flounder catch where catch in 2004 (14,000 mt) is less than half of 2003 (29,000mt). The reduction occurred in the catcher/processor component as inshore catch of arrowtooth is nearly equivalent between the two years. The other two species groups that experienced reductions are shallow water flatfish and rex sole. Shallow water flatfish, which are predominately taken by shoreside catcher vessels, are at a 35% lower rate in 2004 vs 2003 (2,914 vs 4,579 mt). This reduction may have been in part deliberate as information from the fleet is that they reduced their effort in August to maximize the amount of halibut mortality available for the September 1 Pacific cod opening. Rex sole, which is almost entirely taken by at-sea catcher/processors, is reduced by about 60% from 3,473 mt in 2003 to 1,409 in 2004. Both rex sole and shallow water flat fish catch were expected to be taken during the scheduled October 1 fishery. However halibut mortality in the September 1 Pacific cod fishery was high enough that the October 1 fishery did not occur.

Halibut Bycatch Mortality

Trawl Gear

Trawling for both the shallow water and deep water species complexes opened on July 1. The deep-water apportionment was taken and trawling for deepwater species (rockfish and rex sole are the primary targets in July) closed gulf-wide on July 25. The shallow water complex did not close in August, as is normally the case since effort in that component of the fishery essentially stopped. When the September 1 inshore Pacific cod fishery closed on September 10, the shallow complex and eventually all trawling closed for the remainder of the year due to extremely high halibut bycatch rates in the Pacific cod fishery. About 2,265 mt of halibut mortality are estimated to have been taken by trawl gear this year. Of that amount, 833 mt were taken in the nine days of the September fishery.

Hook-and-line

The hook-and-line fishery for groundfish (except sablefish and demersal shelf rockfish) closed October 2 due to halibut mortality. The majority of the halibut bycatch was taken in the winter and remainder in the fall Pacific cod fisheries.

Page-M brand

Fax Transmittal Memo 7672

To North Pacific Management Council

Company

Location 605 W 4th Ave Suite 306

Fax (907) 271-2817

Comments

No. of Pages 1

Today's Date 9/28/04

Time

From Kenneth N. Holland Jr.

Company F/V Point Omega

Location Kodiak

Fax (907) 486-3764

Original Disposition: Destroy Return Call for pickupAGENDA B-2
Supplemental
OCTOBER 2004

B-2 NMFS management

September 26, 2004
Kenneth N. Holland, Jr.
F/V Point Omega
P.O. Box 608, Kodiak, AK 99615
Tel/fax: 907-486-3764

North Pacific Council
Sitka meeting
B-2 NMFS Management

Dear Council members,

You have probably heard of the tremendous trawl bycatch of halibut that occurred in the recent B season trawl cod fishery in Kodiak. The majority of the cod trawl fleet was catching tremendous amounts of halibut in their tows, and sacrificing great amounts of halibut to catch small amounts of cod. Cod catch rates were very poor, and halibut catch rates were very high. There was probably very serious crab habitat destruction and destruction to crab stocks because of the way the fishery was conducted. Word of this very high trawl halibut bycatch was well known but no one did anything about it.

You know that the 60% - 40% split for the A and B cod seasons is not achieved because far more than 60% of the B season cod TAC is taken before the B season ever starts by trawlers targeting on cod as bycatch in their other trawl fisheries after the A season for cod closes. That means when the pot fleet is hoping to harvest their share of the 40% cod TAC that is supposed to be available in the B season, it is not there, and has already been harvested by the trawl fleet as bycatch after the A season closes and before the B season starts. To add to this unfair situation, the B season cod trawl fishery is having a destructive impact on our halibut stocks, crab stocks and crab habitat.

I propose that the Council require that all fishing for cod during the central GOA B cod season be accomplished with pots. This is a simple solution to the problem, and will slow down the B cod season and the destruction of halibut and also crab habitat in the B season cod trawl fishery. Trawlers will be able to fish for B season cod with pots if they wish, and our halibut stocks, crab stocks and crab habitat will be protected.

It is crazy to sacrifice so much halibut to the trawl cod fishery.

Please change the B season cod fishery so that only pots are allowed to take cod during the B season. Please take action to limit the destruction of halibut, crab and crab habitat during the trawl cod B season. And please change the allocation of A season and B season trawl cod to limit the targeted cod bycatch between the A and B seasons by trawlers.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth N. Holland, Jr.

I am extremely concerned about the unprecedented negative impact on the halibut biomass and brood-stock that has recently occurred in the Kodiak area by the cod trawlers during the September 2004 fishery.

A fleet of approximately thirty-six (36) trawlers took 800 tons of halibut bycatch in only nine (9) days which, in turn, caused the halibut by-catch to be exceeded by over 10% for the Year 2004.

This is not only shocking but is on a scale that is unprecedented. The blatant disregard for other fish species while bottom trawling has proven that some drastic changes are needed in both monitoring the bottom trawling fleet and creating a strong deterrent that will ensure that this "dirty" fishing behavior is stopped.

I am a vessel owner and have lived and commercial fished out of Kodiak for twenty-five (25) years in both the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea for just about every fishery. While a deckhand on bottom trawlers, I witnessed just what indiscriminate waste can be reaped on by-catch species while pursuing cod, flat fish, and shrimp.

The economy of Kodiak needs all the various gear types and diversified fisheries but when there is a group that has so much potential to affect and ruin other people's livelihoods, and the economy of Kodiak, we must put safeguards in place to stop the wanton fishing behavior that has become part of the norm for some of the trawl fleet.

Some of my friends own and/or operate trawlers and I realize that there are both good and bad types of operators. However, when you deploy a bottom trawl, the operator of the vessel makes a conscious decision on location and duration of his set and must be held accountable for his actions.

During the September 2004 cod opening there were individual trawl operators pleading on the VHF radio, asking some of the boats not to set

back because of the massive amount of halibut present on Port Lock Banks. This attempt by the responsible trawl operators was to no avail and our town is now faced with closures to the processing plants, and yet another hit to the struggling economy of Kodiak, due to greed on the part of some.

When I mentioned this unprecedented destruction of the halibut resources at a public "pre-council" meeting a few days ago, I was told by Julie Bonney, the Alaska Groundfish & Data Bank Representative, that it wasn't as bad as I portrayed because the halibut were "all smaller ones!"

Doesn't the trawler representative understand that this is the future of the halibut resource that they are killing and it's owned by everyone in this state and country. IPHC data shows that halibut caught w/trawls typically are "smaller" and for every pound of halibut mortality there is 1.7 pounds of future spawning biomass lost. Smaller fish grow up to be bigger fish and become of more value whether you pole fish, charter fish, subsistence or commercial halibut fish.

After my testimony at the North Pacific Management Council meeting in Kodiak in June 2003, I was followed out of the meeting room and confronted by a trawler operator who accused me of mis-representing my trawling experiences and said there isn't a need for any monitoring of the bottom trawl fleet, in fact, they all are "very clean fishermen". This same "clean" trawl operator just posted a 28% halibut by-catch rate in the September 2004 cod fishery, that's twenty-eight (28) pounds of halibut for every one hundred (100) pounds of groundfish!!

Here are the disturbing facts relating to the September 2004 cod fishery...According to NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division there were eighteen (18) observers utilized during the fishery which is a higher number than is normally available. This would be approximately fifty percent (50%) of the fleet that was observed at any one time and fifty percent (50%) could then fish without an observed accountability. Eight hundred (800) tons equates to 5.6 million dollars of halibut by-catch, or \$156,000 per trawler vessel, of halibut by-catch. The estimated gross dollar value of the trawl caught cod was approximately 3.86 million dollars and the average per trawler value

was \$107,000. THAT'S \$156,000 OF HALIBUT BYCATCH TAKEN PER TRAWL VESSEL IN ORDER TO GAIN \$107,000 OF COD VALUE!!

The Canadians have proven that a by-catch reduction can be done while still fully harvesting their target species. I urge you to look at this model and apply options that appear to be working. The key factors are individual by-catch accountability and more observer coverage.

The Canadian model has made a significant impact on behavioral changes with the Canadian trawl fleet and behavioral changes are what is needed in the American trawl fleet.

As the Council moves forward with Gulf rationalization, I urge them to put safeguards in place to assure that the by-catch rates are brought down through strong deterrents for "dirty" fishing. The only way to mitigate this unacceptable waste is through economic disincentives for the "dirty" fishermen and rewards for clean behavior.

Ending the "Race for Fish" is not going to stop the trawl operator that has years of "kill it all and sort it out later" mentality. A new attitude and a new behavior will foster a future for a more healthy ecosystem that is not damaged by greed and a blatant disregard of all halibut, crab, and other important fisheries.

In your future Gulf of Alaska rationalization plans, please do not allow transferable by-catch quota. This concept insures that the 2000 Metric Ton cap will always be reached rather than encouraging cleaner fishing and reduction of wasted fish. Transferable by-catch quota will also create a secondary economic system where by-catch will be traded for money and that is a wrong approach.

A mechanism needs to be put in place that when overage occurs above the 2000 Metric Ton level, the overage is subtracted from the next year. This will provide some deterrent to the sector of the fleet that chooses to move to other fisheries and is willing to fish "dirty" before they can head South or out to the Bering Sea. They too would have to pay the price the following year and would be inclined toward "cleaner" fishing. This system could be similar to the halibut IFQ program that subtracts overage from the following year's fishery.

Thank you for your consideration...

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter T. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Peter Thompson
P.O. Box 3037
Kodiak, Ak 99615**

VESSEL HALIBUT BYCATCH

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Average</u>
DUSK	67.6	
DAWN	10.8, 12.5	11.65
TOPAZ	28	
EX II	16.8, 73.5	45.6
MAR DEL NORTE	11.5	
HAZEL LORRAINE	9.9	
ELIZABETH F	47.3	
WALTER N	35.7	
TASSINGE	3.9	
PEGGY JO	102.0, 153.0	127.5
HICKORY WIND	9.1	
MARATHON	10.8, 34.0	22.4
BAY ISLANDER	28.8	
COHO	18.1	
LESLIE LEE	7.47, 25.8	16.6
CAPE KIWANDA	8.15	
LAURA	34.3, 20.5	27.4
OCEAN HOPE 3	6.5	
MAR PACIFICO	10.8	

VESSEL HALIBUT BYCATCH

<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Average</u>
GOLD RUSH	35.9	
MARCY J	23.4	
DEFIANT	27.5	
ENTERPRISE	3.1, 2.2	2.6
COLLIER BROS	35.1	
ROSELLA	6.5, 26.4	16.45
MICHELLE RENE	45.4	
PACIFIC RAM	4.94, 2.5	3.7
LISA MELINDA	52.9	
GRUMPY J	16.0	
PACIFIC STAR	9.0	
JAMIE MARIE	52.8	
CHELLISSA	10.7	
SEA MAC	3.1	
ALASKA BEAUTY	11.4, 3.8	7.6