



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

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last Council report includes those for crab and Pacific cod.

Bering Sea/ Aleutian Islands crab. During the 2015/16 season, fisheries opened for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, St. Matthew Island blue king crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern Bering Sea snow (*opilio*) crab, and Eastern Bering Sea Tanner (*bairdi*) crab. Ten percent of each TAC is allocated to the Community Development Quota (CDQ) fisheries; ten percent of the western Aleutian Islands golden king crab TAC is allocated to the Adak Community Allocation (ACA) fishery.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab

The 201516 Area O (Aleutian Islands) golden king crab fishery opened August 1, 2015. The TAC is set at 6.29 million pounds (2,853 mt) by regulation and is apportioned east and west of 174° W long; the eastern TAC is 3.31 million pounds and the western TAC is 2.98 million pounds. Fishing in the eastern area concluded in November and both the IFQ and CDQ quota were fully harvested. Catch rates remained strong throughout the season, with an average catch of 39 crabs per pot. Two vessels are fishing in the western area and harvest remains confidential.

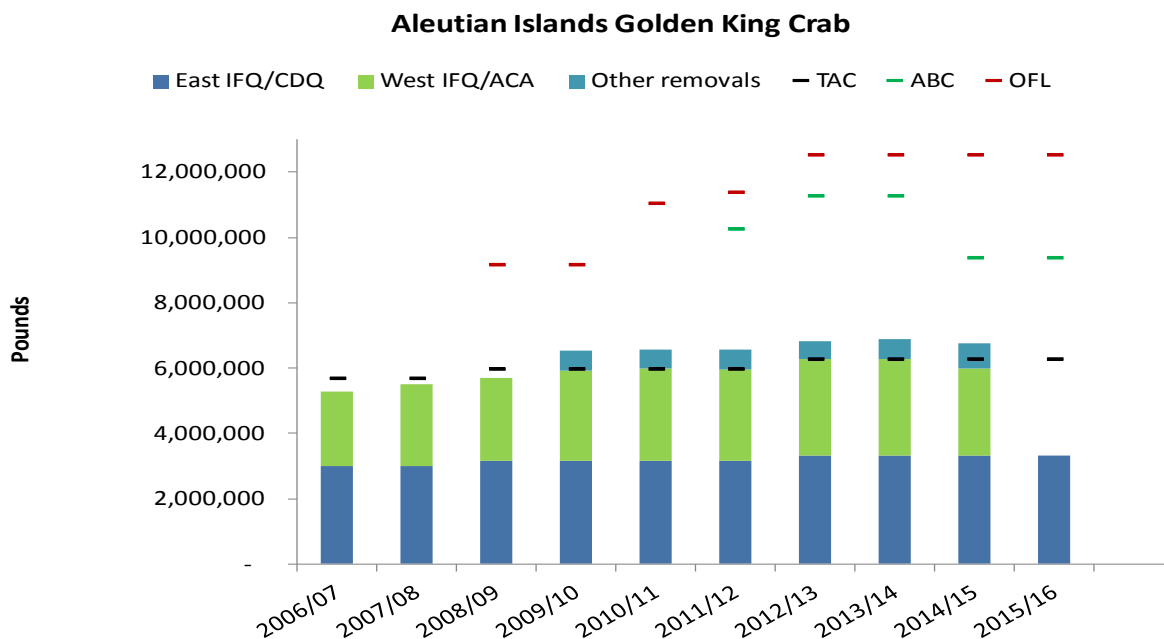


Figure 1. Aleutian Islands golden king crab harvest by area, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2006/07 – 2015/16 seasons.

Bristol Bay red king crab

The 2015/16 Bristol Bay red king crab fishery opened October 15, 2015 with a TAC of 9.97 million pounds (4,524 mt). All vessels have checked out of the fishery and total catch is 9.97 million pounds. Sixty-five vessels participated this season and the average catch rate was 33 crabs per pot (up from 28 crabs per pot in 2014). Average weight also increased this year to 6.66 pounds per crab. This fishery closes by regulation on January 15, 2016; one vessel is considering a clean-up trip to harvest the remaining 4,000 pounds.

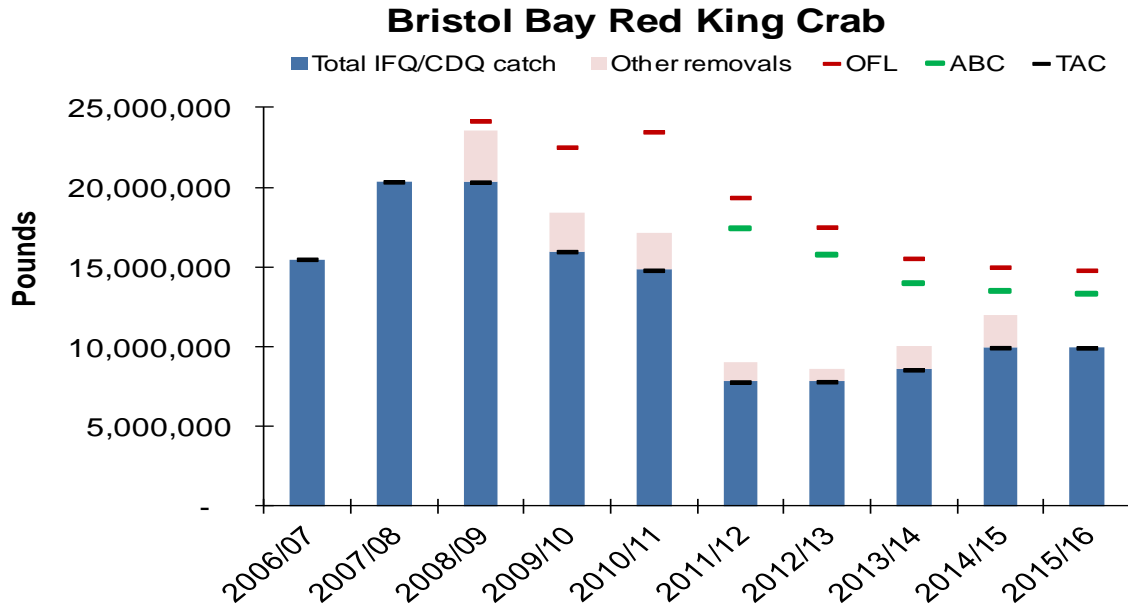


Figure 2. Bristol Bay red king crab harvest, TAC level, OFL, and ABC; 2006/07 – 2015/16 seasons.

St. Matthew Island blue king crab

The 2014/15 St. Matthew Island Section blue king crab fishery opened on October 15, 2015 with a total TAC of 411,000 pounds (186 mt). Three vessels have participated this season and harvest is confidential due to the number of processors. Catch rates this season remained very low and averaged 4 crabs per pot.

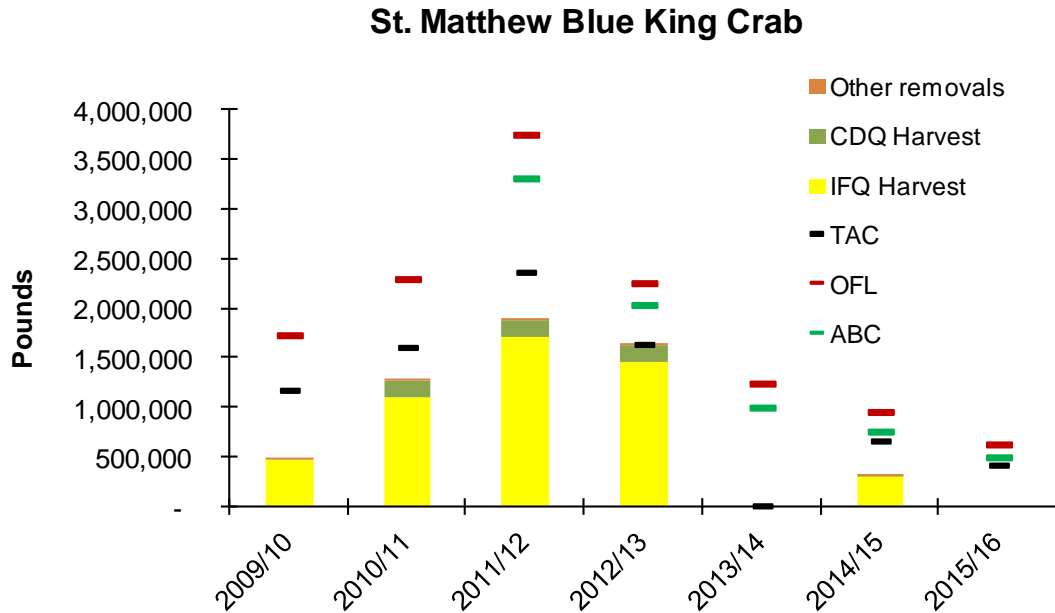


Figure 3. St. Matthew Island blue king crab harvest, TAC level, OFL, and ABC; 2009/10 – 2015/16 seasons.

Bering Sea Tanner crab

The Tanner crab fishery opened on October 15, 2015, and closes by regulation on March 31, 2016. East of 166° W long, Tanner crab may be retained up to five percent of the weight of red king crab onboard a vessel registered for Bristol Bay red king crab. West of 166° W long, Tanner crab may be retained up to five percent of the weight of snow crab onboard a vessel registered for Bering Sea snow crab. Fishermen may not be concurrently registered for both WBT and EBT fisheries.

A total of 4.22 mlbs (37% of TAC) has been harvested in the eastern district by 40 vessels; 14 vessels have harvested a total of 1.54 mlbs of Tanner crab in the western district (18% of TAC). Catch rates are higher in the western district at 53 crabs per pot compared to 31 crabs per pot in the east. Vessels are reporting high rates of opilio-type hybrid crab in the eastern district.

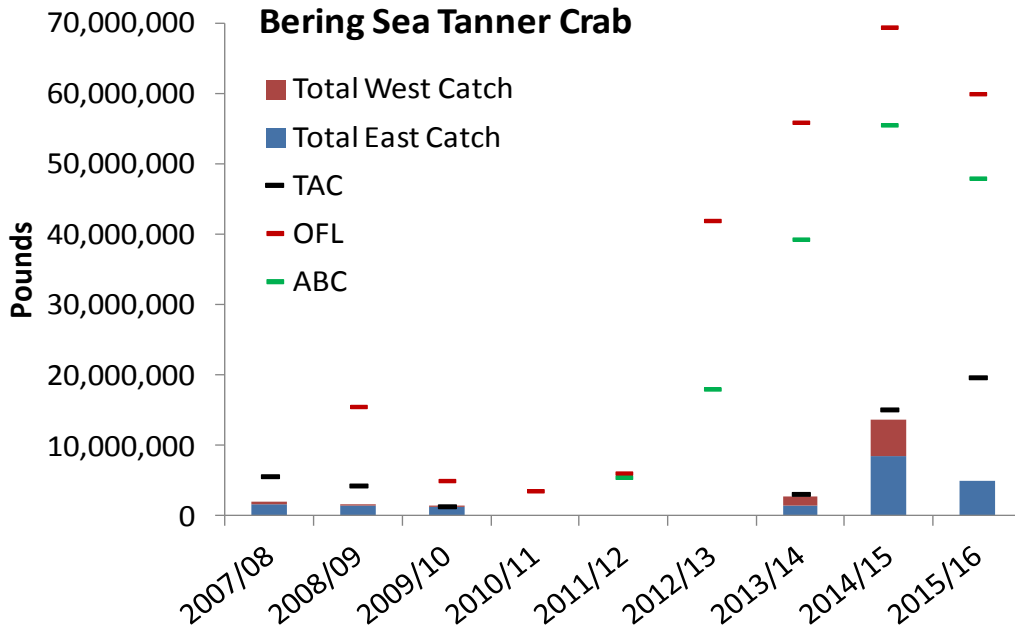


Figure 4. Bering Sea Tanner crab harvest by area, TAC, OFL, and ABC, 2007/08 – 2015/16 seasons.

Bering Sea snow crab

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2015 and will remain open through May 15, 2015 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2015 in the Western Subdistrict. The 2015/16 snow crab TAC is 40.61 million pounds. Two vessels are currently fishing and harvest remains confidential.

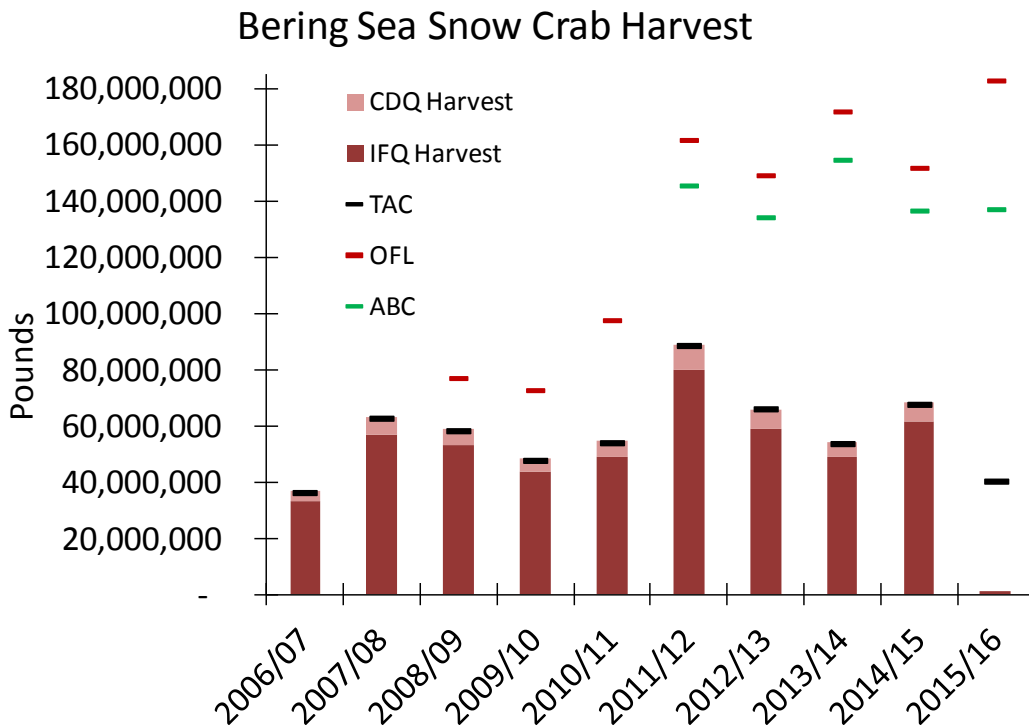


Figure 5. Bering Sea snow crab harvest, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2007 – 2015/16 seasons.

Pacific Cod.

State-water Pacific cod fisheries are established in the Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, South Alaska Peninsula, and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands management areas. Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) for GOA Pacific cod were established in 2015 as 25% of the EGOA ABC, 25% of the CGOA ABC, 30% of the WGOA ABC. Three percent of the combined BSAI ABC was deducted from the AI subarea ABC for the AI District GHL and 3% of the combined BSAI ABC was deducted from the BS subarea ABC for the Dutch Harbor District GHL. Fisheries remain open in the South Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, and Kodiak areas.

Chignik Pacific Cod

The state-waters jig fishery opened on March 15, 2015 and remains open. Effective August 15, 2015, pot or jig gear may be used to harvest the remaining Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod GHL; no additional harvest has occurred to-date. Approximately 1.58 million pounds (717 mt) remains to be harvested.

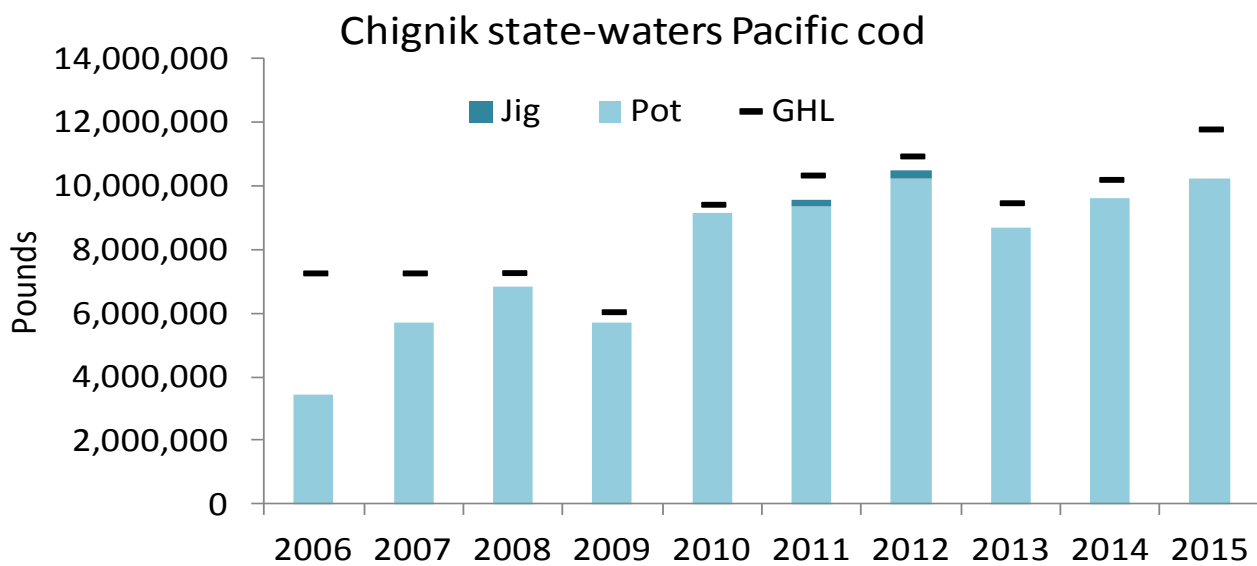


Figure 6. Chignik state-waters Pacific cod harvest by gear, 2006-2015.

Kodiak Pacific Cod

The state-waters jig fishery opened on March 04, 2015 concurrent with the federal jig sector fishery in federal waters and remains open. Total jig harvest to date is 3.8 million pounds (45% of GHL) by ninety-seven vessels. Approximately 4.75 million pounds (2,155 mt) remains to be harvested.

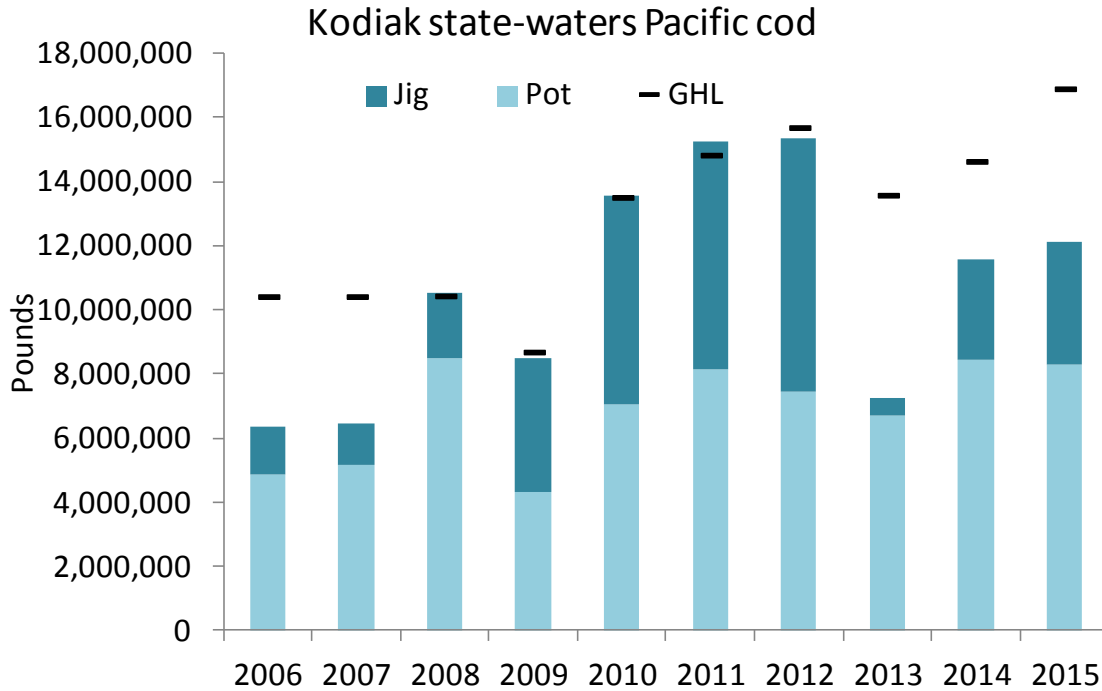


Figure 7. Kodiak state-waters Pacific cod harvest by gear, 2006-2015.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod

The state-waters jig fishery opened on March 18, 2015 and remains open. Total jig harvest to date is 2.22 million pounds (58% of GHL) by thirty-five vessels. Approximately 1.73 million pounds (785 mt) remains to be harvested.

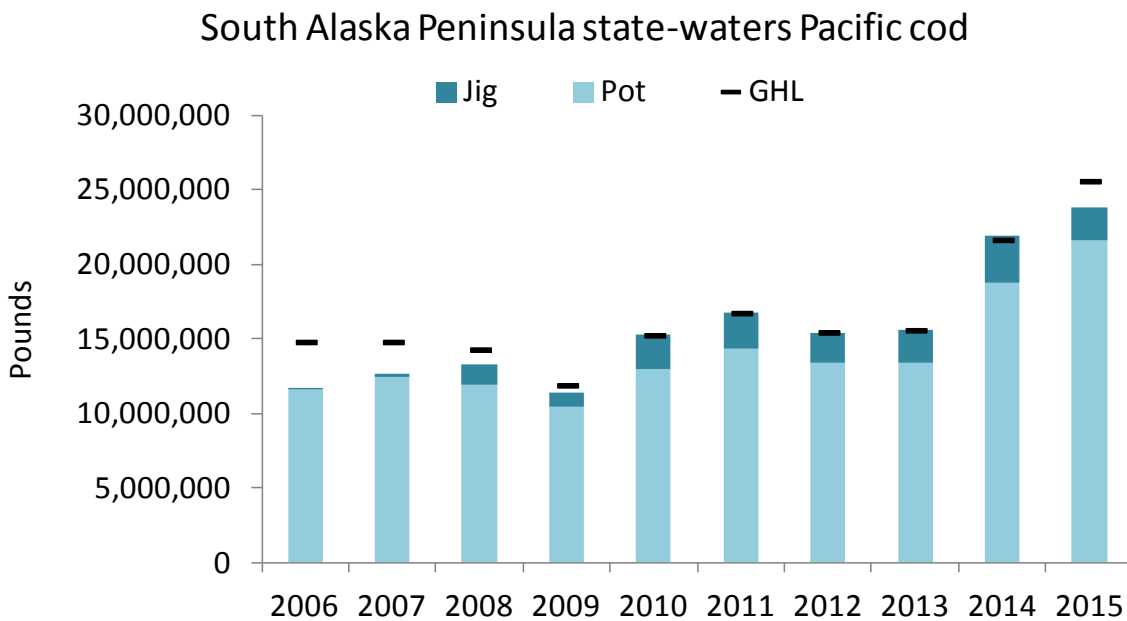


Figure 8. South Alaska Peninsula state-waters Pacific cod harvest by gear, 2006-2015.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

The Board considered out-of-cycle proposals, Agenda Change Requests (ACRs), at the October work session (October 21 - 22, Anchorage). Four ACRs for Bering Sea crab fisheries were considered this year; three for Bering Sea crab and one for Norton Sound red king crab.

- ACR 1 – Failed; did not meet criteria for ACR.** Increase the allowable level of incidental harvest of *C. bairdi* crab from 5% to 40% of the weight of red king crab onboard while directed fishing for Bristol Bay red king crab east of 166° W longitude (5 AAC 35.506).
- ACR 2 – Failed; did not meet criteria for ACR.** Increase the allowable level of incidental harvest of *C. opilio* crab from 5% to 40% of the weight of *C. Bairdi* crab onboard while directed fishing for Bering Sea *C. bairdi* crab west of 166° W longitude (5 AAC 35.506).
- ACR 3 – Failed; did not meet criteria for ACR.** Amend the *Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Crab Fisheries Management Plan* to allow a vessel operator to deploy baited pots in another Bering Sea rationalized crab fishery, for which the vessel is not registered, while the vessel operator delivers crab from another Bering Sea rationalized crab fishery (5 AAC 39.670).
- ACR 4 – Passed; renamed proposal 223 & scheduled for the A-Y-K meeting, Fairbanks, January 12-16, 2016.** Establish an aggregate pot limit of no more than 20 pots per permit holder for the Norton Sound Section winter through the ice commercial fishery (5 AAC 34.925).

Committee assignments were updated at the work session. The **Joint Protocol Committee** members are John Jensen, Sue Jeffery, and Reed Morisky; Tom Kluberton will serve as an alternate.

ALASKA PENINSULA / CHIGNIK / ALEUTIAN ISLANDS- BERING SEA PACIFIC COD

November 30 – December 1, 2015, Anchorage.

Chignik Pacific Cod (9 proposals considered)

- 1 **No action.** Add purse seine gear as an additional gear type to share the 10 percent mechanical jigging machine and hand troll (jig) gear allocation in the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- 2 **Will be deliberated at AK Peninsula/ Chignik/ AI Finfish meeting (Feb. 23 – March 1, Anchorage).** Allow bycatch retention of Pacific cod in the Chignik Area salmon seine fishery.
- 3 **No action; lack of statutory authority.** Apportion the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod allocation for pot vessels by vessel length.
- 4 **Failed.** Establish daily pot gear fishing periods for the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- 5 **Passed.** Change date that gear limits may be removed in the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- 6 **Failed.** Include a change in designation of Chignik Area from a superexclusive registration area to a nonexclusive registration area after October 30 in the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- 7 **Passed; see RC 31.** Change pot storage regulations for the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod pot gear fishery.

- 8 **Failed.** Limit the number of pots in the parallel Pacific cod fishery in the Chignik Area to 60 per vessel.
- 9 **Tabled; the Board will consider this proposal pursuant to determining the impacts of a Section 7 consultation with NMFS; see RC 30 for description of action.** Reduce waters closed for the protection of Steller sea lions during the parallel Pacific cod fishery in the Chignik Area.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod (4 proposals considered)

- 10 **Failed.** Increase the South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery guideline harvest level from 30 percent to 35 percent of the Western Gulf of Alaska acceptable biological catch.
- 11 **No action.** Increase the South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery guideline harvest level from 30 percent to 40 percent of the Western Gulf of Alaska acceptable biological catch.
- 12 **No action.** Apportion the South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters Pacific cod allocation for pot vessels by vessel length.
- 13 **Passed; see RC 31.** Resolve conflict in pot storage regulations for the South Alaska Peninsula state-waters Pacific cod pot gear fishery.

Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod (8 proposals considered)

- 14 **Passed; set GHL as 27% of AI subarea ABC and removed A/B season. Included step-up provisions to 39% of AI ABC and capped maximum GHL at 15 million pounds.** Calculate guideline harvest levels for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands state-waters Pacific cod fisheries based on federal acceptable biological catch for subareas of the federal Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.
- 15 **Passed; revised proposal to set GHL as 6.4% of BS subarea ABC and expanded the western fishing boundary to 170° W long., with the exception of ‘no fishing areas’ as established in 50 CFR 679 – Table 12, and 3 nm haul out closures in Table 5 as well as closed waters in western portion of area.** Expand the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod <58’ fishery boundaries and increase the state-waters fishery guideline harvest level from three percent to nine percent of the federal Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands acceptable biological catch.
- 16 **No action.** Increase guideline harvest level for the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery from three percent to seven percent of the federal Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands acceptable biological catch.
- 17 **Failed.** Increase the vessel size limit from 58 to 125 feet overall length for the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery.
- 18 **Passed.** Align Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod season opening and closing dates with recent changes to federal Pacific cod management.
- 19 **No action.** Modify vessel size limit for longline vessels in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod B season based on remaining guideline harvest level.
- 20 **Passed.** Define waters between 175° W long to 178° W long as the Adak District in the Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod fishery.

- 21 **Passed; see RC 27.** Update state-waters Pacific cod management plans of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands with current federal references for Steller sea lion protections.

STATEWIDE FINFISH AND SUPPLEMENTAL ISSUES

March 8–12, 2016, Anchorage

Groundfish (7 proposals to be considered)

- 213 Clarify possession and landing requirements for Pacific cod and walleye pollock.
- 214 Specify that bycatch in excess of the allowable amount will be surrendered to the state and donated to charity and establish fines for bycatch in excess of the allowable amount.
- 215 **Establish a 58' overall length limit for vessels participating in South Alaska Peninsula parallel walleye pollock fishery using trawl gear.**
- 194 **Close all waters of Unalaska Bay to commercial fishing for groundfish with pelagic trawl gear.** *(This proposal will be heard at the Alaska Peninsula / Chignik / Aleutian Islands Finfish meeting, and be heard and deliberated on at the Statewide Finfish meeting)*
- 216 **Establish a state waters walleye pollock purse seine fishery in Southeast Alaska.**
- 217 **Establish fishing season for walleye pollock that does not conflict with salmon season.**
- 218 **Establish state-waters walleye pollock jig fishery management plans with guideline harvest levels deducted from total allowable catch (TAC) for the Eastern Gulf of Alaska, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, South Alaska Peninsula and Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands.**