



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
April 2012

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last council report includes those for crab and groundfish.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab (FIGURE 1)

The 2011/12 Area 0 (Aleutian Islands) commercial golden king crab fishery opened August 15, 2011. The total allowable catch (TAC) is 5.985 million pounds. The TAC is apportioned east and west of 174° W longitude with the eastern IFQ TAC set at 2.835 million pounds and the western IFQ TAC set at 2.55 million pounds.

As previously reported, the TAC has been fully harvested in the eastern Aleutians Islands. The western Aleutian Islands fishery is ongoing and three vessels have harvested 2.4 million pounds, 94% of the IFQ TAC. The golden king crab fishery in the Aleutian Islands remains open through May 15, 2012.

Bering Sea Snow Crab (FIGURE 2)

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2011 and will remain open through May 15, 2012 in the Eastern Subdistrict and through May 31, 2012 in the Western Subdistrict. The 2011/12 snow crab TAC is 88.894 million pounds with 80 million pounds apportioned to the IFQ fishery and 8.89 million pounds to the CDQ fishery.

Catch through Friday, March 23, was 53.44 million pounds for both IFQ and CDQ combined (60% of TAC). Average catch for the season is 287 crabs per pot. Currently, 59 vessels are registered to fish and 10 have checked out of the fishery. An estimated 40 to 50 vessels are standing down waiting for the ice to move off the fishing grounds. Last week, the fleet harvested 2.3 million pounds, less than half of the previous week's harvest of 5.5 million pounds.

On March 18, 2012, ADF&G opened a portion of statistical area 705630 (southwest of St. Paul Island). Due to ice covering the majority of snow crab fishing grounds, ADF&G reexamined the area closed to the taking of snow crab and determined that opening a portion of statistical area 705630 would have no impact on the Pribilof blue king crab stock.

Central Region Pacific Cod**Prince William Sound (FIGURE 3)**

The GHL for the Prince William Sound Area increased slightly from last year to 1.448 million pounds and is calculated as 15 percent of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska (GOA) ABC. The Prince William Sound state-waters season has an exclusive registration designation.

The state-waters jig season opened at noon on March 7, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery. No vessels registered to fish with jig gear.

The state-waters pot season opened at noon on February 11, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery. No vessels registered to fish with pot gear.

The state-waters longline season opened on March 17, concurrent with the IFQ Halibut season opening date and closed on Friday, March 23, 2012. Thirty-six vessels registered to fish with longline gear and harvested a total of 1.396 million pounds.

Cook Inlet (FIGURE 4)

The GHL for the Cook Inlet Area is calculated as 3.75 percent of the ABC for the Central GOA and the 2012 GHL was set at 4.7 million pounds, a 6% increase from last year. The GHL is allocated 85% to pot gear (4.0 million pounds) and 15% to jig gear (0.7 million pounds). Pot vessels larger than 58 feet are limited to 25% of the total GHL (~1.2 million pounds) prior to September 1.

In addition to the directed fishery, Pacific cod may be retained in state waters as bycatch to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries at a maximum of 20%. Cook Inlet is designated as an exclusive registration area for Pacific cod.

The state-waters jig season in Cook Inlet opened at noon on March 7, 24-hours after the closure of the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery. Three vessels have registered for the jig fishery and to date have harvested just over 2,500 pounds.

The state-waters pot season opened at noon on February 11, 24-hours after the closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska A-season pot fishery. The fishery closed to pot vessels greater than 58 feet in length on March 2 and will close to the remaining pot vessels on Thursday, March 29. Total pot fishery harvest to date is 3.7 million pounds.

Westward Region Pacific Cod**Kodiak Pacific Cod (FIGURE 5)**

The 2012 state-waters GHL for the Kodiak Area is 15.69 million pounds and is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 7.845 million pounds each. Vessel operators fishing with pot gear on vessels longer than 58 feet overall length are restricted to 25% of the GHL, 3.92 million pounds, before September 1. The Kodiak Area is designated as an exclusive registration area for Pacific cod.

The state-waters pot fishery opened on February 17, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure, and closed at 6:00 p.m. on March 1, 2012. Total harvest by 47 vessels was 7.454 million pounds (95% of the GHL).

The state-waters jig fishery opened at noon on March 8, 48-hours after the CGOA federal A-season jig fishery closure. To date, a total of 113 vessels have harvested just over 800,000 pounds.

Chignik Pacific Cod (FIGURE 6)

The 2012 GHL for the Chignik Area is 10.98 million pounds, with pot vessels targeting 90 percent of that amount (9.88 million pounds). The area is designated superexclusive registration for Pacific cod and vessels may not exceed 58 feet in overall length.

The state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 15. The Western GOA parallel jig season that overlaps with the Chignik Area (state waters east of Kupreanof Point) closed March 14 at 11:59 p.m. No vessels have registered for the jig fishery.

The state-waters pot season opened on March 7, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure. As of March 19, 23 vessels have registered and total harvest is 6.78 million pounds. The pot fishery is expected to close sometime within the next few days.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod (FIGURE 7)

The 2012 GHL in the South Alaska Peninsula (SAP) Area is 15.45 million pounds, with 85 percent targeted by pot gear (13.13 million pounds). A 58-foot vessel length limit is in effect and the area has an exclusive registration designation.

The SAP state-waters jig fishery was initially scheduled to open on March 19, 48-hours after the WGOA jig sector closed. Due to weather delays, the fishery opened at noon on March 21, 2012. Twenty-nine vessels have registered to fish and current harvest is just over 5,000 pounds.

The state-waters pot season opened at noon on March 7 and closed on March 22, 2012. Fifty-three vessels harvested a total of 13.367 million pounds.

Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod

The 2012 Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod season initially opened January 1, between 175° W long. and 178° W long. to vessels 60 feet overall length (OAL) or less using pot, jig, and non-pelagic trawl gear and vessels 58 feet OAL or less using longline gear. Beginning noon March 4, the state-waters season was expanded to include all state waters west of 170° W long. and opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 100 feet OAL or less using trawl gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline and jig gear.

Daily catch reporting is required for all vessels and the daily harvest limit is 150,000 pounds round weight, with a maximum of 150,000 pounds of unprocessed Pacific cod on board a vessel at any time.

Stellar sea lion closures in place prior to 2011 are in effect during the state-waters Pacific cod season with an additional 3-mile fishing closure around the Kanaga Island/Ship Rock rookery.

There are currently 9 active vessels in the fishery (5 trawl and 4 pot vessels). Total catch to date is ~6.99 million pounds with ~7.54 million pounds remaining to be harvested. Average trawl harvest has been highly variable with periods of slow fishing, whereas the pot harvest has been good and relatively consistent.

If the state-waters A season GHL has not been taken by April 1st, when the federal catcher-vessel trawl B season opens, the state-waters A season in the waters outside of 175° W long. to 178° W long. will close and a parallel fishery will immediately open. Within state waters from 175° W long. to 178° W long. the state-waters A season will remain open to vessels 60 feet OAL or less using pot, jig, and trawl gear and vessels 58 feet OAL or less using longline gear.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Southeast and Yakutat Finfish, February 24 – March 4, 2012, Ketchikan

#206 (failed): Create a commercial spiny dogfish pot fishery in the Ketchikan area.

#212 (failed): Increase the sport allocation of demersal shelf rockfish to 25%.

Statewide Dungeness crab, shrimp, and misc. shellfish, March 20 – 24, 2012, Anchorage

#350 (passed/amended): Allow scallop harvest from multiple registration areas when an observer is onboard. A vessel may register for up to two registration areas if a “certified” scallop observer is on board the vessel. A fish ticket must be completed prior to checking out of a registration area.

#351 (passed): Establish two management district subsections (east Kayak/west Kayak) for scallops within the Eastern Section of the Outside District of the Prince William Sound Area. (FIGURE 8)

#352 (No action, proposer withdrew support): Open waters to commercial scallop fishing beyond 3-miles near Mitrofanina Island in the Alaska Peninsula scallop registration area.

#353 (passed/amended): Open waters to commercial scallop fishing beyond 3-miles south of Unimak Island. Fishing for scallops in the waters between Cape Pankof (163° 03.70' W. long.) and Scotch Cap Light (164° 44.72' W. long.) may only occur under the authority of a permit issued by the commissioner. (FIGURE 9)

#354 (passed): Amend the regulatory boundary description for scallops in Registration Area J by updating historical boundary coordinates for closed waters. (FIGURE 10)

#381 (passed/amended): Amend the Norton Sound Section red king crab harvest strategy. The Board lowered the minimum threshold level of abundance for legal male red king crab biomass from 1.5 million pounds to 1.25 million pounds and modified the exploitation rates. If the legal male red king crab biomass is less than 2 million pounds, the harvest rate will be no more than 7% of the legal male abundance. When the legal male biomass is between 2 and 3 million pounds, the harvest rate will be no more than 13% of the legal male abundance. When the legal male biomass is more than 3 million pounds, the harvest rate will be no more than 15% of the legal male abundance.

#382 (passed/amended): Increase the Aleutian Islands golden king crab TAC by an unspecified amount. The Board increased the TAC by 5%. The new harvest levels for the IFQ/CDQ fisheries combined are 3.31 million pounds east of 174° W long. and 2.98 million pounds west of 174° W long.

#384 (passed): Remove the minimum TAC threshold of 4 million pounds from the regulatory Bristol Bay red king crab harvest strategy.

Figure 1

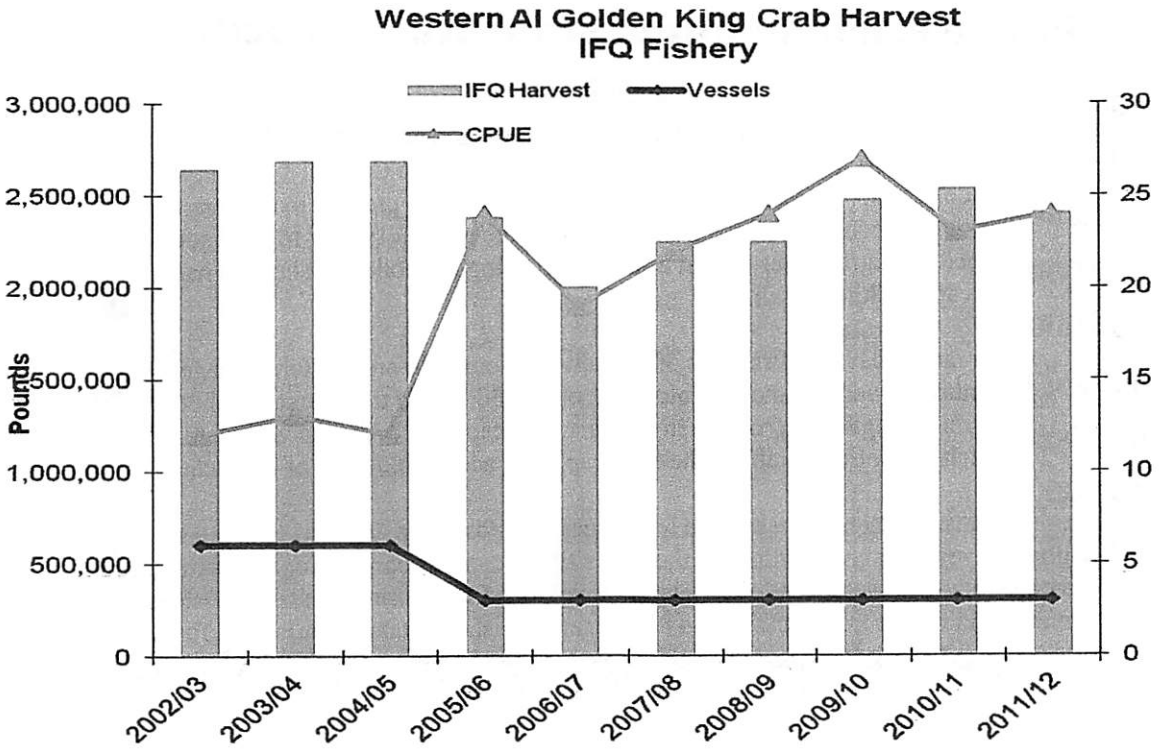


Figure 2

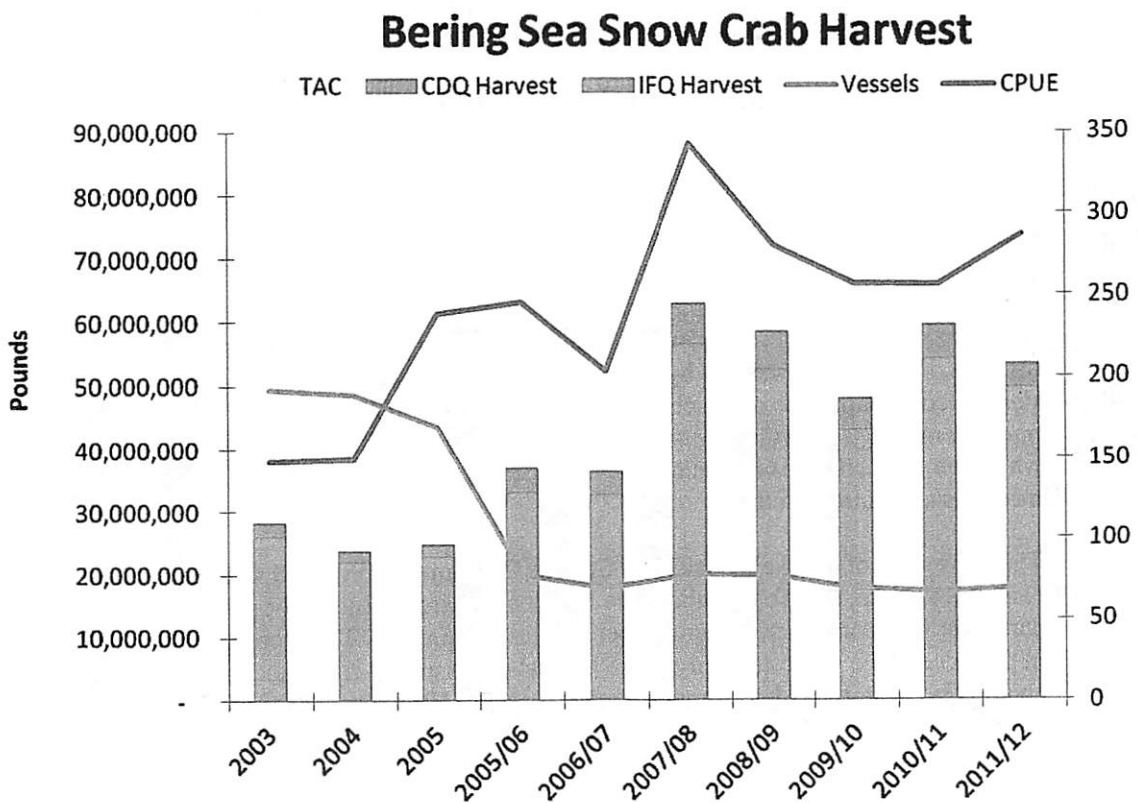


Figure 3

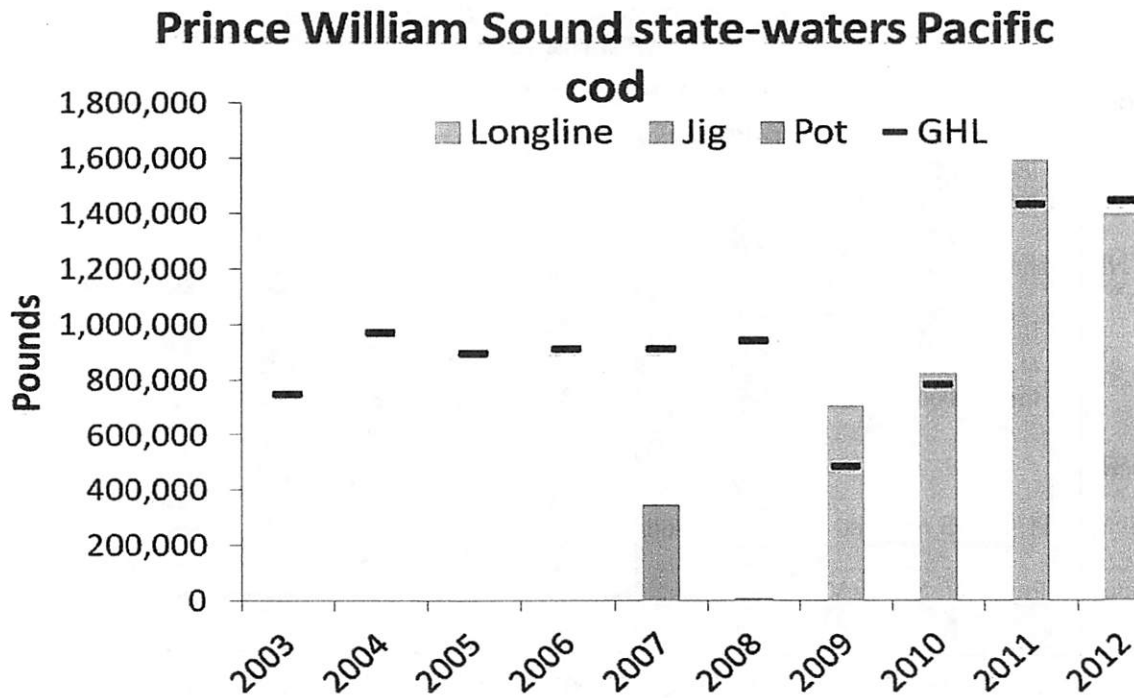


Figure 4

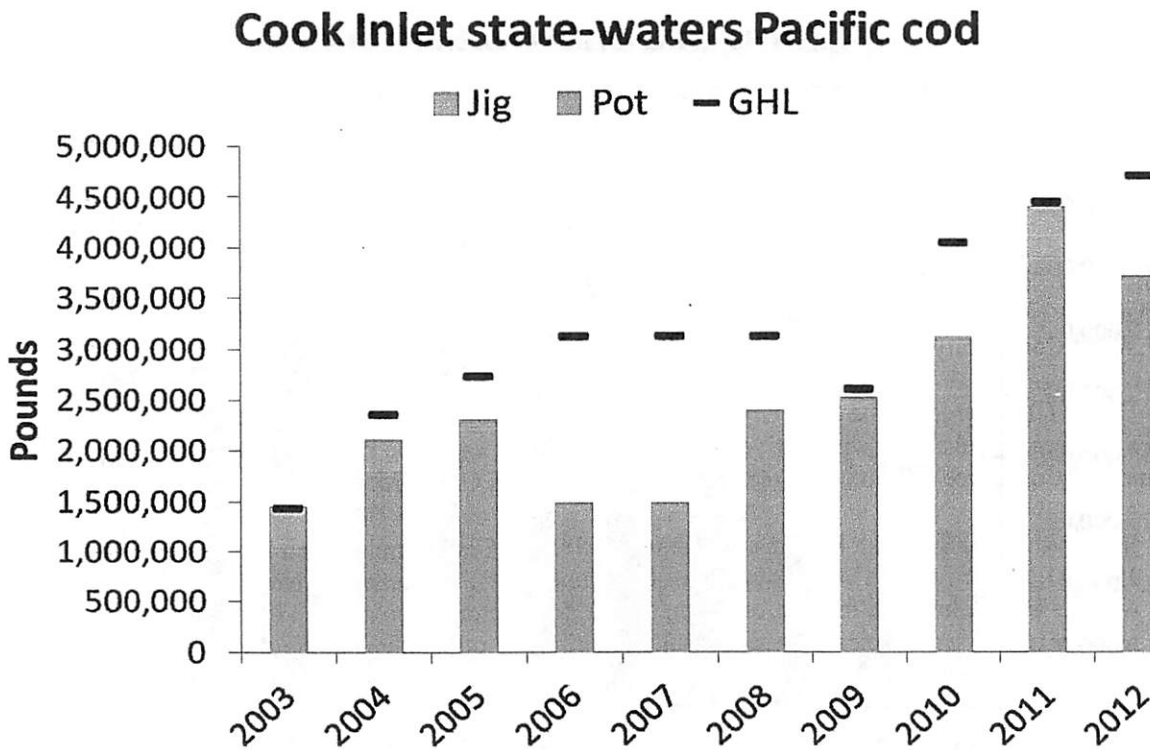


Figure 5

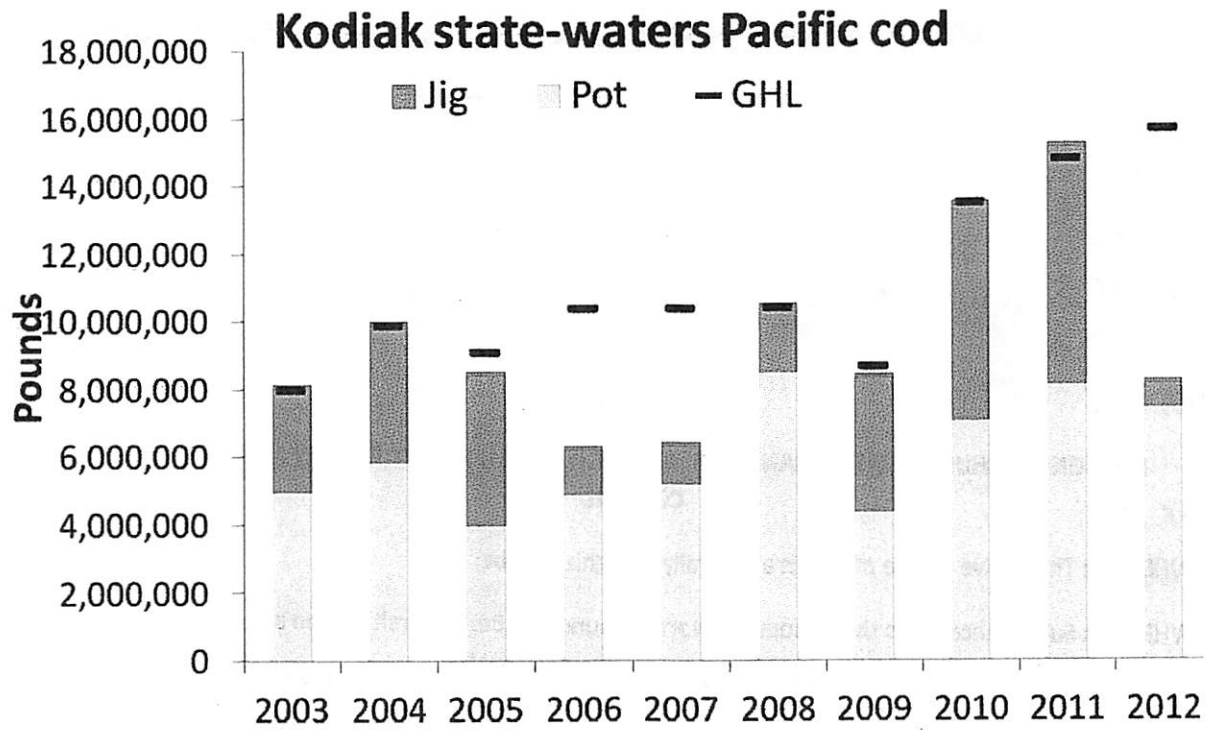


Figure 6

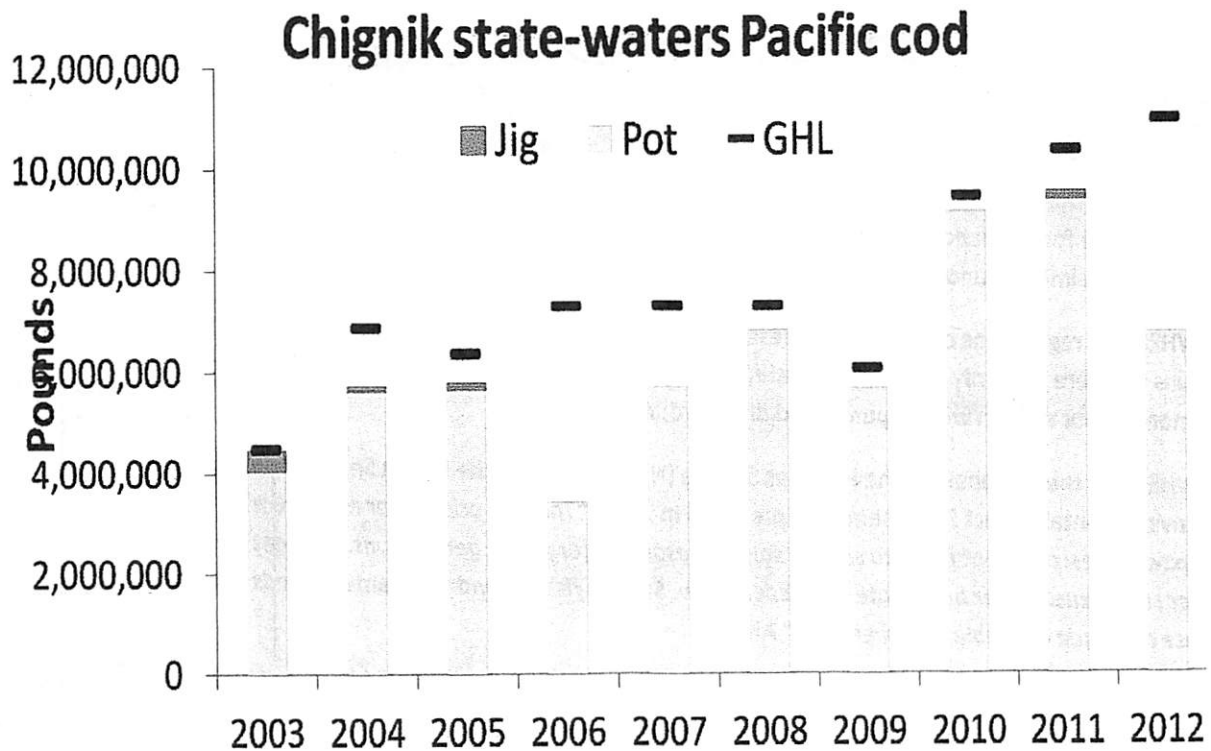


Figure 7

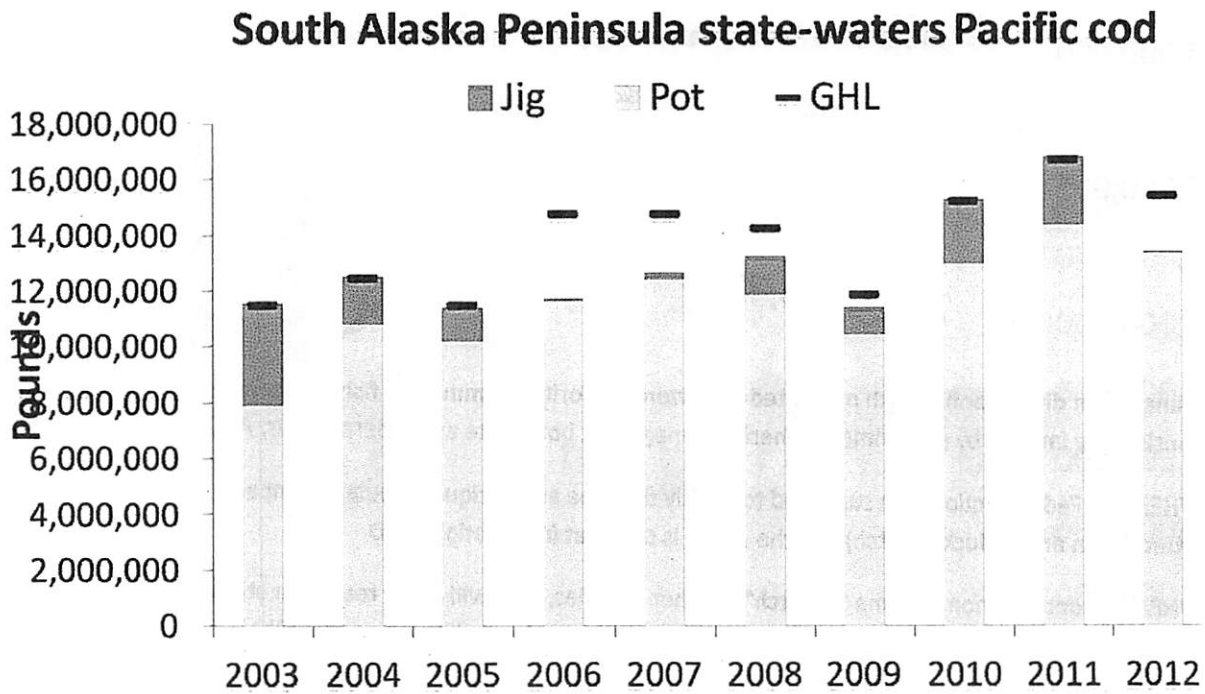


Figure 8

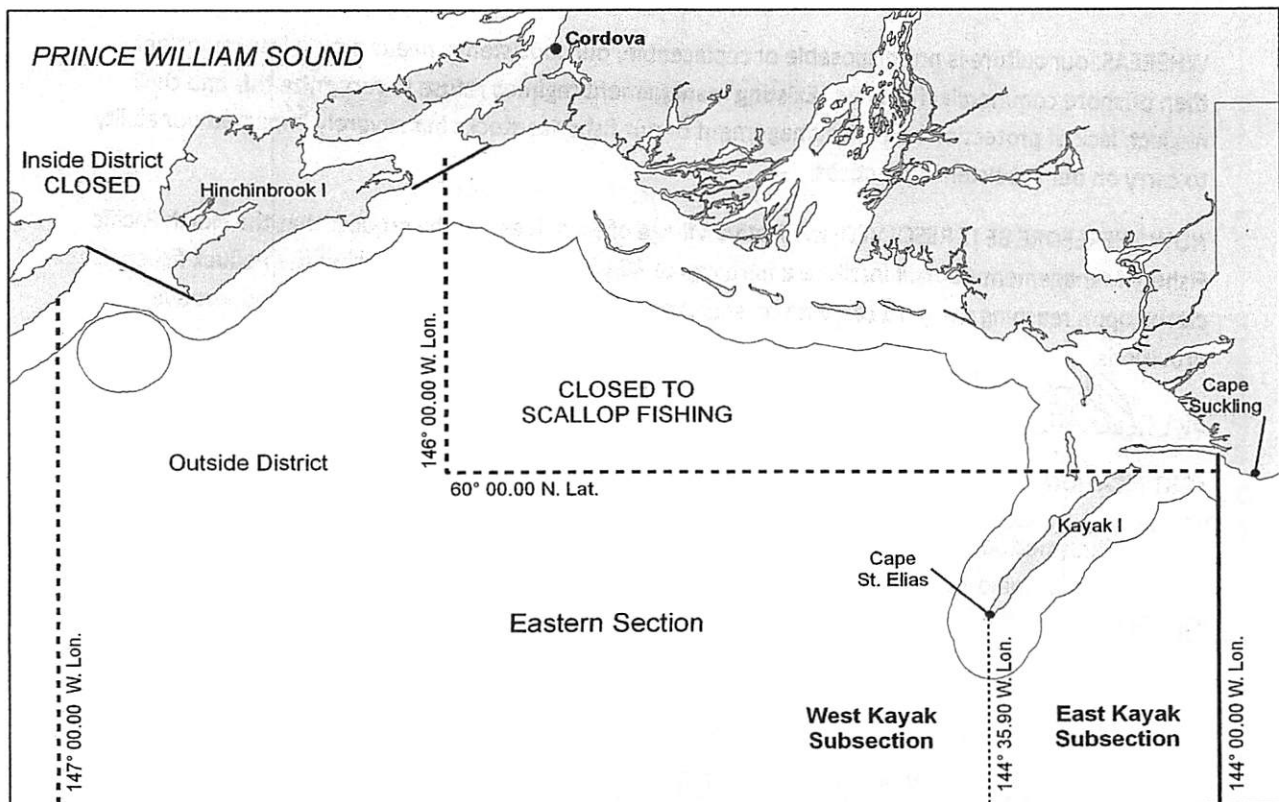


Figure 9

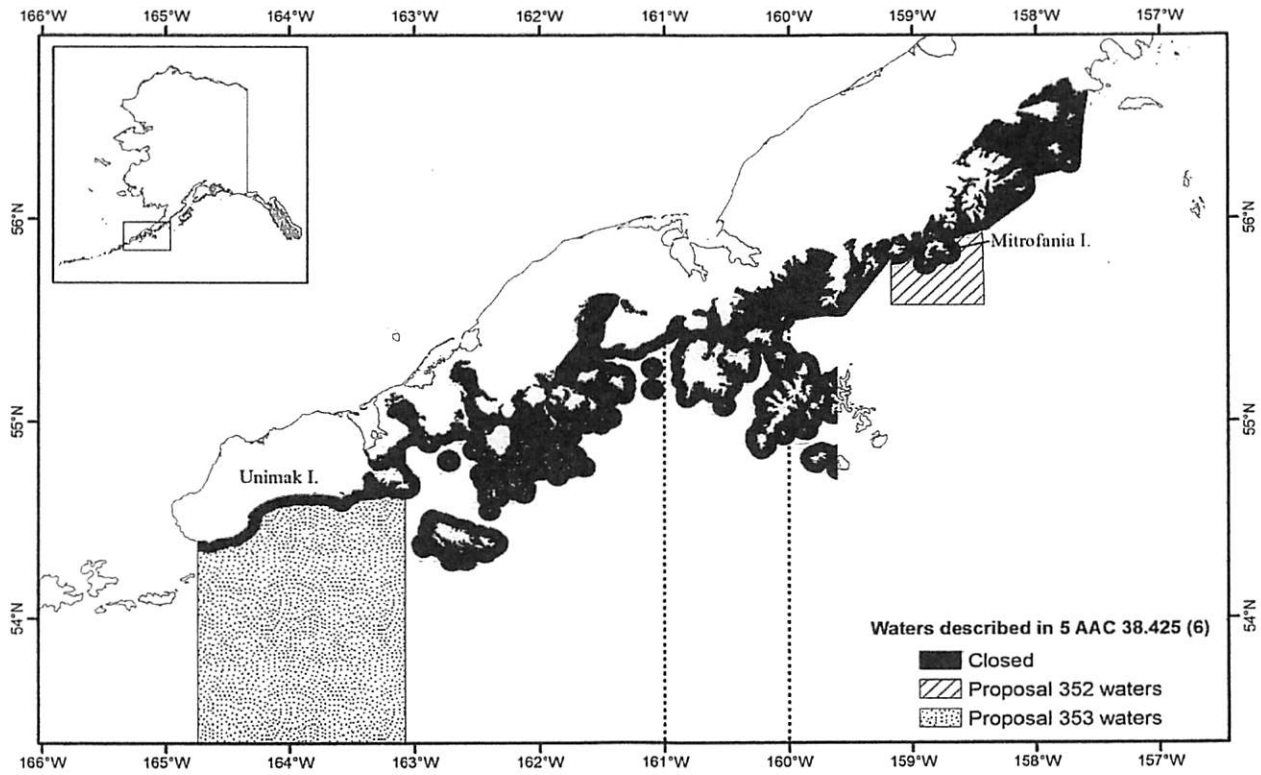


Figure 10

