

Agenda Item: B-3



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL
APRIL, 2003**

Fisheries managed under delegated authority to the State of Alaska since the last council report: salmon, crab, and groundfish.

Salmon Troll Fishery

(FIGURE 1) The Southeast Alaska chinook salmon winter troll fishery opened October 11, 2002. At the February 2003 Board of Fisheries meeting in Ketchikan, the Board adopted changes to several regulations impacting this fishery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced changes to the winter troll fishery effective Friday, March 7, 2003. The Southeast Alaska/Yakutat winter chinook salmon troll fishery will remain open until 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, April 30, 2003, or until a total of 45,000 chinook salmon are harvested. This change lengthens the season by two weeks from the previous April 14, 2003 closure date. Due to the extension on the winter season, spring troll fisheries will open after April 30. The winter troll boundary line has been modified in Yakutat Bay, also an additional portion of section 11-A near Juneau

will be opened. The catch is now 32,526 chinook salmon. This is now the most valuable winter fishery since at least 1996. It also ranks as the second highest late-winter catch, behind 1992 harvests. This ranking may change with ticket updates.

Aleutian Island Golden King Crab

(FIGURE 2) The Aleutian Islands (Area O) opened to commercial fishing for golden king crab on August 15, 2002 with guideline harvest levels (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds east and 2.7 million pounds west of 174° W long. That portion of Area O east of 174° W longitude closed to commercial fishing on September 7, 2002. Fishing effort west of 174° W longitude has fluctuated throughout the season from one to six vessels. Weekly harvest has ranged from zero to 177,255 pounds per week and has averaged 99,000 pounds per week since January 5, 2003. Through February 27, 2003, approximately 2.56 million pounds of golden king crab had been harvested from Area O west of 174° W longitude. At that harvest rate, the GHL of 2.7 million pounds was projected to be reached by March 8, 2003. Therefore, the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery west of 174° W longitude closed to commercial fishing at 11:59 PM March 8, 2003. The most recent harvest figures available indicate the harvest to be approximately 2.7 million pounds, bringing the total Area O golden king crab harvest to approximately 5.5 million pounds.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 3)

Cook Inlet

In Cook Inlet, the fishery opened on February 10, 2003, twenty-four hours after the close of the Federal fishery. The 1.44 million pound GHL was allocated 50 percent to pot gear and 50 percent to jig gear. The GHL was calculated as 2.25% of the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area. This year there was more effort in the state waters fishery, the fish

were larger and more abundant. Good catches by the pot fleet resulted in a closure on February 27, 2003. To date, 11 vessels have made 90 landings for a total harvest of approximately 880,000 pounds.

Prince William Sound

The 2003 Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season opened February 16, 2003 with a 1.76 million pound GHL allocated 60 percent to pot gear and 40 percent to jig gear. The GHL was calculated as 25 percent of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. No vessels have yet elected to participate in the fishery.

Westward Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 4)

Kodiak

(FIGURE 5) The 2003 Kodiak Area GHL for the state-waters Pacific cod season is 8.0 million pounds. This is 12.5 percent of the Central Gulf of Alaska ABC for cod. The guideline is split equally between pot and jig gear. No more than 25 percent of the guideline can be taken with pot gear by vessels over 58 feet prior to September 1, 2003. The Kodiak Area opened for the 2003 state-waters season seven days after the close of the Central Gulf of Alaska. National Marine Fisheries Service closed the inshore processing sector of the Central Gulf of Alaska to retention of Pacific cod at noon on February 9, 2003. Therefore, the state-waters season for pot and jig gear opened at noon on February 16, 2003 in the Kodiak Area. The pot fishery was allocated 4.0 million pounds of harvest, or half of the 8.0 million pound GHL. Vessels larger than 58 feet in overall length fishing with pot gear were restricted to half of the pot allocation or 2.0 million pounds before September 1, 2003.

Forty-eight vessels registered to fish pot gear in the Kodiak Area. The federal fishery using pot gear had experienced stronger than usual catches; it was

expected that strong harvest would continue in the state-waters season. Approximately 1.6 million pounds were harvested in the first reporting week. This was a record level harvest for the Kodiak Area. Vessels larger than 58 feet harvested approximately 600,000 pounds in this period, vessels less than or equal to 58 feet harvested 1.0 million pounds. The ratio of catch between large and small vessels remained fairly consistent. The fleet in the Gulf of Alaska normally targets cod until the roe-pollock fishery opens. In the past, many of the pot boats also focused on the crab fishery in an effort to develop catch history as the fishery heads towards rationalization, limiting the fishing effort on cod during the roe season. Now that the Council has defined the guidelines for determining catch history, this has resulted in a considerable shift in the early fishing effort to cod. Subsequently, this has resulted in a sizable increase in the production of fresh cod milt this year. Good landings of cod in Kodiak have resulted in an increased production of fresh cod milt for the Japanese market, and one importer indicates that this year's receipts through the end of January are about double the volume received during the same period last year. Harvest continued strong on the processor landing reports on February 27 and 28, 2003. Total harvest through midnight on Thursday, February 27 indicated 3.2 million pounds had been landed. Large vessels had harvested 1.1 million and smaller pot vessels had landed almost 2.1 million pounds. Average deliveries from three-day trips were 37,000 pounds per vessel. Given the current levels of participation, harvest rates, and weather outlook it appeared that the remaining pot gear GHL would be taken by 4:00 PM on Sunday, March 2, 2003. It also appeared that at the time of the closure announcement, the vessels larger than 58 feet in overall length would not exceed the 2.0 million pounds allocated for the 2003 season before the closure became effective. The fishery closed to pot gear March 2, 2003 with a pot cod catch of 4.9 million pounds.

Chignik

(FIGURE 6) The 2003 Chignik area GHL is 4.5 million pounds for the state-waters Pacific cod season. This is 7 percent of the Central Gulf of Alaska ABC for cod. Pot, mechanical jig, and hand troll are the legal gear types for the state-waters season. A 60-pot limit per vessel is in effect for the state-waters season and vessels may use no more than 5 jig machines or hand troll lines with no more than 30 hooks per line. The Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season opened March 1, 2003. The Chignik Area has a 58-foot overall vessel length size limit and is designated as a superexclusive registration area during the state-waters season.

Vessels fishing with pot gear are limited to 85 percent of the GHL or 3.8 million pounds. Vessels fishing with mechanical jig or hand troll gear are limited to 15 percent of the GHL or 675,000 pounds. The current harvest is approximately 1.7 million pounds for the pot fleet. No jig activity has yet occurred.

South Alaska Peninsula

(FIGURE 7) The 2003 South Alaska Peninsula Area GHL is 11.4 million pounds for the state-waters Pacific cod season. This is 25 percent of the Western Gulf of Alaska ABC for cod. The guideline is allocated 85 percent to pot gear and 15 percent to jig gear. The fishery opened February 24, 2003, seven days after the closure of the Western Gulf of Alaska to cod fishing. Forty-one vessels registered to fish pot gear in the South Alaska Peninsula Area. Based on harvests during the parallel fishery, it was expected that strong harvest would continue in the state-waters season. When inseason reports indicated that their 9.6 million pound allocation would be taken, a closure announcement for pot gear was made on March 9, 2003. However, extremely poor weather kept the fleet off the grounds just prior to the March 11, 2003 closure date, and pot fishermen left approximately 18 percent of their allocated pounds on the table. Fishing with pot gear will reopen if mechanical jig fishermen fail to take their 15 percent allocation by October 31. In that instance, the commissioner shall close the fishing season

by emergency order and immediately reopen it to all legal gears. Based upon past jig gear performance, that may not be very likely to occur. Jig fishermen have harvested about 300,000 pounds to date.

Southeast Groundfish

(FIGURE 8) In the Southeast District, between January and March 2003, there was activity in the directed demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and the directed Pacific cod fishery. The winter DSR fishery opened on Jan. 1, 2003. The 32 vessels participating in the winter fishery landed a total of 251,897 round pounds of DSR from the Central Southeast Outside (CSEO), Southern Southeast Outside (SSEO), Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) and Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) management areas. Area seasons were short in the winter fishery, with closures on January 3, 2003 for CSEO, January 11, 2003 for SSEO, February 5, 2003 for SSEI and February 19, 2003 for NSEI. There was no directed fishery allowed in East Yakutat (EYKT) or Northern Southeast Outside (NSEO).

The 2003 sablefish quota for the Northern Southeast Inside sablefish fishery will be 2,005,000 round pounds, the same as last year. There are currently 108 permits for this fishery, one less than in 2002; hence the individual permit quota will be 18,565 round pounds. The 2002 longline survey catch per unit effort was slightly lower than the 2001 survey but above the 1999 and 2000 level measured in both fish/hook and pounds/hook. The commercial fishery catch per unit effort (pounds/hook) overall was higher compared to the recent past. The Gulf of Alaska sablefish abundance is considered moderate and increasing from recent lows. The 1997 year class is above average and the 1998 year class appears to be above average. These fish are not yet showing a strong signal in the age data from NSEI. However, the eastern Gulf of Alaska is just beginning to benefit from these year classes and the Chatham Strait population may benefit as well, as these young fish move eastward.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting took place on January 24-28, 2003 in Ketchikan. Thirty-four proposals pertaining to groundfish in Southeast Alaska were voted on; the highlights of the meeting are listed below:

- A proposal to change the NSEI Sablefish season to mirror the IFQ season was modified to read, the NSEI fishery would open Aug. 15 and close Nov. 15, passed.
- A proposal to allow sablefish EQS to be taken out of the regular season under terms of a research permit issued by ADF&G, passed.
- A proposal to allow the release of small sablefish in the NSEI sablefish fishery but require logbook reporting passed.
- A proposal to allow a 5 percent sablefish overage/underage to be carried over, passed
- A proposal to establish guideline harvest limits for black rockfish and prohibit directed fishery for slope rockfish, passed.
- A proposal to close waters for the directed black rockfish fishery, passed.
- A proposal to require full retention of black rockfish, passed.
- A proposal to allow groundfish bycatch limits to be set in the salmon troll fisheries, by Emergency Order, passed.
- A proposal to establish a directed fishery for spiny dogfish in Yakutat Bay, failed.
- A proposal to establish a super-exclusive directed lingcod fishery in Icy Bay Subdistrict, passed.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Actions

At its March 2003 meeting in Anchorage, the Board of Fisheries selected stakeholders to examine possible actions the board will need to take concerning state regulatory structure for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands king and Tanner crab fisheries once the council finalizes its actions, and make recommendations on new regulations. It is anticipated that this task force will work very closely with staff from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the North Pacific Fishery

Management Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Alaska Department of Law.

The task force is to work within the intent and scope of the council's plan, and any additional Congressional direction, to provide the Board of Fisheries with proposals to assist the implementation of the final rationalization plan.

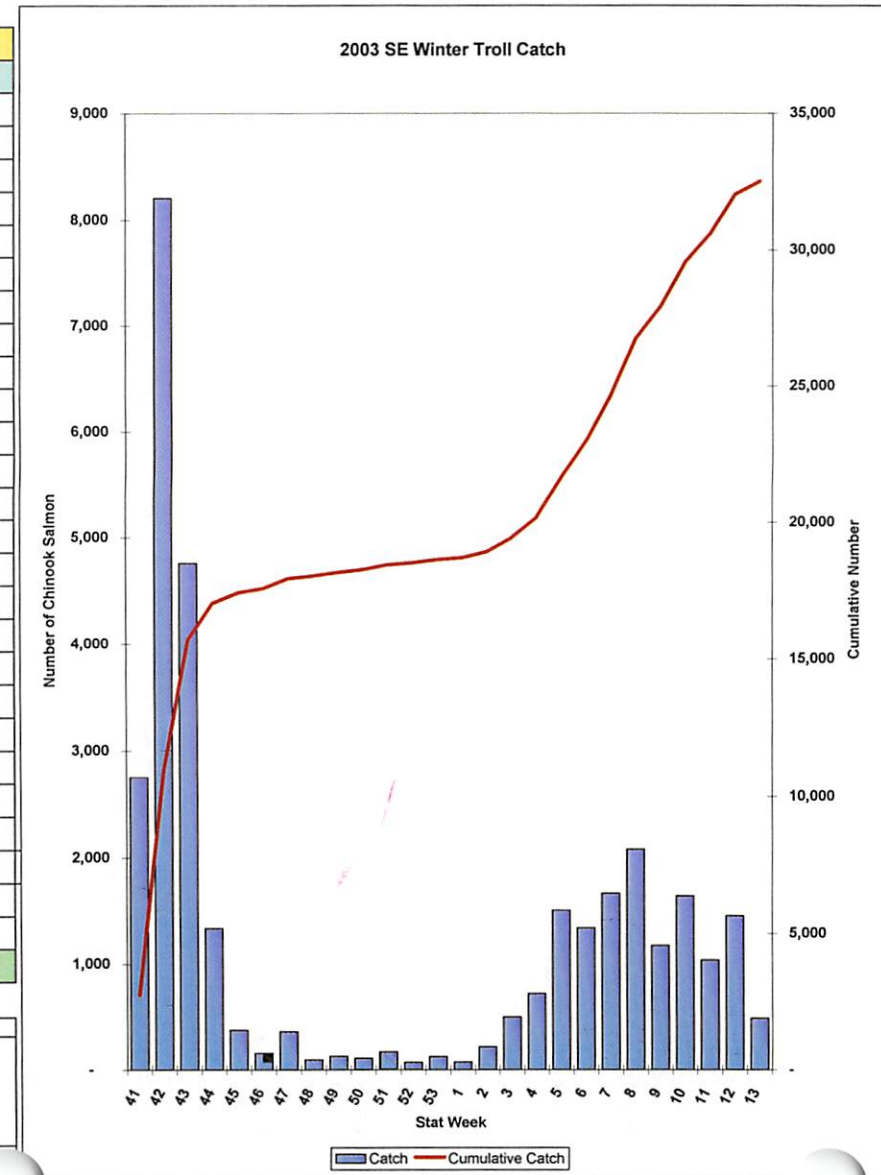
The task force will begin its work when the rationalization plan is finalized and Congressional authorization is provided. At that time, the board will provide a timeline for the task force to complete its work.

Figure 1. 2003 ALASKA COMMERCIAL WINTER TROLL CHINOOK FISHERY



Troll Year	Statistics for March 16 - 22 Week 12						
	Total Catch to Date	Week 11 Catch (numbers)	Permits Fished	Landings	Average Catch per Landing	Average Weight (lbs)	Average Price/Lb (from fish tickets)
2003	32,526	1,453	91	142	10.2	15.1	\$4.56
2002	21,782	1,134	98	152	7.5	15.8	\$4.33
5-year average (1998-2002)	19,703	1,269	75	107	11.6	16.1	\$3.88

Troll Year 2003	Weekly Chinook Salmon Catch and Effort Data					
Week	Catch	Permits	Landings	Pounds	Ave. Price	Ave. Wt.
41	2,750	31	32	38,130	\$2.20	13.9
42	8,204	130	212	110,252	\$2.07	13.5
43	4,756	98	132	57,197	\$1.69	12.1
44	1,334	69	88	17,420	\$1.73	13.1
45	378	29	33	4,723	\$2.66	12.5
46	156	21	25	2,141	\$2.91	13.8
47	365	28	34	4,784	\$3.09	13.1
48	94	15	21	1,288	\$3.62	13.7
49	127	20	24	1,621	\$3.80	12.8
50	107	20	27	1,677	\$3.94	15.7
51	167	30	51	2,430	\$4.24	14.5
52	68	11	18	961	\$3.98	14.1
53	122	16	28	1,584	\$3.82	13.0
1	73	13	16	891	\$4.10	12.2
2	220	26	35	3,182	\$4.82	14.5
3	501	50	77	7,083	\$4.68	14.1
4	722	50	83	10,889	\$5.72	15.1
5	1,506	86	148	22,312	\$5.63	14.8
6	1,338	104	152	19,701	\$5.14	14.7
7	1,665	120	193	23,502	\$4.99	14.1
8	2,078	93	171	34,078	\$4.93	16.4
9	1,172	112	154	18,469	\$4.77	15.6
10	1,643	102	155	25,340	\$4.86	15.4
11	1,037	70	109	15,305	\$4.70	14.8
12	1,453	91	142	21,959	\$4.56	15.1
13	490	28	33	6,785	\$4.56	13.9
Totals	32,526	308	2,193	453,704	\$3.42	14.0



NOTES:

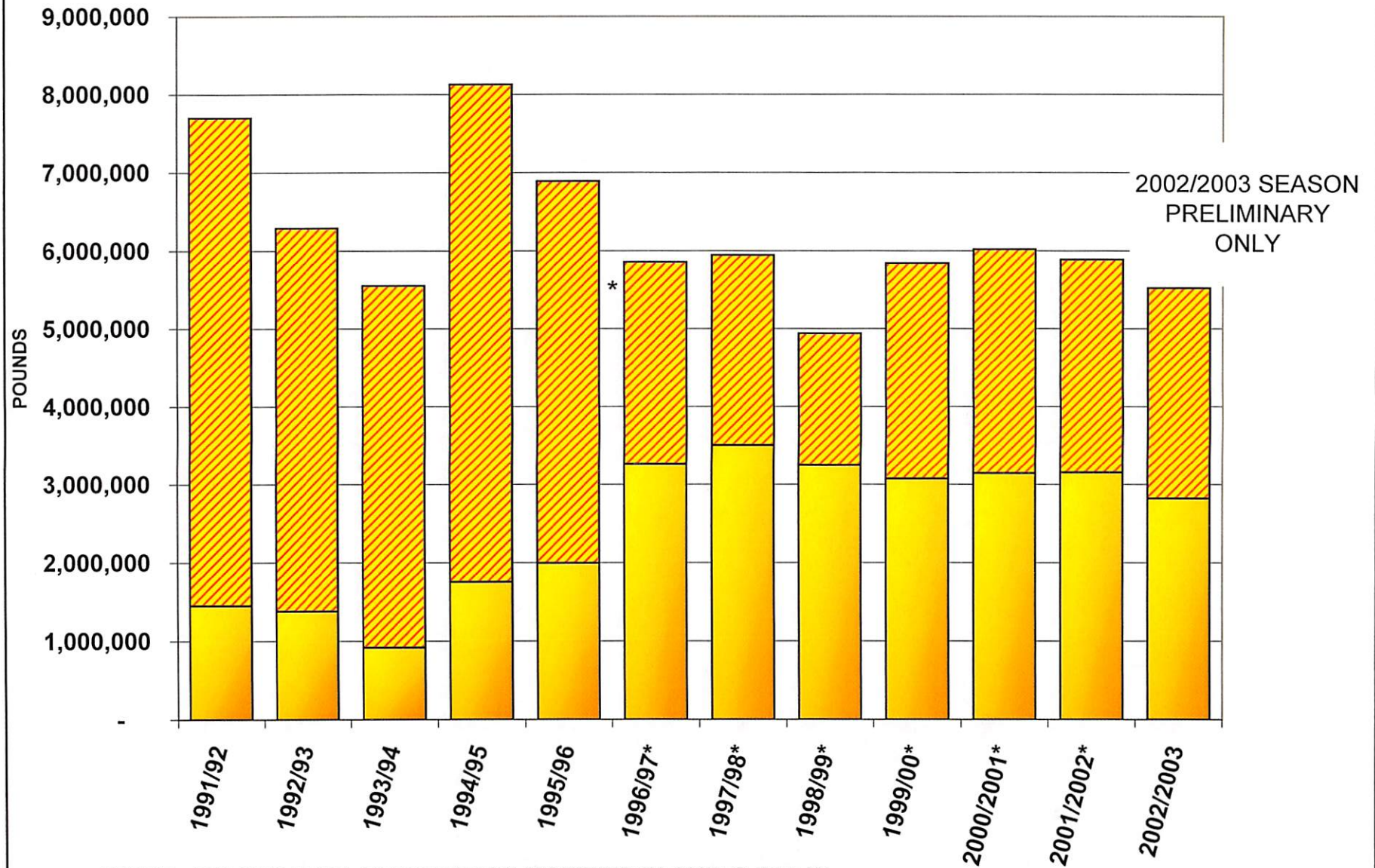
Data for troll year 2003 is preliminary.

The Southeast Alaska/Yakutat winter troll fishery for chinook salmon began October 11, 2002 and will be open through April 30, 2003 or until a total of 45,000 chinook salmon are harvested. The fishery is confined to waters east of the "winter boundary line" and includes waters of Yakutat Bay. Please refer to the 2003 Winter Troll Management Plan and Regulatory Guide for more details. The "winter boundary line" is defined in 5 AAC 29.020(b), which can be found on page 58 in the 2002-2003 S.E. Alaska and Yakutat Commercial Fishing Regulations.

This table was updated March 25, 2003. Numbers above are listed by Troll Year, which begins with the winter fishery in October and ends with the summer fishery in September.

FIGURE 2

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GOLDEN KING CRAB HARVEST, 2002/2003 SEASON



*NOTE: FISHING AREA DESIGNATION MODIFIED IN 1996 @ 174° W

■ EAST OF 174° W

■ WEST OF 174° W

FIGURE 3. 2003 Harvest Guideline, Effort, and Catch Reported for the Central Region State Water Pacific Cod

This summary censured for confidential reports or records.

Pacific Cod	PARALLEL SEASON - STATE WATERS					
	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
Gear	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
Hand troll	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jig	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trawl	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longline	9	15	103,425	5	6	6,544
Pots	7	89	292,809	0	0	0
Totals	16	104	396,234	5	6	6,544
Status	Bycatch			Bycatch		
Federal seasons: Central Gulf	Directed Opened - Closed Jan 1 - noon Feb 9			Directed Opened - Closed Jan 1 - noon Feb 9		

Parallel season concurrent with federal waters of the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA).
Totals include Pacific Cod bycatch to other directed fisheries e.g. halibut & sablefish.

Pacific Cod	STATE MANAGED - STATE WATERS*					
	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
GHL (lb)		1.44mil.			1.76 mil.	
Gear	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
Hand troll	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jigs	1	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL	0	0	0
Pots	10	89	880,023	0	0	0
Totals	11	89	880,023	0	0	0
State seasons: Jigs	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 -			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 -		
Status	Open			Open		
State seasons: Pots	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 - 5 PM Feb 27			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 -		
Status	Closed			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.
Includes only directed fishery harvest.



FIGURE 4.

2003 WESTWARD REGION STATE MANAGED GROUND FISH

UPDATED: March 17, 2003

PRELIMINARY PACIFIC COD HARVEST BY FISHERY WEEK



VESSEL REGISTRATIONS	KODIAK			CHIGNIK			SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA		
	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig
	82	44	38	19	18	1	68	32	36

2003 GH L	8.0 million pounds	4.5 million pounds	11.4 million pounds
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ALLOCATIONS:	50% Jigs, 50% Pots Pots >58' restricted to 25% of total GH L before Sept. 1. Jigs = 4.0 million, Pots = 4.0 million, >58' pots 2.0 before Sept. 1.	85% Pots, 15% Jigs Pots = 3.8 million Jigs = 675,000	85% Pots Pots limited to 9.6 million pounds
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DATES:	Pots		Jigs		Pots		Jigs		Pots		Jigs	
	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch	Landings	Catch
2/16 to 2/22	41	1,712,444	19	68,154	Opens 3/1/03	-	Opens 3/1/03	-	Opens Feb 24 th	-	Opens Feb 24 th	-
2/23 to 3/1	71	2,258,375	24	58,950	0	0	0	0	49	1,494,364	Confidential	Confidential
3/2 to 3/8	35	977,099	25	59,788	16	600,982	0	0	73	3,572,094	13	101,186
3/9 to 3/15	Fishery Closed 3/2	-	7	12,480	14	386,227	0	0	69	2,785,863	8	64,281
3/16 to 3/22	Fishery Closed 3/2	-	40	96,457	23	755,978	0	0	Fishery closed 3/11	-	12	124,492
ACCUMULATIVE CATCH	147 (Total combined)	4,947,918	115	295,829	53 (Total combined)	1,743,187	0	0	191 (Total combined)	7,852,321	33	289,959
			5,243,747				1,743,187				8,142,280	

Accumulative Catch	
Harvest by pot vessels ≤ 58'	3,155,398
Harvest by pot vessels > 58'	1,792,519

Pot fishery in SAP Area closed Tues. 3/11 at 1:00pm.

Vessels greater than 58' restricted to 2,000,000 pounds before Sept. 1

CONFIDENTIAL = less than 4 boats; data combined with following week

Figure 5. KODIAK STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD CATCHES, 2003

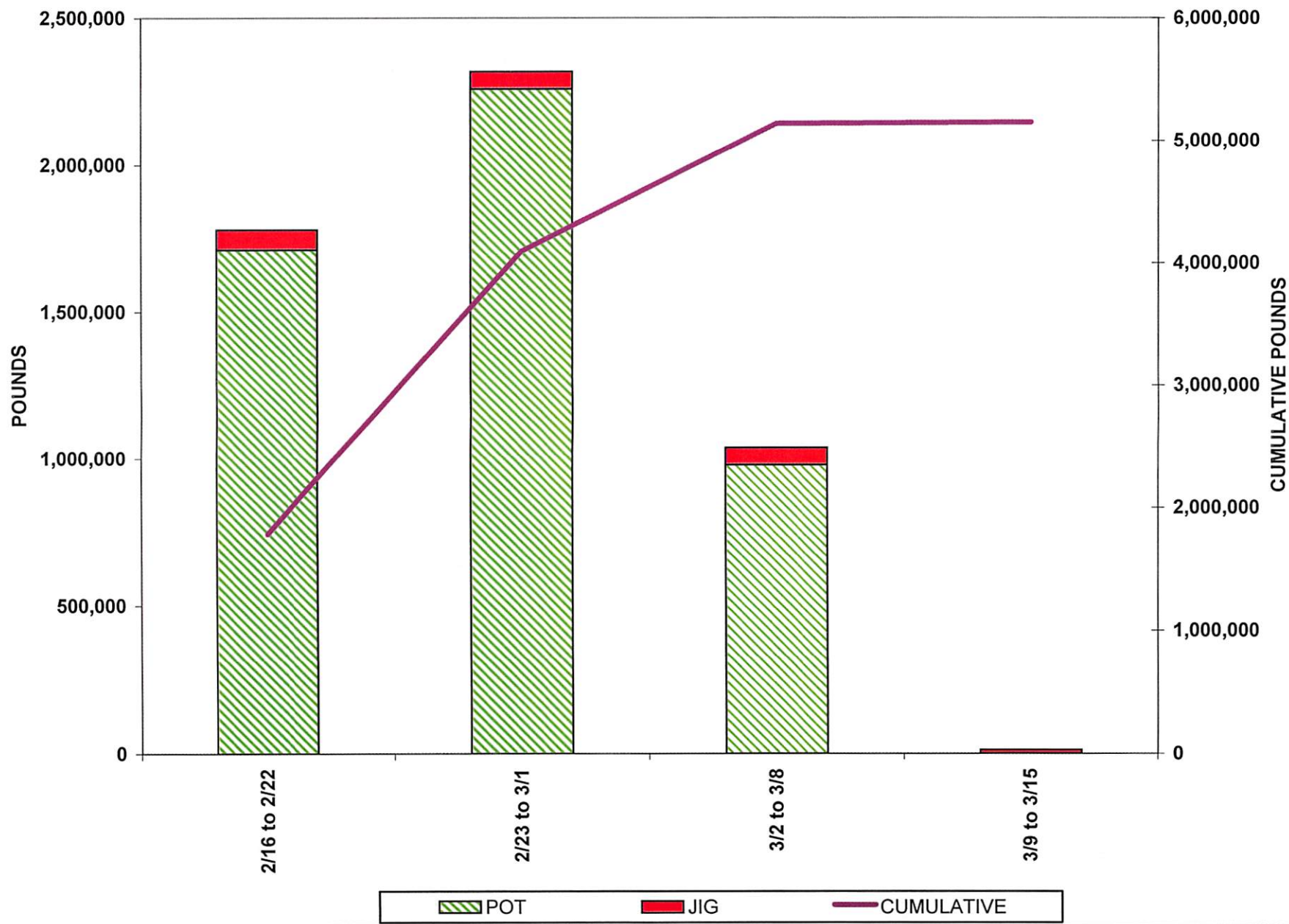


Figure 6. CHIGNIK STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD CATCHES, 2003

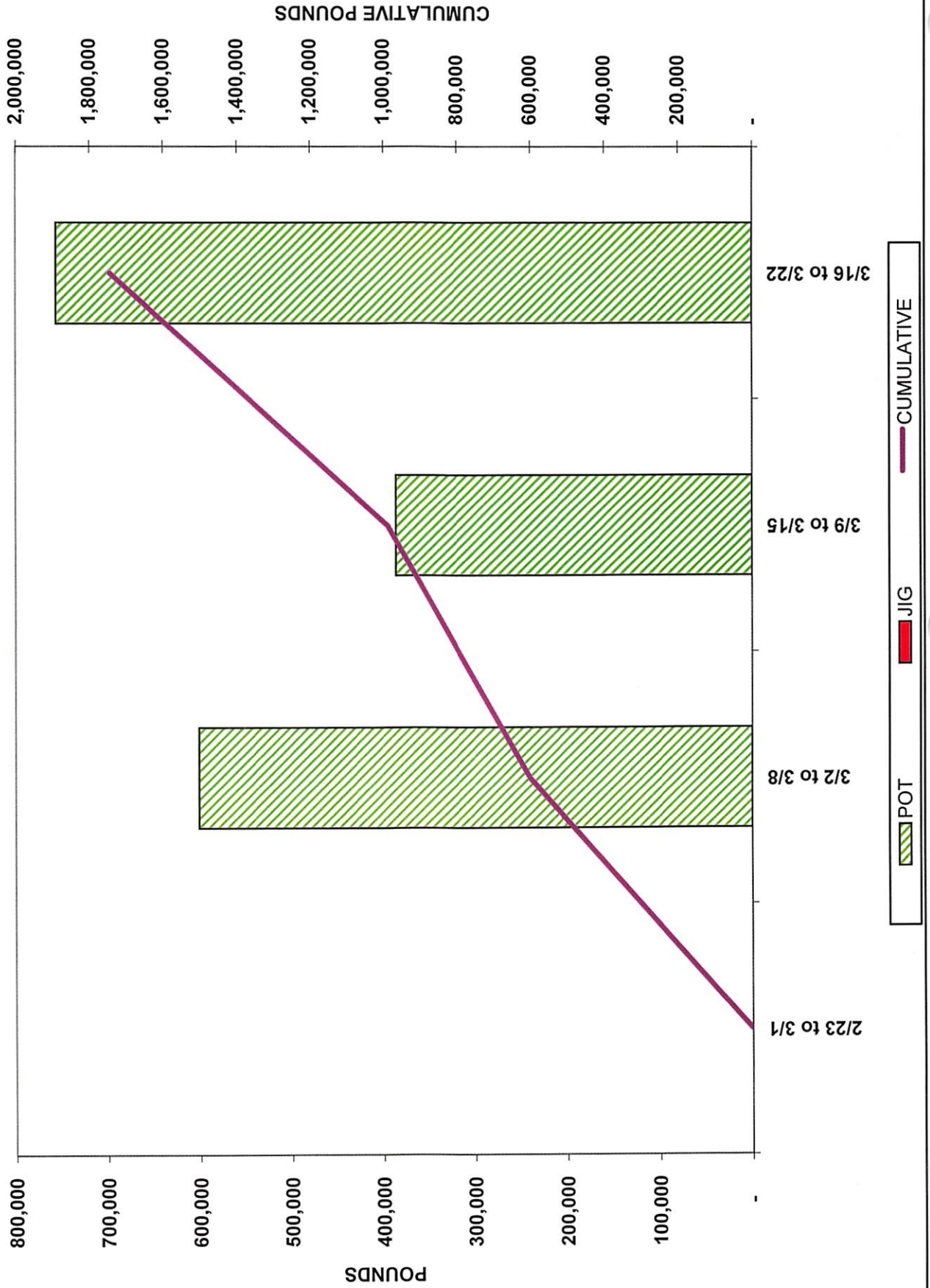
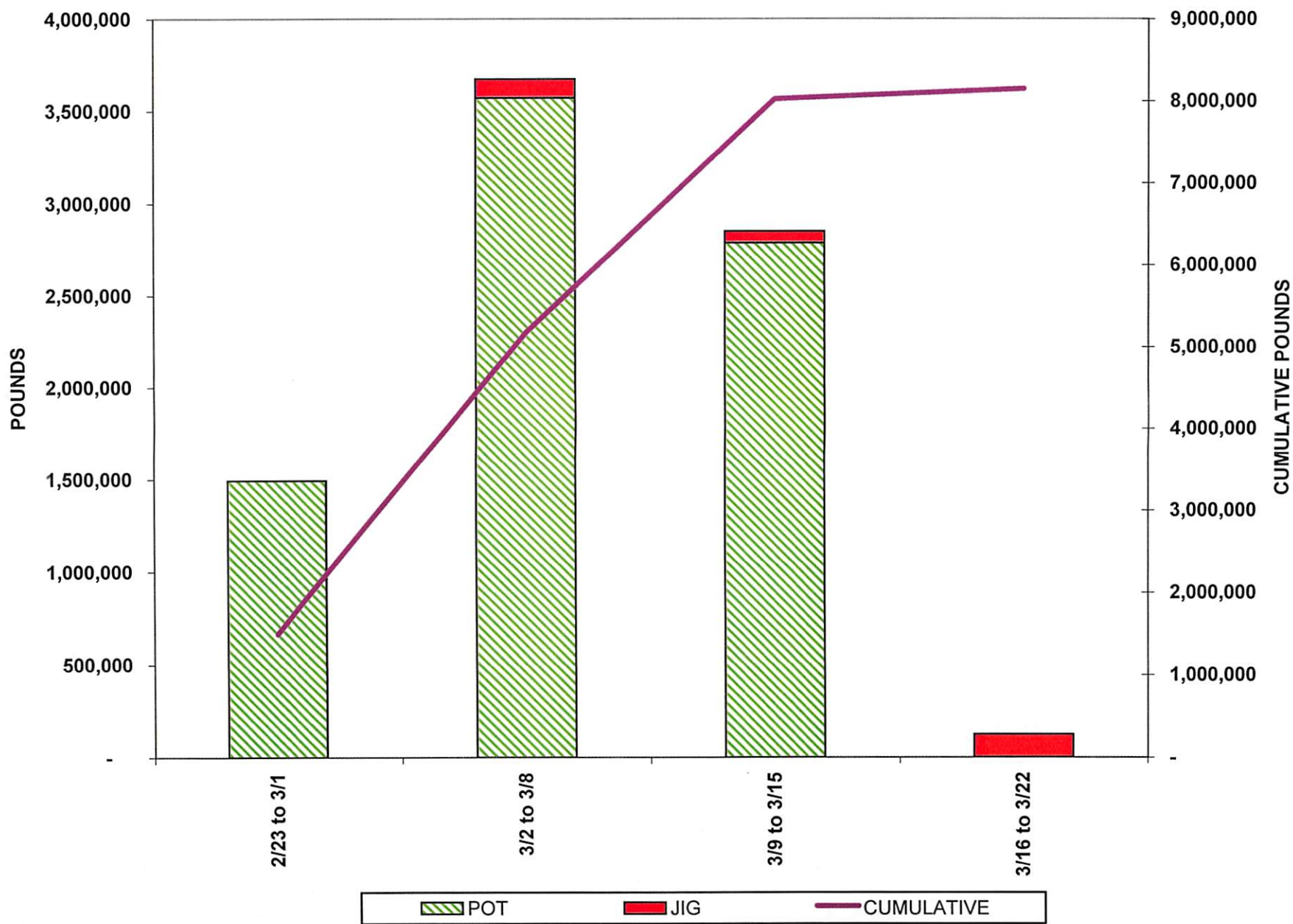
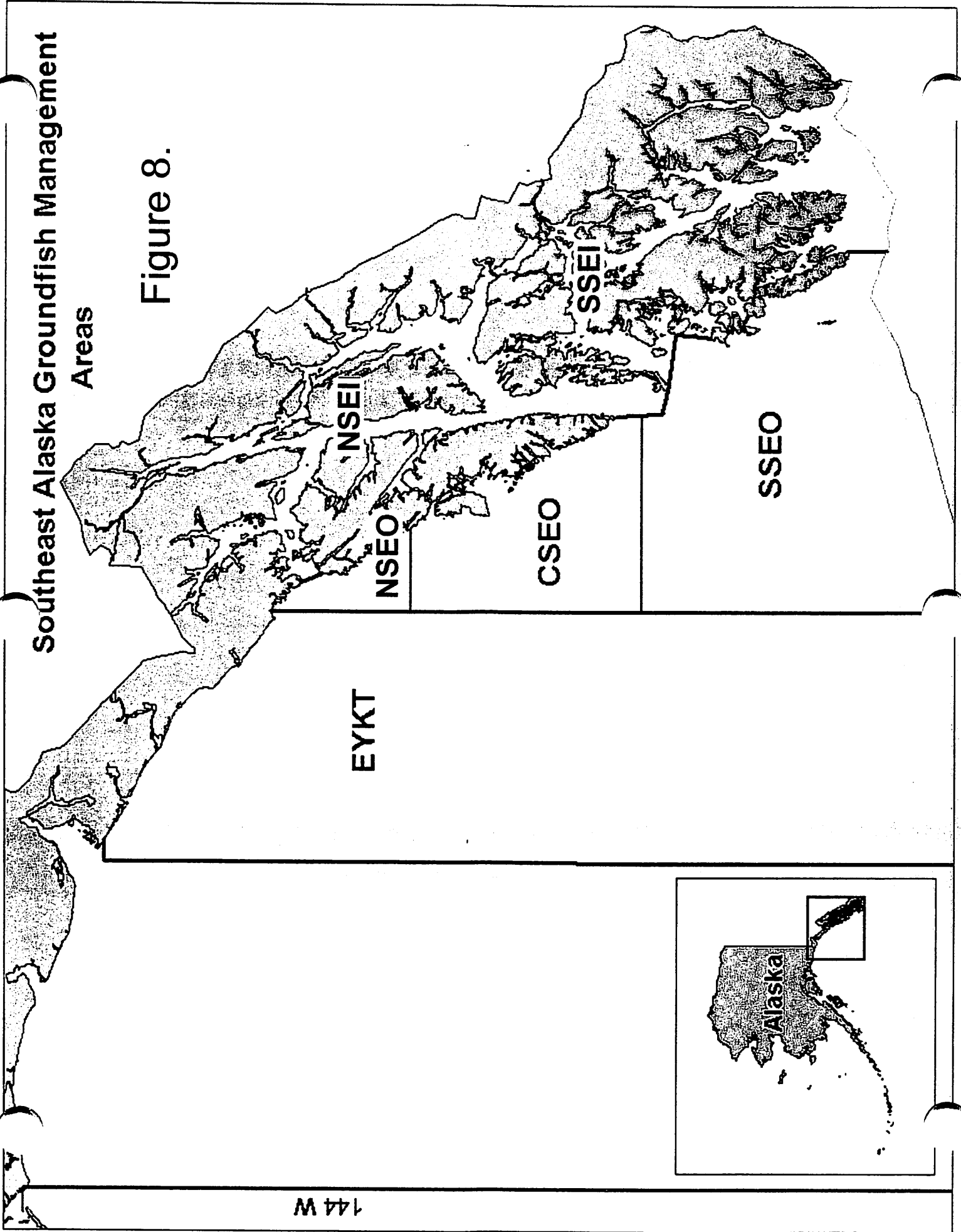


Figure 7. S. AK PENINSULA STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD CATCHES, 2003



Southeast Alaska Groundfish Management Areas

Figure 8.



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