



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME OCTOBER 2000
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Fisheries managed under delegated authority of the State of Alaska since the last council meeting: salmon, crab, Southeast demersal shelf rockfish, and state waters Pacific cod

Chinook Salmon Sport Fishery

At the June meeting in Portland, the Council asked the Department to prepare a summary of actions impacting the Southeast Alaska Chinook salmon Sport Fishery.

(FIGURE i) As you may be aware, in early May the Chinook Technical Committee released their preseason chinook salmon abundance index. Based upon the lower abundance, the SE AK king salmon management plan outlined several steps necessary to reduce the sport harvest of treaty fish.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game's first action came on May 3rd when it was announced that the bag and possession limit for all anglers dropped from 2, to one fish. In addition, the annual limit for non-resident anglers was reduced from 4 to 2 chinook salmon. **(FIGURE ii)** One month later, on June 3rd, it was further announced that four additional chinook salmon harvest restrictions would be imposed on nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel. Those restrictions included:

1. Retention and possession of king salmon was prohibited if more than four lines were being fished from a chartered vessel from June 3 through June 30;
2. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel could not retain king salmon on any Wednesday from June 3 through July 31;
3. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel could not retain king salmon from August 1 through September 30; and
4. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel could not retain king salmon within two areas of the outside coast around Sitka and the west and south coasts of Prince of Wales Island from July 12 through July 31.

During this time, the CTC conducted a review of their findings. Following a lengthy review of the data and the chinook model used to calculate the abundance index, the abundance was raised to about 35,000 chinook salmon. Several restrictions already in place were relaxed on June 27th, including an increase in the daily bag and possession limit from 2 to 3 fish, and the 4 restrictions listed above were repealed.

While the catch of chinook salmon was down about 30% from 1999 levels, the 2000 fishery was still the 6th largest since 1977.

Salmon Troll Fishery

(FIGURE 1)

The spring troll fisheries targeting Alaska hatchery chinook salmon were open April 15 through June 29. The harvest was approximately 28,700 chinook salmon (from both experimental and terminal harvest areas), with an Alaska hatchery contribution of about 53%. This compares closely to a five-year average harvest of 30,100 fish and an Alaska Hatchery contribution of 55%.

The summer troll season for chinook salmon opened July 1. The target for the summer troll fishery was 90,000 chinook salmon. The first target period under the management plan established in regulation directs the department to harvest 70% of the goal. The first period ended July 5. Catch was estimated at just fewer than 51,000 fish, or about 57% of the summer allocation. Chinook retention was again allowed beginning August 11 for two days. Catch was just over 11,000 chinook salmon, or only about 41% of the goal for the second summer Treaty fish target. With troll allocation still remaining, chinook retention was permitted again from August 23 through September 20. Nearly 25,000 chinook salmon were harvested during that period. Total summer troll chinook harvest was about 90,700 fish with an Alaska hatchery contribution of about 7.0%. Therefore the total harvest of treaty chinook salmon was approximately 84,300 fish, or approximately 94% of the preseason target.

(FIGURE 2)

The summer troll fisheries for coho salmon were open July 1 through August 12 and August 23 through September 20 (closed for 10 days in mid-August for coho salmon conservation). The preliminary summer coho harvest was 1.1 million fish. This compares to a five-year average harvest of 1.7 million coho salmon.

The winter troll fisheries begin October 11 and continue through April 14, or until 45,000 chinook salmon are caught.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES:

Bering Sea king crab:

(FIGURE 3)

The red and blue king crab fishery in the Pribilof Islands District and the blue king crab fishery in the St. Matthew Island Section of the Northern District of the Bering Sea will remain closed for the 2000 season; the second consecutive closure due to the continued depressed nature of those stocks.

(FIGURE 4)

High mortality rates and the absence of production resulted in the St. Matthew blue king crab stock falling below the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) in 1999. This fishery was declared overfished in 1999 and a rebuilding plan has been implemented. The 2000 survey indicated the stock remains below the MSST.

While red and blue king crab in the Pribilof Islands remain above state and federal threshold levels, poor fishery performance since the area reopened in 1993 and closure

of the St. Matthew fishery, which opens concurrent to this area to spread fishing pressure, caused fisheries managers to keep this area closed for the 2000 season.

Bristol Bay red king crab:

(FIGURE 5)

The red king crab fishery in Bristol Bay is scheduled to open at 4:00 p.m. on October 15, 2000. The harvest guideline for the open access fishery is 7.723 million pounds. A total of 255 vessels filed preseason registrations by the September 25 deadline. A total of 257 vessels participated in the 1999 fishery, which had a total harvest of 11.1 million pounds.

Norton Sound red king crab

(FIGURE 6)

The Norton Sound Section red king crab open access summer season began fishing July 1. That fishery closed August 29. In 1999 the legal red king crab population was estimated to be near the historic high biomass level. Final harvest for the 2000 summer season was 297,654 pounds landed by 15 fishermen. That was about 93% of the 310,800 pounds open access quota. The CDQ fishery opened shortly after that, and closed September 30. Final data is still being compiled, but it appears that approximately 15,000 pounds was harvested against the 25,200-pound cap. Concern over the marketability of crab, low effort, as well as possible molting problems were factors in not extending the fishery.

Aleutian Islands golden (brown) king crab:

(FIGURE 7)

The Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery opened August 15 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds east of 175° W. long. and 2.7 million pounds west of 174° W. long. Sixteen vessels registered for the fishery. Through September 23, 14 vessels have taken approximately 2.29 million pounds from the eastern Aleutians. The eastern Aleutians fishery closed on September 24 and it is anticipated that the GHL will be reached. Harvest in the western Aleutians is confidential because only two vessels have made landings from that area. It is likely that effort will increase significantly in the western Aleutians after the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery.

Pribilof Islands golden king crab:

One vessel is currently participating in the Pribilof District golden king crab fishery, thus harvest is confidential. Effort in this fishery has persisted at a low level since early August and may continue after the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery.

STATE OF ALASKA PACIFIC COD FISHERIES The Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and South Alaska Peninsula Areas opened at noon on March 11, seven days after the closure of the Central and Western Gulf of Alaska. The Cook Inlet Area opened by regulation on March 5, just 24 hours following the closure of the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. The Chignik area opened on April 15. The following is an update through September 15, 2000.

(FIGURE 8)

Prince William Sound The Prince William Sound Area GHL is 2.95 million pounds, which is 25% of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of Pacific cod. Through September 15 the harvest by both pot and jig gear is 134,009 pounds from 10 vessels in 26 landings. The fishery will remain open until the allocation is taken.

Cook Inlet The Cook Inlet Area GHL is 2.16 million pounds, which is equal to 2.25% of the Central Gulf of Alaska total allowable harvest of Pacific cod. The guideline is split equally between pot and jig gear. The state waters fishery opened at noon March 5 and harvest is just over 714,000 pounds from 251 landings by 27 vessels. Pot gear, which closed by regulation on May 1 and reopened June 15, has accounted for greater than 90% of the total harvest. The fishery will remain open until the allocation is taken.

(FIGURE 9)

Kodiak The Kodiak Area GHL is 12.0 million pounds, which is 12.5% of the Central Gulf of Alaska TAC for cod. The guideline was split equally between pot and jig gear. The harvest through September 24th is 8.0 million pounds. Sixty-two pot vessels have harvested 5.1 million pounds. One hundred thirty eight jig vessels have taken 2.8 million pounds. Gear allocations were removed September 1st. Both pot and jig activity has been minimal since July; however, it is anticipated effort will increase through the autumn.

Chignik The Chignik area GHL is 6.7 million pounds, which is 7% of the Central Gulf of Alaska TAC for cod. The guideline was allocated 85 percent to pot gear and 15 percent to jig gear. The season opened on April 15th. Nineteen pot vessels have harvested 1.8 million pounds. Less than three jig vessels have fished with few landings. Their harvest remains confidential. No landings have occurred since July 1st. Gear allocations were removed September 1st. The vessel size and pot limits maybe removed October 31st to increase participation.

South Alaska Peninsula The South Alaska Peninsula Area GHL was 15.2 million pounds, which is 25% of the Western Gulf of Alaska TAC for cod. The guideline was allocated 85 percent pot gear and 15 percent jig gear. The South Alaska Peninsula Area closed for pot gear on April 8, 2000 for the remainder of the year. Sixty-seven pot vessels harvested 14.4 million pounds. Twenty-eight jig vessels have taken 750,000 pounds and fishing closed to that gear type on September 18th for the remainder of the year.

Southeast Alaska

During June-September there was activity in the following SE state managed fisheries:

SSEI sablefish (longline fishery opened in June, pot fishery in September (ongoing)): 227 mt

NSEI sablefish (opened in September until mid November): 610 mt

Lingcod: 69 mt (primarily directed lingcod dinglebar but 17% in halibut longline fishery)

pacific cod: 12 mt

black rockfish: 10 mt (primarily directed jig fishery)

other rockfish: 135 mt (primarily sablefish bycatch but often landed on directed card)

DSR: 38 mt (primarily halibut bycatch)

DSR will reopen to directed fishing in SSEO, EYKT, NSEI, and SSEI on November 16 (no fall opening in CSEO or NSEO)
directed lingcod closes December 1st if quota isn't taken

FIGURE i

KING SALMON BAG LIMIT AND NON-RESIDENT ANNUAL LIMIT REDUCED IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Effective 12:01 am on Wednesday, May 3, 2000, the king salmon bag and possession limits for all sport anglers fishing in the marine waters of Southeast Alaska and Yakutat are reduced from 2 to 1 fish. In addition, the annual limit for non-resident anglers is reduced from 4 to 2 king salmon.

King salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska are managed to stay within a quota that is set according to an abundance-based management agreement negotiated through the Pacific Salmon Commission. A recent Commission meeting revealed that the abundance of king salmon in 2000 will be much lower than expected and will result in a much reduced harvest quota.

The low king salmon abundance is primarily due to the West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI) stocks that are projected to be only nine percent of the previous 20-year average. These stocks have comprised approximately 30 percent of the Southeast fishery in past years. The WCVI stocks have had successive brood failures resulting in subsequent weak returns.

While the harvest quota has not been finalized, it is clear that the sport fishery will exceed its allocation unless harvest restrictions are implemented. A 1-fish bag and possession limit for all anglers and a 2-fish annual limit for non-residents is necessary beginning on May 3. A final harvest quota is expected by late May. At that time, additional restrictions to the sport fishery may be implemented.

Most king salmon produced by Alaska Hatcheries do not count toward the total Alaska king salmon quota. King salmon returns to Whitman Lake, Crystal Lake, and Gastineau (and potentially other hatcheries) are projected to be above average. Regional bag limit and annual limit restrictions may not apply in the hatchery terminal harvest areas. The Department of Fish and Game will issue emergency orders increasing bag limits and other regulations in terminal harvest areas as soon as projected hatchery returns are in excess of brood stock needs.

The commercial troll/sport fisheries allocation, determined by the Board of Fisheries in 1997, of 80% commercial troll and 20% sport will not change. For the 2000 season, the sport fishery will continue to receive 20% and the troll fishery will receive 80% of the harvestable king salmon resource. Both fisheries will be restricted to meet their respective harvest quotas.

FIGURE ii

ADDITIONAL KING SALMON RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON NONRESIDENT AND CHARTER ANGLERS IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Juneau - The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today that, effective 12:01 am on Saturday, June 3, 2000, four additional king salmon harvest restrictions will be imposed on nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel. These restrictions include:

1. Retention and possession of king salmon is prohibited if more than four lines are being fished from a chartered vessel from June 3 through June 30;
2. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel may not retain king salmon on any Wednesday from June 3 through July 31;
3. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel may not retain king salmon from August 1 through September 30; and
4. Nonresident anglers and anglers fishing from a chartered vessel may not retain king salmon within two areas of the outside coast around Sitka and the west and south coasts of Prince of Wales Island from July 12 through July 31

The first three restrictions apply to all marine waters in the Southeast Alaska area, including Yakutat, except terminal harvest areas that are established by emergency order to harvest excess Alaskan hatchery king salmon. Most king salmon produced by Alaska Hatcheries do not count toward the total Alaska king salmon quota. The Department of Fish and Game will issue emergency orders increasing bag limits and other regulations in terminal harvest areas as soon as projected hatchery returns are in excess of brood stock needs.

One of the objectives of the Southeast Alaska King Salmon Management Plan requires the department to "minimize regulatory restrictions on resident anglers not fishing from a charter vessel." Therefore, the harvest restrictions being implemented apply to all anglers except residents not fishing from a chartered vessel.

Based on this year's abundance index the harvest of "treaty" king salmon in the sport fishery must be reduced by 42 percent from the 1999 harvest level. The 20 percent sport allocation equals 27,535 fish in 2000. A 1-fish bag and possession limit for all anglers and a 2-fish annual limit for nonresidents was implemented on May 3 to reduce harvest. These additional harvest restrictions are necessary to reduce the sport harvest by 6,600 fish, down to the 27,535 harvest target.

SE AK COMMERCIAL SUMMER TROLL CHINOOK SALMON CATCHES

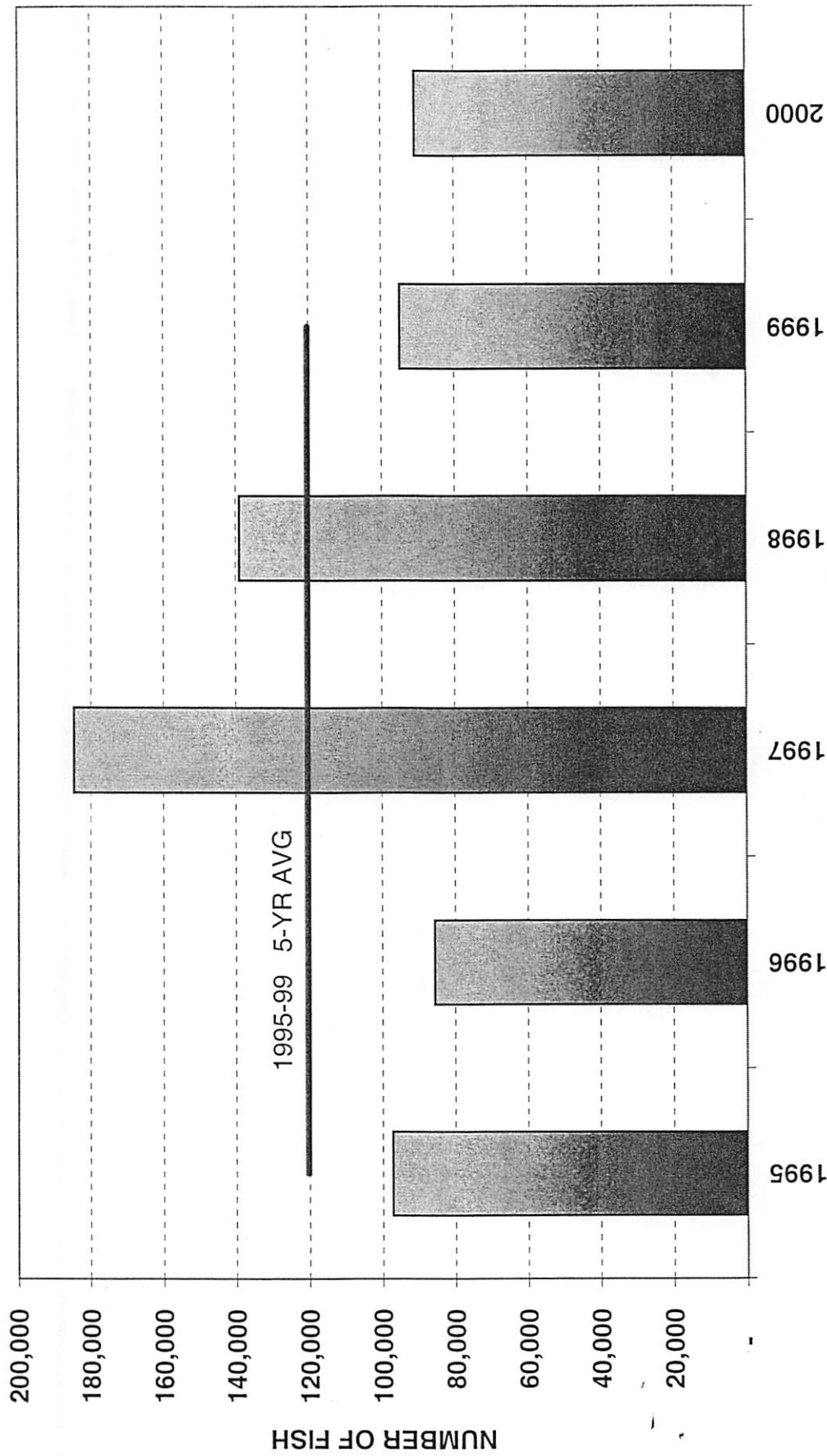


FIGURE 1

SE AK COMMERCIAL SUMMER TROLL COHO SALMON CATCHES

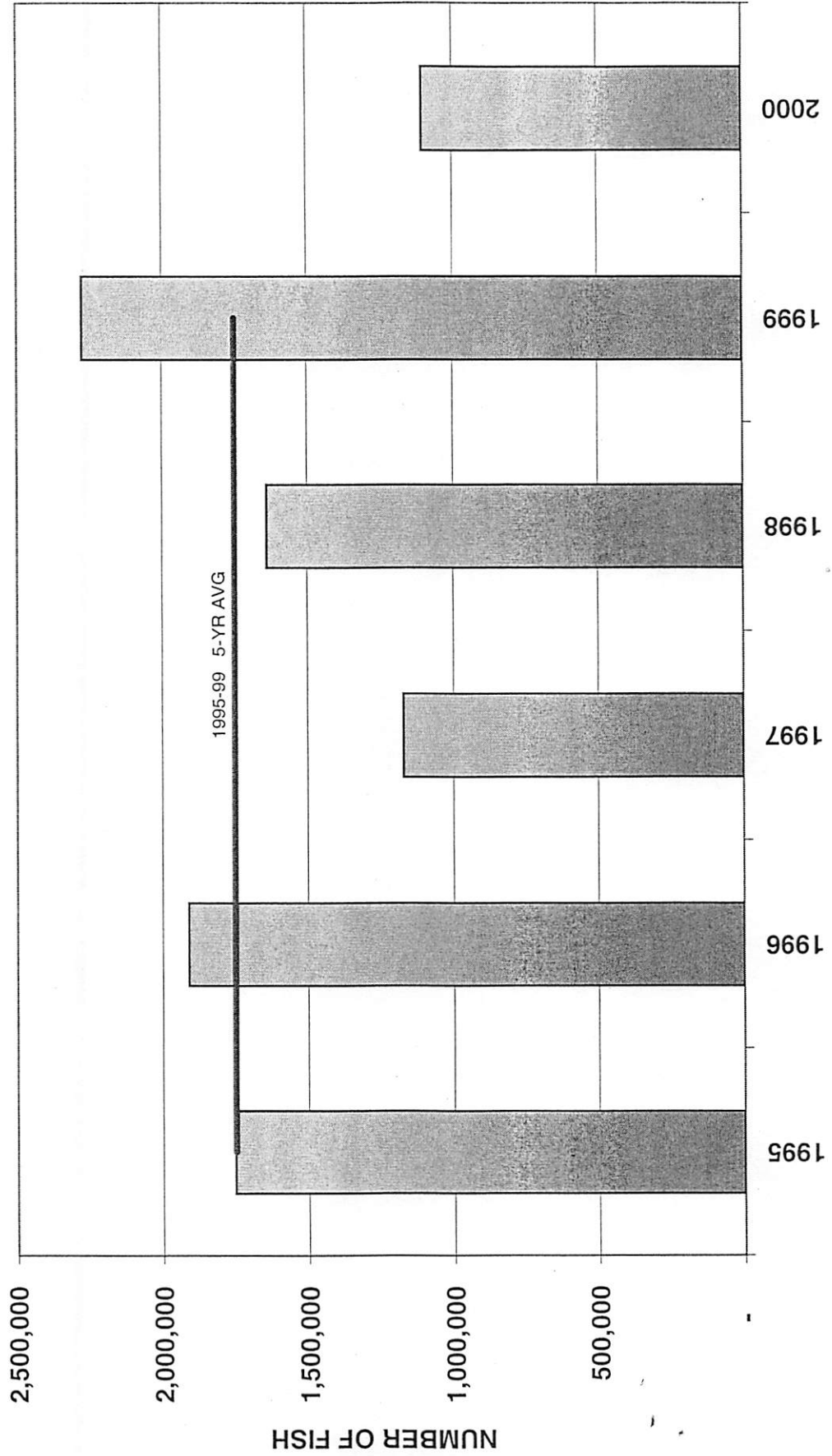


FIGURE 2

Pribilof District Commercial Red and Blue King Crab Catches

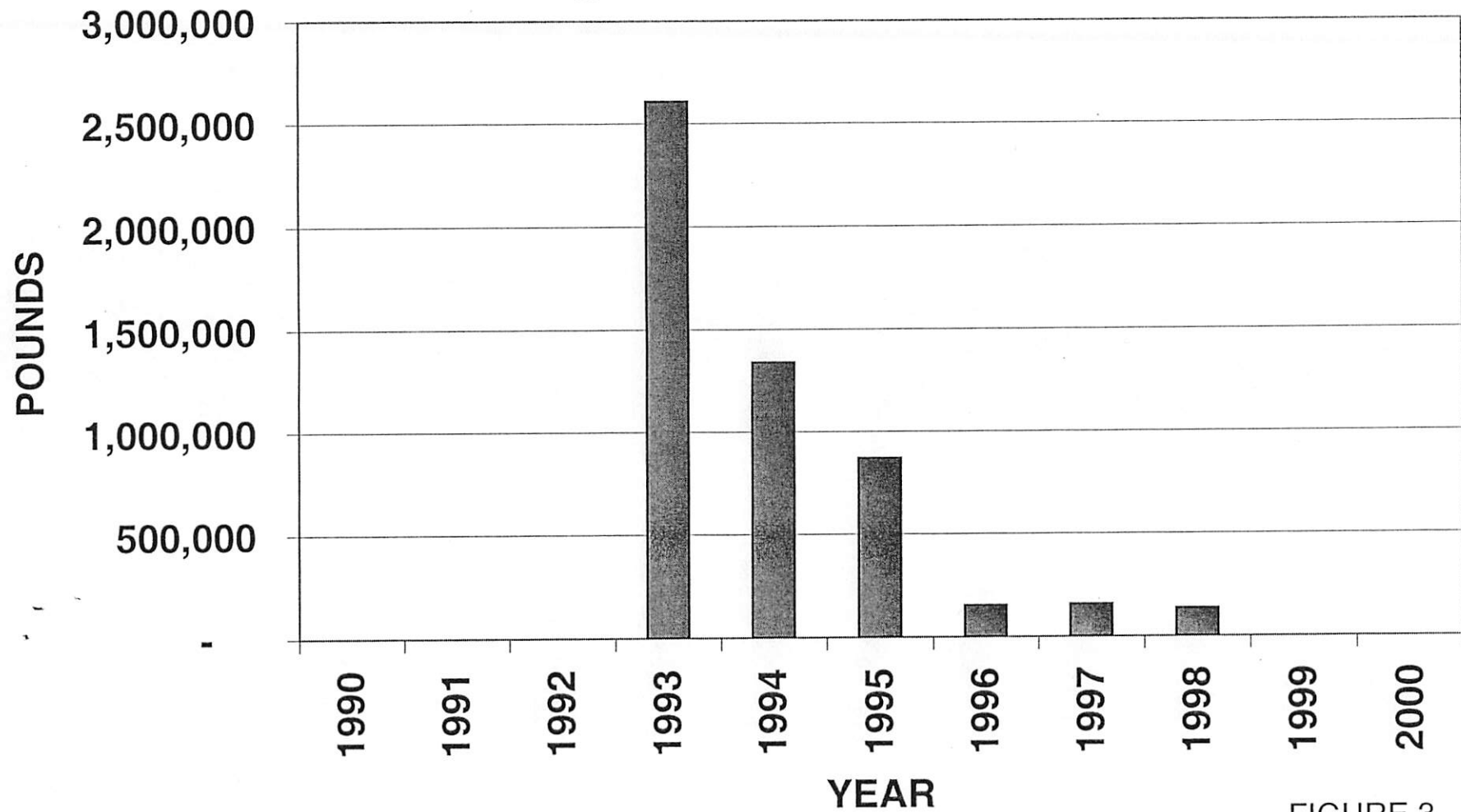


FIGURE 3

St. Matthew District Commercial Blue King Crab Catches

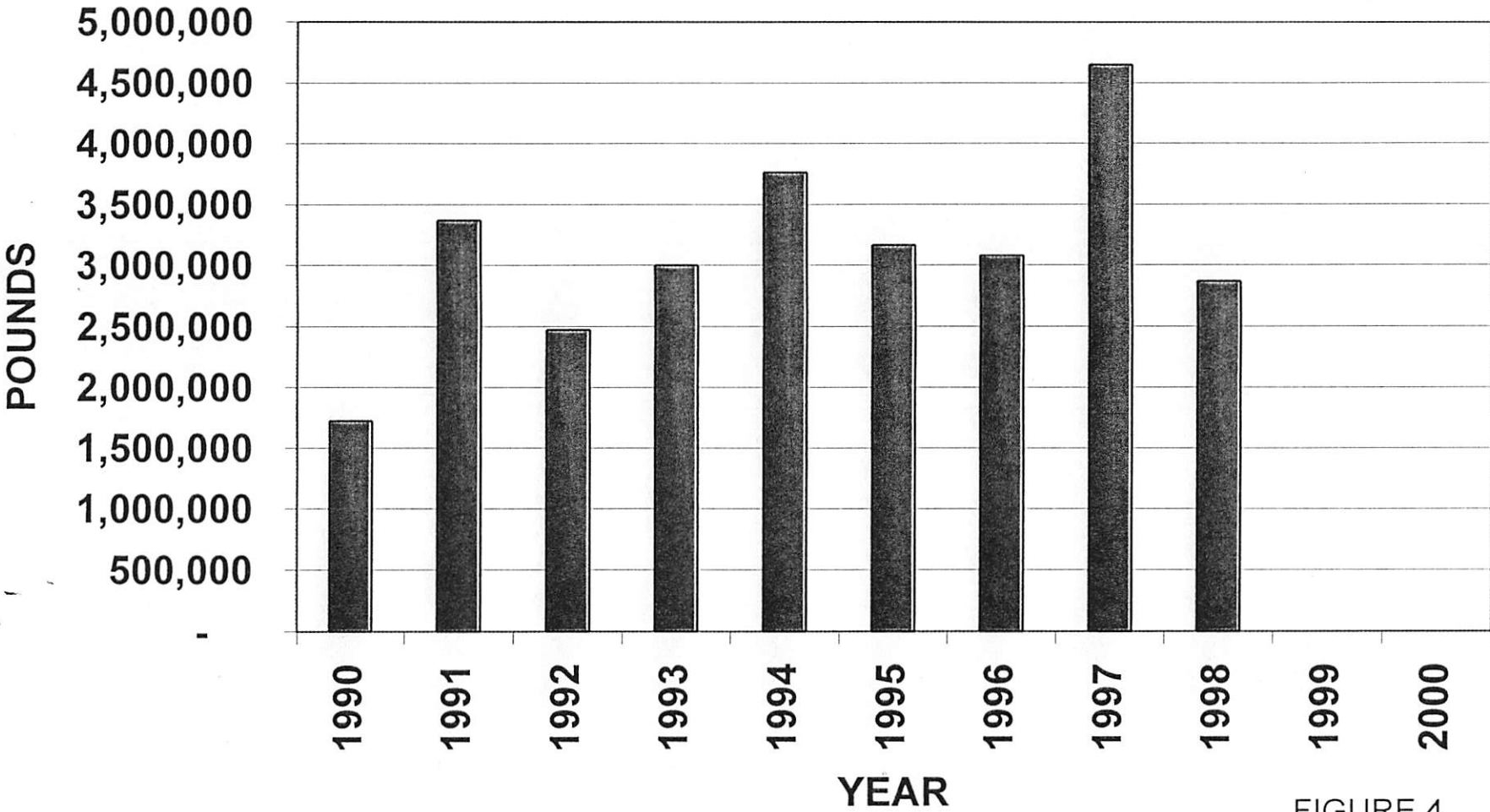


FIGURE 4

Bristol Bay Commercial Red King Crab Catches (open access)

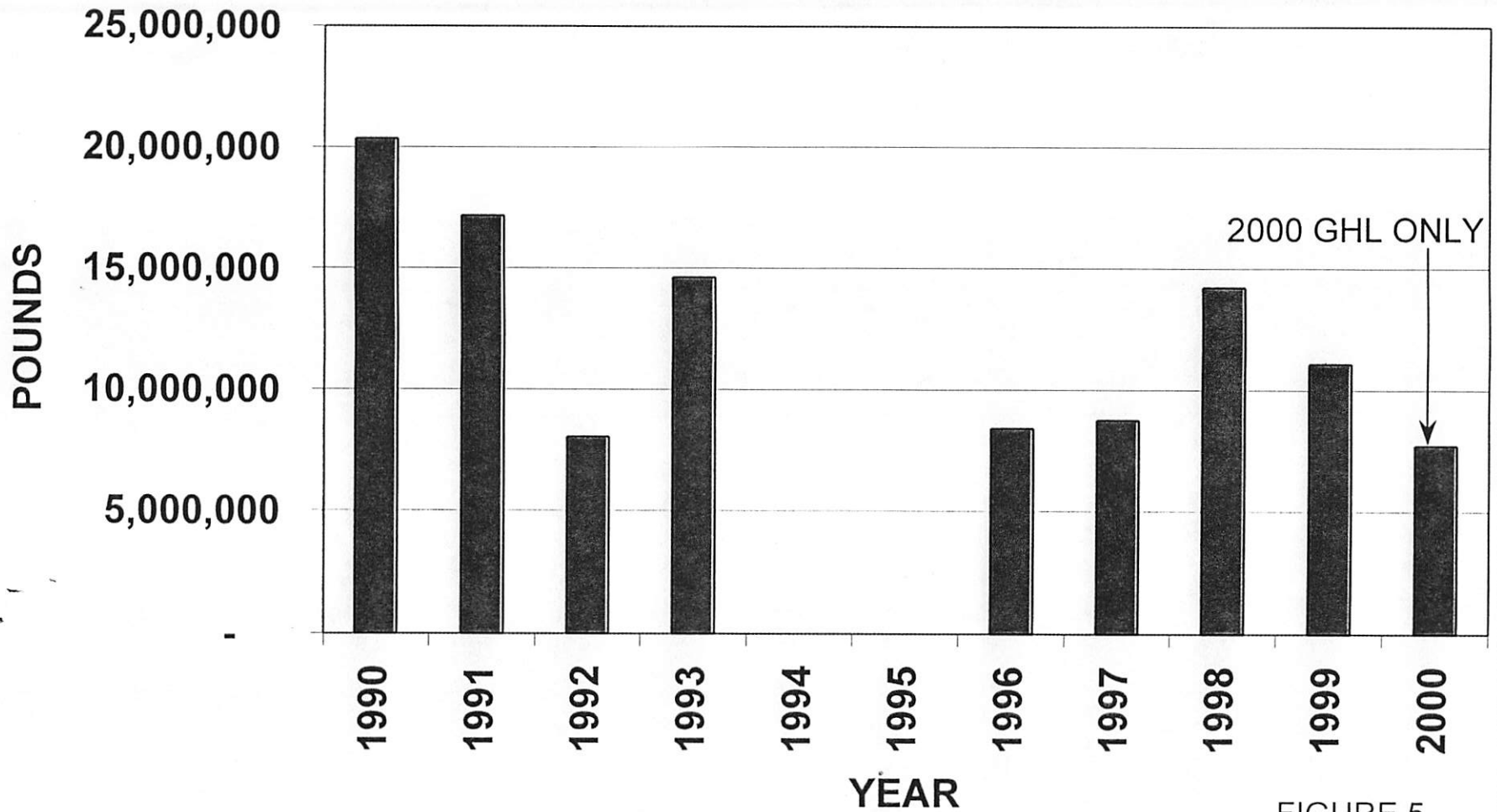


FIGURE 5

NORTON SOUND COMMERCIAL RED KING CRAB CATCHES (SUMMER FISHERY)

2000 PRELIMINARY ONLY

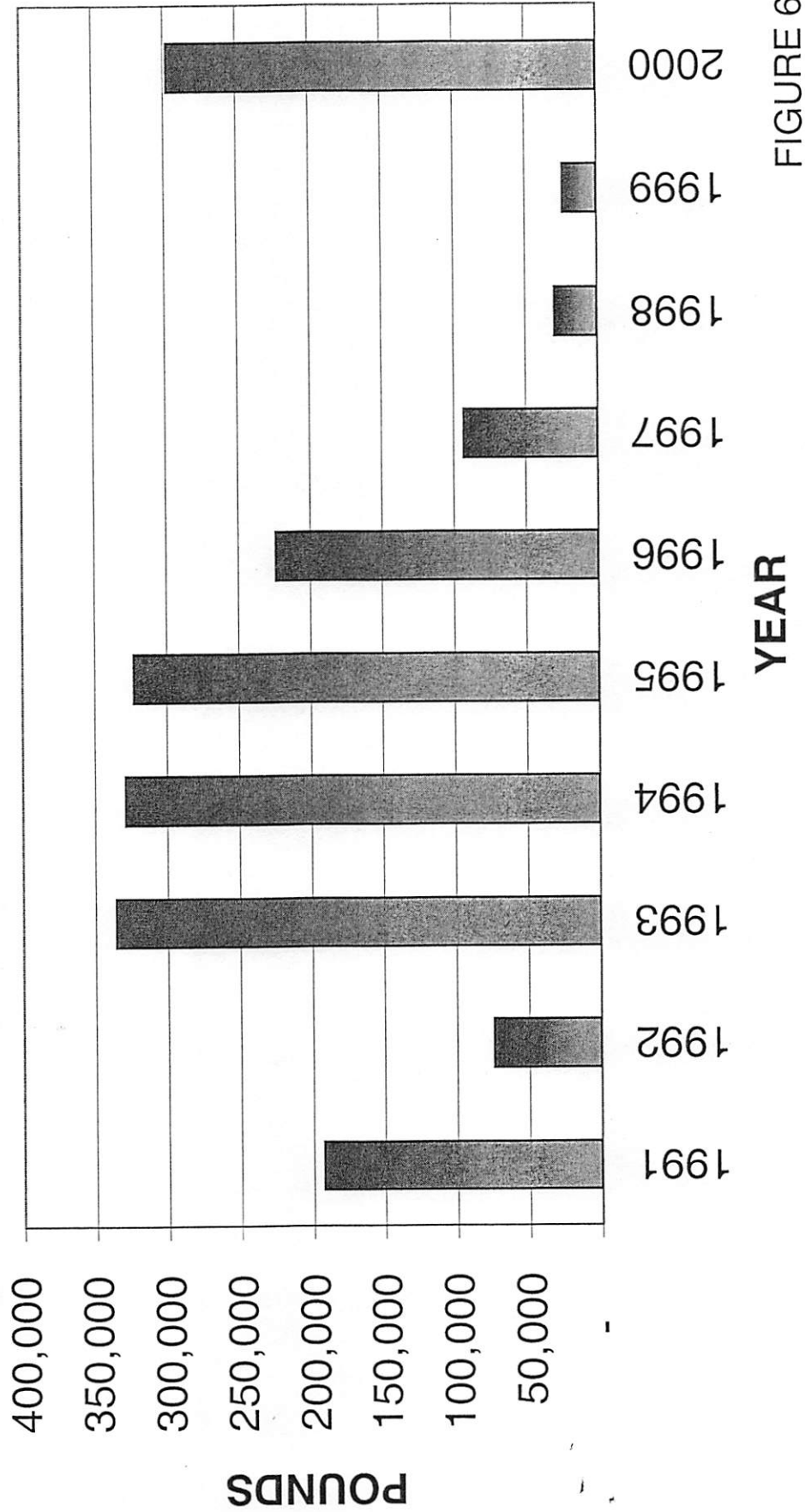


FIGURE 6

Aleutian Islands Commercial Golden King Crab Catches

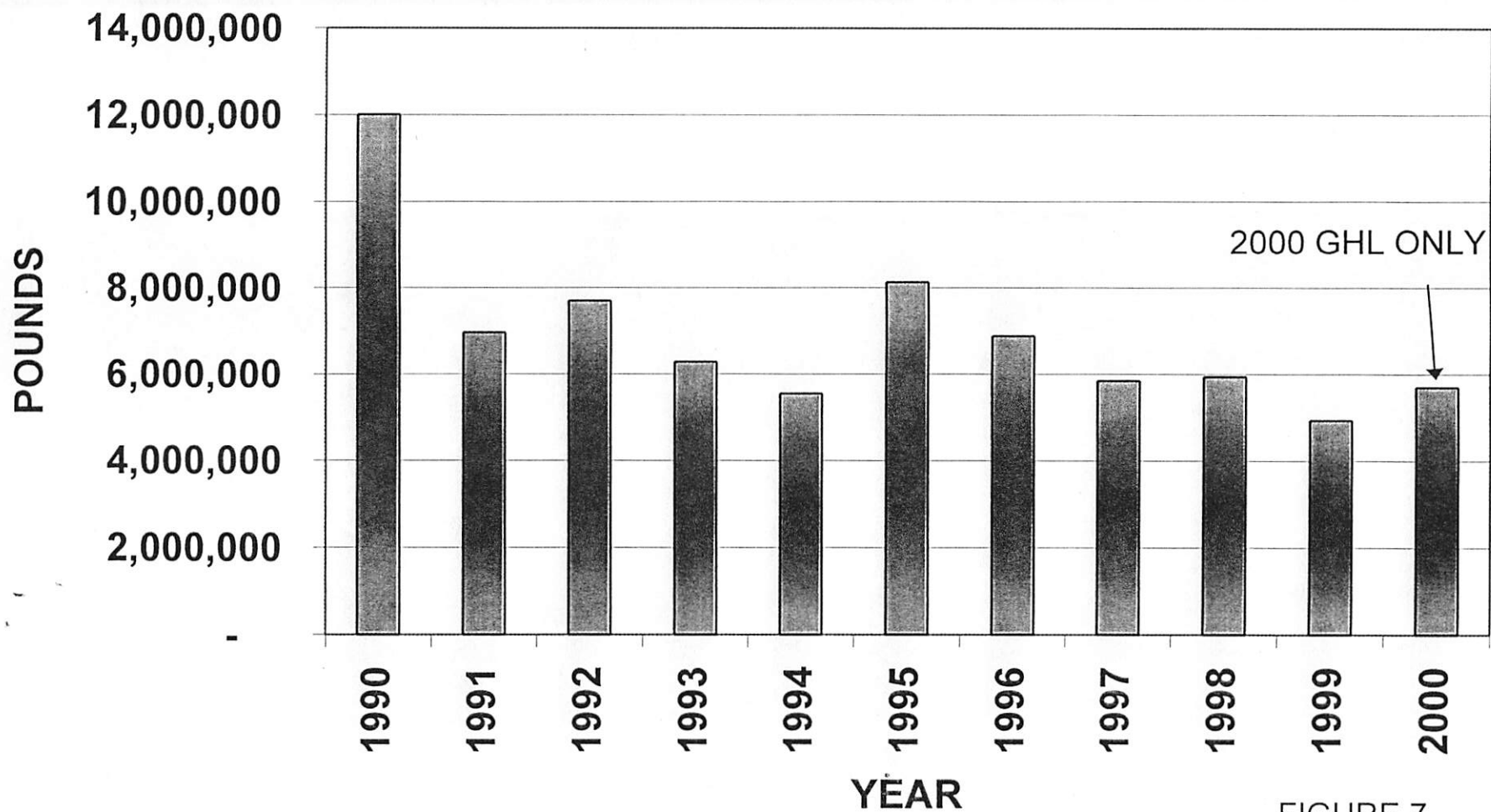


FIGURE 7

Pacific Cod

STATE MANAGED - STATE WATERS*

	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound Inside District Only		
GHL (lb)		2,160,000			2,950,000	
Gear	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
Hand troll (05)	2	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL	0	0	0
Jigs (26)	7	10	13,674	4	10	21,048
Pots (91)	18	239	700,678	6	16	112,961
Totals	27	249	714,352	10	26	134,009
State seasons:	Opened - Closed			Opened - Closed		
Jigs (26)	Noon Mar 5 - ongoing			Noon Mar 11 - ongoing		
Status	Open			Open		
State seasons:	Opened - Closed			Opened - Closed		
Pots (91)	Noon Mar 5 - Noon May 1			Noon Mar 11 - ongoing		
Status	Open			Open		

The state managed fishery for Pacific cod opens by emergency order to pot and jig gear under exclusive area registration 24 hours after the Federal closure in Cook Inlet and 7 days in PWS.

* Federally managed and bycatch not included in weights, vessels or landings.

FIGURE 8

**STATE WATER PACIFIC COD FISHERY
PRELIMINARY CATCH RESULTS BY WEEK**

VESSEL REGISTRATIONS	KODIAK			CHIGNIK			SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA					
	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig			
	206	62	144	23	19	4	95	67	28			
2000 GHL:	12.0 Million			6.7 Million			15,174,540 Million (Actual)					
ALLOCATIONS:	50% Jigs, 50% Pots Pots >58' restricted to 25% of total GHL before Sept. 1.			85% Pots, 15% Jigs			85% Pots, 15% Jigs					
DATES:	Pots		Jigs		Pots		Jigs		Pots		Jigs	
	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch
3/11 to 3/18	47	395,510	31	32,519					113	1,948,659	0	0
3/19 to 3/25	70	1,047,157	45	75,237					101	2,929,982	0	0
3/26 to 4/1	32	450,994	38	47,014					124	3,624,017	0	0
4/2 to 4/8	52	798,999	61	51,279					133	5,041,388	X	X
4/9 to 4/15	52	782,818	51	80,713					35	909,694	7	6,468
4/16 to 4/22	61	872,684	91	168,428	opened 4/15, no reported landings							
4/23 to 4/29	33	324,008	109	261,737	43	670,401	0	0	Closed 4/8 @ NOON			
4/30 to 5/6	29	231,017	105	305,449	44	492,129	0	0			6	20,132
5/7 to 5/13	23	141,893	147	431,113	35	362,467	0	0			0	0
5/14 to 5/20	6	31,200	161	410,994	16	142,677	0	0			X	X
5/21 to 5/27	10	40,008	168	489,426	9	78,708	0	0			15	41,848
5/28 to 6/3	X	X	91	220,077	4	25,789	0	0			12	60,672
6/4 to 6/10	3	22,143	67	164,412	X	X	0	0			36	173,832
6/11 to 6/17	X	X	25	50,363	0	0	X	X			6	29,929
6/18 to 6/23	X	X	18	24,783	0	0	X	X			14	91,288
6/24 to 7/1	X	X	15	23,020	0	0	0	0			8	59,042
7/2 to 7/8	0	0	X	X	0	0	X	X			3	29,212
7/9 to 7/15	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0			6	13,805
7/16 to 7/22	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0			X	X
7/23 to 7/29	0	0	12	9,153	0	0	0	0			X	X
7/30 to 8/5	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0			0	0
8/6 to 8/12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			X	X
8/13 to 8/19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			X	X
8/21 to 8/26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			17	84,600
8/27 to 9/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			5	27,380
9/3 to 9/9	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0			Closed	X
9/10 to 9/16	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0			7	32,615
9/17 to 9/23	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0			6	57,430
ACCUMULATIVE CATCH	418	5,138,431	1,235	2,845,716	151	1,772,171	0	0	506	14,453,740	152	753,715
	(Total combined)		7,984,147		(Total combined)		1,772,171		(Total combined)		15,207,455	

X - CONFIDENTIAL DATA (catch combined with following week)

** S. Ak. Pen. Closed to jig gear
9/19 @ 12:00 NOON

BLACK ROCKFISH CATCH BY AREA (INCLUDING BYCATCH)

Closed areas are restricted to 5% bycatch by target species weight.

AREA	HARVEST	GUIDELINE	STATUS
Afognak	60,408	35,000	Closed 4/25
Northeast	28,681	20,000	Closed 4/18
Eastside	45,074	30,000	Closed 4/25
Southeast	71,455	30,000	Closed 4/27
Southwest	19,112	20,000	Closed 5/5
Westside	12,890	30,000	Closed 5/12
Mainland	18,809	20,000	Closed 9/12
Kodiak Total	256,429	185,000	
Chignik	96,433	100,000	Closed 7/25
Peninsula	96,131	100,000	Closed 7/13

Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries

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Commercial Fisheries