



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

April 4, 2016

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report online

A status of Actions report is provided in **Attachment 1** and is updated daily at:
<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/reports/amendments.pdf>

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the February 2016 meeting include:

- [Final rule for Amendment 102 to the Gulf of Alaska \(GOA\) FMP and Amendment 112 to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands \(BSAI\) FMP](#) – Observer Coverage Requirements for Small Catcher/Processors in the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries.
Effective March 29, 2016
- [Final Rule for the 2016 and 2017 BSAI groundfish harvest specifications.](#)
Effective March 18, 2016
- [Final Rule for the 2016 and 2017 GOA groundfish harvest specifications.](#)
Effective March 18, 2016
- [Final Rule for the 2016 Pacific Halibut Annual Management Measures.](#)
Effective March 14, 2016

Consultation with the Council on Changes from Proposed to Final Rules

NMFS published several final rules (described above) since the Council's October meeting. NMFS made minor administrative revisions to the final rule for Amendment 102/112. NMFS anticipates publishing final rules for Amendment 109 (CDQ small-vessel), Amendment 110 (Salmon halibut bycatch), Amendment 111 (Halibut bycatch), changing the method for submitting IFQ and crab cost recovery fees, and modifying Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab offload requirements between the April 2015 and June 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.

Processing Caps in Tanner Crab Fisheries

At its December 2015 meeting, the Council requested that NMFS promulgate an emergency rule to modify regulations governing individual processing quota (IPQ) use caps in the Bering Sea Tanner crab fisheries. The Council determined an emergency existed because, due to the consolidation of processors, the few processors available are constrained by IPQ use caps, resulting in more crab being available for harvest than can be legally processed. The emergency rule was intended to temporarily relieve a restriction that was preventing the full harvest of Tanner crab. NMFS published the emergency rule on January 26, 2016 (81 FR 4206). The emergency rule exempts the Tanner crab fisheries from IPQ use caps until the end of the 2015/2016 crab fishing year -- June 30, 2016.

In recommending the emergency rule, the Council recognized that processor consolidation could continue to constrain processors operating in the Tanner crab fisheries after the emergency rule expires. To address this situation, the Council initiated an analysis for a fishery management plan amendment to permanently exempt the Tanner crab fisheries from the IPQ use caps. The Council has tentatively scheduled initial review at its June 2016 meeting. The Council has not scheduled final action for this issue, but under the Council's standard process, final action likely would be scheduled at its October 2016 or December 2016 meeting. The Council's current schedule does not provide sufficient time for NMFS to complete proposed and final rulemaking to permanently exempt the Tanner crab fisheries from the IPQ use caps for the 2016/2017 Tanner crab fishing season that ends on March 31, 2017.

It is not clear that the unforeseen conditions that existed during the 2015/2016 crab fishing year that formed the basis for NMFS granting an emergency rule will exist for the 2016/2017 crab fishing year. Fishery participants may not wish to rely on the expectation that an emergency rule would be granted, and may wish to ensure that they have arranged for additional processing capacity for the 2016/2017 crab fishing year that begins on July 1, 2016.

The Council could consider scheduling both initial review and final action on this issue for its June 2016 meeting. This schedule may provide an opportunity for, but does not guarantee that, NMFS can complete rulemaking in time to relieve the restriction for the 2016/2017 crab fishing year if the fishery participants do not arrange for adequate processing capacity.

Seabird Working Group Formation

In compliance with the terms and conditions of the 2015 Biological Opinion on effects of the GOA and BSAI Groundfish Fisheries on short-tailed albatross, NMFS is coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to form an Alaska Seabird Bycatch Working Group. The working group will review information for mitigating effects of the groundfish and halibut

fisheries on short-tailed albatross and other seabirds. NMFS will lead the working group, composed of federal, state, or tribal government representatives.

The working group will request input from stakeholders and academic researchers with experience and expertise about the fisheries and methods to reduce seabird interactions. NMFS will keep the Council apprised of the working group's activities, opportunity for public engagement with the working group, and any resulting recommendations for methods to reduce seabird bycatch. Any changes to seabird avoidance regulations recommended by the working group are expected to follow the standard Council-led analytical and regulatory process.

2016 Halibut Decksorting Exempted Fishing Permit

In February 2016, the Council reviewed an application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to deck sort halibut on vessels participating in Amendment 80, trawl limited access, and CDQ groundfish fisheries in the BSAI in 2016. The Council supported issuance of the EFP. NMFS intends to issue a permit effective from May 2016 through May 2017 (as opposed to May 2016 through December 2016) to allow sufficient testing of the experimental methods.

Staffing Changes and Job Announcement

Mary Alice McKeen will be retiring from Federal service at the end of this month. Mary Alice started working in the Alaska Regional Office in 1999. Mary Alice served as an Administrative Judge in the NMFS Office of Administrative Appeals for many years and was involved in many of the halibut and sablefish IFQ, License Limitation Program (LLP), and BSAI Crab rationalization appeals. Mary Alice brought her extensive legal and regulatory expertise to the Sustainable Fisheries Division as a Fishery Management Specialist in 2013. She was instrumental in many of our recent regulatory actions that revised American Fisheries Act vessel replacement provisions, observer coverage requirements for small catcher/processors, and BSAI halibut bycatch measures. We will miss Mary Alice's diligence, dedication, and engagement and wish her well in her retirement.

I am happy to announce an upcoming job opportunity in the Sustainable Fisheries Division. We are currently advertising for a Fishery Management Specialist position located in Juneau. The person hired for this position will work as part of a team to implement programs for monitoring, weighing, and reporting groundfish and prohibited species catch to support federal management of North Pacific fisheries. Duties will include conducting inspections of processing plants and at-sea scales onboard commercial fishing vessels; supporting Alaska's interagency electronic reporting system for documenting commercial fishing landings; and conducting outreach to the public on electronic reporting and catch monitoring requirements.

We're looking for someone with excellent written and verbal communication skills, experience collecting fisheries data on commercial fishing vessels or processing plants, and an ability to interact with the commercial fishing industry.

The job announcement is open through April 11, 2016. The position description is available on USAJobs.gov at: <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/432635400/>

Status of Actions

(Changes since February 2016 Council meeting in **red highlight**)

B2 NMFS Report
April 2016

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 101 (GOA) Allow pot longline gear in GOA sablefish IFQ Fishery	Cunningham Murphy	April 2015						
Amendment 103 (GOA) Reapportionment of Chinook salmon PSC limits in GOA trawl fisheries	Cunningham Hartman	December 2015	PR: 4/1/16					
Amendment 109 (BSAI) - CDQ Small Vessel Groundfish Fishery Decision Date: April 20, 2016	Marrinan Bibb	February 2015	PR: 08/11/16 FR: 3/22/16	PR: 08/21/15 FR: 3/28/16	PR: 1/12/16	Jan 21, 2016 81 FR 3374 EOC: 3/21/16	Feb 8, 2016 81 FR 6489 EOC: 3/09/16	
Amendment 110 (BSAI) Salmon prohibited species catch management in the Bering Sea pollock fishery Approved: March 30, 2016	Harrington Stram	April 2015	PR: 09/18/15 FR: 3/31/16	PR: 09/28/15	PR: 1/04/16	Jan 8, 2016 81 FR 897 EOC: 03/08/16	Feb 3, 2016 81 FR 5681 EOC: 3/4/16	
Amendment 111 (BSAI) Revise halibut prohibited species catch limits Approved: Jan 20, 2016	Evans McKeen	June 2015	PR: 8/28/15 FR: 2/29/16	PR: 8/28/15 FR: 2/29/16	PR: 10/23/15	Oct 29, 2015 80 FR 66486 EOC: 12/28/15	Nov 16, 2015 80 FR 71650 EOC: 12/16/15	
Amendment 113 (BSAI) Aleutian Islands Pacific cod shoreplant delivery requirements.	McCracken Scheurer	October 2015	PR: 3/24/16					
Amendment 112 (BSAI) / 102 (GOA) Revise allowances for small catcher/processors to be in the partial observer coverage category Approved: Mar 11, 2016	Evans Eich	June 2015	PR: 9/30/15 FR: 2/22/16	PR: 10/2/15 FR: 2/23/16	PR: 12/11/15 FR: 3/10/16	Dec 17, 2015 80 FR 78705 EOC: 02/16/16	Dec 29, 2015 80 FR 81262 EOC: 01/28/16	March 29, 2016 81 FR 17403 Effective: 3/29/16

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 <i>Federal Register</i>	Final Rule Published in <i>Federal Register</i>
Changes to authorized cost recovery fee payments (Halibut & Sablefish, and Crab IFQ)	N/A Kent	NMFS initiated October 2015	PR: 10/28/15 FR: 2/17/16	PR: 10/28/15 FR: 2/19/16	PR: 12/11/15	Dec 31, 2015 80 FR 81798 EOC: 02/01/16	
Western Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab Full Offload Delivery Exemption	Marrinan Kent	October 2015	PR: 1/05/16 FR: 3/28/16	PR: 1/06/16 FR: 3/29/16	PR: 2/2/16	PR: 2/23/16 81 FR 8886 EOC: 3/24/16	
Voluntary full observer coverage for BSAI trawl vessels	Cunningham Miller	February 2016					
2016 and 2017 BSAI Harvest Specifications	Stram Whitney	December 2015	PR: 10/16/15 FR: 1/11/16	PR: 10/19/15 FR: 1/11/16	PR: 11/24/15 FR: 3/04/16	Dec 9, 2015 80 FR 76425 EOC: 01/08/16	March 18, 2016 81 FR 14773 Effective: 3/18/16
2016 and 2017 GOA harvest specifications	Armstrong Davis	December 2015	PR: 10/15/15 FR: 1/6/16	PR: 10/19/15 FR: 1/6/16	PR: 11/24/15 FR: 3/01/16	Dec 9, 2015 80 FR 76405 EOC: 01/08/16	March 18, 2016 81 FR 14740 Effective: 3/18/16
Halibut Annual Management Measures for 2016	MacLean Scheurer	IPHC: January 2016	FR: 2/24/16	FR: 2/26/16	FR: 3/01/16	N/A	March 16, 2016 81 FR 14000 Effective: 3/14/16
Revisions to tLandings requirements	Robinson Kent	NMFS initiated February 2016					

Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2016 is through March 26, 2016 and is compared to catch during 2015 through March 28, 2015. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information from daily catch reports and information bulletins are available at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries-catch-landings>

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands**Bering Sea Pollock**

NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ and 5,000 mt of Aleut Corporation pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to the CDQ and non-CDQ Bering Sea TACs.

Bering Sea	2016 A season allocation	2016 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	232,551	195,434	84%
C/P	186,042	172,740	93%
Mothership	46,510	44,780	96%
CDQ	54,741	54,194	99%
Total	519,844	467,148	90%

Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2016		2015		2016		2015	
Year	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
Amount	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	1,242	2.27%	781	1.45%	416	0.76%	340	0.63%
Non-CDQ	13,817	3.30%	11,009	2.51%	3,150	0.75%	4,087	0.93%
Total	15,059	3.18%	11,790	2.39%	3,566	0.75%	4,427	0.90%

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

Aleutian Islands Pacific cod

In 2016, NMFS closed directed fishing for the non-CDQ allocation of Pacific cod on March 22 compared to the 2015 closure on February 27.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

BSAI Sector	2016				2015			
	A season allocation	Catch 26-Mar	A season closed	# of vessels 26-Mar	A season allocation	Catch 28-Mar	A season closed	# of vessels 28-Mar
Hook-and-line C/P	55,581	41,142	n/a	29	55,116	38,899	n/a	28
Pot C/P	1,712	1,724	Jan 29	4	1,698	1,959	Feb 4	4
Pot CV >= 60 ft	9,587	6,624	n/a	15	9,507	9,043	Jun 10	15
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft ¹	6,226	6,163	Feb 5	19	6,138	6,818	Feb 2	20
Jig ¹	136	0	n/a	0	171	0	n/a	n/a
Trawl CV	36,732	37,772	Mar 9	93	36,426	29,753	n/a	94
AFA CP	3,874	2,330	n/a	15	3,842	2,016	n/a	16
Amendment 80 CP	22,573	13,757	n/a	13	22,385	10,984	n/a	18
Total	136,421	109,512		188	135,283	99,472		195

¹In 2016 NMFS reallocated 1,750 mt and in 2015 NMFS reallocated 1,700 mt of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 ft length overall allocation. In 2015, hook-and-line CVs continued to fish inside 3 miles after the directed fishery closure by NMFS.

Pacific cod - Trawl catcher vessels

The 2016 B season allocation of 5,460 mt became available April 1. In 2015, the fishery remained open until the regulatory closure on November 1, 2015.

BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)

The 2016 flatfish total catch is lower relative to 2015.

Species	2016			2015		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Alaska plaice	1,671	14,500	12%	1,614	18,500	9%
Arrowtooth flounder	586	14,000	4%	806	22,000	4%
Flathead sole	3,132	21,000	15%	4,222	24,250	17%
Greenland turbot	14	2,873	0%	47	2,648	2%
Kamchatka flounder	59	5,000	1%	98	6,500	2%
Other flatfish	489	2,500	20%	452	3,620	12%
Rock sole	21,799	57,100	38%	28,979	69,250	42%
Yellowfin sole	25,190	144,000	17%	29,895	149,000	20%
Total	52,940	260,973	20%	66,113	295,786	22%

BSAI Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)

The 2016 total catch is lower relative to 2015.

Species	2016			2015		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	15,744	55,000	29%	18,421	54,500	34%
Pacific ocean perch	1,453	31,900	5%	1,632	32,021	5%

Gulf of Alaska**Pacific cod - Western GOA**

Sector	2016				2015			
	A season allocation	Catch March 26	A season closed	# of vessels March 26	A season allocation	Catch March 28	A season closed	# of vessels March 28
Hook-and-line C/P	2,982	1,268	n/a	3	2,850	2,730	Apr 2	5
Hook-and-line CV	192	57	Mar 11	3	183	61	n/a	< 3
Jig	595	52	n/a	7	569	55	n/a	6
Pot CV/CP	5,417	5,755	Feb 19	36	5,176	5,506	Feb 12	38
Trawl CV	7,579	7,295	Mar 12	25	7,242	6,929	Mar 11	24
Trawl C/P	246	21	n/a	< 3	235	0	Jan 20	0
Total	17,011	14,448		74	16,255	15,281		73

Pacific cod - Central GOA

Sector	2016				2015			
	A season allocation	Catch March 26	A season closed	# of vessels March 26	A season allocation	Catch March 28	A season closed	# of vessels March 28
Hook-and-line C/P	1,504	580	n/a	3	1,851	1,012	n/a	4
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	2,411	2,014	Mar 11	45	4,241	3,691	n/a	26
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	1,354	611	Mar 11	19	2,554	774	n/a	14
Jig	422	231	n/a	47	276	343	Mar 2	38
Pot CV/CP	8,028	8,026	Mar 31	59	8,118	8,350	Feb 16	51
Trawl CV	7,738	3,754	n/a	43	9,623	6,935	n/a	49
Trawl C/P	734	0	Jan 20	0	912	66	Jan 20	<3
Total	22,190	15,216		216	27,594	21,171		182

In 2016, pot CV/CP closed February 1 and reopened March 12, jig closed March 1 and reopened March 19. In 2016, NMFS reallocated of 1,700 mt from hook-and-line CVs to pot CV/CP (1,500 mt) and Jig (200 mt).

Pollock

Catch in the 620 pollock fishery is low due to the small size of pollock. For Areas 610 and 630, the fleet caught the available TACs.

2016 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	3,826	42,040	12,456	4,719 (annual)
A season catch	3,583	14,401	12,504	0
A season closure	January 29	March 10	February 19	n/a
B season allocation	4,348	50,747	5,895	n/a
B season catch	4,077	8,937	6,337	n/a
B season closure	March 28	n/a	March 13	n/a

¹The 610 and 630 B season allocations include reallocations of unused 620 A season pollock TAC.

Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

In 2016, Chinook salmon PSC is 3,435 salmon lower relative to 2015 for fisheries with PSC limits.

Chinook Salmon	2016 Limit	2016 PSC (Rate ²)	2015 PSC (Rate ²)
Total	n/a	3,103 (5%)	6,538 (9%)
Western GOA pollock	6,684	849 (11%)	269 (29%)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	2,241 (5%)	5,211 (9%)
Western/Central trawl CV	2,700	13 (0%)	1,058 (7%)
Western/Central trawl CP ¹	4,080	0	0

¹The 2015 Western/Central trawl CP limit was 3,600 Chinook salmon, and the 2016 limit includes the incentive buffer.

Non-Chinook Salmon	2016 PSC (Rate ²)	2015 PSC (Rate ²)
Total	44 (0.07%)	52 (0.07%)

²Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

Halibut Mortality Data

Total halibut mortality in the BSAI is 142 mt lower in 2016 relative to 2015. In the GOA, halibut mortality is 250 mt higher in 2016 relative to 2015. The 2016 Bering Sea rates are lower for Amendment 80 and Non-trawl Pacific cod than in 2015, and the 2016 GOA rates are lower for Hook-and-line CP Pacific cod than in 2015.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2016			2015		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	833	735,937	0.11%	975	740,607	0.13%
Amendment 80	384	78,767	0.49%	596	91,631	0.65%
BSAI trawl limited access	335	532,380	0.06%	263	536,804	0.05%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	75	51,446	0.15%	88	46,943	0.19%
Non-trawl Other	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
CDQ	39	73,344	0.05%	28	65,229	0.04%
GOA Total	528	76,655	0.69%	278	89,935	0.31%
Trawl	341	69,362	0.49%	155	79,232	0.20%
Hook-and-line CP	13	2,187	0.59%	37	4,417	0.84%
Hook-and-line CV	147	4,068	3.61%	66	6,286	1.05%

Halibut PSC Limit Closures in the GOA

NMFS closed directed fishing for groundfish for catcher vessels using hook-and-line gear in the GOA on March 11, 2016, because the first season (111 mt) and annual halibut PSC limit of 129 mt had been exceeded. The halibut PSC was taken in the Pacific cod target. Observed halibut PSC rates were consistently high in for this fleet relative to previous years. NMFS does not expect the hook-and-line catcher vessels Pacific cod fisheries to open for the remainder of 2016.

NMFS closed directed fishing for deep-water species for vessels using trawl gear in the GOA on March 16, 2016 because the first season halibut PSC limit for deep-water species of 85 mt had been reached. The halibut PSC was taken in the arrowtooth flounder (74 mt) and rex sole (12 mt) targets. This fishery reopened at noon, Alaska local time, April 1, 2016 when the second season halibut PSC limit for deep-water species of 256 mt became available.