

Status of FMP Amendments

December 5, 2003

FMP Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since October 2003 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
Amend. 17 (KTC): Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan	October 2003	PR: 10/23/03	PR: November 24, 2003			
Amend. 63 (GOA): Move skates from the "other species" list to "target species" Decision date: March 3, 2004	October 2003	PR: 10/21/03	PR: November 17, 2003	December 2, 2003 68 FR 67390 Comment period ends February 2, 2004		
Amendment 77 (BSAI) Pacific cod fixed gear allocation Amendment Approved October 22, 2003	June 2003	PR: 6/24/03 FR: 11/6/03	PR: July 15, 2003 FR: November 12, 2003	July 22, 2003 68 FR 43342 <u>Comment period ended Sept. 22, 2003</u>	Aug. 18, 2003 68 FR 49416 <u>Comment period ends Oct. 2, 2003</u>	Dec. 1, 2003 68 FR 67086 Effective January 1, 2004
Amendment 79 (BSAI) Groundfish Retention Standard	June 2003					
Amendment 72 (GOA) Remove flatfish IR/IU provisions	April 2003					
Amend. 66 (GOA): Community Quota Share Amendment Approved: December 3, 2003	April 2002	PR: 5/12/03	PR: August 22, 2003	Sept. 2, 2003 68 FR 52173 <u>Comment period ends November 3, 2003</u>	October 16, 2003 68 FR 59564 <u>Comment period ends December 1, 2003</u>	
Amend. 71 BSAI: CDQ administrative changes	June 2002					

Status of Regulatory Amendments

December 3, 2003

Regulatory Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since</u> <u>October 2003 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review of Rule	Transmittal Date of Rule to NMFS Headquarters	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Groundfish Regulations					
Amend housing requirements for observers	NMFS	PR: 6/28/03 FR: 11/12/03	PR: July 14, 2003	Sept. 3, 2003 68 FR 52378 <u>Comment period ends October 3, 2003</u>	
Revision of at-sea observer communication system requirements	Feb 2000	PR: 11/30/01 FR: 06/27/03	PR: February 21, 2002 FR: July 22, 2003	July 25, 2002 67 FR 48604 <u>Comment period ended August 26, 2002</u>	October 8, 2003 68 FR 58038 Effective January 1, 2004
CDQ "other species" management	April 2003	PR: 7/28/03 FR: 11/12/03	PR: September 24, 2003 FR: November 18, 2003	Oct. 22, 2003 68 FR 60327 <u>Comment period ends November 6, 2003</u>	
Change port codes on Table 14	NMFS	PR: 9/22/03			
Corrections to definitions of salmon area	NMFS	PR: 12/23/02 FR: 9/24/03	PR: June 16, 2003	July 23, 2003 68 FR 43483 <u>Comment period ended August 22, 2003</u>	
Clarify Prohibited Species Donation Program to allow processing of fish waste	NMFS	PR: 12/5/03			
Adjust BSAI pollock MRA	June 2003	PR: 11/10/03			
DSR full retention and donation rule	June 1999 Reconsidered January 2003	PR: 3/13/03			
Effective date for provisions of American Fisheries Act	NMFS	PR: 5/23/03	PR: June 16, 2003	August 25, 2003 68 FR 51147 <u>Comment period ended September 24, 2003</u>	

Regulatory Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since October 2003 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review of Rule	Transmittal Date of Rule to NMFS Headquarters	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Fix 620/630 boundary problem for Alitak Bay/Deadman Bay	NMFS	PR: 6/9/03	PR: October 3, 2003	November 4, 2003 68 FR 62423 <u>Comment period ended December 4, 2003</u>	
Revised seabird avoidance measures	December 2001	PR: 8/26/02	PR: December 11, 2002 FR: November 7, 2003	February 7, 2003 68 FR 6386 <u>Comment period ended March 10, 2003</u>	
Halibut Regulations					
Annual Halibut Management Measures for 2004	Pending IPHC meeting in January 2004				
Halibut charter boat IFQ	April 2001; October 2001	Analysis received 5/9/03 Proposed rule in preparation			
Subsistence Halibut 2	April 2002; October 2003				
IFQ Cost Recovery Fee notice	NMFS	11/24/03	November 26, 2003		
Crab Regulations					
Crab LLP license and vessel buyback program	Congress December 2000	<i>Final rule in preparation at HQ review</i>		December 12, 2002 67 FR 76329 Comment period ended Jan. 27, 2003, and subsequently extended until Feb. 27, 2003	Went to DOC 12/1/03; will go to OMB review next week

Regulatory Amendment Status: <u>Actions Since October 2003 Council Meeting</u>	Date of Council Action	Start Regional Review of Rule	Transmittal Date of Rule to NMFS Headquarters	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule Published in Federal Register
Harvest Specifications					
2004 BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specs	October 2003 December 2003	PR: 10/23/03	PR: November 14, 2003	December 2, 2003 68 FR 67642 <u>Comment period ends January 2, 2004</u>	
2004 GOA Groundfish Harvest Specs	October 2003 December 2003	PR: 10/22/03	PR: November 14, 2003	December 5, 2003 68 FR 68002 <u>Comment period ends January 5, 2004</u>	
Interim BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specs	October 2003	10/24/03	November 14, 2003	December 8, 2003	
Interim GOA Groundfish Harvest Specs	October 2003	10/24/04	November 14, 2003	December 5, 2003 68 FR 67964	



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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

**DECEMBER 2003
Supplemental**

December 2, 2003

RECEIVED

DEC - 5 2003

N.P.F.M.C

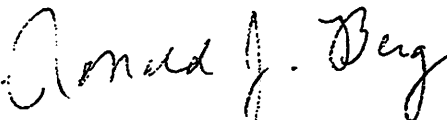
Chris Oliver
Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Chris:

We have approved Amendment 66 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (Amendment 66). The amendment was approved on December 2, 2003. It will revise the definition of an eligible quota share holder to authorize non-profit organizations representing eligible communities in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) to hold sablefish quota share (QS) for lease to and use by community residents as defined by specific elements and options described in Amendment 66.

Amendment 66 amends the FMP affecting the sablefish IFQ fishery. Those portions of the Council's motion that affect the halibut IFQ fishery are not affected by this amendment. The halibut IFQ fishery is managed pursuant to regulations implemented under the authority of the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982.

Sincerely,


For James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region



STATE OF ALASKA

FRANK MURKOWS.

AGENDA D-1(b)
Supplemental
DECEMBER 2003

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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December 5, 2003

Mr. Chris Oliver, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
604 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Chris:

This letter provides an estimate of the 2004 spawning biomass of Pacific herring (*Clupea harengus*) in the eastern Bering Sea for the purposes of establishing bycatch caps per Amendment 16A of the Bering Sea/Aleutians Islands Groundfish FMP. The department's estimate of the 2004 biomass is 206,846 short tons, equivalent to 187,648 metric tons. This estimate is the sum of the spawning location estimates contained in the attached table.

Sincerely,



Doug Mecum, Director

Table 1. Projections of Pacific herring spawning biomass for spawning aggregations in the eastern Bering Sea, Alaska in 2004.

Spawning area	short tons	metric tons
Norton Sound	28,787	26,115
Cape Romanzof	3,500	3,175
Nunivak Island	4,739	4,299
Nelson Island	5,085	4,613
Cape Avinof	3,369	3,056
Goodnews Bay	7,744	7,025
Security Cove	9,698	8,798
Togiak	143,124	129,840
Port Moller/Port Heiden	800	726
Total	206,846	187,648

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

National Marine Fisheries Service Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries Catch Accounting



Bering Sea

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Other Rockfish	334	888	554	38%	1
	Pacific Ocean Perch	1,180	1,199	19	98%	0
	Northern Rockfish	72	112	40	64%	0
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish	105	126	21	83%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	699	1,159	460	60%	3
	Sablefish (Trawl)	196	1,233	1,037	16%	0
	Greenland Turbot	2,337	2,278	-59	103%	1
X	Pollock, AFA Inshore	652,880	653,047	167	100%	0
X	Pollock, AFA Catcher Processor	522,432	522,437	5	100%	0
X	Pollock, AFA Mothership	130,564	130,609	45	100%	0
	Pollock, Incidental Catch, non-Bogoslof	35,051	36,490	1,439	96%	261
	Pollock, Incidental Catch, Bogoslof	24	50	26	49%	0

Aleutian Islands

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Other Rockfish	385	539	154	71%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Eastern	3,767	3,238	-529	116%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Central	2,966	3,090	124	96%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch, Western	6,027	5,411	-616	111%	0
	Northern Rockfish	4,581	5,438	857	84%	0
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish (Trawl)	205	538	333	38%	0
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish (Non Trawl)	69	230	161	30%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Eastern (Other Gear)	10,819	9,753	-1,066	111%	1
	Atka Mackerel, Eastern (Jig)	0	99	99	0%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Central	25,434	27,158	1,724	94%	0
X	Atka Mackerel, Western	17,842	18,491	649	96%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	961	1,860	899	52%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	35	659	624	5%	0
	Greenland Turbot	616	1,122	506	55%	0
	Pollock, Incidental Catch	1,653	1,000	-653	165%	0

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Alaska Plaice	9,778	9,250	-528	106%	0
	Arrowtooth Flounder	12,678	10,200	-2,478	124%	27
	Flathead Sole	13,764	17,000	3,236	81%	7

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting



Bering Sea Aleutian Islands

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Other Flatfish	2,749	2,775	26	99%	2
	Other Species	24,854	29,886	5,032	83%	370
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Trawl)	33,486	33,605	119	100%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Trawl)	43,434	39,105	-4,329	111%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Hook-and-Line)	91,068	97,956	6,888	93%	2,328
X	Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Hook-and-Line)	269	292	23	92%	0
X	Pacific Cod (Pot)	18,506	18,877	371	98%	92
X	Pacific Cod (Jig)	156	239	83	65%	0
	Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line and Pot < 60 ft)	1,454	1,363	-91	107%	6
	Pacific Cod, Incidental Catch (Hook-and-Line and Pot)	395	500	105	79%	3
	Rock Sole	35,325	37,400	2,075	94%	1
	Squid	1,273	1,675	402	76%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	74,407	71,188	-3,219	105%	8
Total:		1,784,830	1,799,565	14,735	99%	3,111

This report includes CDQ total catch of squid and ICA pollock. The remaining CDQ allocated catch may be found in the CDQ reports.

Other gear in the Atka mackerel fishery includes all authorized gear types except jig.

Other flatfish: all flatfish species, except for Pacific halibut, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder, and Alaska plaice.

Other rockfish: all Sebastes and Sebastolobus species except for Pacific ocean perch, northern, shortraker, and roughey rockfish.

Other species: sculpins, sharks, skates and octopus.

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Seasonal Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

Account: ALL

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting



Bering Sea

Pollock, AFA Inshore

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	258,288	259,119	831	100%
B	10-JUN-03	01-NOV-03	394,592	391,928	-2,664	101%
Total:			652,880	651,047	-1,833	100%

Pollock, AFA Catcher Processor

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	207,167	207,295	128	100%
B	10-JUN-03	01-NOV-03	315,266	313,542	-1,724	101%
Total:			522,432	520,837	-1,595	100%

Pollock, AFA Mothership

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	51,778	51,824	46	100%
B	10-JUN-03	01-NOV-03	78,786	78,386	-400	101%
Total:			130,564	130,210	-354	100%

Aleutian Islands

Atka Mackerel, Eastern (Other Gear)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	15-APR-03	4,902	4,876	-26	101%
B	01-SEP-03	01-NOV-03	2,707	4,876	2,169	56%
Total:			7,609	9,752	2,143	78%

Atka Mackerel, Central

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	15-APR-03	12,186	13,579	1,393	90%
B	01-SEP-03	01-NOV-03	13,200	13,579	379	97%
Total:			25,386	27,158	1,772	93%

Atka Mackerel, Western

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	15-APR-03	7,278	9,245	1,967	79%
B	01-SEP-03	01-NOV-03	10,452	9,245	-1,207	113%

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Seasonal Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

Account: ALL

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting****Aleutian Islands****Atka Mackerel, Western**

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
Total:			17,731	18,490	759	96%

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands**Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Trawl)**

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	20,387	22,553	2,166	90%
B	01-APR-03	10-JUN-03	3,082	13,532	10,450	23%
C	10-JUN-03	01-NOV-03	10,017	9,021	-996	111%
Total:			33,486	45,106	11,620	74%

Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Trawl)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	34,885	31,574	-3,311	110%
B	01-APR-03	10-JUN-03	5,247	4,510	-737	116%
C	10-JUN-03	01-NOV-03	3,301	9,021	5,720	37%
Total:			43,434	45,105	1,671	96%

Pacific Cod, Catcher Processor (Hook-and-Line)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	46,032	46,747	715	98%
B	10-JUN-03	31-DEC-03	45,036	31,164	-13,872	145%
Total:			91,068	77,911	-13,157	117%

Pacific Cod, Catcher Vessel (Hook-and-Line)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	28-MAR-03	175	175	0	100%
B	10-JUN-03	31-DEC-03	91	117	26	77%
Total:			266	292	26	91%

Pacific Cod (Pot)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	12,176	10,693	-1,483	114%
B	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	6,330	7,129	799	89%

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Seasonal Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

Account: ALL

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting****Bering Sea Aleutian Islands****Pacific Cod (Pot)**

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
Total:			18,506	17,822	-684	104%

Pacific Cod (Jig)

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	108	2,303	2,195	5%
B	10-JUN-03	31-DEC-03	48	1,536	1,488	3%
Total:			156	3,839	3,683	4%

This report does not include the CDQ allocated catch.

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Seasonal Prohibited Species Report

Through: 29-NOV-03
Account: ALL

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Non-Chinook Salmon, CVOA

Trawl Gear

Season	Begin	End	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken
Non-Chinook Salmon CVOA	15-AUG-03	14-OCT-03	Count	94,399	38,850	-55,549	243%
Total:				94,399	38,850	-55,549	243%

Halibut Mortality

Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line)

Season	Begin	End	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	MT	195	320	125	61%
2nd Season	10-JUN-03	15-AUG-03	MT	0	0	0	0%
3rd Season	15-AUG-03	31-DEC-03	MT	291	455	164	64%
Total:				486	775	289	63%

Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish (Trawl)

Season	Begin	End	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	MT	694	448	-246	155%
2nd Season	01-APR-03	29-JUN-03	MT	0	164	164	0%
3rd Season	29-JUN-03	31-DEC-03	MT	187	167	-20	112%
Total:				881	779	-102	113%

Yellowfin Sole (Trawl)

Season	Begin	End	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	MT	269	262	-7	103%
2nd Season	01-APR-03	21-MAY-03	MT	132	195	63	68%
3rd Season	21-MAY-03	29-JUN-03	MT	185	49	-136	378%
4th Season	29-JUN-03	31-DEC-03	MT	347	380	33	91%
Total:				933	886	-47	105%

This report does not include the CDQ allocated catch.

CVOA: Catcher Vessel Operational Area. 50 CFR 679.22(a)(5) and Figure 2.

Other flatfish for PSC monitoring: all flatfish species, except for Pacific halibut (a prohibited species), Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder.

Data is based on observer reports, extrapolated to total groundfish harvest. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting



Chinook Salmon

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pollock (Pelagic)	Count	44,762	30,525	-14,237	147%	0
Total:			44,762	30,525	-14,237	147%	0

Halibut Mortality

Non-Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line)	MT	486	775	289	63%	12
	Non-Pacific Cod (Hook-and-Line)	MT	22	58	36	38%	0
Total:			508	833	325	61%	12

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	MT	1,231	1,434	203	86%	0
	Rockfish	MT	67	69	2	97%	0
X	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish (Trawl)	MT	881	779	-102	113%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	MT	160	232	72	69%	0
X	Yellowfin Sole (Trawl)	MT	933	886	-47	105%	0
	Turbot/Sablefish/Arrowtooth Flounder	MT	55	0	-55	0%	0
Total:			3,327	3,400	73	98%	0

Herring

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	MT	14	20	6	69%	0
	Rockfish	MT	0	7	7	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	MT	1	20	19	7%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	MT	19	146	127	13%	0
	Pollock Pelagic	MT	1,036	1,184	148	88%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	MT	38	139	101	27%	0
	Greenland Turbot, Arrowtooth, Sablefish	MT	0	9	9	1%	0
Total:			1,108	1,525	417	73%	0

Opilio (Tanner) Crab - COBLZ

Trawl Gear

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Opilio (Tanner) Crab - COBLZ

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	59,881	124,736	64,855	48%	0
	Rockfish	Count	0	40,237	40,237	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	179,304	969,130	789,826	19%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	954	72,428	71,474	1%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	377,000	2,776,981	2,399,981	14%	0
	Greenland Turbot, Arrowtooth, Sablefish	Count	1,699	40,238	38,539	4%	0
Total:			618,838	4,023,750	3,404,912	15%	0

Bairdi Crab, Zone 1

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	53,482	183,112	129,630	29%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	224,361	365,320	140,959	61%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	2,078	17,224	15,146	12%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	32,309	340,844	308,535	9%	0
Total:			312,230	906,500	594,270	34%	0

Bairdi Crab, Zone 2

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	103,214	324,176	220,962	32%	0
	Rockfish	Count	0	10,988	10,988	0%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	221,403	596,154	374,751	37%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	2,007	27,473	25,466	7%	0
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	277,320	1,788,459	1,511,139	16%	0
Total:			603,944	2,747,250	2,143,306	22%	0

Red King Crab, Zone 1

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Pacific Cod	Count	1,141	13,079	11,938	9%	0
	Rock Sole, Flathead Sole, Other Flatfish	Count	52,254	59,782	7,528	87%	0
	Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Other Species	Count	34	200	166	17%	0

Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Prohibited Species Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting****Red King Crab, Zone 1****Trawl Gear**

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Yellowfin Sole	Count	22,873	16,664	-6,209	137%	0
Total:			76,302	89,725	13,423	85%	0

This report does not include the CDQ allocated catch.

"Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring: all flatfish species, except for Pacific halibut (a prohibited species), Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, arrowtooth flounder.

COBLZ: C. Opilio Crab Bycatch Limitation Zone. 50 CFR 679.21(e) and Figure 13.

Zone 1: Federal Reporting Areas 508, 509, 512, 516.

Zone 2: Federal Reporting Areas 513, 517, 521.

Data is based on observer reports, extrapolated to total groundfish harvest. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

Gulf of Alaska Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Western, Central Pollock

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Pollock, 610 Shumagin	16,583	16,788	205	99%	0
X	Pollock, 620 Chirikof	19,504	19,685	181	99%	0
X	Pollock, 630 Kodiak	12,285	10,339	-1,946	119%	0

Western Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	8,190	8,000	-190	102%	0
	Deep Water Flatfish	28	180	152	16%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	192	4,500	4,308	4%	0
	Flathead Sole	515	2,000	1,485	26%	0
	Rex Sole	767	1,280	513	60%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	2,149	2,700	551	80%	0
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish	240	220	-20	109%	0
	Thornyhead Rockfish	343	360	17	95%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	219	510	291	43%	0
	Northern Rockfish	533	890	357	60%	0
	Other Rockfish	130	90	-40	144%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Inshore	13,957	13,905	-52	100%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Offshore	2,160	1,545	-615	140%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	1,859	2,056	197	90%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	246	514	268	48%	0

Central Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	20,612	25,000	4,388	82%	0
	Deep Water Flatfish	905	2,220	1,315	41%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	4,289	13,000	8,711	33%	0
	Flathead Sole	1,733	5,000	3,267	35%	0
	Rex Sole	2,705	5,540	2,835	49%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	8,010	8,510	500	94%	0
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish	937	840	-97	112%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	2,201	3,480	1,279	63%	0
	Northern Rockfish	4,771	4,640	-131	103%	0
	Thornyhead Rockfish	751	840	89	89%	0
	Other Rockfish	699	550	-149	127%	0
X	Pacific Cod, Inshore	22,425	20,421	-2,004	110%	0

Note: All weights are in metric tons.

Gulf of Alaska Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Central Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Pacific Cod, Offshore	2,159	2,269	110	95%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	5,578	5,152	-426	108%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	1,423	1,288	-135	110%	0

Eastern Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Shortraker/Rougheye Rockfish	387	560	173	69%	0
	Thornyhead Rockfish	98	800	702	12%	0
	Pacific Cod, Inshore	61	2,160	2,099	3%	0
	Pacific Cod, Offshore	0	240	240	0%	0

West Yakutat

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	35	2,500	2,465	1%	0
	Deep Water Flatfish	2	1,330	1,328	0%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	0	1,160	1,160	0%	0
	Flathead Sole	0	2,900	2,900	0%	0
	Rex Sole	1	1,600	1,599	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	606	810	204	75%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	607	640	33	95%	0
	Other Rockfish	226	150	-76	151%	0
	Pollock	943	1,078	135	87%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	1,656	2,026	370	82%	0
	Sablefish (Trawl)	143	294	151	49%	0

Southeast

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Arrowtooth Flounder	26	2,500	2,474	1%	0
	Deep Water Flatfish	3	1,150	1,147	0%	0
	Shallow Water Flatfish	3	2,960	2,957	0%	0
	Flathead Sole	0	1,250	1,250	0%	0
	Rex Sole	1	1,050	1,049	0%	0
	Pacific Ocean Perch	0	1,640	1,640	0%	0
	Pelagic Shelf Rockfish	11	860	849	1%	0
	Other Rockfish	19	200	181	10%	0
	Pollock	0	6,460	6,460	0%	0

Gulf of Alaska Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Southeast

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Demersal Shelf Rockfish	243	390	147	62%	0
	Sablefish (Hook-and-Line)	3,174	3,560	386	89%	0

Entire Gulf

Sea- sons	Account	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Atka Mackerel	577	600	23	96%	0
	Other Species	6,132	11,260	5,128	54%	0
Total:		174,050	236,440	62,390	74%	0

Deep water flatfish: Dover sole, Greenland turbot, and deepsea sole.

Shallow water flatfish: flatfish not including deep water flatfish, flathead sole, rex sole, or arrowtooth flounder.

Other rockfish in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas and in the West Yakutat District: slope rockfish and demersal shelf rockfish.

Other rockfish in the Southeast Outside District: slope rockfish.

Slope rockfish: aurora, blackgill, bocaccio, chilipepper, darkblotch, greenstriped, harlequin, pygmy, redbanded, redstripe, sharpchin, shortbelly, silvergrey, splitnose, stripetail, vermilion, and yellowmouth.

In the Eastern GOA only, "slope rockfish" also includes northern rockfish.

Demersal shelf rockfish: canary, china, copper, quillback, rosethorn, tiger, and yelloweye.

Pelagic shelf rockfish: dusky, widow, and yellowtail.

Other species: sculpins, sharks, skates, squid, and octopus.

Gulf of Alaska Seasonal Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03
Account: ALL

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



**Western, Central Pollock
Pollock, 610 Shumagin**

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	25-FEB-03	4,214	2,894	-1,320	146%
B	10-MAR-03	31-MAY-03	1,380	1,666	286	83%
C	25-AUG-03	15-SEP-03	5,976	5,480	-496	109%
D	01-OCT-03	01-NOV-03	4,720	5,500	780	86%
Total:			16,290			

Pollock, 620 Chirikof

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	25-FEB-03	5,054	6,535	1,481	77%
B	10-MAR-03	31-MAY-03	10,887	9,262	-1,625	118%
C	25-AUG-03	15-SEP-03	1,547	1,864	317	83%
D	01-OCT-03	01-NOV-03	1,995	2,686	691	74%
Total:			19,484			

Pollock, 630 Kodiak

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	20-JAN-03	25-FEB-03	2,472	2,274	-198	109%
B	10-MAR-03	31-MAY-03	1,466	857	-609	171%
C	25-AUG-03	15-SEP-03	4,234	3,119	-1,115	136%
D	01-OCT-03	01-NOV-03	3,939	3,517	-422	112%
Total:			12,112			

Western Gulf

Pacific Cod, Inshore

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	9,990	8,343	-1,647	120%
B	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	3,787	5,562	1,775	68%
Total:			13,776	13,905	129	99%

Pacific Cod, Offshore

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	2,022	927	-1,095	218%
B	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	28	618	590	5%
Total:			2,050	1,545	-505	133%

Gulf of Alaska Seasonal Catch Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

Account: ALL

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**Central Gulf****Pacific Cod, Inshore**

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	15,719	12,253	-3,466	128%
B	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	4,393	8,168	3,775	54%
Total:			20,113	20,421	308	98%

Pacific Cod, Offshore

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Quota	Remaining Quota	% Taken
A	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	1,408	1,361	-47	103%
B	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	701	908	207	77%
Total:			2,110	2,269	159	93%

Gulf of Alaska Prohibited Species Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting



Chinook Salmon

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Chinook Salmon	Count	15,438	0			0
Total:			15,438	0			0

Halibut Mortality

Non-Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
X	Other Hook-and-Line Fisheries	MT	296	290	-6	102%	0
Total:			296	290	-6	102%	0

Trawl Gear

Sea- sons	Account	Units	Total Catch	Limit	Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
	Trawl Fishery	MT	2,014	2,000	-14	101%	0
Total:			2,014	2,000	-14	101%	0

No PSC Limits apply to salmon in the GOA.

Other hook-and-line fisheries means all hook-and-line fisheries except sablefish and demersal shelf rockfish in the Southeast District. The hook-and-line sablefish fishery is exempt from halibut bycatch restrictions.

Halibut mortality for the demersal shelf rockfish fishery, Southeast District is not listed due to insufficient observer coverage.

Data is based on observer reports, extrapolated to total groundfish harvest. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

Gulf of Alaska Halibut Mortality Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting



Trawl Fisheries

Deep Water Species Complex

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	105	100	-5	105%
2nd Season	01-APR-03	29-JUN-03	302	300	-2	101%
3rd Season	29-JUN-03	01-SEP-03	310	400	90	77%
4th Season	01-SEP-03	30-SEP-03	34	0	-34	0%
Total:			751	800	49	94%

Shallow Water Species Complex

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	20-JAN-03	01-APR-03	274	450	176	61%
2nd Season	01-APR-03	29-JUN-03	315	100	-215	315%
3rd Season	29-JUN-03	01-SEP-03	127	200	73	64%
4th Season	01-SEP-03	30-SEP-03	282	150	-132	188%
Total:			998	900	-98	111%

Year-To-Date

Account	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken	Last Wk Catch
Trawl Fishery	2,014	2,000	-14	101%	0

Other Hook-and-Line Fisheries

Season	Begin	End	Total Catch	Limit	Limit Remaining	% Taken
1st Season	01-JAN-03	10-JUN-03	233	250	17	93%
2nd Season	10-JUN-03	01-SEP-03	33	5	-28	655%
3rd Season	01-SEP-03	31-DEC-03	30	35	5	86%
Total:			296	290	-6	102%

Deep-water species complex: sablefish, rockfish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole and arrowtooth flounder. Shallow-water species complex: pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, and 'other species'.

No apportionment between shallow-water and deep-water fishery complexes during October 1 to December 31 (300 mt allocated).

Other hook-and-line fisheries means all hook-and-line fisheries except sablefish and demersal shelf rockfish in the Southeast District. The hook-and-line sablefish fishery is exempt from halibut bycatch restrictions.

Halibut mortality for the demersal shelf rockfish fishery, Southeast District is not listed due to insufficient observer coverage.

Gulf of Alaska Halibut Mortality Report

Through: 29-NOV-03

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries
Catch Accounting**



Data is based on observer reports, extrapolated to total groundfish harvest.. Estimates for all weeks may change due to incorporation of late or corrected data.

Alaska Region

National Marine Fisheries Service

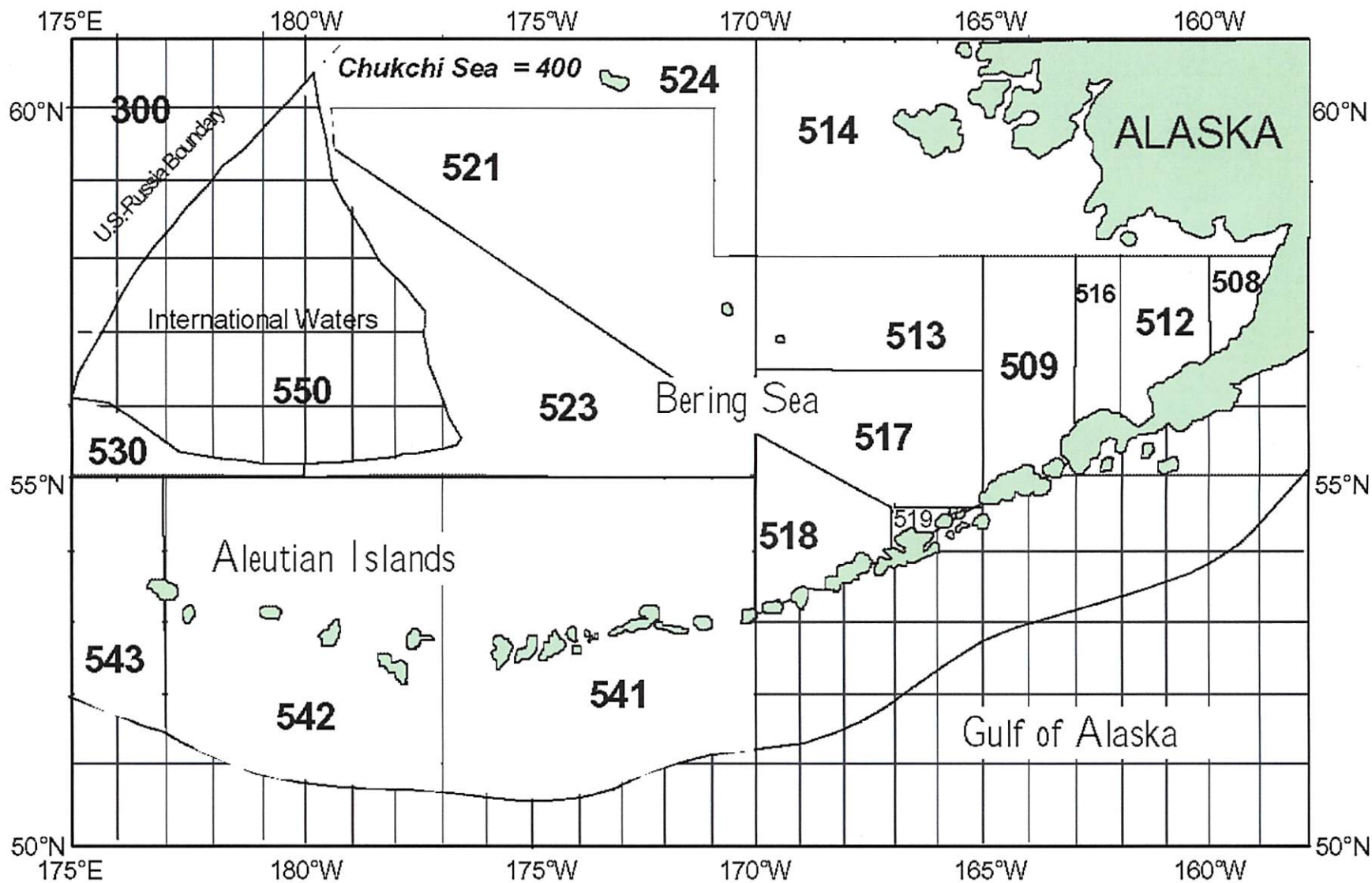
Inseason Management Report

December 2003

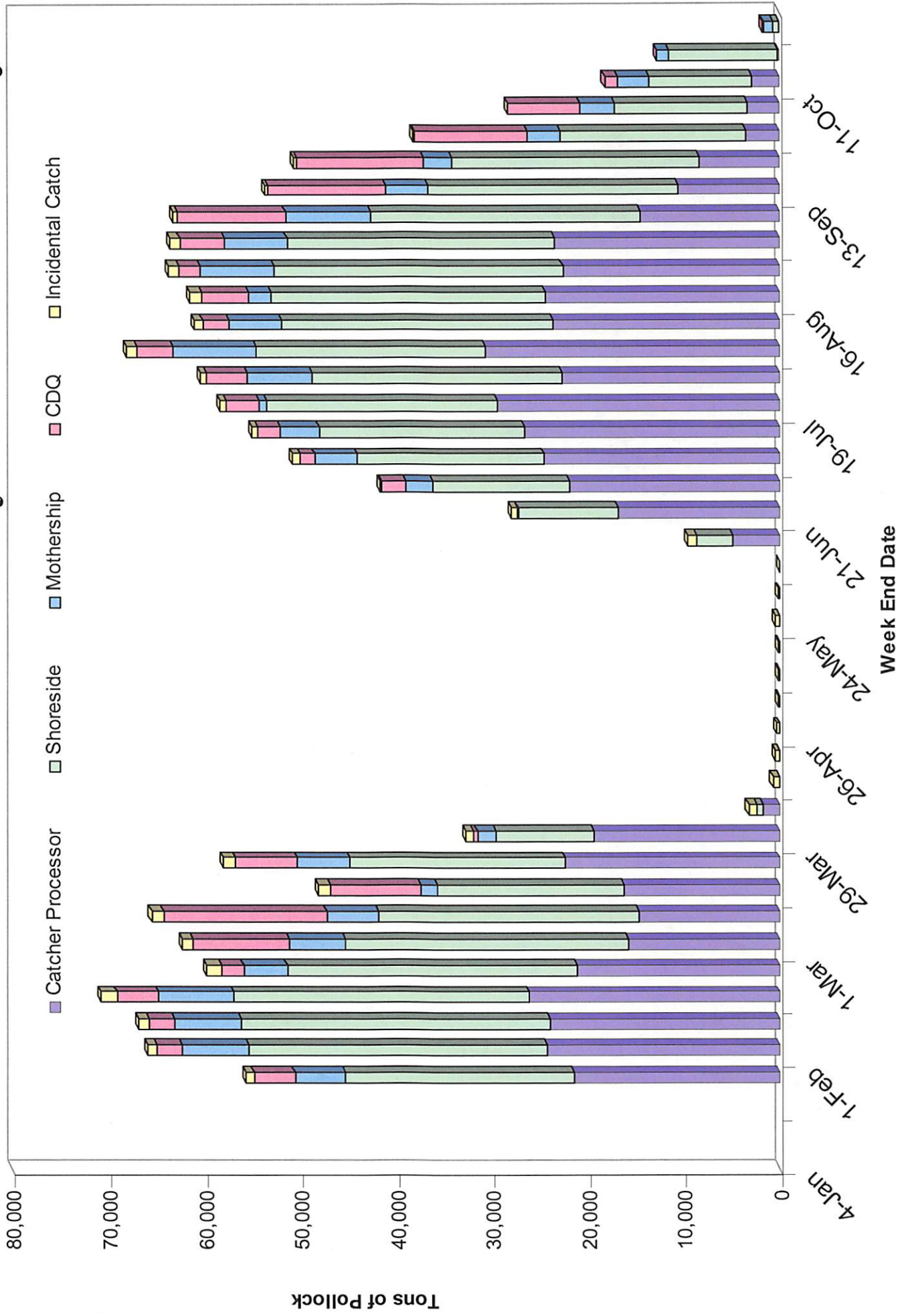


Catch data are through November 22, 2003

BSAI Reporting Areas



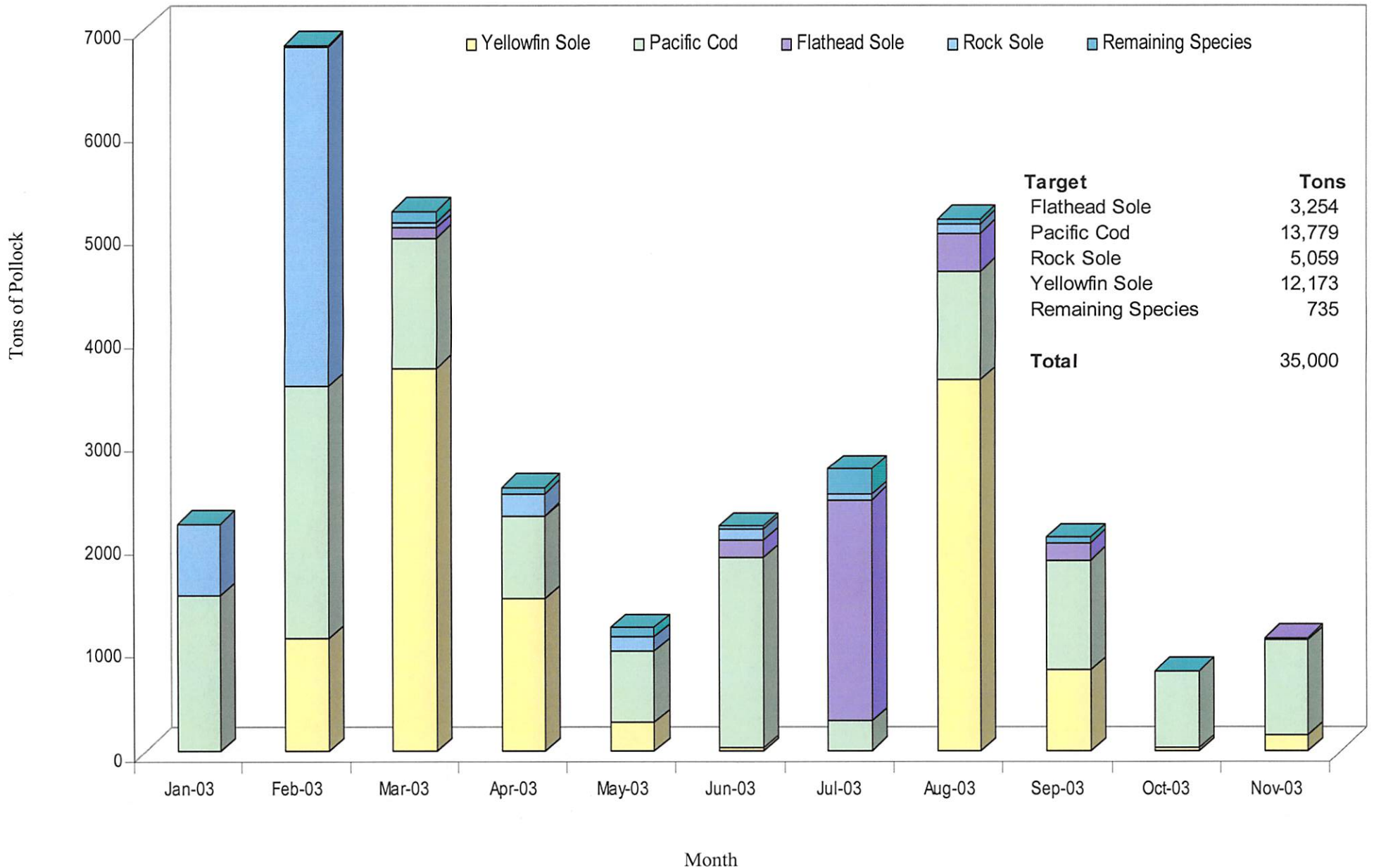
2003 BSAI Pollock Catch by Week and Fishery



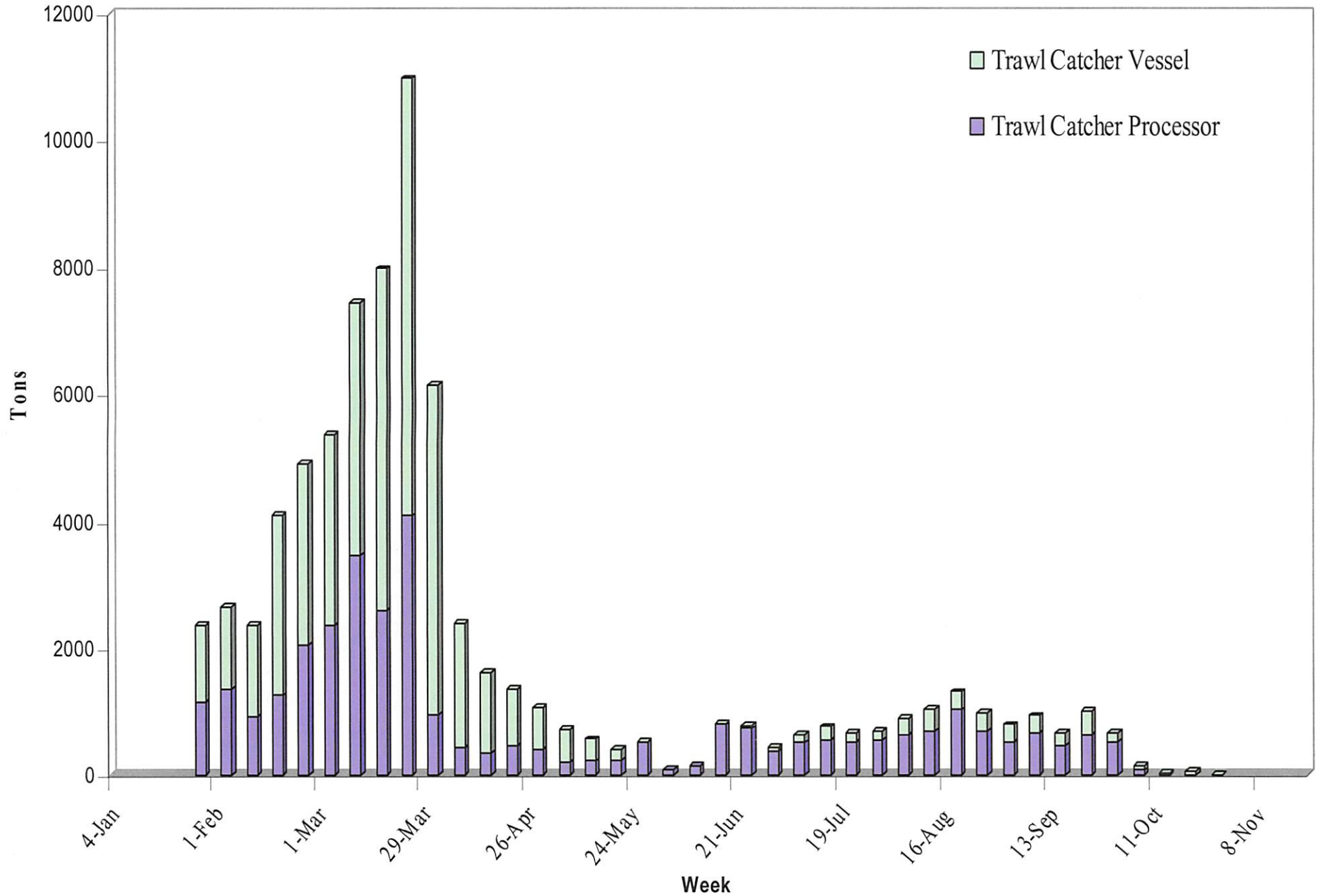
2003 Bering Sea Pollock Catch by Fishery Component

Fishery Component	TAC	Catch
Inshore	653,047	652,880
Catcher Processor	522,437	522,432
Mothership	130,609	130,564
Incidental Catch	36,490	35,000
CDQ	149,176	149,121
TOTAL	1,491,760	1,489,997

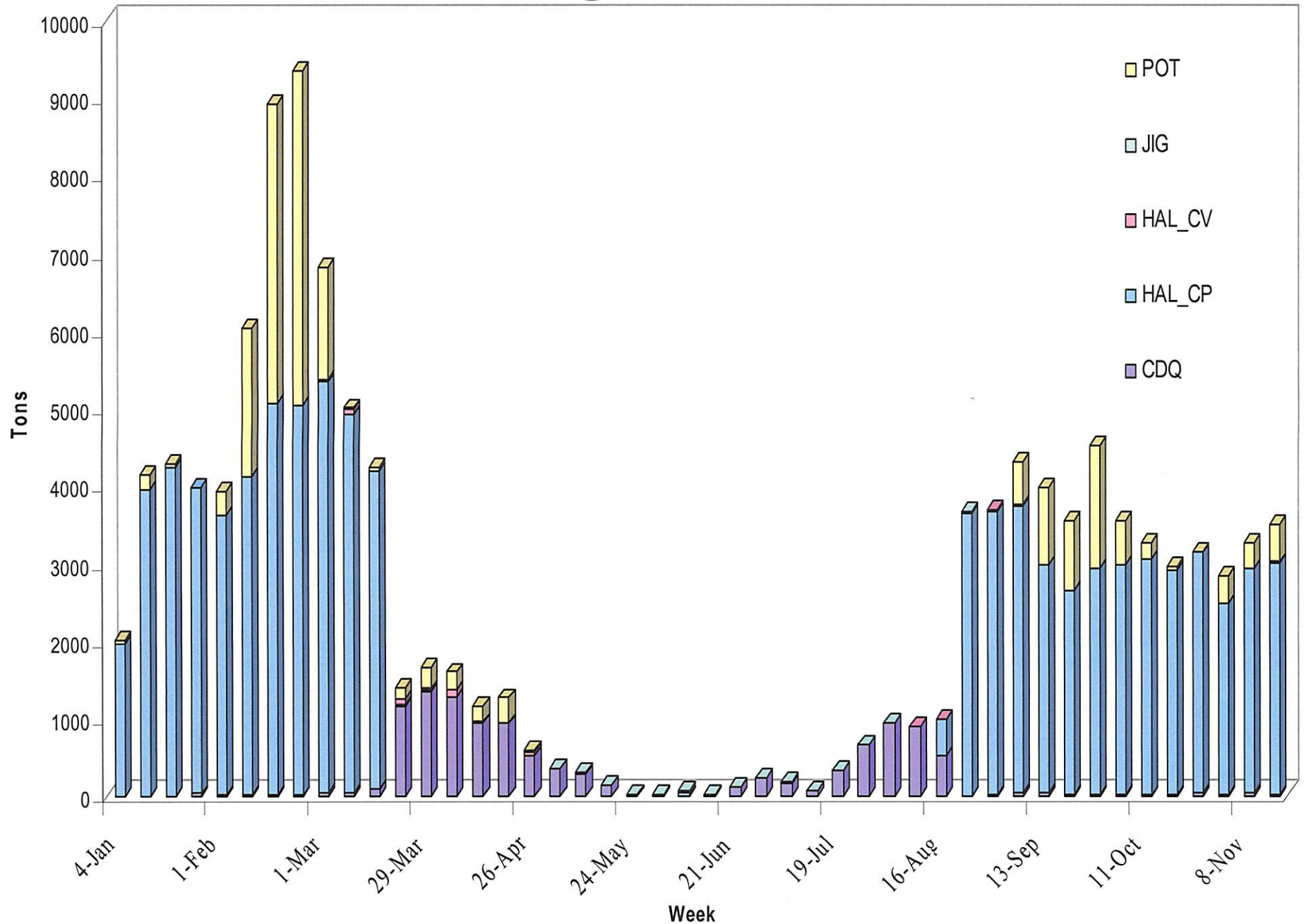
2003 Pollock Incidental Catch Allowance Catch by Month and Target



2003 BSAI Trawl Pacific Cod Catch



2003 BSAI H&L, Pot, Jig and CDQ Pacific Cod Catch

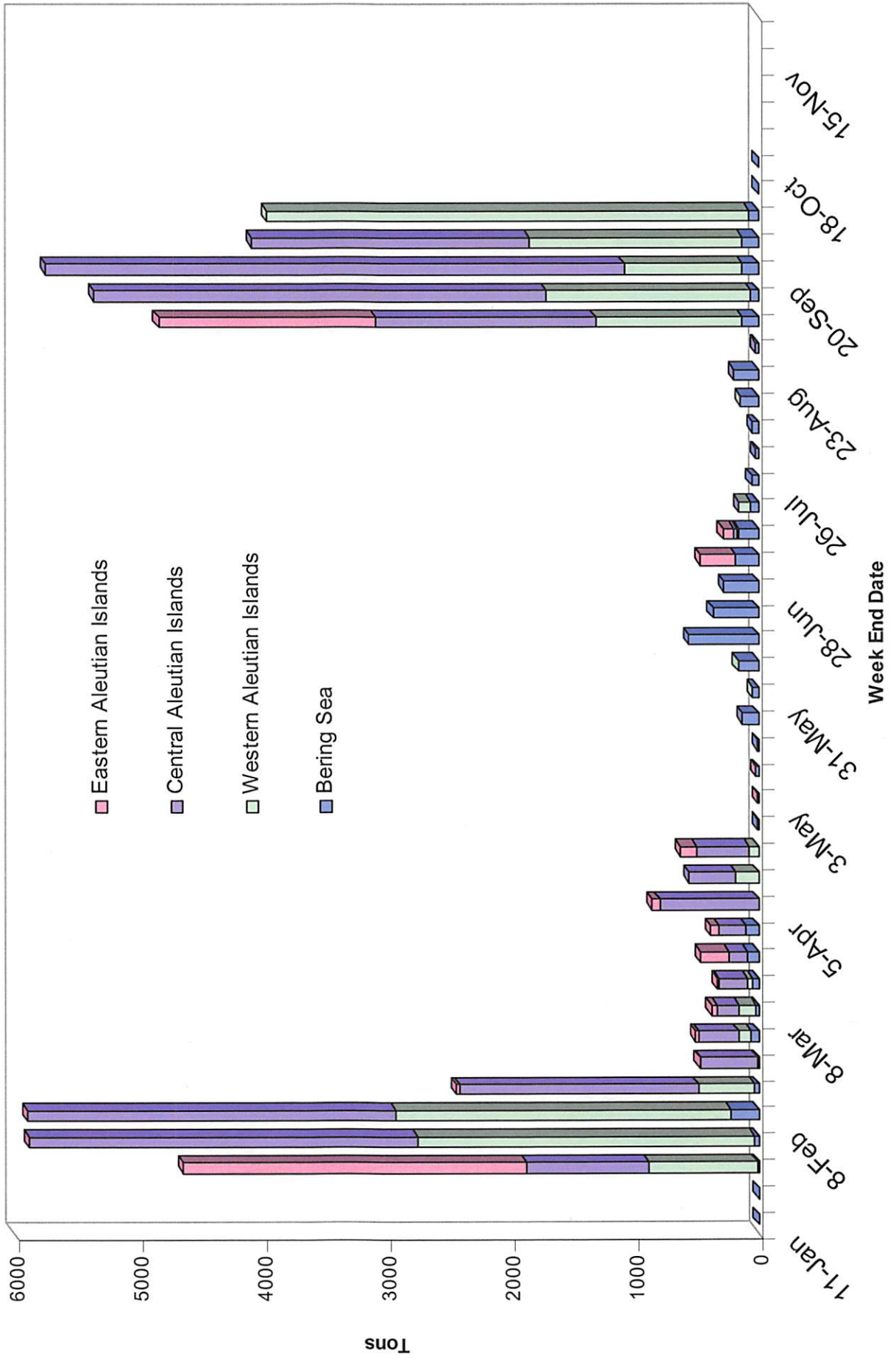


2003 BSAI Pacific Cod Apportionments & Catch

Fishery Component	TAC	Catch
Hook and Line Gear / Pot Gear		
H&L Catcher Processor	93,843	88,561
H&L Catcher Vessel	293	295
Pot Gear	18,661	18,388
H&L & Pot Catcher Vessels < 60	1,363	1,448
Trawl Gear		
Trawl Catcher Processor	33,605	33,486
Trawl Catcher Vessel	43,434	43,434
Jig Gear	239	156
CDQ	15,563	11,484
TOTAL	207,055	197,252

Includes the reapportionment on October 3, 2003 and the rescind/reapportionment on November 26, 2003

2003 Atka Mackerel Catch by Week and Area



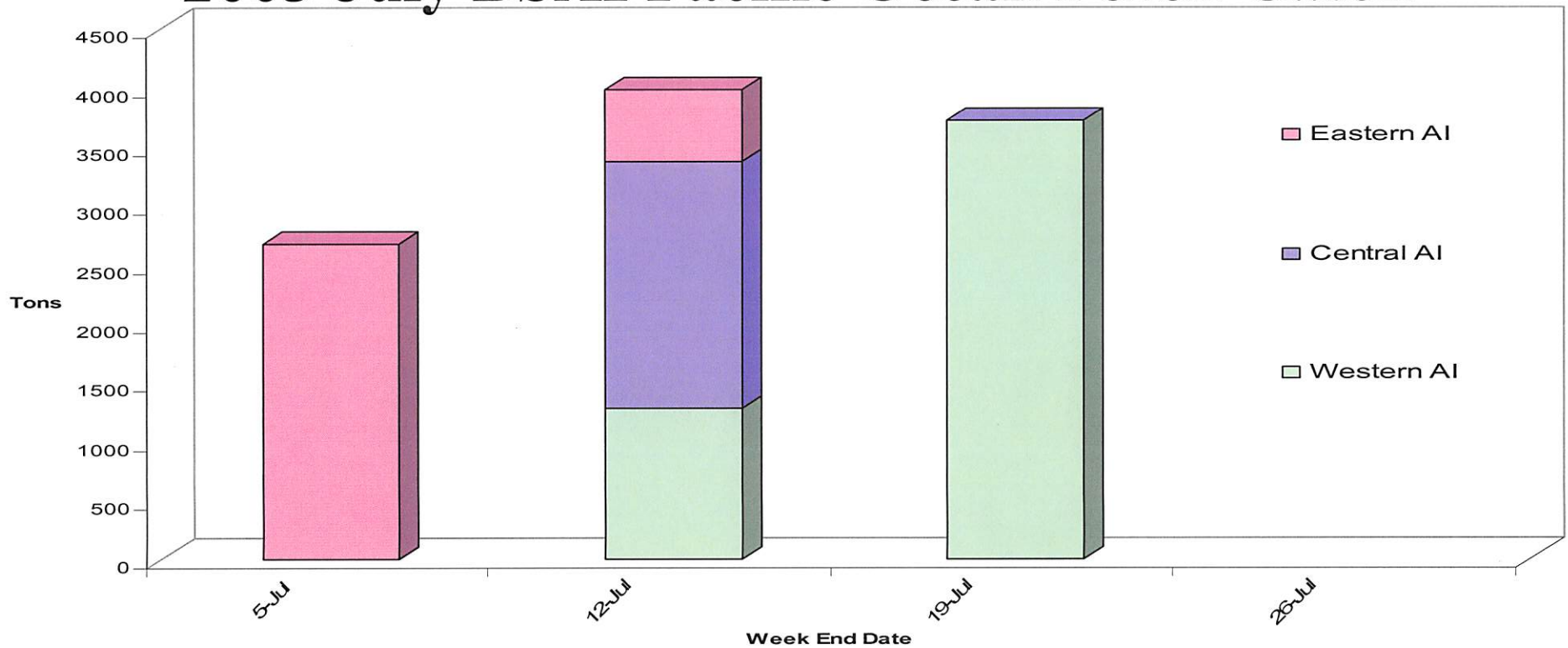
2003 Area 542 & 543 Harvest Limitation Area Fishery

Season	HLA	Vessels	Fishery Dates			
			Area 542		Area 543	
			Open	Close	Open	Close
A	HLA 1	<i>Alaska Spirit</i>	24-Jan	29-Jan	31-Jan	4-Feb
		<i>Alaska Warrior</i>				
		<i>Ocean Peace</i>				
		<i>Seafreeze AK</i>				
	HLA 2	<i>Alaska Juris</i>	31-Jan	5-Feb	24-Jan	28-Jan
		<i>Alaska Ranger</i>				
		<i>Alaska Victory</i>				
		<i>Seafisher</i>				
B	HLA 1	<i>Alaska Spirit</i>	4-Sep	10-Sep	12-Sep	18-Sep
		<i>Alaska Warrior</i>				
		<i>Ocean Peace</i>				
		<i>Seafisher</i>				
		<i>US Intrepid</i>				
	HLA 2	<i>Alaska Juris</i>	12-Sep	18-Sep	4-Sep	10-Sep
		<i>Alaska Ranger</i>				
		<i>Alaska Victory</i>				
		<i>Seafreeze AK</i>				
		<i>American No. 1</i>				

2003 Atka Mackerel Apportionments and Catch

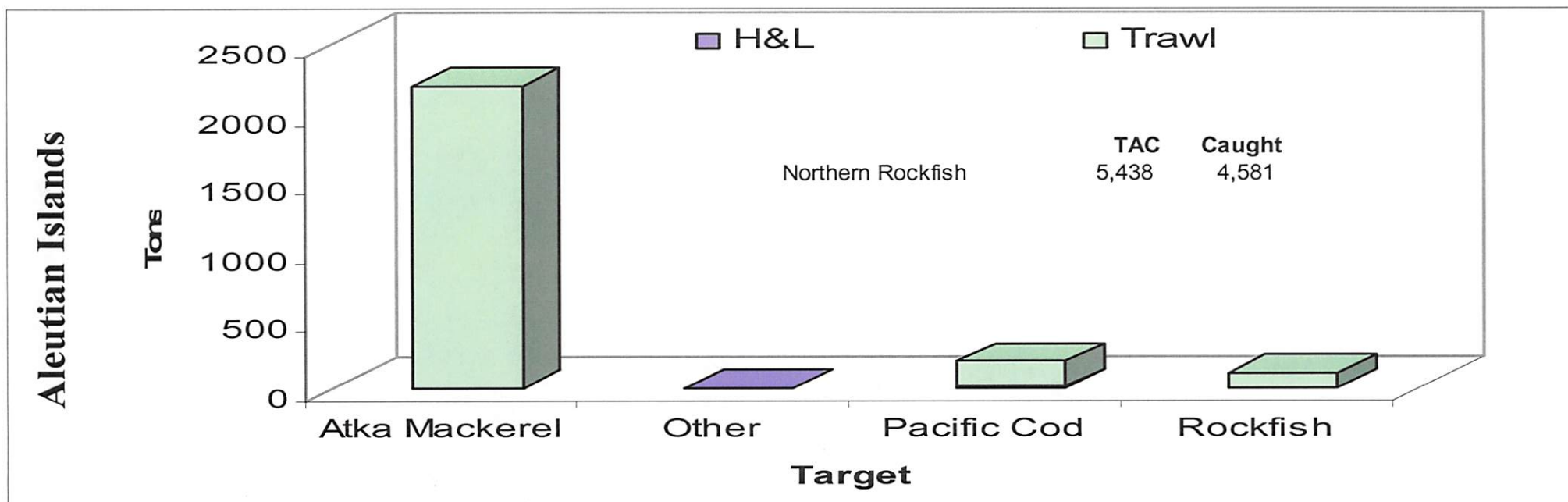
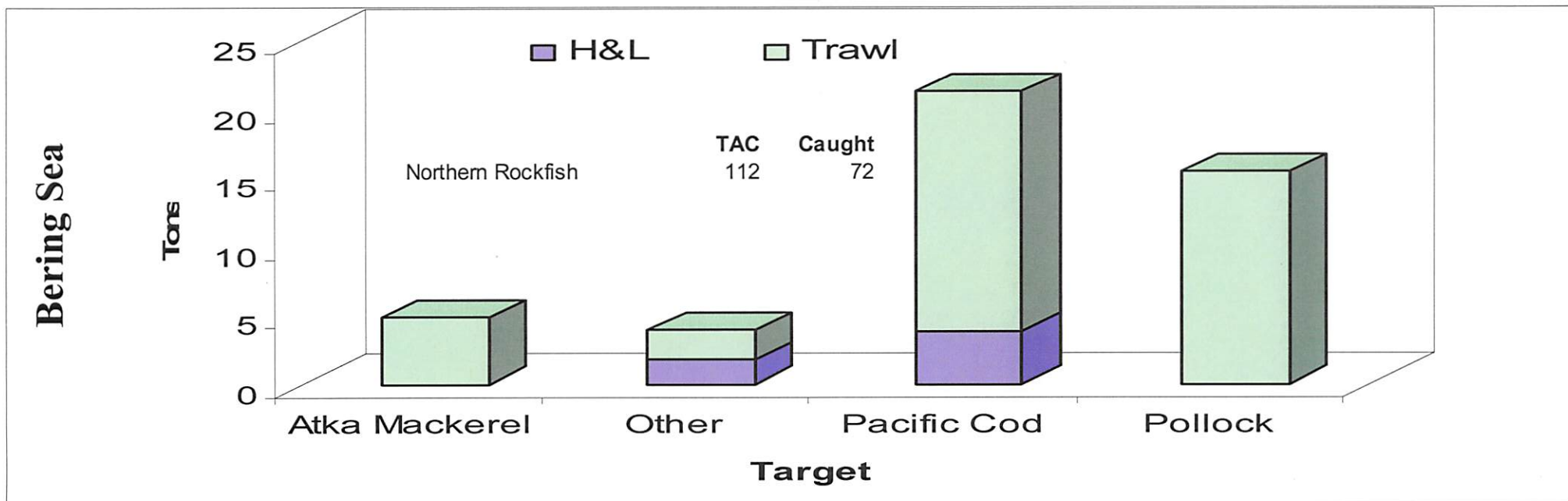
Fishery		TAC	Catch
Eastern Aleutian		9,753	10,880
Central Aleutian			
	TAC	27,158	25,434
	HLA Limit	16,294	12,908
Western Aleutian			
	TAC	18,491	17,767
	HLA Limit	11,094	9,333
CDQ			
	Eastern AI	799	696
	Central AI	2,202	2,129
	Western AI	1,499	1,203
Total		59,902	58,109

2003 July BSAI Pacific Ocean Perch Catch



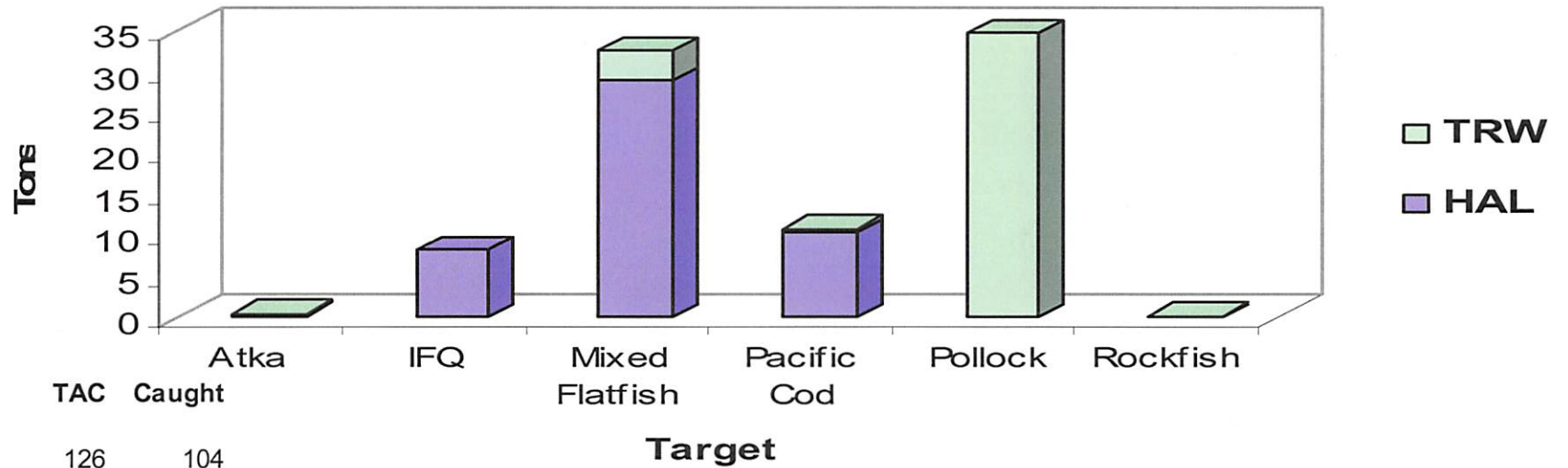
Fishery	TAC	Catch	Open	Close
Eastern				
	3,238	3,767	June-29	July-6
CDQ	263	249		
Central				
	3,090	2,966	June-29	July-11
CDQ	251	185		
Western				
	5,411	6,027	June-29	July-16
CDQ	439	404		

2003 BSAI Northern Rockfish Catch

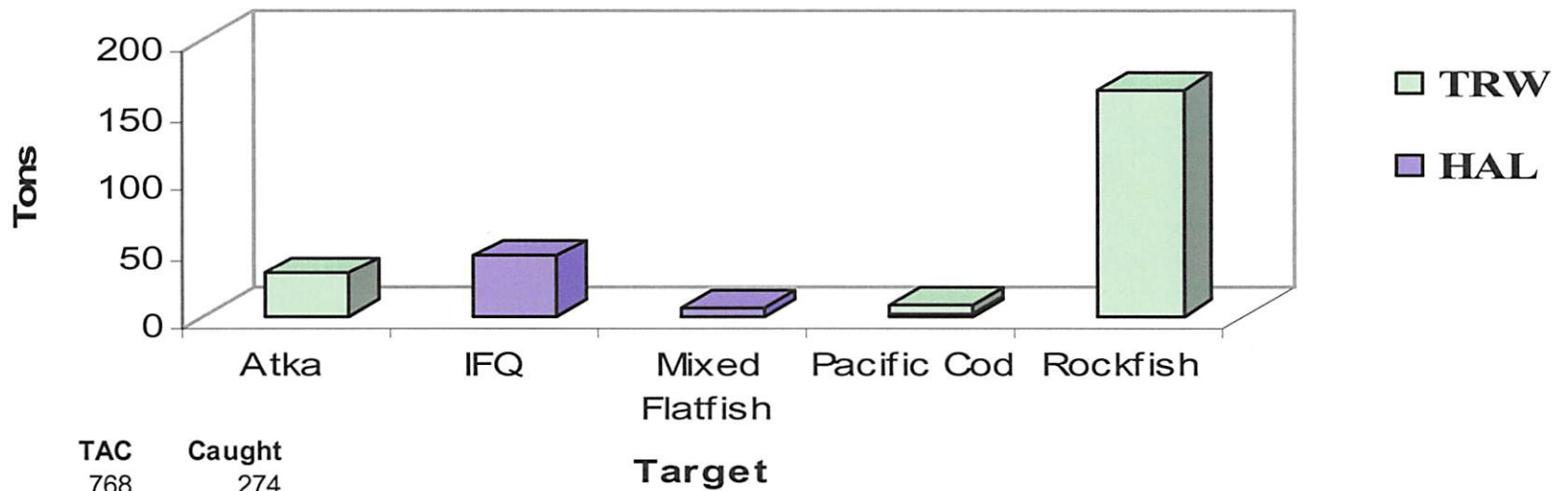


2003 BSAI Shortraker/Rougheye Catch

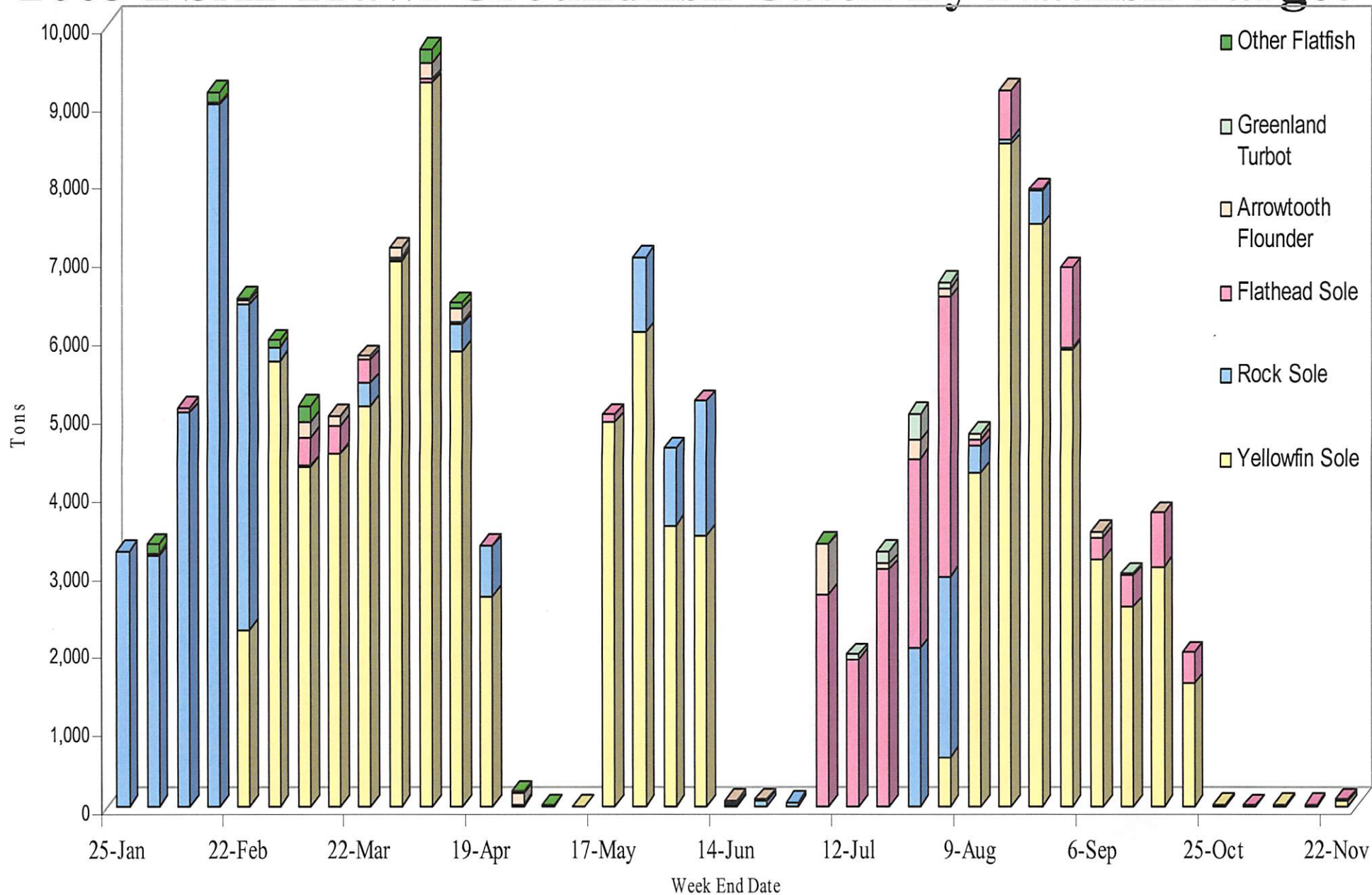
Bering Sea Shortraker/Rougheye



Aleutian Island Shortraker/Rougheye



2003 BSAI Trawl Groundfish Catch By Flatfish Target



2003 BSAI Hook and Line Halibut Mortality

H&L and Pot Closures

Hook and Line Halibut Mortality

Target	Apportionment	Taken
Pacific Cod	775	472
Other Non-Trawl	58	22

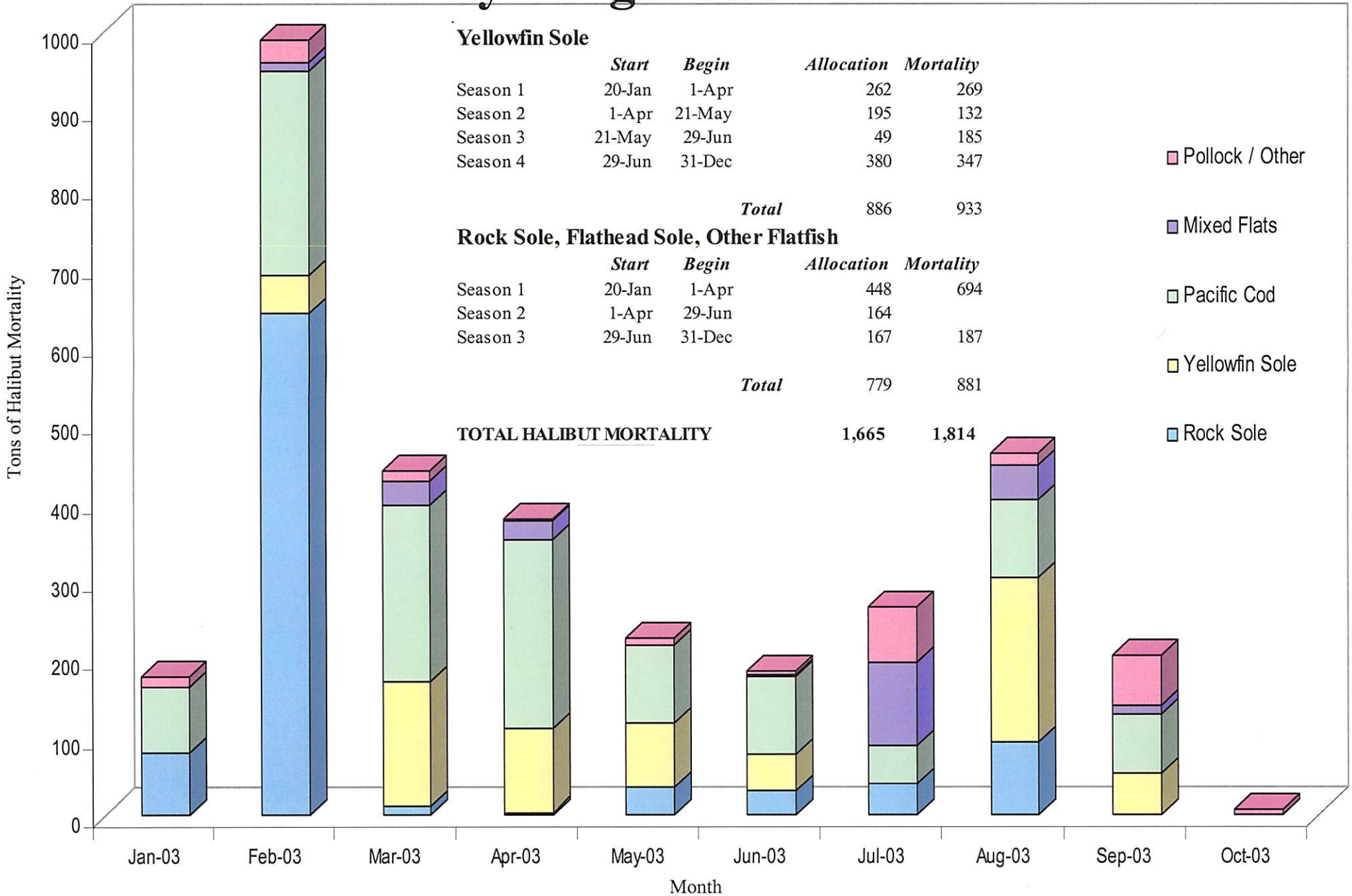
Hook & Line Closures

	Open	Closed	Reason
PACIFIC COD			
Catcher Processors	1-Jan 15-Aug	15-Mar	TAC
Catcher Vessels < 60	1-Jan 15-Aug	22-Apr	TAC
Catcher Vessel >= 60	1-Jan 15-Aug	28-Mar	TAC
Greenland Turbot	1-May	2-Aug	TAC

Pot Closures

	Open	Closed	Reason
PACIFIC COD			
Catcher Processors & Catcher Vessel >= 60	1-Jan 1-Sep	26-Feb	TAC
Catcher Vessels < 60	1-Jan 1-Sep	22-Apr	TAC

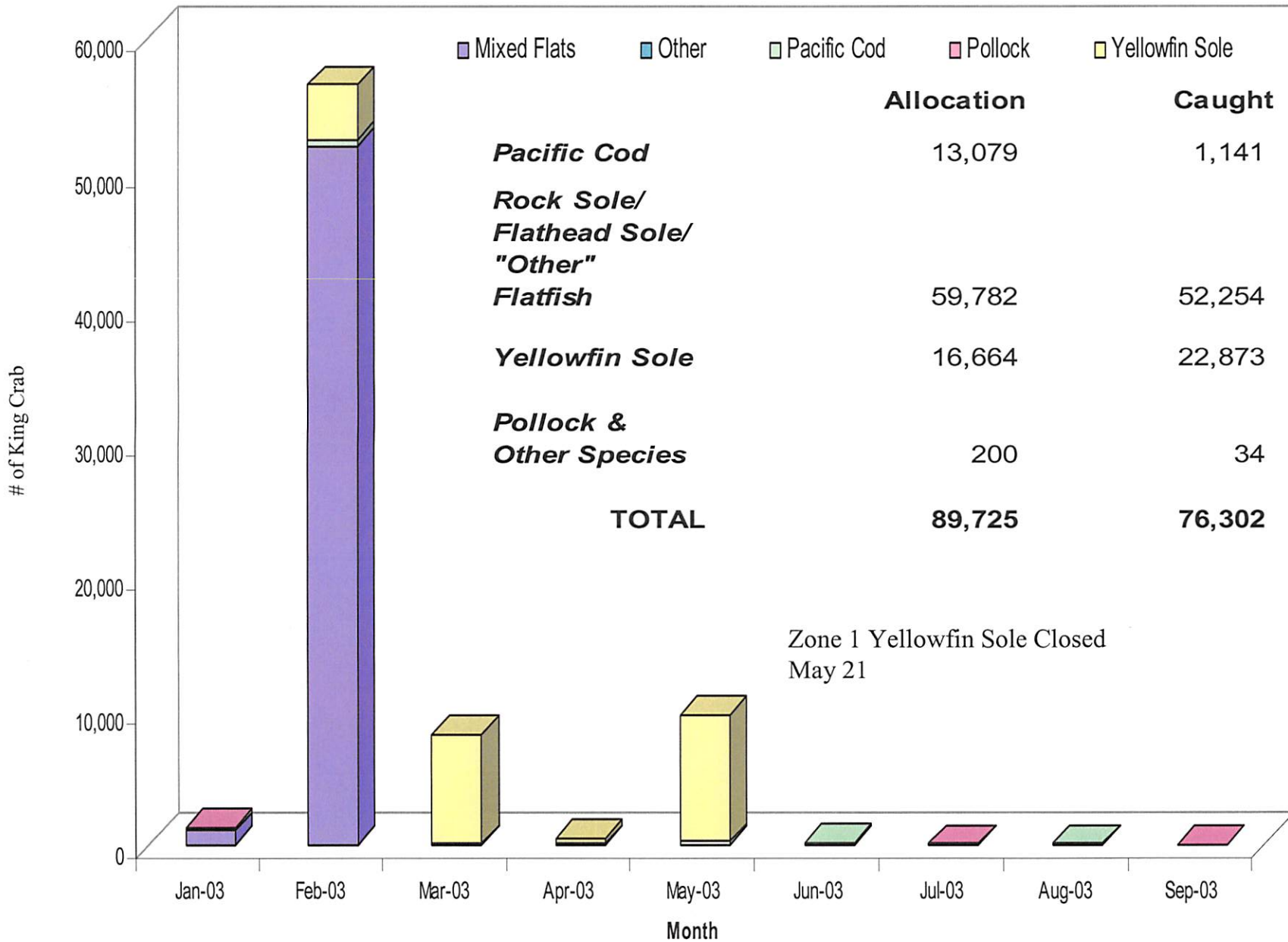
2003 BSAI Trawl Halibut Mortality by Target and Month



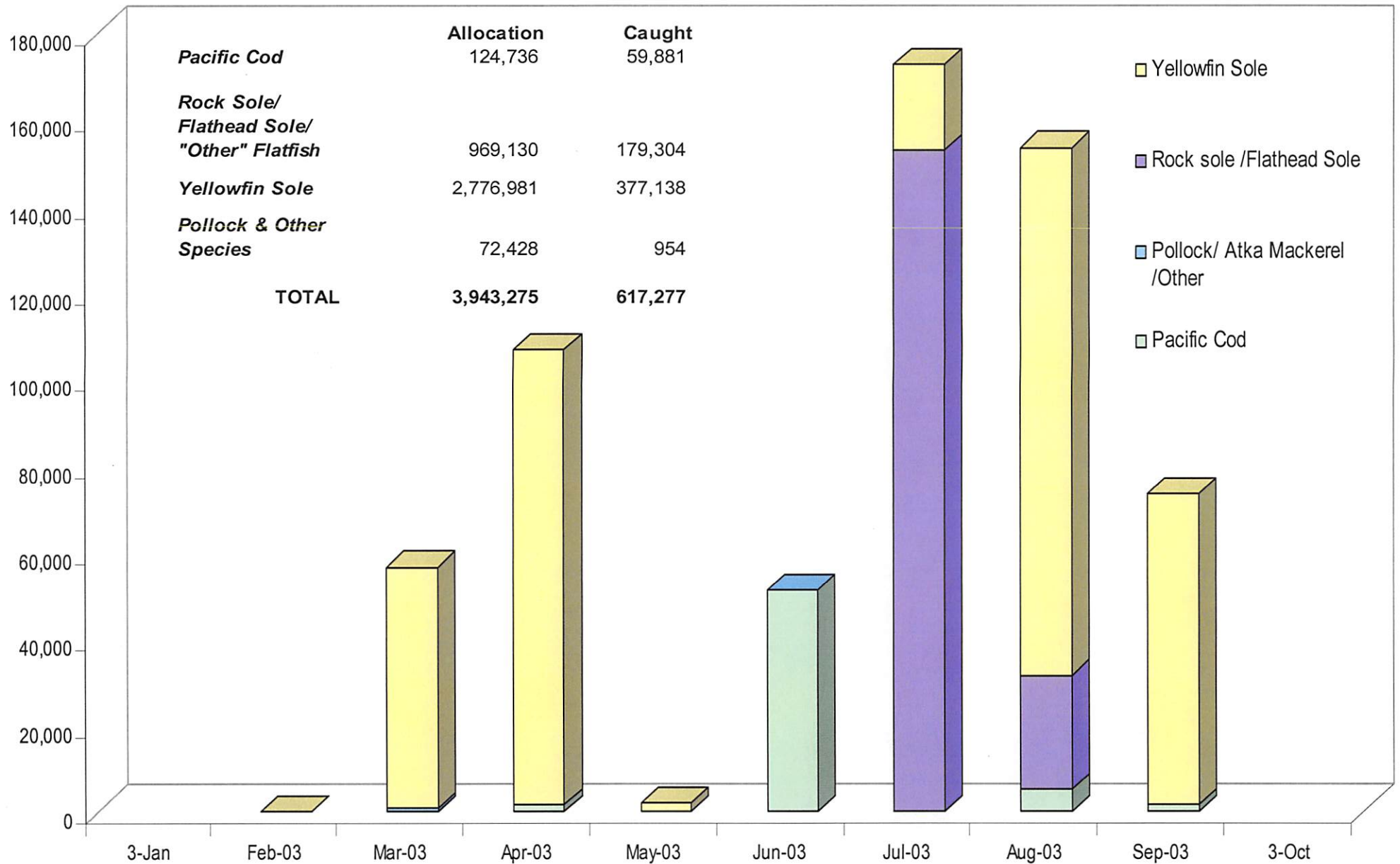
2003 BSAI Trawl PSC Closures By Target

	Type	Open	Closed
Rock Sole/ Flathead Sole / "Other Flatfish"	<i>Halibut Mortality</i>	20-Jan	18-Feb
		29-Jun	31-Jul
Yellowfin Sole	<i>Halibut Mortality</i>	20-Jan	17-Apr
		12-May	6-Jun
		29-Jun	25-Sep
	<i>Zone 1 Red King Crab</i>	20-Jan	21-May
Pacific Cod	<i>Halibut Mortality</i>	20-Jan	25-Sep
Pollock	<i>Chinook Salmon Saving Area</i>	20-Jan	1-Sep
	<i>Chum Salmon Savings Area</i>	20-Jan 14-Oct	24-Sep
All Groundfish with NPT Gear	<i>Red King Crab Savings Subarea</i>	20-Jan	14-Feb

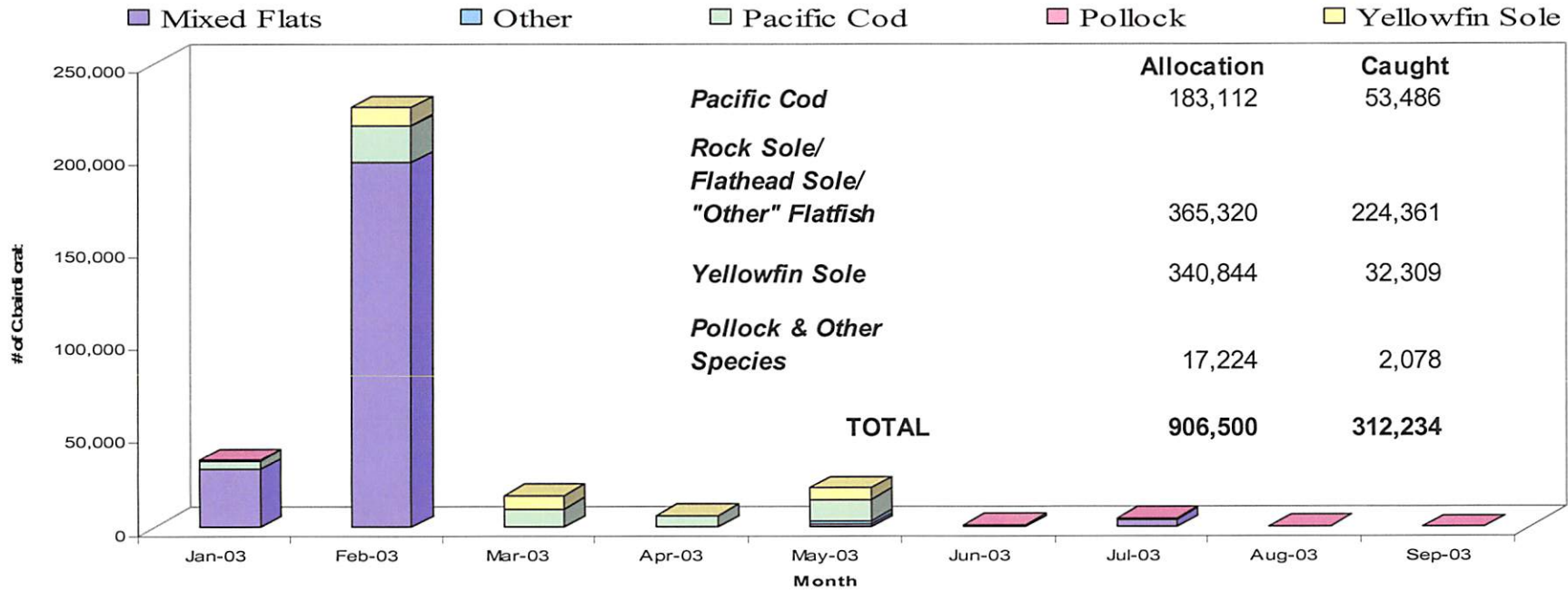
2003 Zone 1 Red King Crab By Month and Target



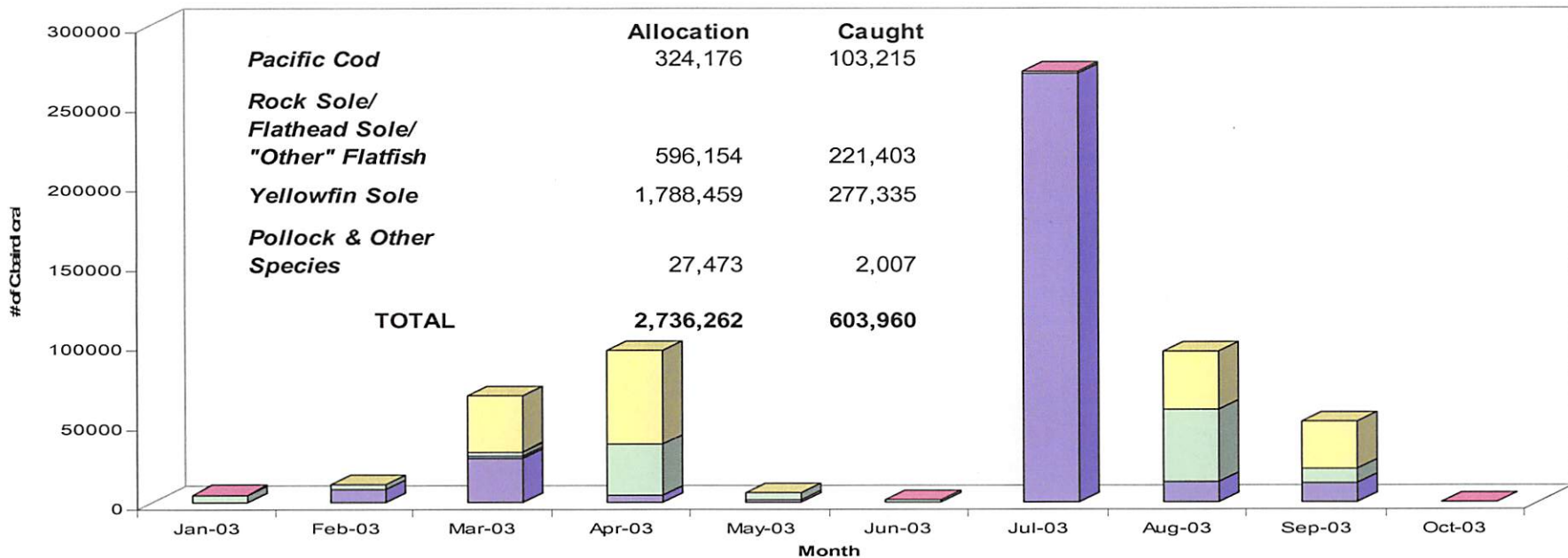
2003 COBLZ Opilio Crab Catch



Zone 1 & 2 C. bairdi Crab Catch by Month and Target

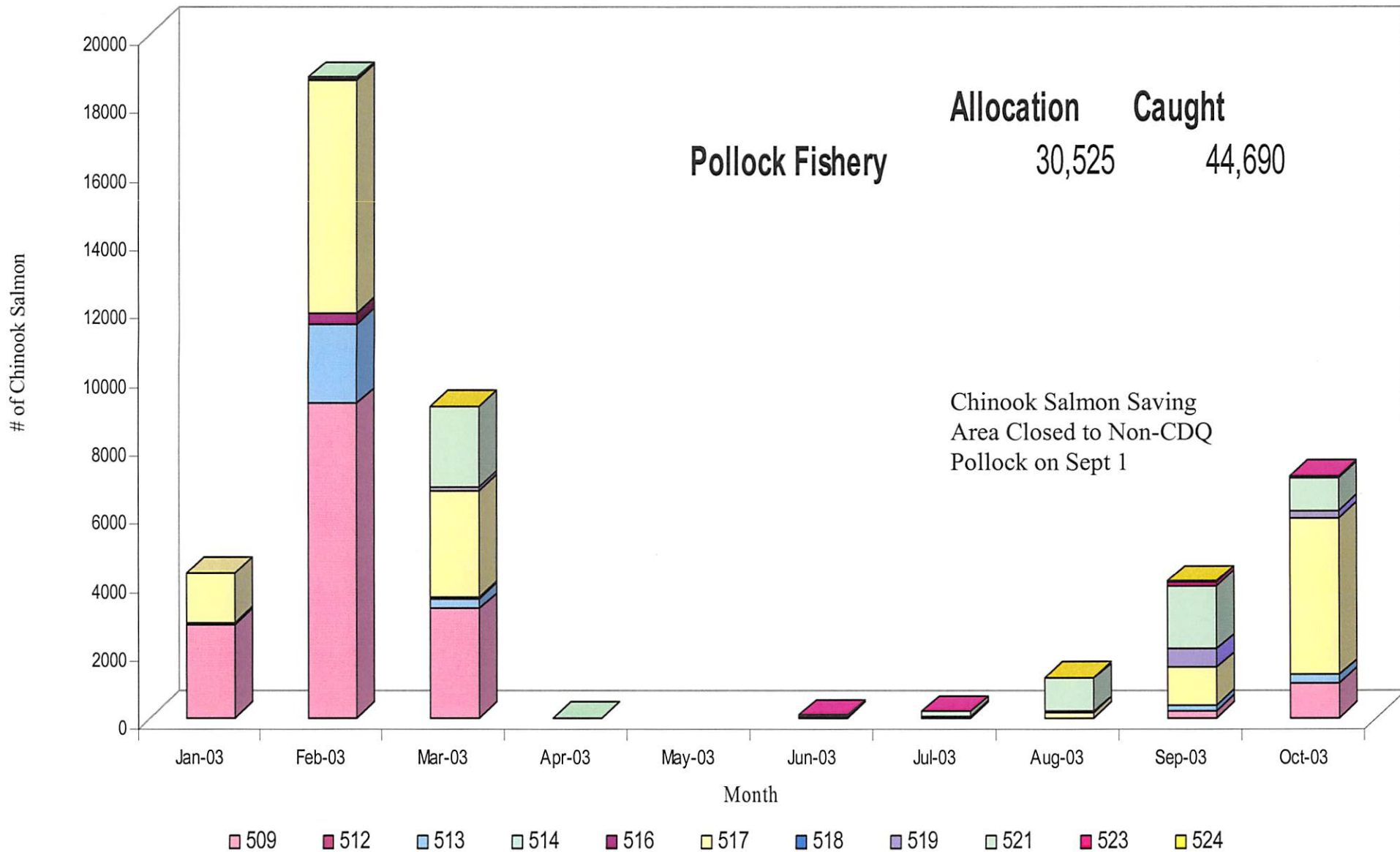


ZONE 1

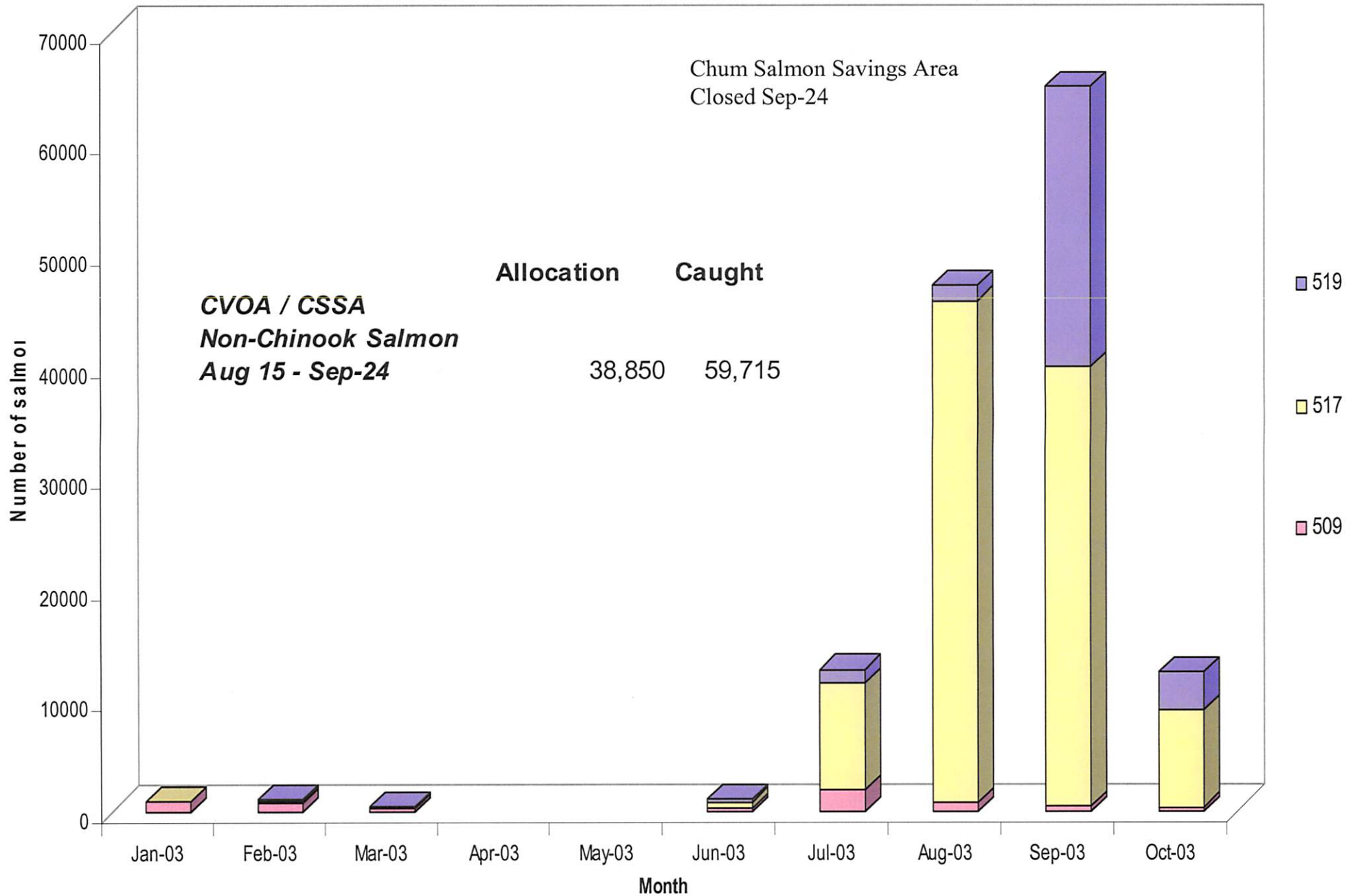


ZONE 2

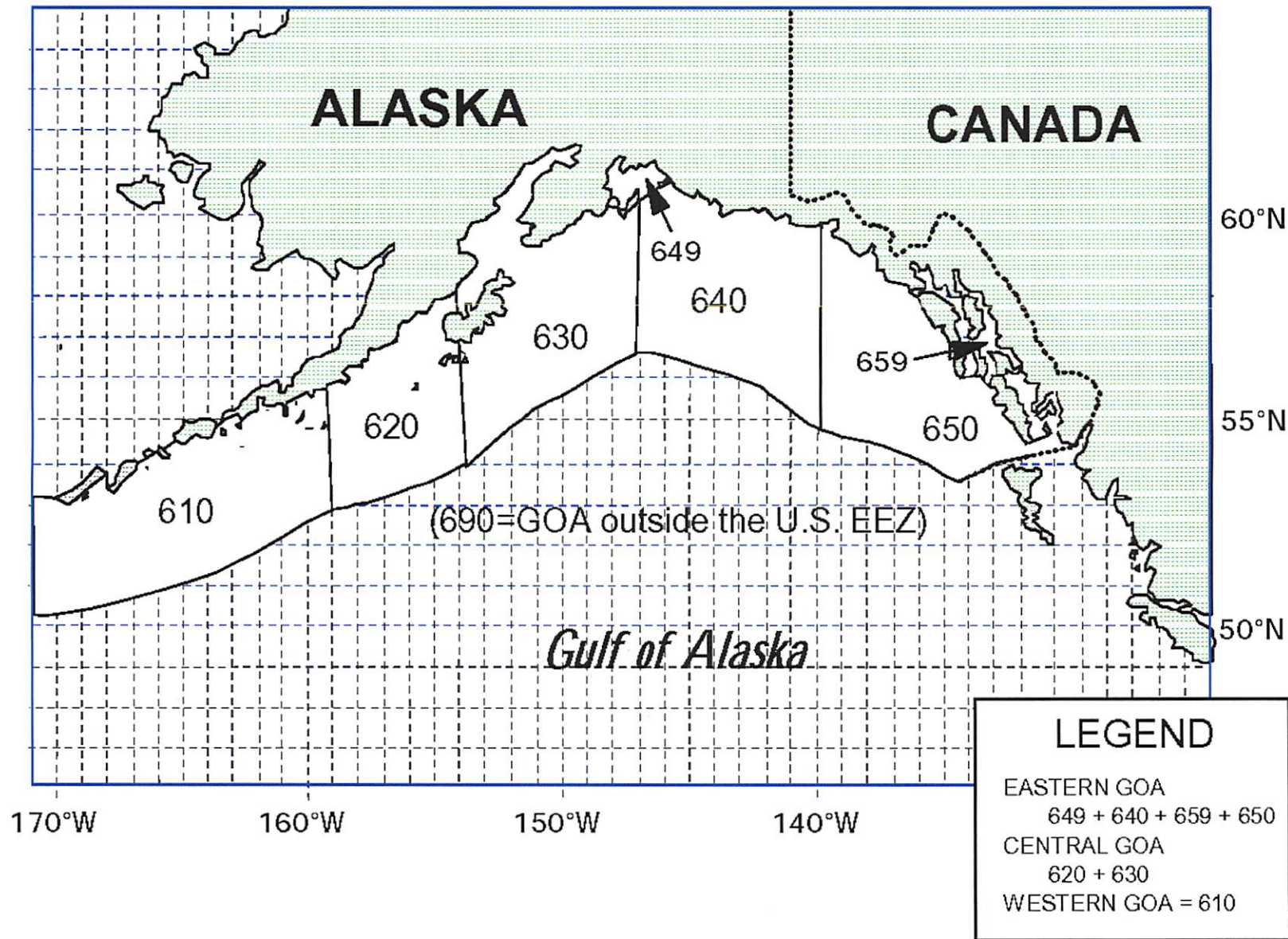
2003 BSAI Chinook Salmon Catch by Month and Area



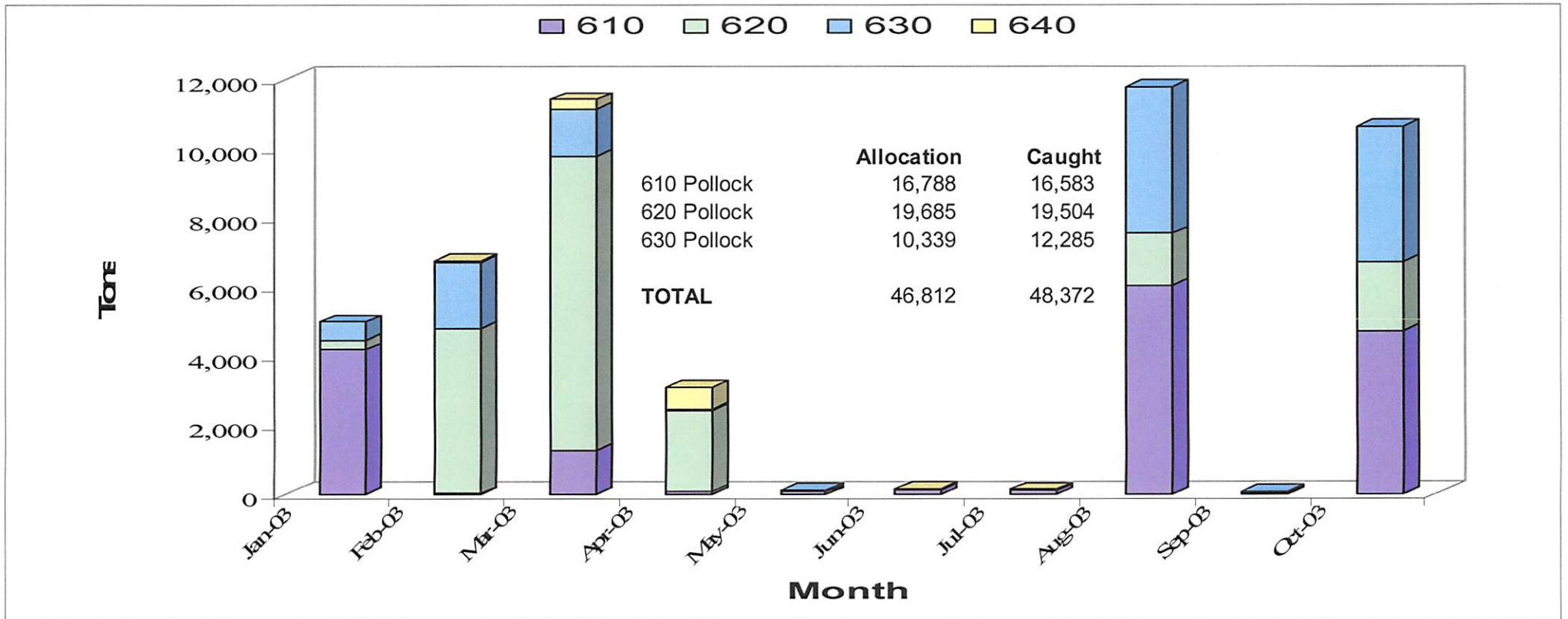
2003 BSAI Non-Chinook Salmon Catch



Gulf of Alaska Reporting Areas



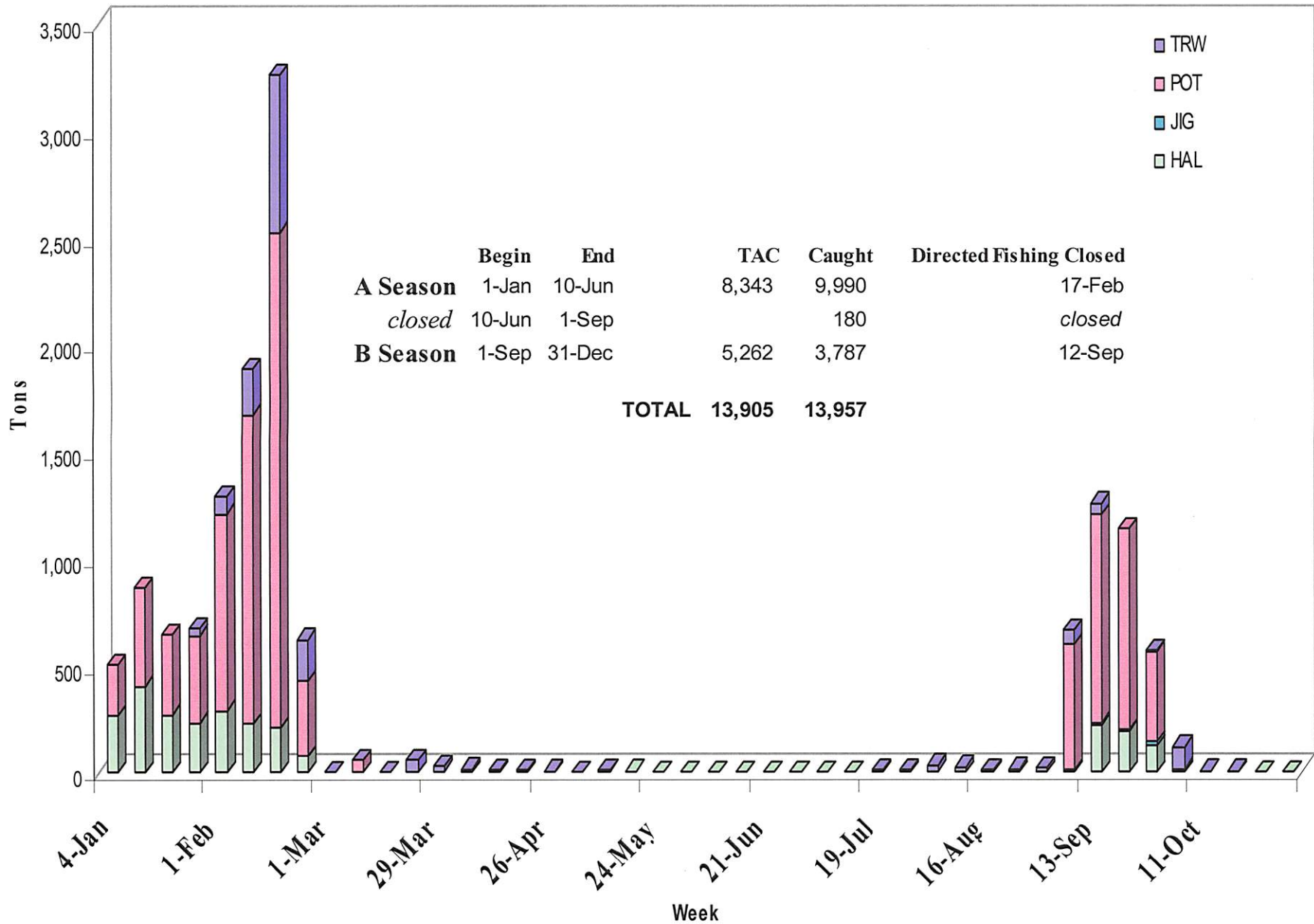
2003 GOA Pollock Catch and Seasons



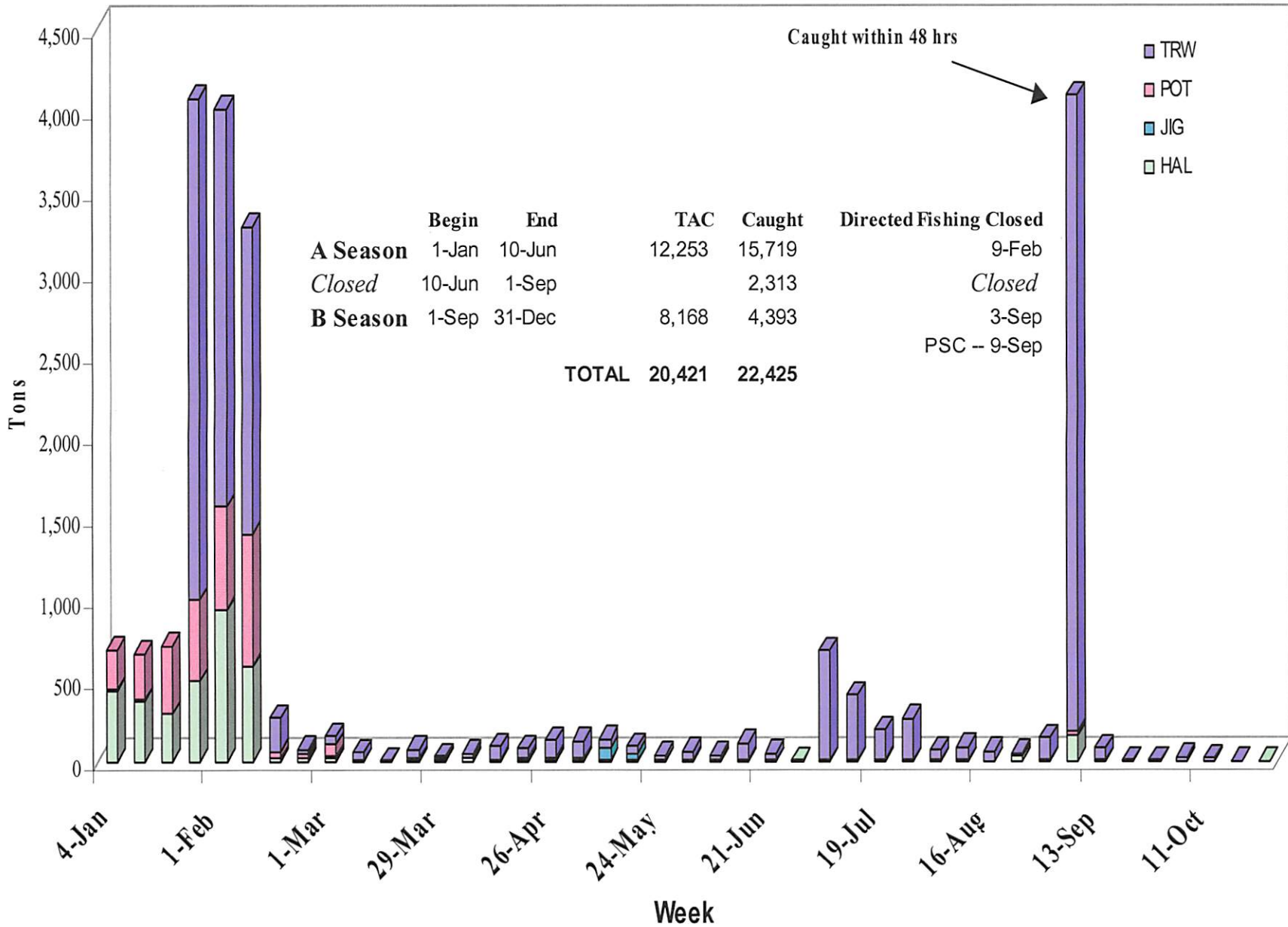
Pollock Seasons and Closures

		Open	Closed			Open	Closed
610 Pollock	A Season	20-Jan	23-Jan	630 Pollock	A Season	20-Jan	21-Jan
	B Season	10-Mar	11-Mar		B Season (closed)	13-Feb	14-Feb
		18-Mar	19-Mar			10-Mar	10-Mar
		26-Mar	27-Mar			3/20 (noon)	3/20 (Mignight)
	C Season	25-Aug	30-Aug		C Season	25-Aug	27-Aug
	D Season	1-Oct	4-Oct		D Season	1-Oct	2-Oct
						9-Oct	10-Oct
620 Pollock	A Season	20-Jan	25-Feb				
	B Season	10-Mar	3-Apr				
	C Season	25-Aug	30-Aug				
	D Season	1-Oct	3-Oct				

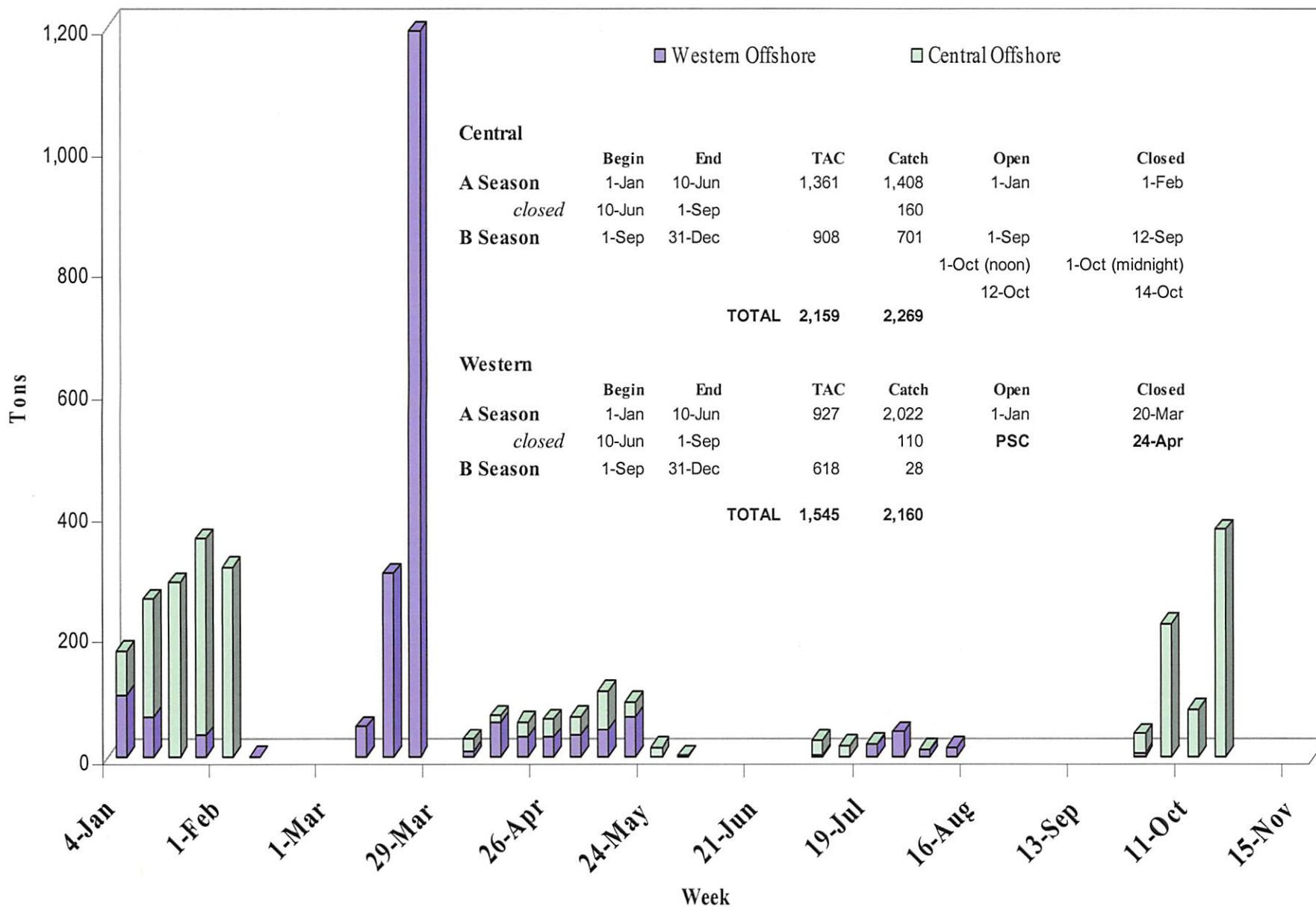
2003 Western Gulf Inshore Pacific Cod Catch By Week and Gear



2003 Central Gulf Inshore Pacific Cod Catch By Week and Gear

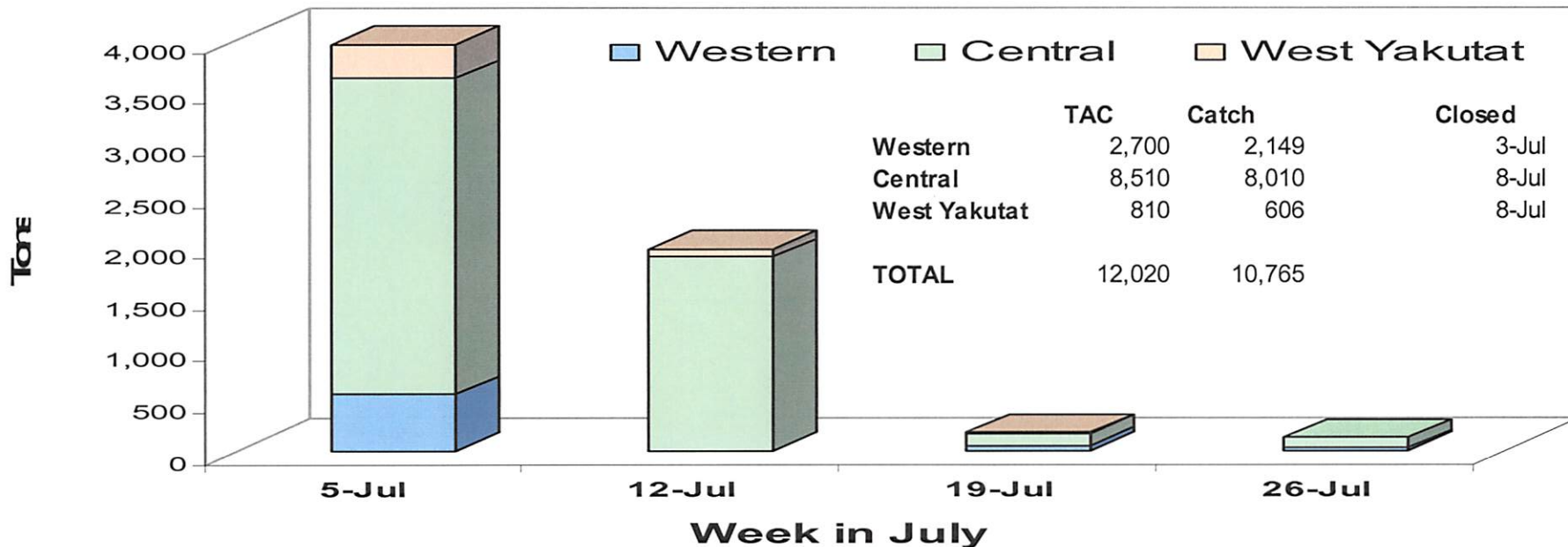


2003 Central and Western Offshore Pacific Cod Catch By Week and Area

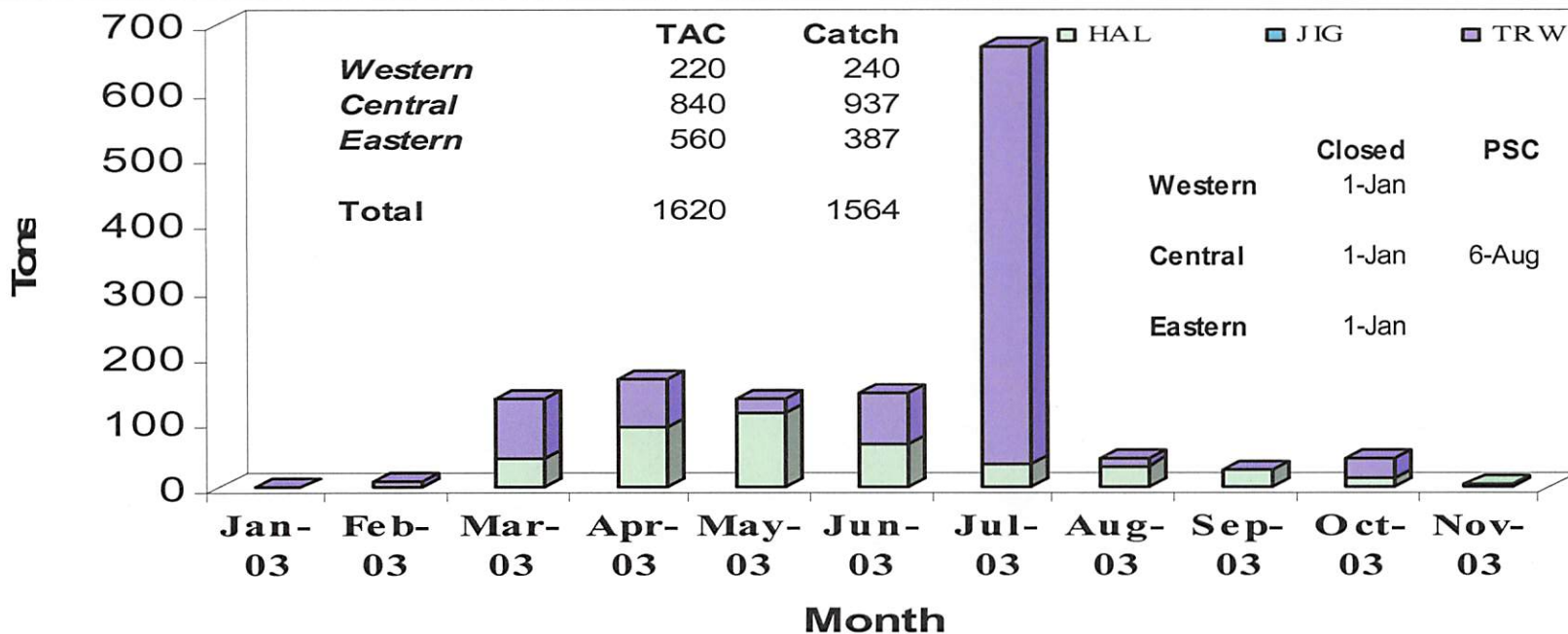


2003 GOA POP and Shortraker/Rougheye Catch

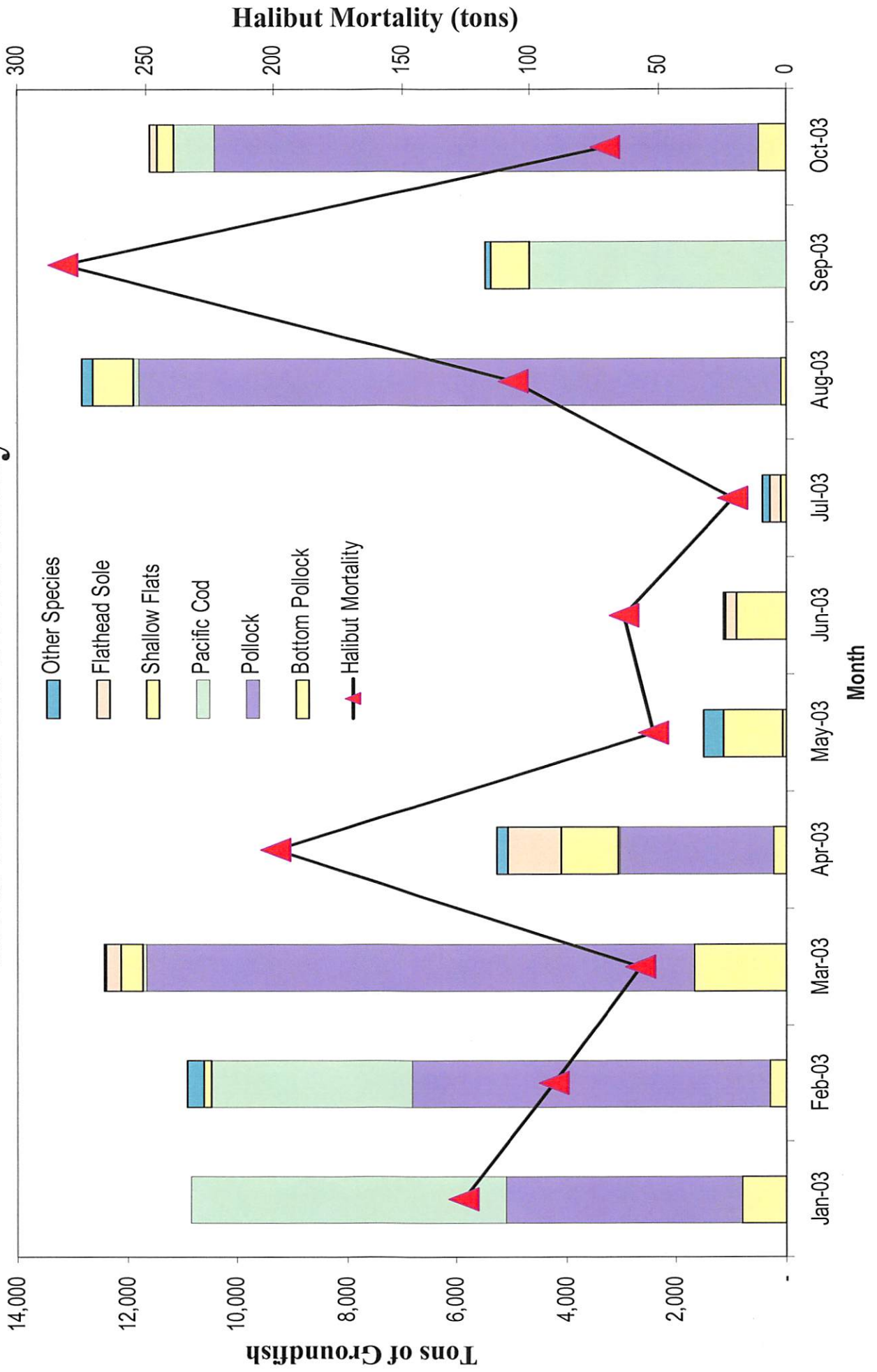
Pacific Ocean Perch



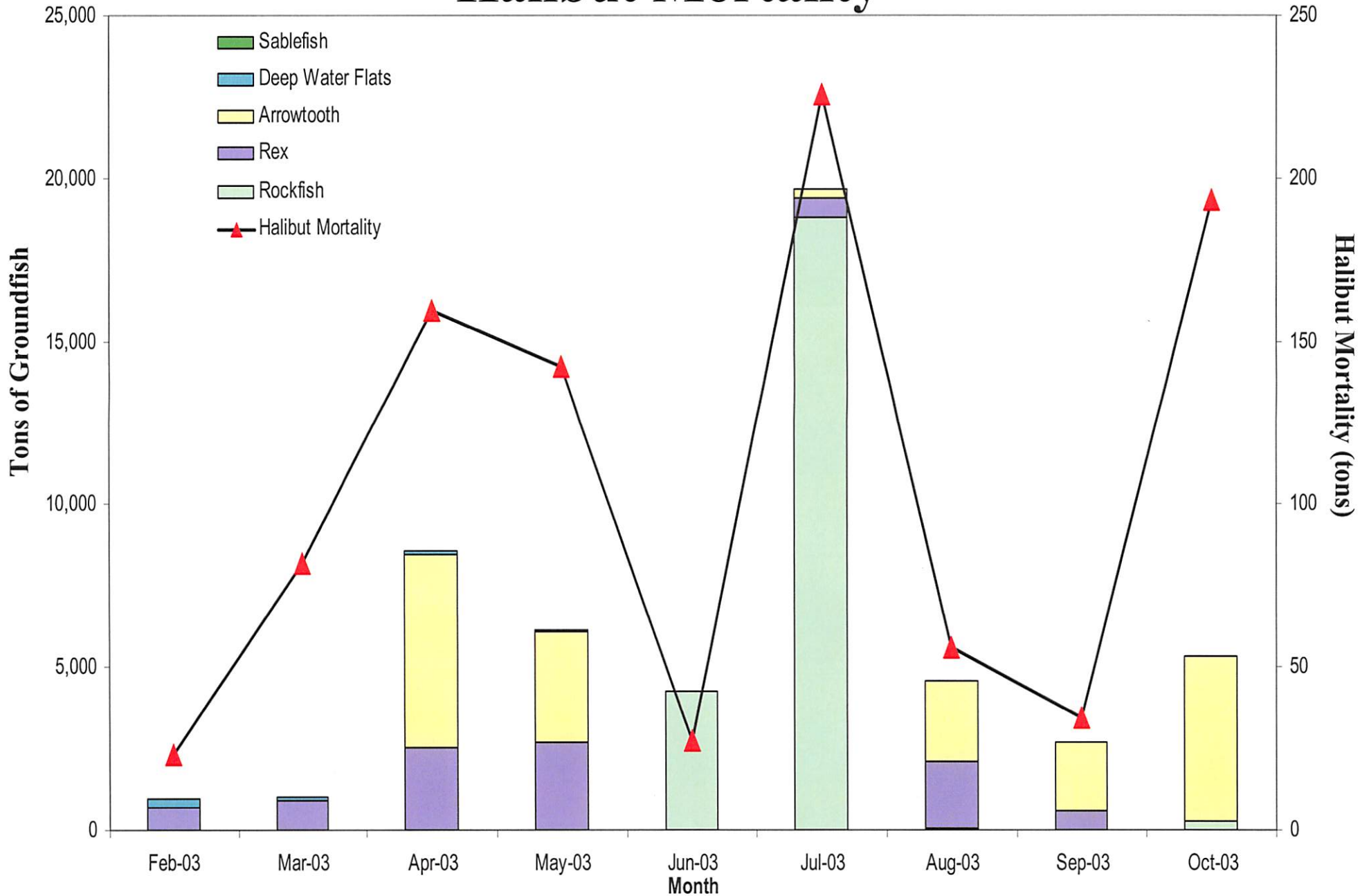
Shortraker / Rougheye



2003 Trawl Shallow Water Groundfish Catch and Halibut Mortality



2003 Trawl Deep Water Groundfish Catch and Halibut Mortality



2003 Trawl Halibut Mortality and Closures

Shallow Water Complex

	Start	End	Allocation	Mortality
<i>1st Season</i>	20-Jan	1-Apr	450	274
<i>2nd Season</i>	1-Apr	29-Jun	100	315
<i>3rd Season</i>	29-Jun	1-Sep	200	127
<i>4th Season</i>	1-Sep	30-Sep	150	282
Total shallow water complex			900	998

Deep Water Complex

	Start	End	Allocation	Mortality
<i>1st Season</i>	20-Jan	1-Apr	100	105
<i>2nd Season</i>	1-Apr	29-Jun	300	302
<i>3rd Season</i>	29-Jun	1-Sep	400	310
<i>4th Season</i>	1-Sep	30-Sep	0	34
Total deep water complex			800	751

	Start	End	Allocation	Mortality
Fall Halibut Allocation	1-Oct	31-Dec	300	265

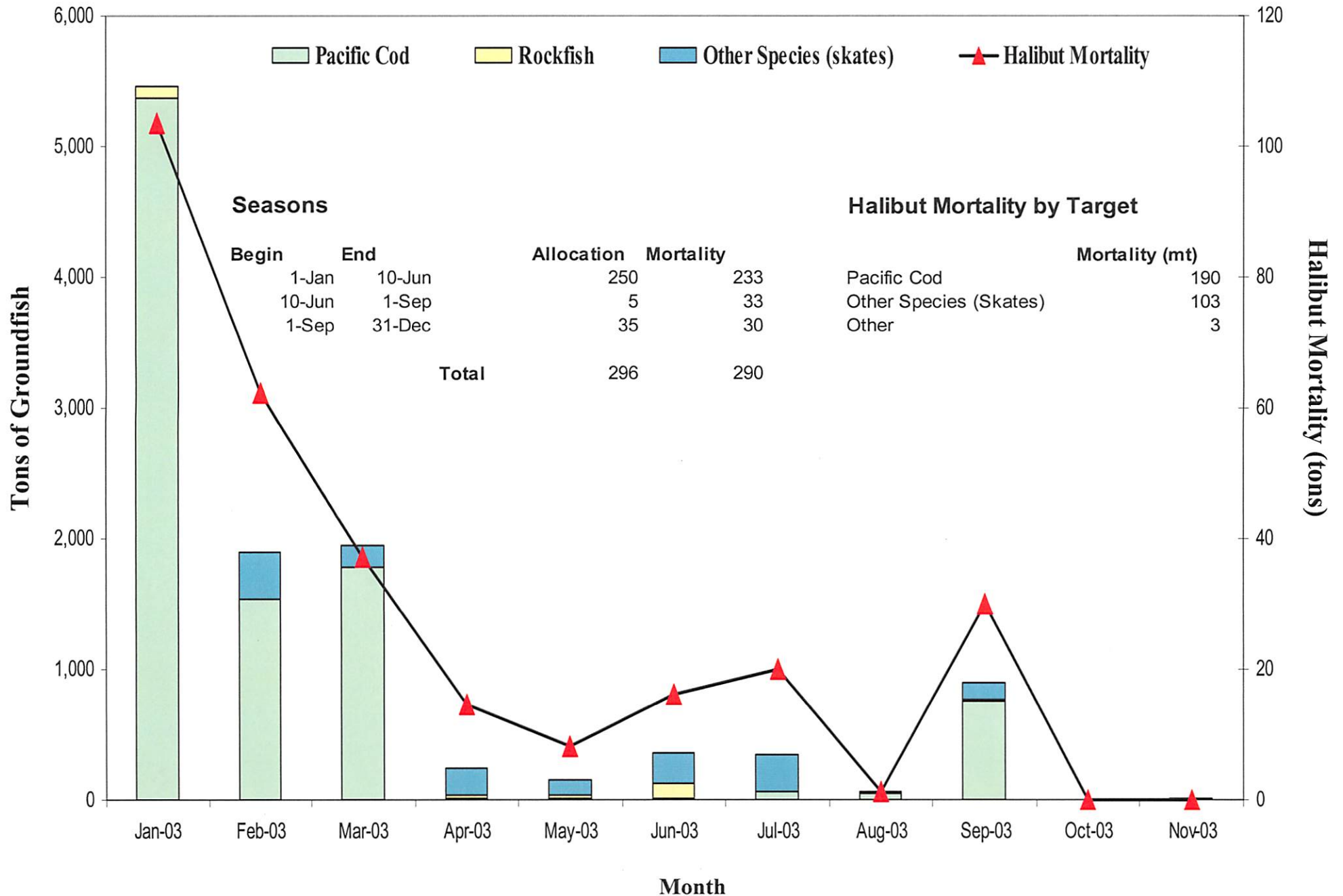
**Not split between shallow and deep complex

	Allocation	Mortality
TOTAL HALIBUT MORTALITY	2,000	2,014

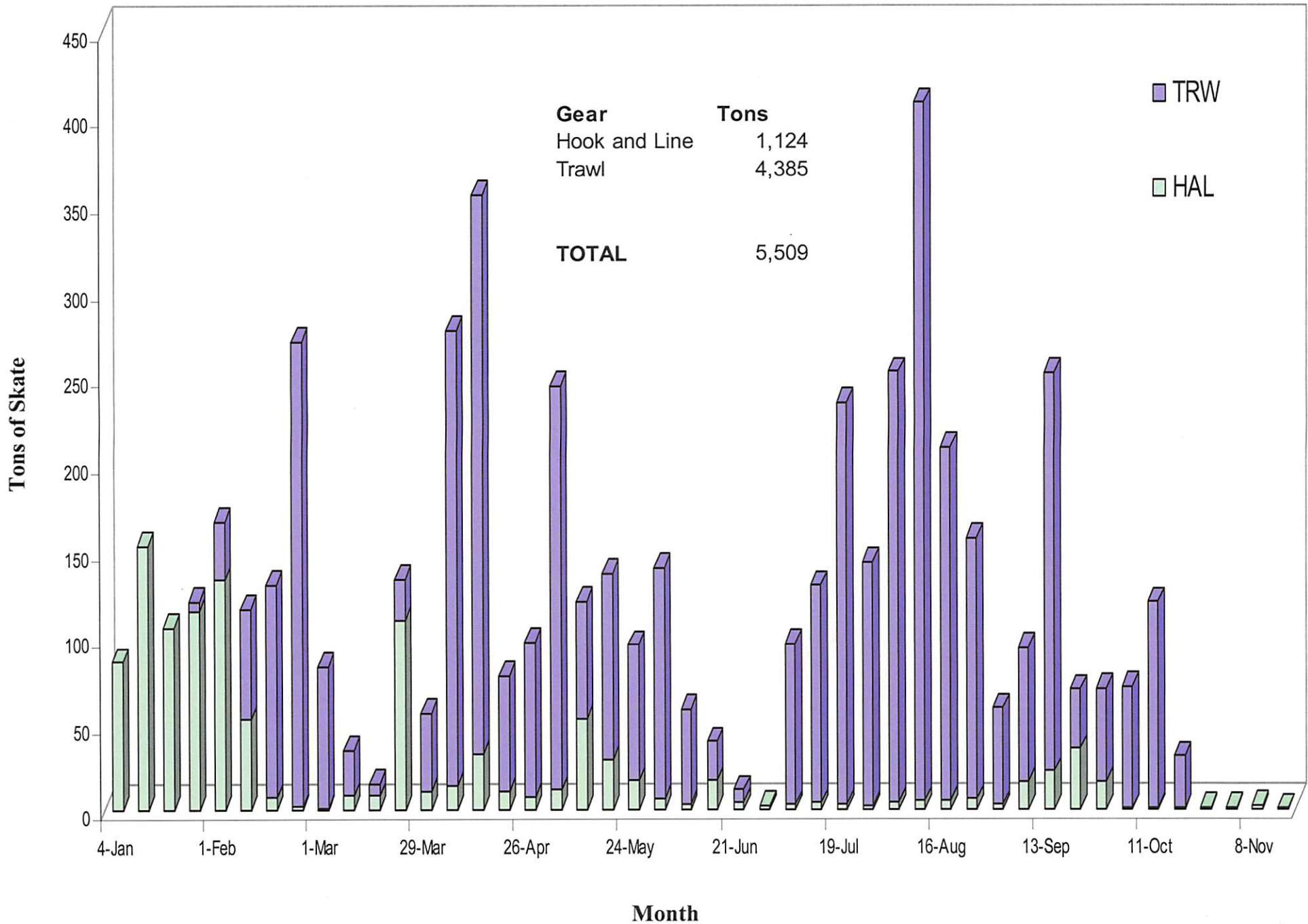
CLOSURES

	Open	Closed
Shallow water	20-Jan	19-Jun
	29-Jun	12-Sep
	1-Oct	15-Oct
Deep Water	20-Jan	16-May
	29-Jun	15-Oct

2003 H&L Groundfish Catch and Halibut Mortality



2003 GOA Skate Catch by Week and Gear





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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

B-2
Brandee Gerke

December 8, 2003

Ms. Stephanie Madsen
Chair, North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Street, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Madam Chair:

This letter is to inform the Council of the process NMFS will follow to comply with ESA interagency consultation requirements (ESA section 7) with regard to the Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS). A schedule for the process is provided so the Council can anticipate the completion of the associated documents. NMFS invites Council participation in this process in the form of review and comment on draft documents.

As you are aware, the federal action analyzed in the PSEIS is the management of groundfish fisheries and the authorization of groundfish fishery activities pursuant to the fishery management plans (FMPs) for the Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Area and Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). Previous consultations have concluded that the implementation of the groundfish FMPs may adversely affect listed species and their designated critical habitat. As a result, formal consultations were conducted at the FMP (November 30, 2000) and project level (October 19, 2001 and June 2003 Supplement) with the completion of biological opinions and the issuance of incidental take statements for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries.

The preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) in the PSEIS was designed to meet the requirements of the ESA by retaining FMP protection measures implemented to ensure that the groundfish fisheries do not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify their designated critical habitat. Though these measures have been retained in the PPA, NMFS is required to evaluate changes to the proposed action to determine if formal section 7 consultation should be re-initiated. NMFS is preparing a focused biological assessment (BA) separate from the PSEIS to examine the effects of the PPA on listed species and to determine if these effects have been fully evaluated in previous consultations. Identification of adverse effects which have not been considered in earlier biological opinions would trigger re-initiation of formal consultation. The BA will also compare the scope of the action described in the PPA to those analyzed in previous consultations to ascertain if the scopes are co-extensive.

The duration of the consultation process will depend on the conclusion of the BA. If it is found that the re-initiation criteria are not met (these criteria can be found at 50 CFR §402.16), the

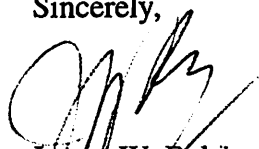


consultation process will conclude informally. However, if the BA reveals that one or more of the re-initiation criteria are met or that the scopes of the action described in the PPA and those analyzed in prior biological opinions are incongruent, NMFS will re-initiate formal consultation and prepare a biological opinion.

NMFS will present a draft BA at the February 2004 Council meeting. At that time, the Council will be provided with either a (1) concurrence letter from NMFS Protected Resources Division stating that formal consultation is not required or with a (2) draft biological opinion. NMFS will incorporate the Council's review and comment on the draft BA (and draft biological opinion if one is required) and return to the April 2004 Council meeting with a revised version such that the BA (and biological opinion if necessary) will be available when the Council takes final action on the Council's preferred alternative.

If you have questions or would like more information about the ESA consultation process, please contact Brandee Gerke of my staff at (907)586-7248. Steve Davis (907)271-3523 of my staff, can answer questions or provide information on topics pertaining to the PSEIS.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region