



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

B-3  
APRIL 1996  
Supplemental

April 12, 1996

Mr. Richard B. Lauber  
Chairman, North Pacific Fishery  
Management Council  
P.O. Box 103136  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Rick,

Bycatch rate standards for trawl fisheries under the Pacific halibut and red king crab vessel incentive program during the second half of 1996 are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register by July 1, 1996. A summary of 1993 - 1996 observer data on fishery bycatch rates is listed in the attached table for review by the Council. Recent halibut and crab bycatch rates in the groundfish trawl fisheries do not appear to warrant a change in the bycatch rate standards recommended by the Council during the past several years. Unless the Council recommends a change in these standards, we will continue to use the halibut and red king crab bycatch rate standards listed in the attached table for the second half of 1996.

We recognize that the Council has requested NMFS staff to prepare a discussion paper on the feasibility of an alternative vessel incentive program based on the bycatch rate standards of prohibited species relative to retained catch. We intend to dedicate staff resources to prepare this discussion paper for presentation to the Council at its June 1996 meeting.

Sincerely,

Steven Pennoyer  
Director, Alaska Region

Attachment



1993 - 1996 (through March 1996) observed bycatch rates, by quarter, of halibut and red king crab in the fishery categories included in the vessel incentive program. Also listed are the bycatch rate standards established for 1995.

Halibut Bycatch (Kilograms Halibut/ MT Allocated Groundfish Catch)

Fishery and quarter	Bycatch Rate Standards	Observed Bycatch Rates			1996
		1993	1994	1995	
<b>BSAI Midwater Pollock</b>					
QT 1	1.0	0.95	0.17	0.05	0.10
QT 2	1.0	0.20	0.01	0.07	
QT 3	1.0	0.06	0.30	0.12	
QT 4	1.0	0.12	0.06	0.19	
Year to date		0.43	0.22	0.09	
<b>BSAI Bottom Pollock</b>					
QT 1	7.5	7.49	2.71	1.93	2.18
QT 2	5.0	2.72	29.67	5.50	
QT 3	5.0	0.84	2.61	1.98	
QT 4	5.0	25.28	0.38	0.14	
Year to date		6.86	2.66	1.92	
<b>BSAI Yellowfin sole</b>					
QT 1	5.0	****	2.70	3.67	2.98
QT 2	5.0	13.02	5.93	4.54	
QT 3	5.0	1.82	1.15	2.93	
QT 4	5.0	3.34	4.57	4.49	
Year to date		6.18	3.92	3.67	
<b>BSAI Other Trawl Fisheries</b>					
QT 1	30.0	8.80	9.02	11.27	10.30
QT 2	30.0	13.69	19.94	16.93	
QT 3	30.0	4.66	3.30	10.33	
QT 4	30.0	3.91	4.00	21.23	
Year to date		9.25	12.04	12.96	
<b>GOA Midwater Pollock</b>					
QT 1	1.0	0.01	0.06	0.34	0.22
QT 2	1.0	0.02	0.07	0.05	
QT 3	1.0	0.03	0.55	0.54	
QT 4	1.0	0.05	0.04	0.13	
Year to date		0.03	0.17	0.24	
<b>GOA Other Trawl fisheries</b>					
QT 1	40.0	34.49	19.97	16.55	14.71
QT 2	40.0	26.80	42.78	63.93	
QT 3	40.0	33.90	26.49	18.48	
QT 4	40.0	37.81	43.76	48.33	
Year to date		33.04	29.91	28.45	

Zone 1 Red King Crab Bycatch Rates  
(number of crab/mt of allocated groundfish)

<b>BSAI yellowfin sole</b>					
QT 1	2.5	****	0.68	0.28	0.00
QT 2	2.5	2.19	0.23	0.02	
QT 3	2.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	
QT 4	2.5	0.27	0.00	****	
Year to date		1.30	0.33	0.18	
<b>BSAI Other Trawl</b>					
QT 1	2.5	1.78	1.78	0.31	0.15
QT 2	2.5	0.02	0.02	0.00	
QT 3	2.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	
QT 4	2.5	****	0.00	0.00	
Year to date		1.18	1.18	0.30	

**APRIL 1996**

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**NMFS FISHERIES  
MANAGEMENT REPORT**

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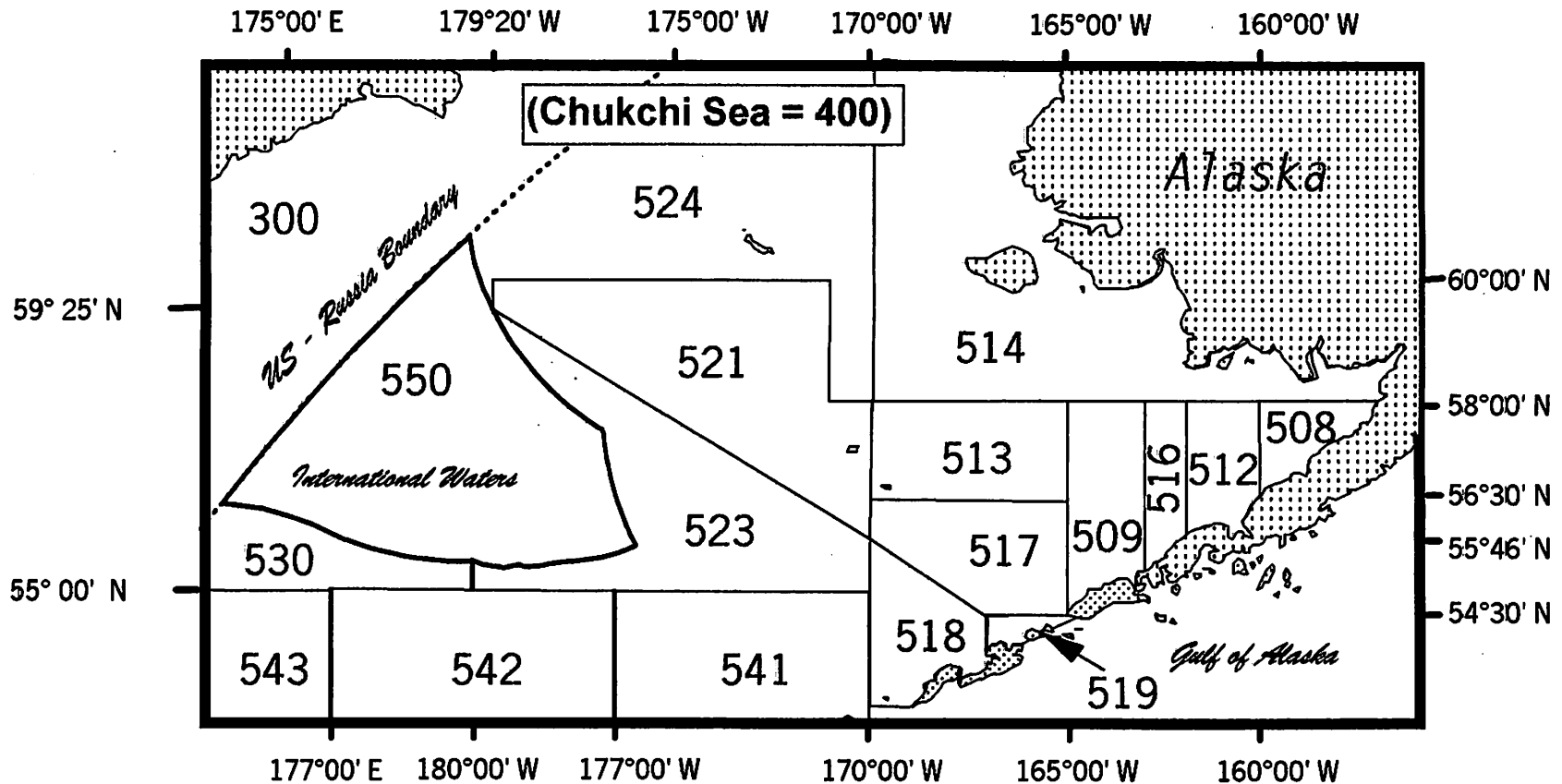


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# **BERING SEA & ALEUTIAN ISLANDS**

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# 1996 REPORTING AREAS OF THE BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

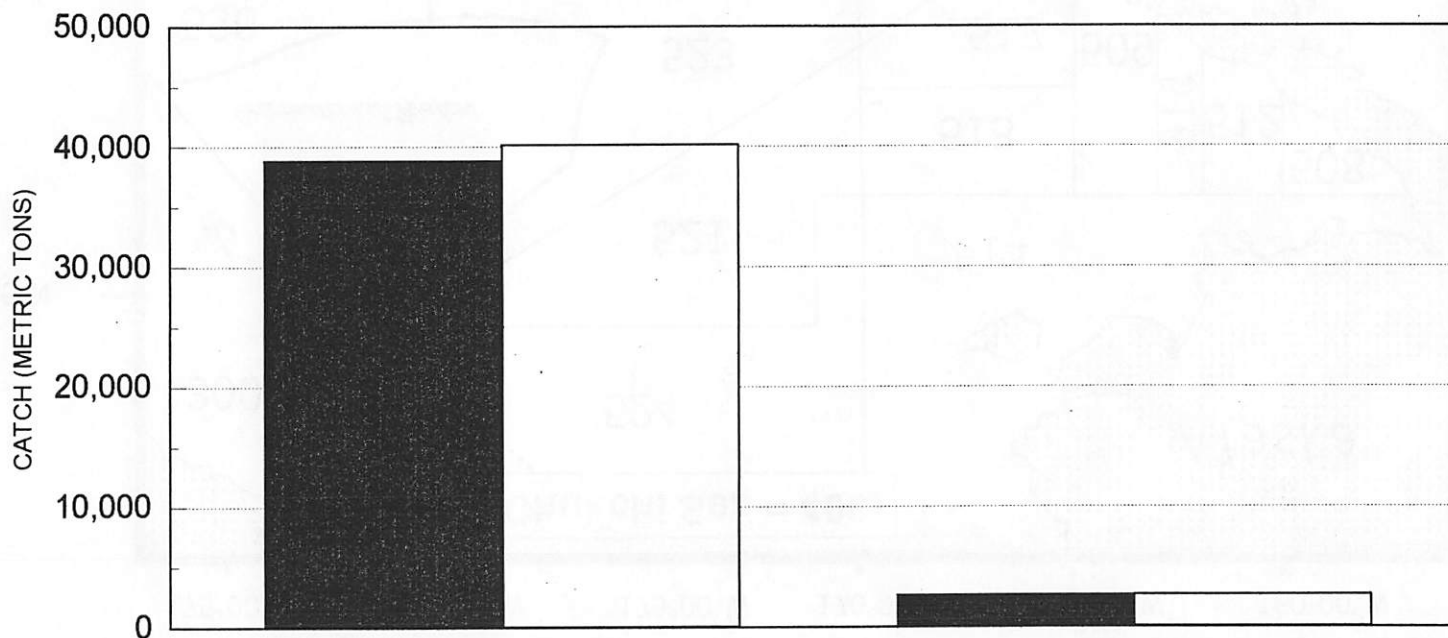


**BYCATCH PROTECTION AREAS**

Zone 1 = 508 + 509 + 512 + 516

Zone 2 = 513 + 517 + 521

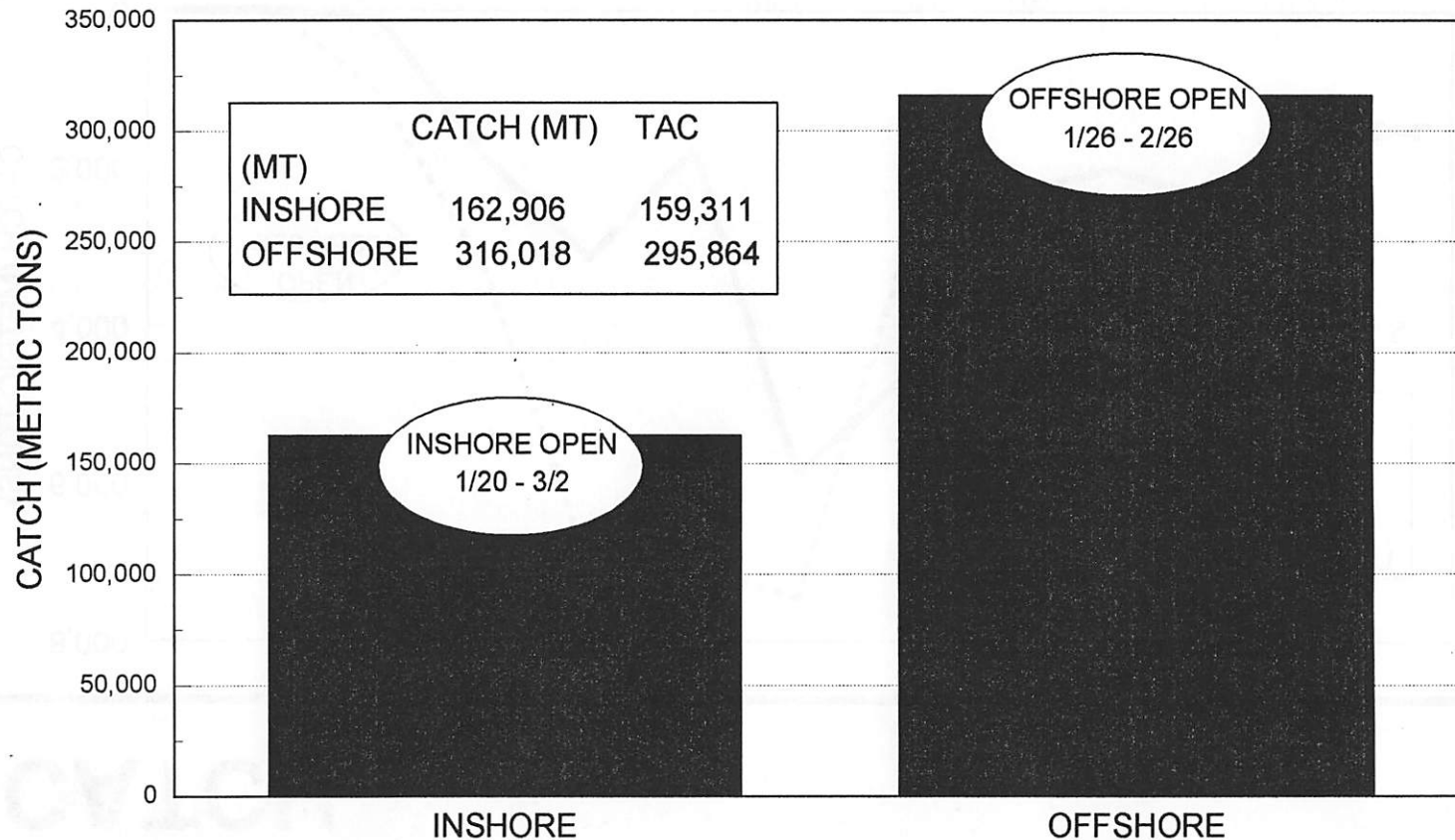
# 1996 BSAI CDQ POLLOCK



	BS 'A' Season	Aleutians
CATCH ■	38,821	2,623
QUOTA □	40,163	2,670

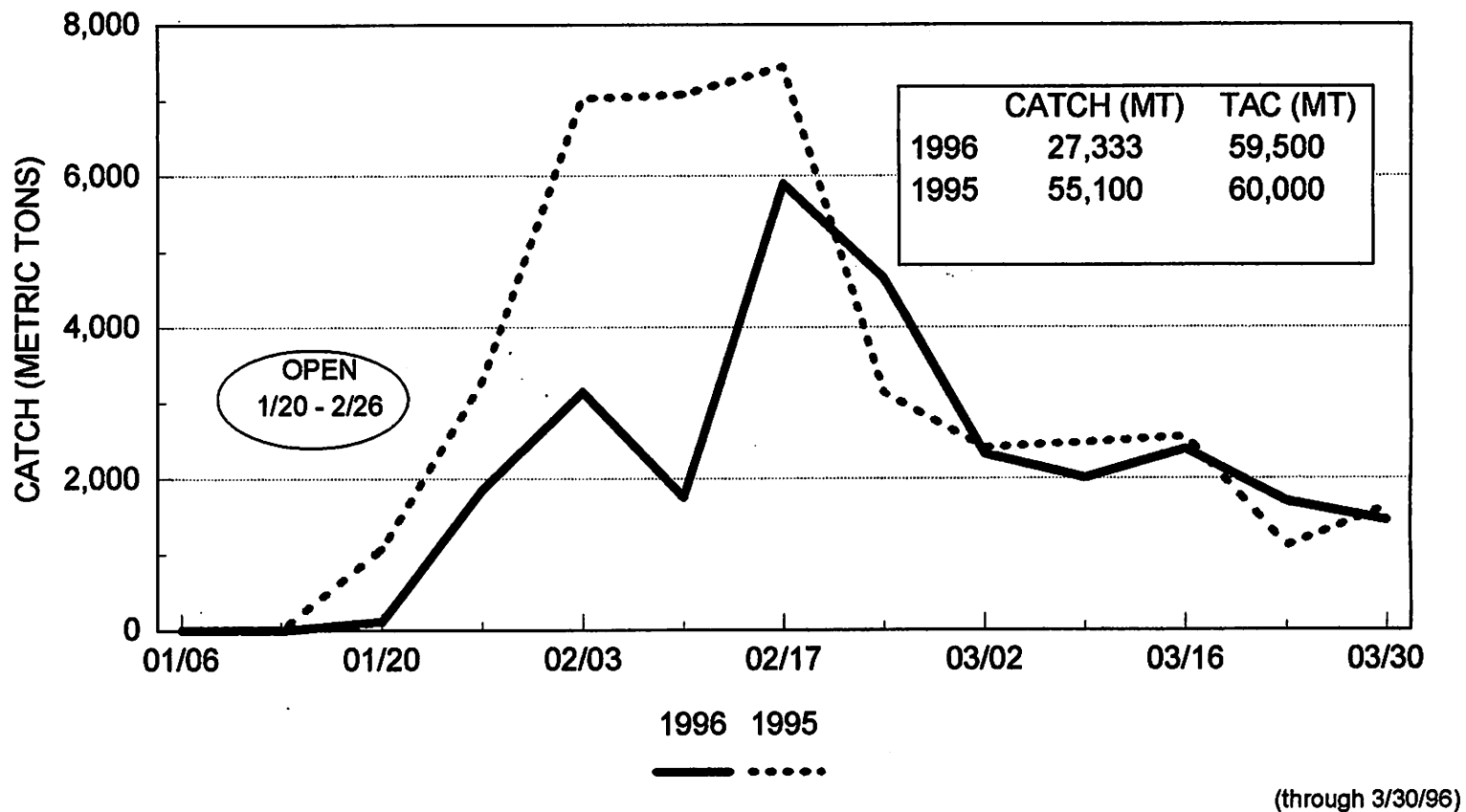
(through 3/30/96)

# 1996 BS 'A' SEASON INSHORE/ OFFSHORE POLLOCK CATCH\*



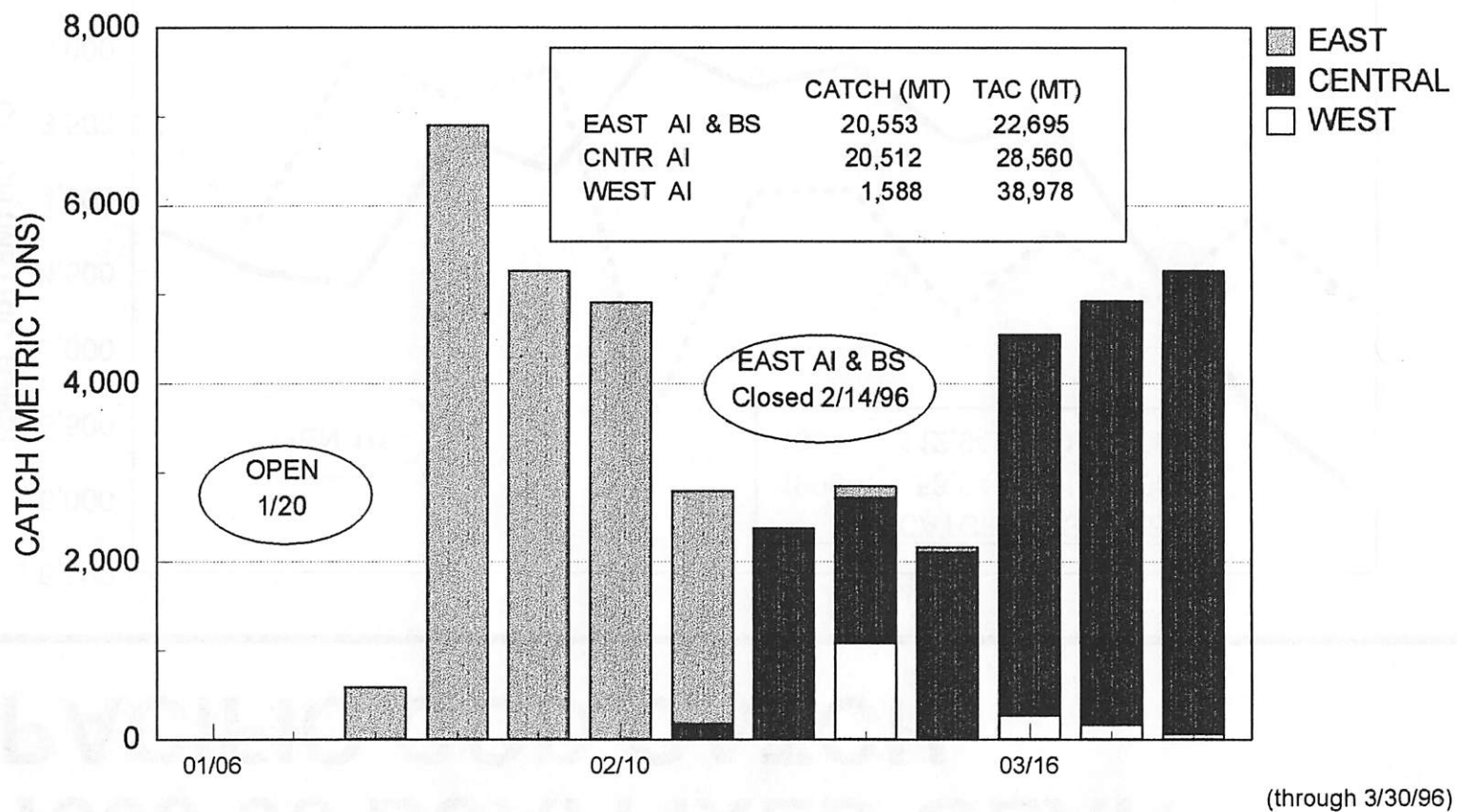
\*EXCLUDES CDQ POLLOCK  
(through 3/30/96)

# 1995-96 BSAI ROCK SOLE CATCH

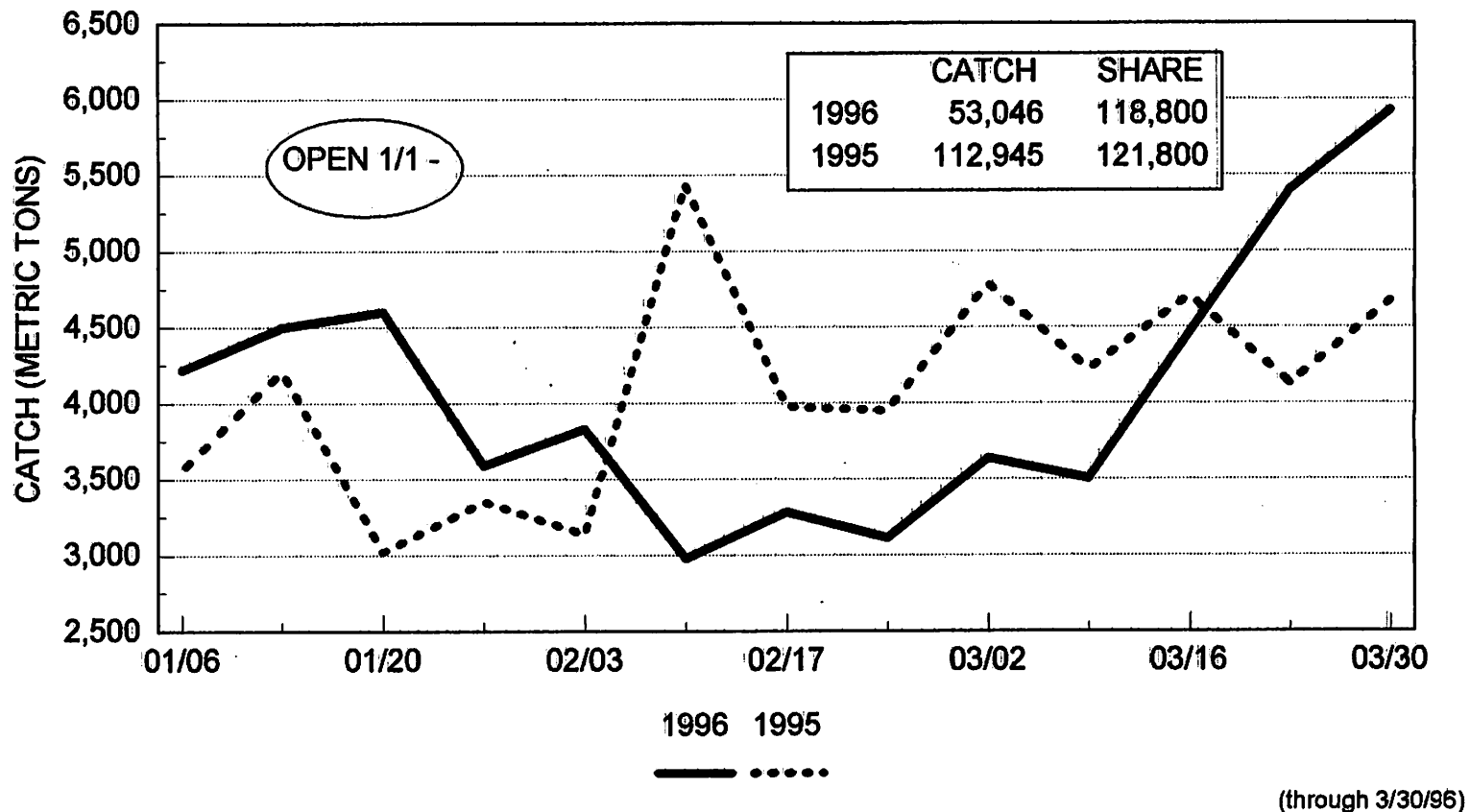




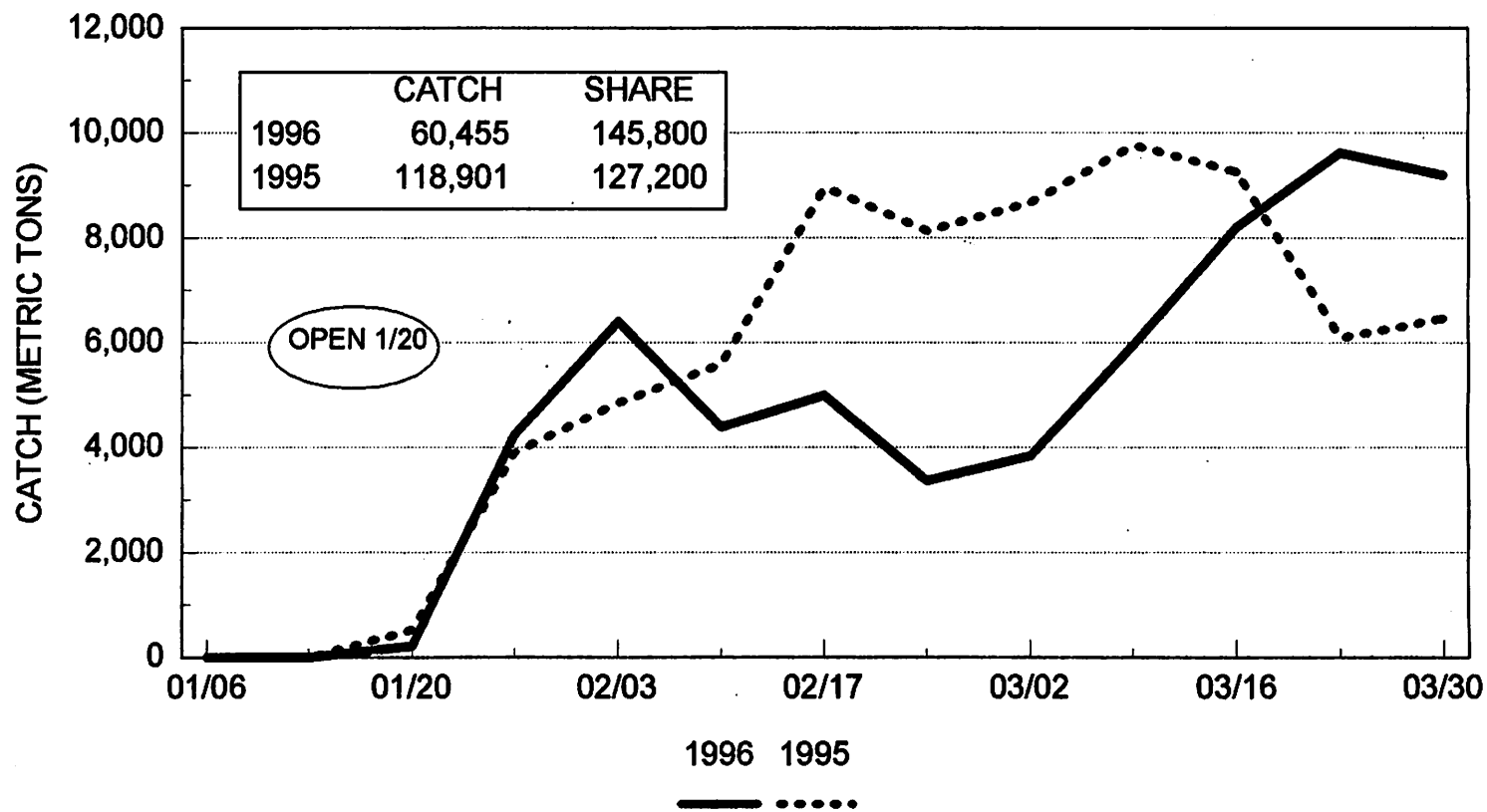
# 1996 BSAI TRAWL ATKA MACKEREL CATCH



# 1995-96 BSAI FIXED GEAR PACIFIC COD CATCH

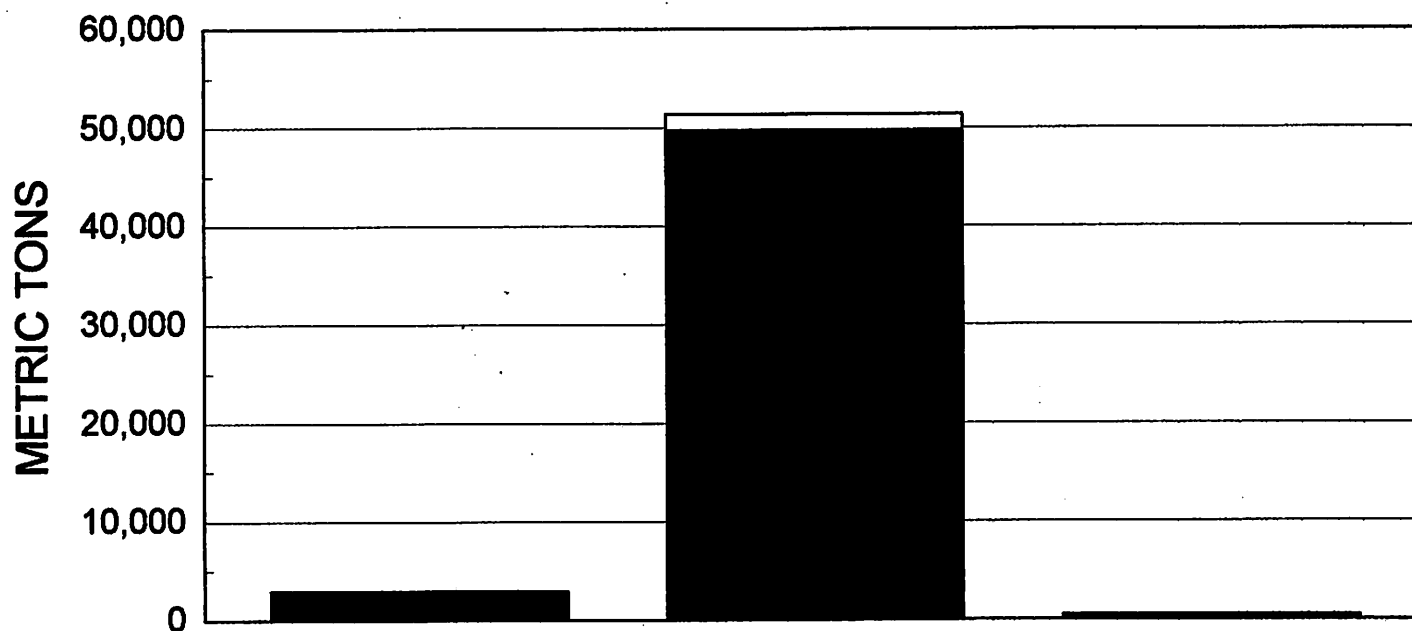


# 1995-96 BSAI TRAWL PACIFIC COD CATCH



(through 3/30/96)

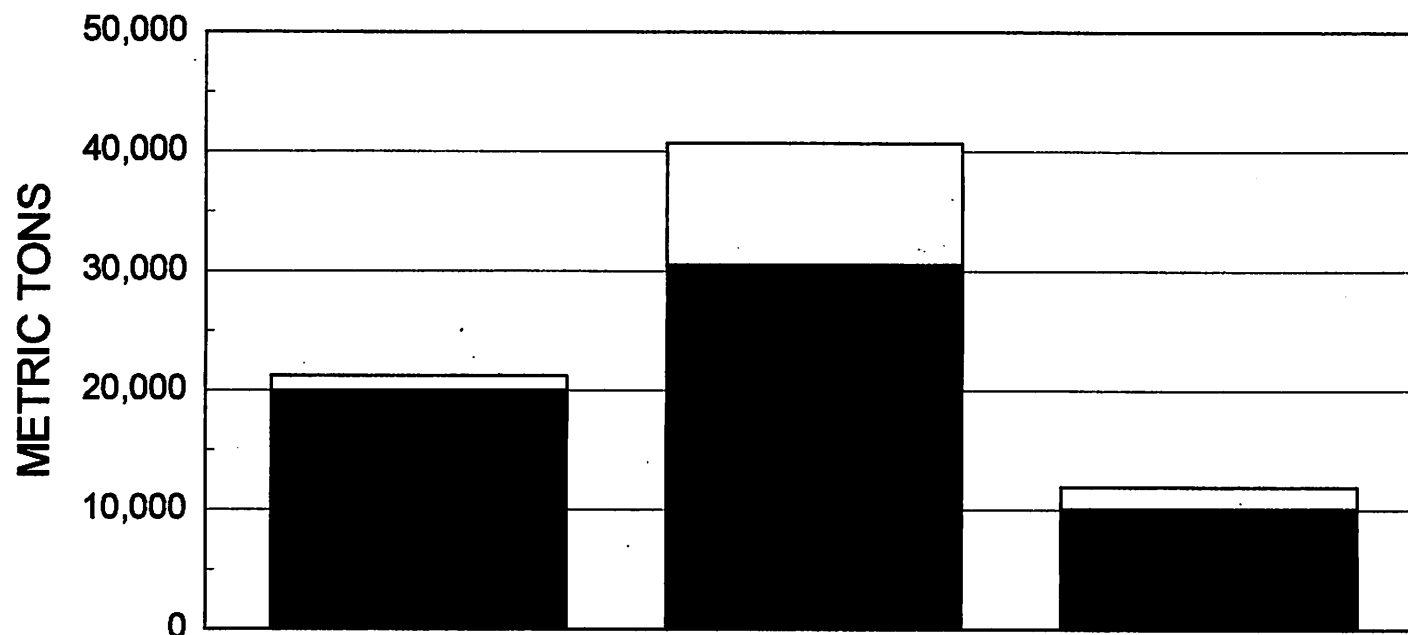
# 1996 BSAI FIXED GEAR, PCOD DISCARDS, ALL FISHERIES



	SHORESIDE	CATCH/PROC	MOTHERSHIP
RETAIN ■	2,891	49,700	455
DISCARD □	36	1,676	11

(through 3/30/96)

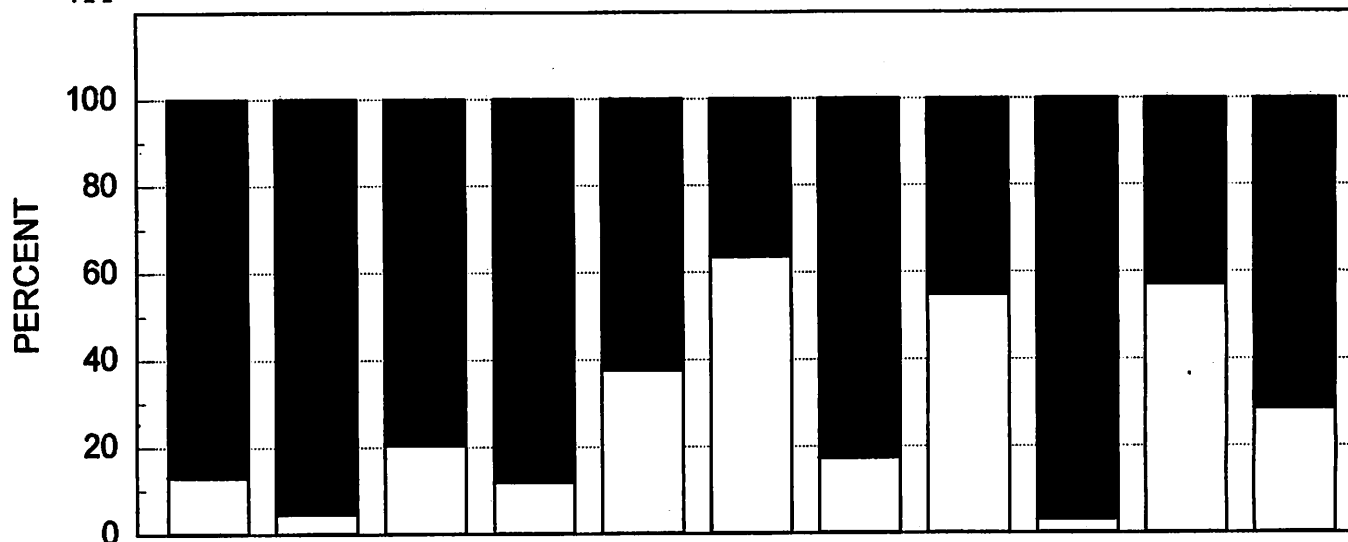
# 1996 BSAI TRAWL, PACIFIC COD DISCARDS, ALL FISHERIES



	SHORESIDE	CATCH/PROC	MOTHERSHIP
RETAIN ■	19,953	30,462	10,040
DISCARD □	1,288	10,203	1,888

(through 3/30/96)

# 1996 BSAI PERCENT DISCARDS BY GEAR & TARGET FISHERY

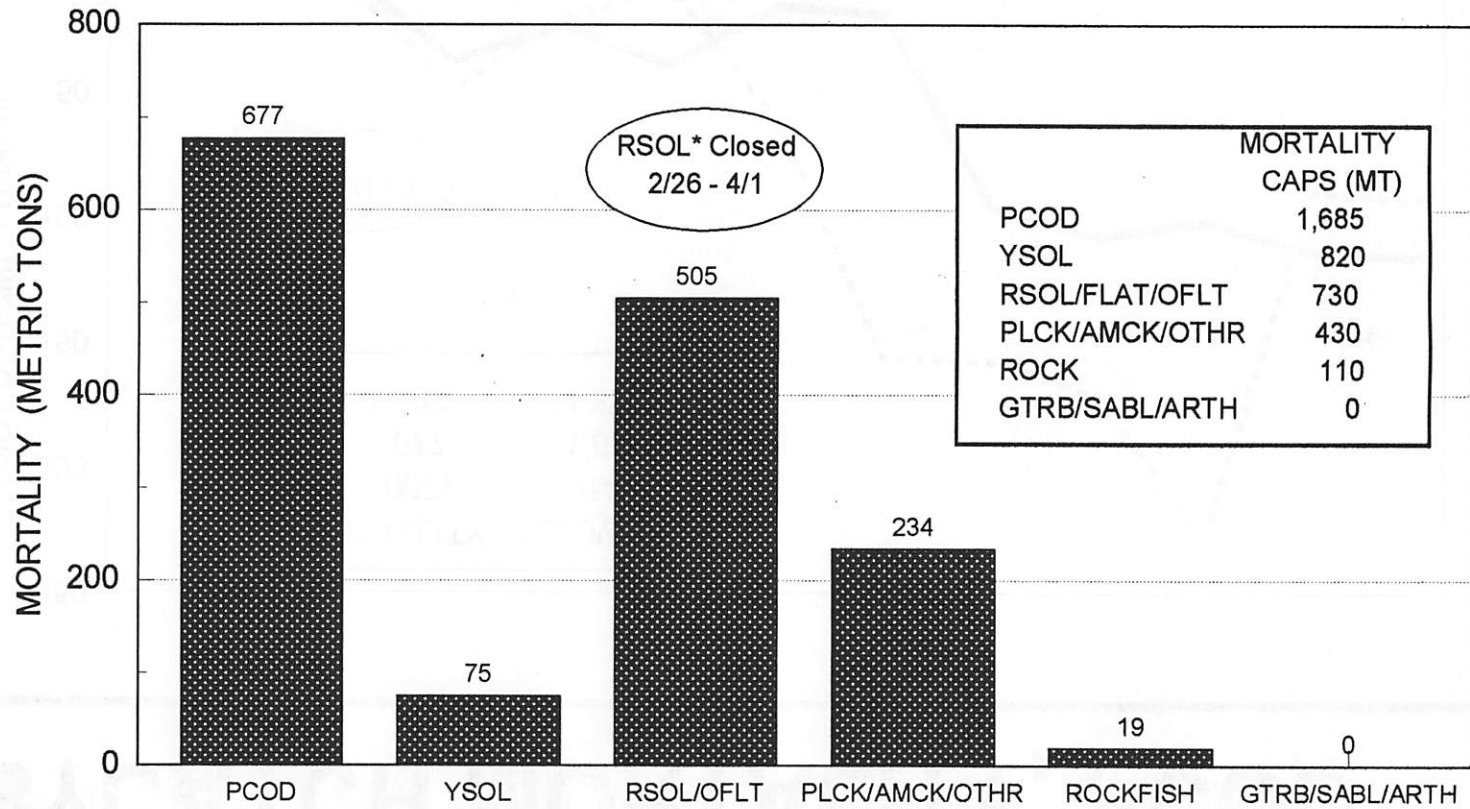


	C-HAL	C-POT	A-TRW	B-TRW	C-TRW	F-TRW	K-TRW	L-TRW	P-TRW	R-TRW	Y-TRW
DISCARDED <input type="checkbox"/>	7,221	183	9,678	6,698	23,900	963	1,897	1,236	15,181	20,570	9,087
RETAINED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	48,269	3,861	37,701	50,002	39,621	550	9,031	1,018	485,910	15,439	22,707

(through 03/30/96)

TARGETS	A - Atka mackerel	P - Midwater pollock
	B - Bottom pollock	R - Rock sole
	C - Pacific cod	Y - Yellowfin sole
	F - Other flatfish	
	K - Rockfish	
	L - Flathead sole	

# 1996 BSAI TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY



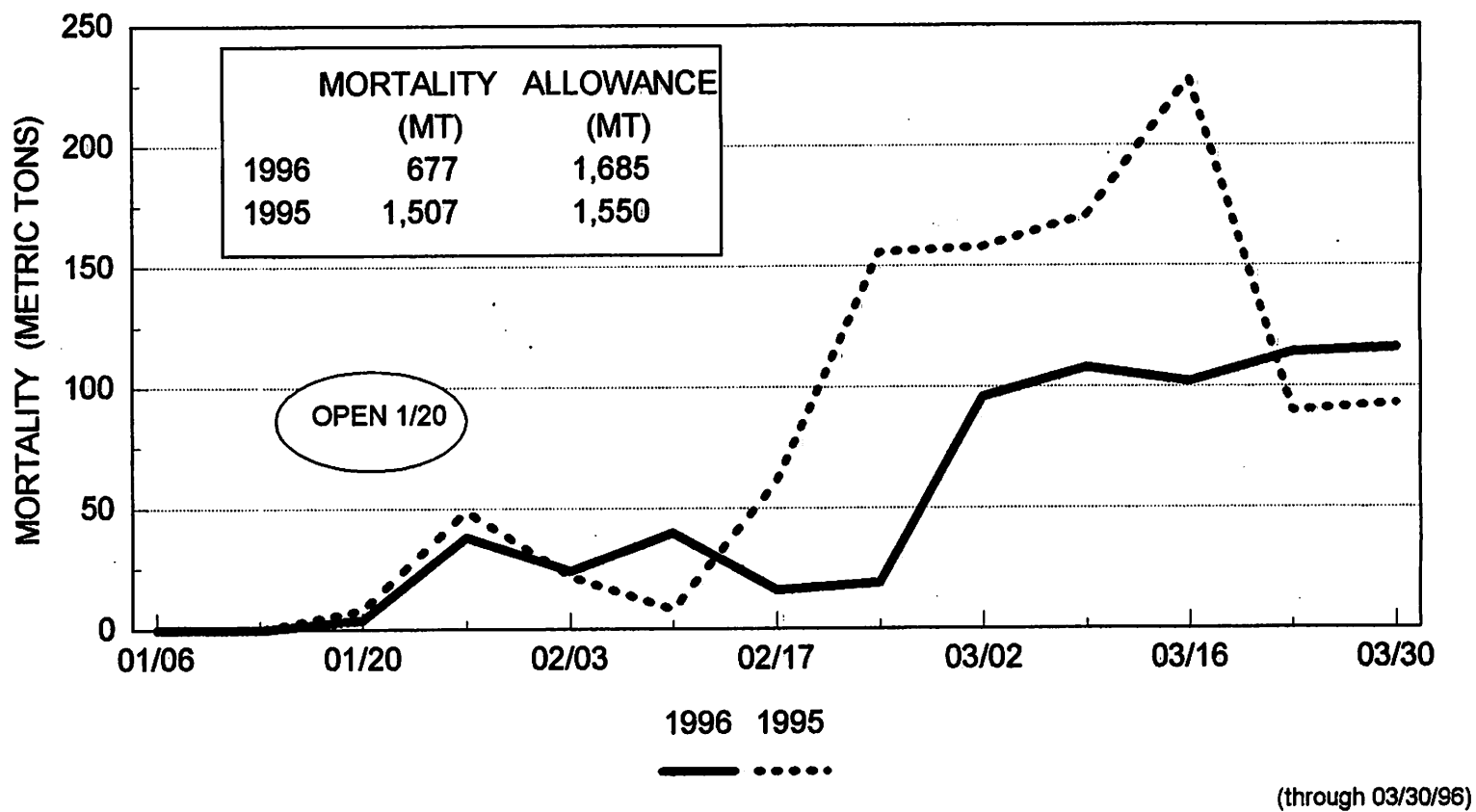
\*Closures shown are due to halibut bycatch

Total halibut mortality thru 3/30: 1,510

Annual total halibut cap: 3,775

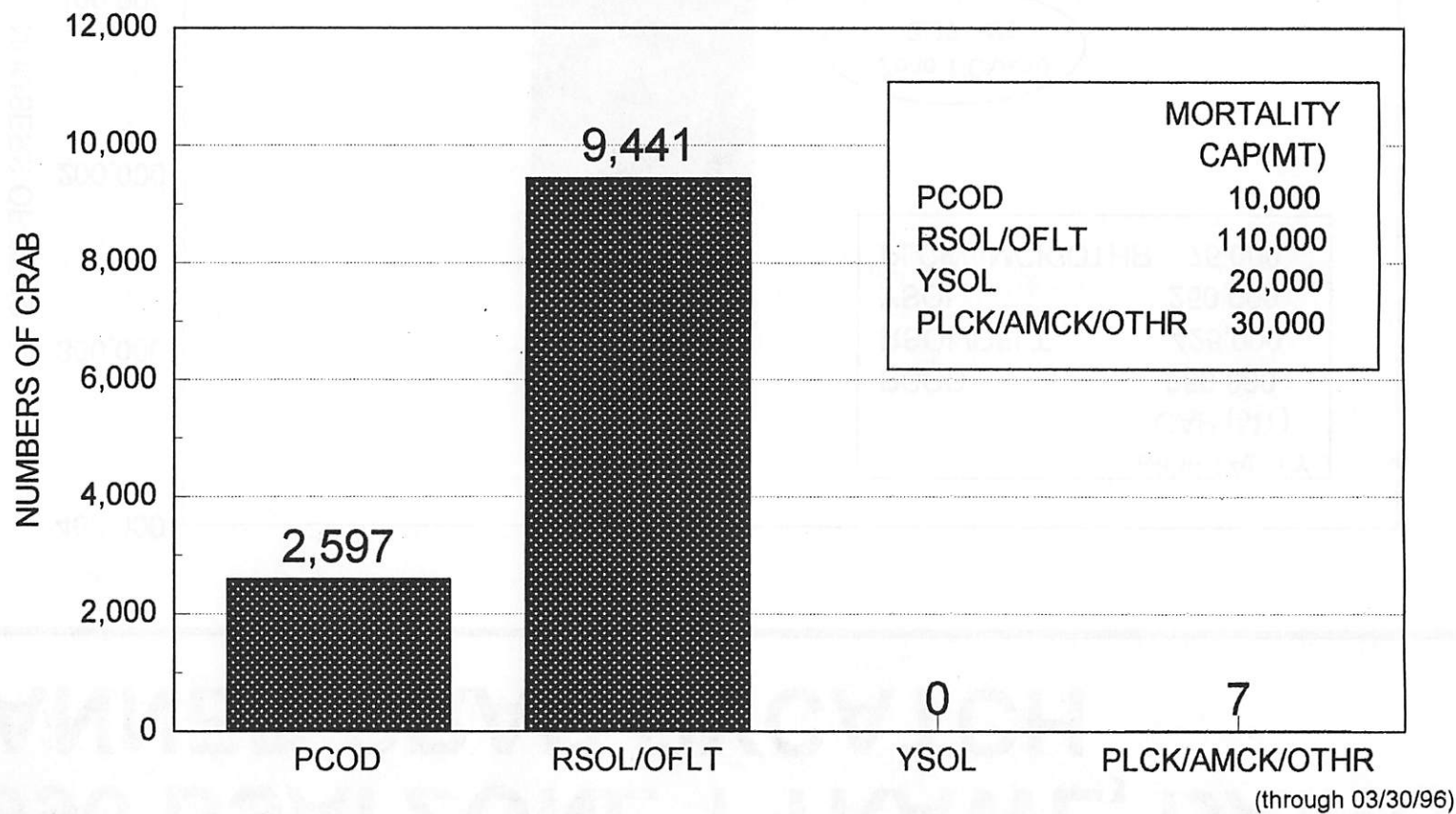
(through 03/30/96)

# 1995-96 BSAI TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY, PCOD

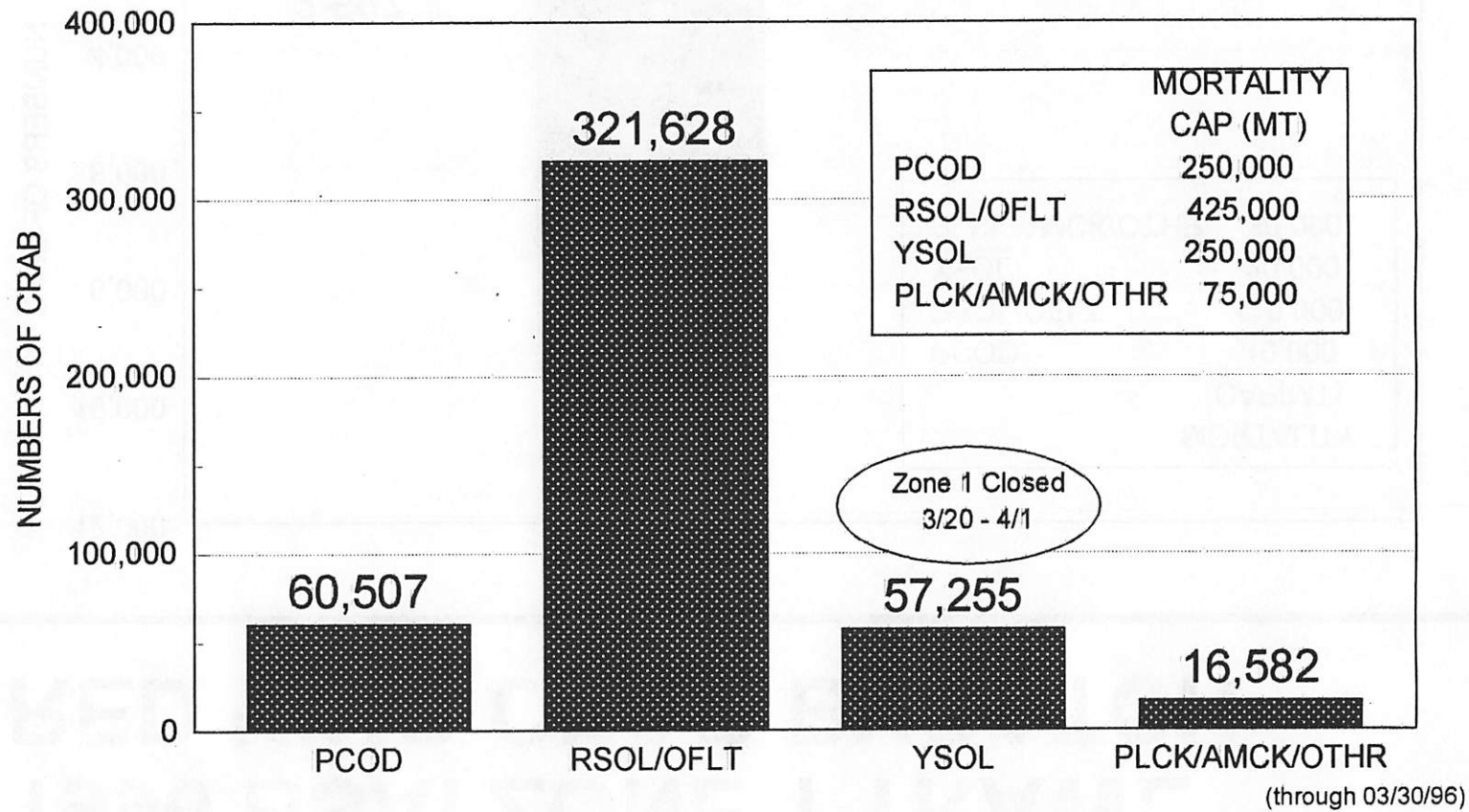




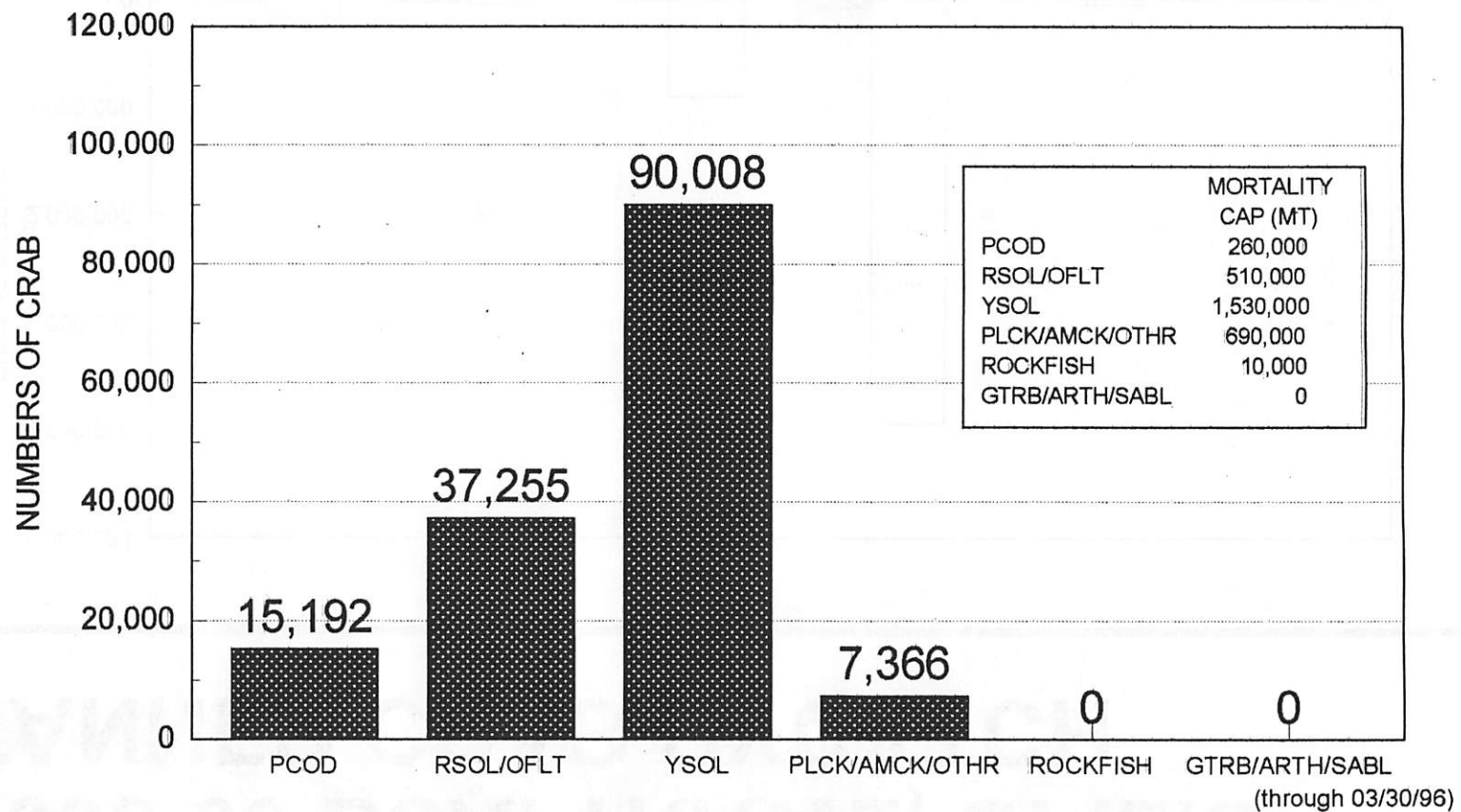
# 1996 BSAI ZONE 1 TRAWL RED KING CRAB BYCATCH



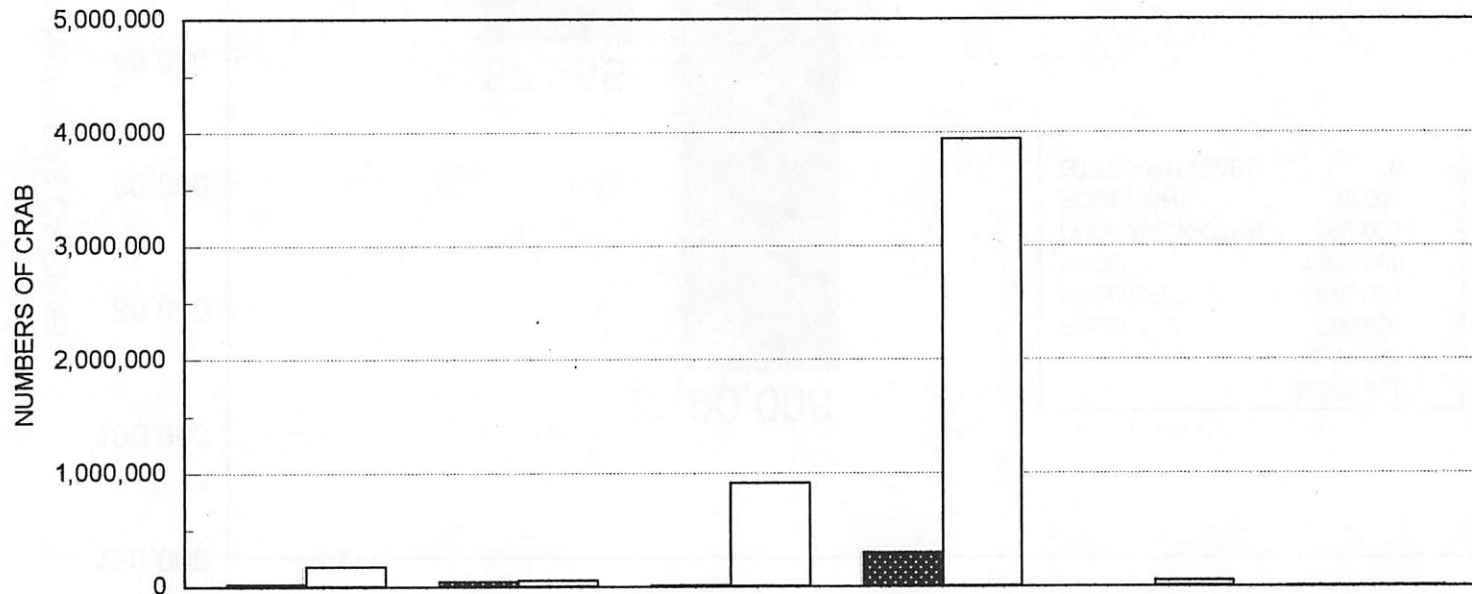
# 1996 BSAI ZONE 1 TRAWL, BAIRDI TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



# 1996 BSAI ZONE 2 TRAWL BAIRDI TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



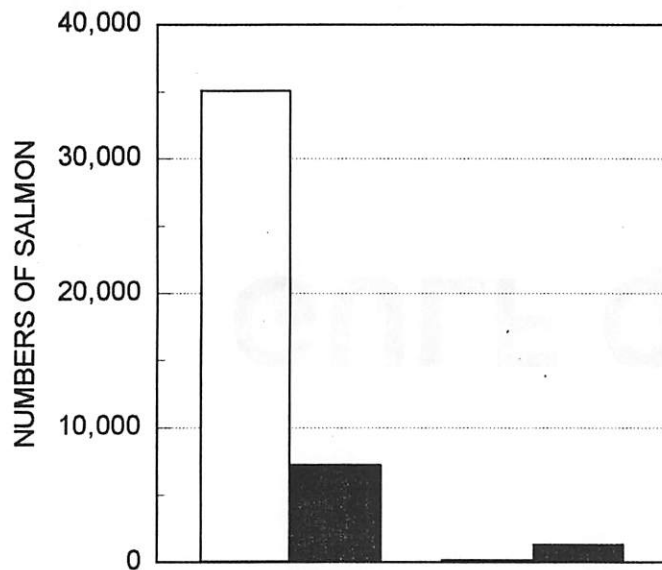
# 1995-96 BSAI TRAWL, OPILIO TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



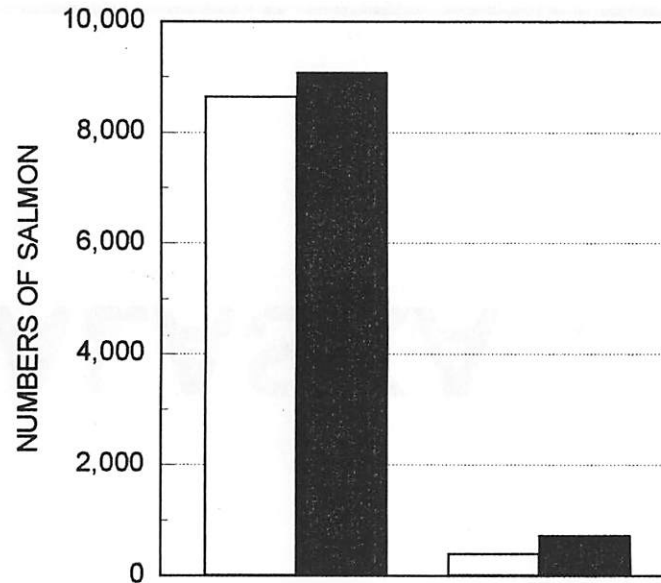
	PLCK/AMCK/OTHER	PCOD	RSOL/FSOL/OFLT	YSOL	GTRB/ARTH/SABL	ROCKFISH
1996 ■	22,255	46,630	13,318	300,770	0	100
1995 □	180,315	56,907	914,978	3,940,469	52,935	75

(through 03/30/96)

# 1995-96 BSAI TRAWL, CHINOOK & OTHER SALMON BYCATCH



MIDWATER POLLOCK



OTHER FISHERIES

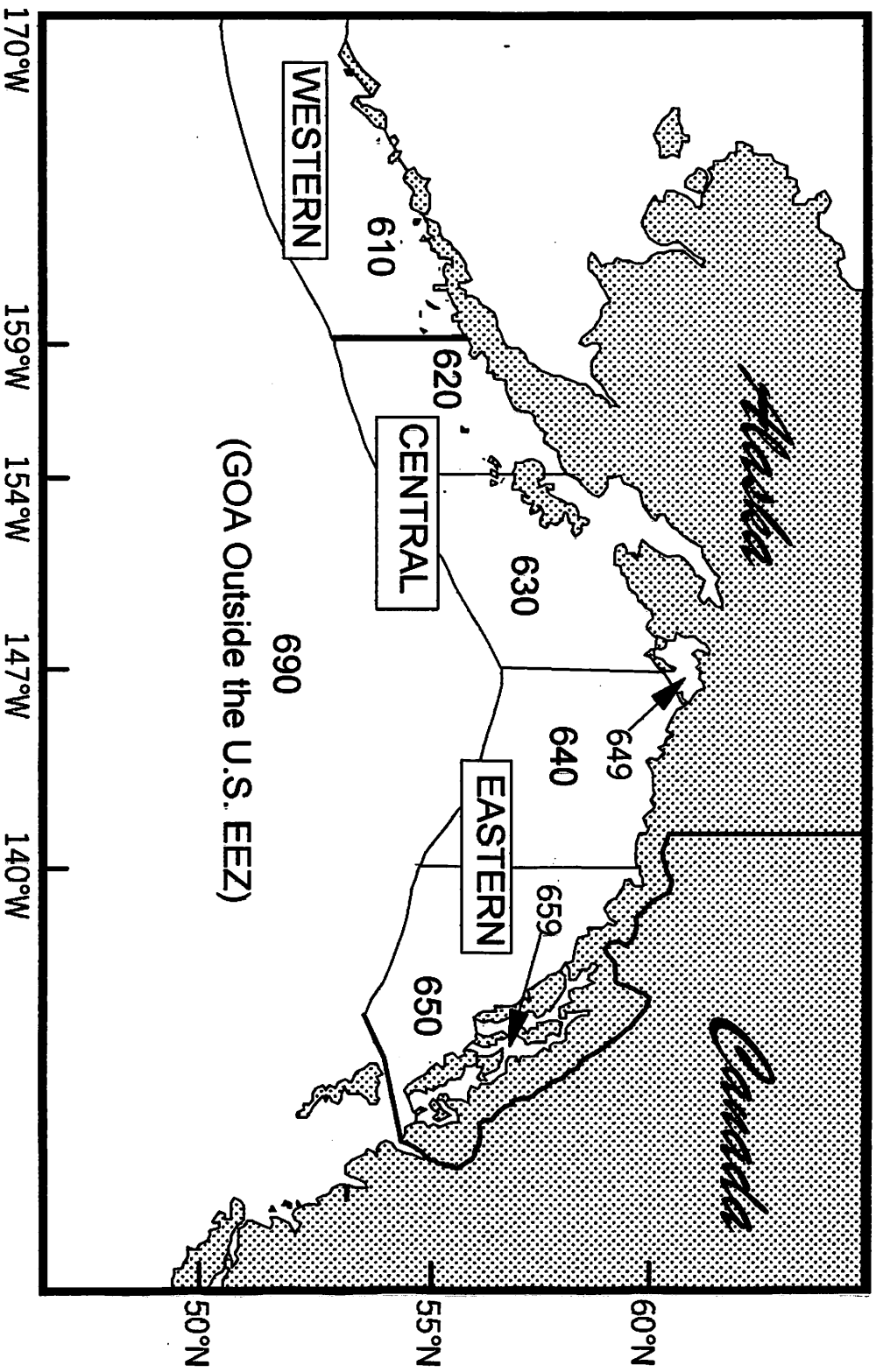
(through 04/01/95 and 03/30/96)

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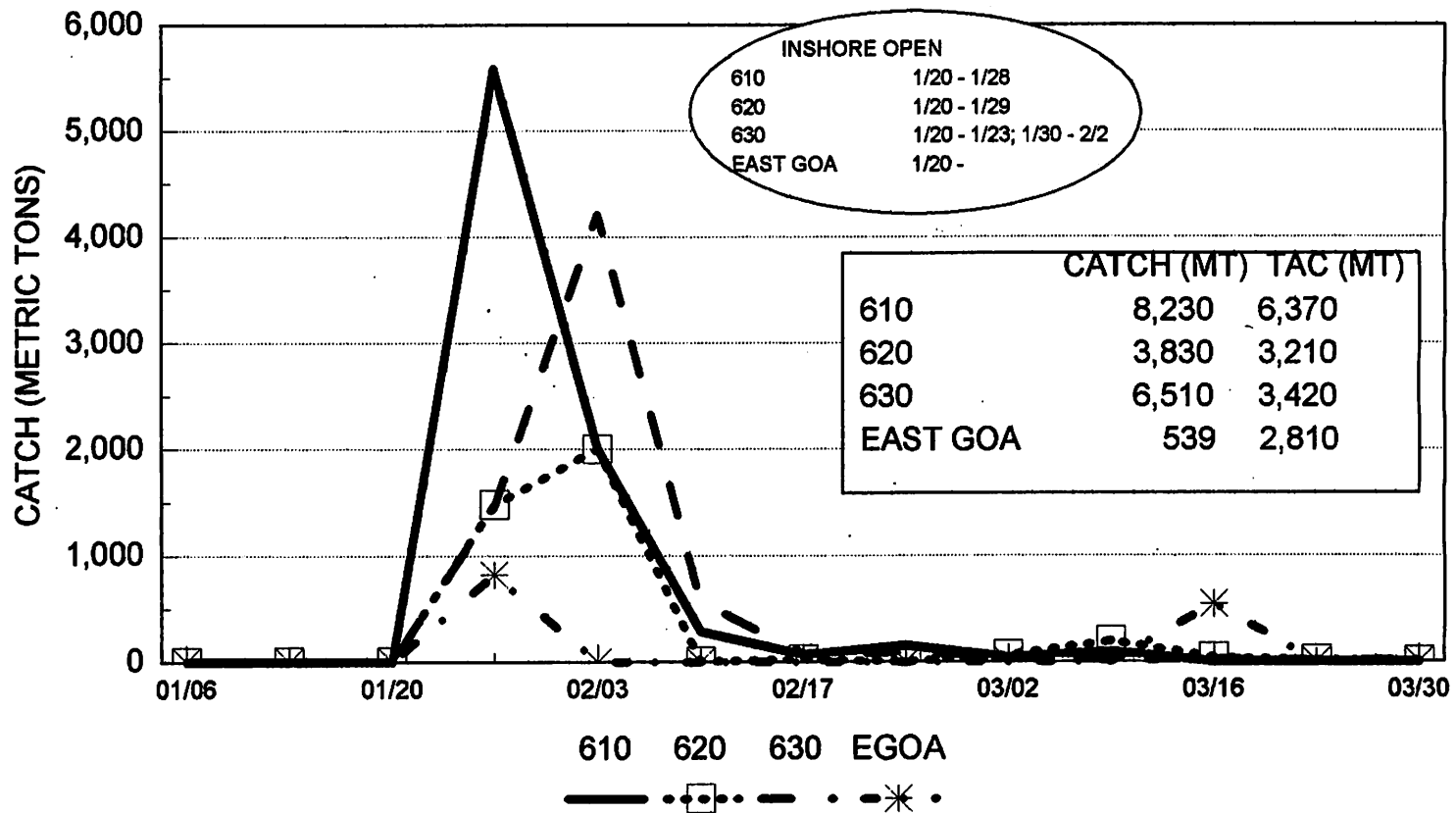
# **GULF OF ALASKA**

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# 1996 REPORTING AREAS OF THE GULF OF ALASKA



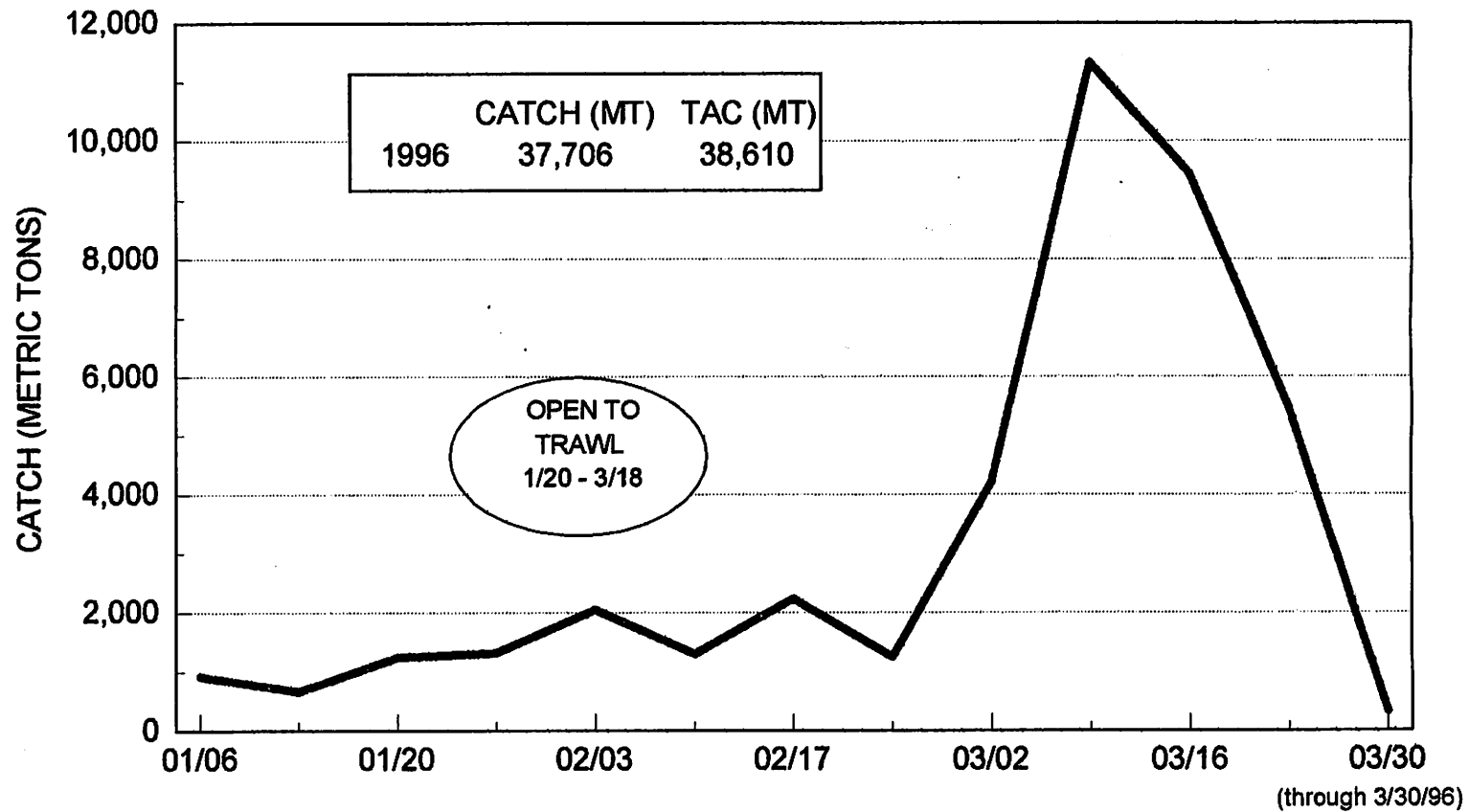
# 1996 GOA POLLOCK CATCH



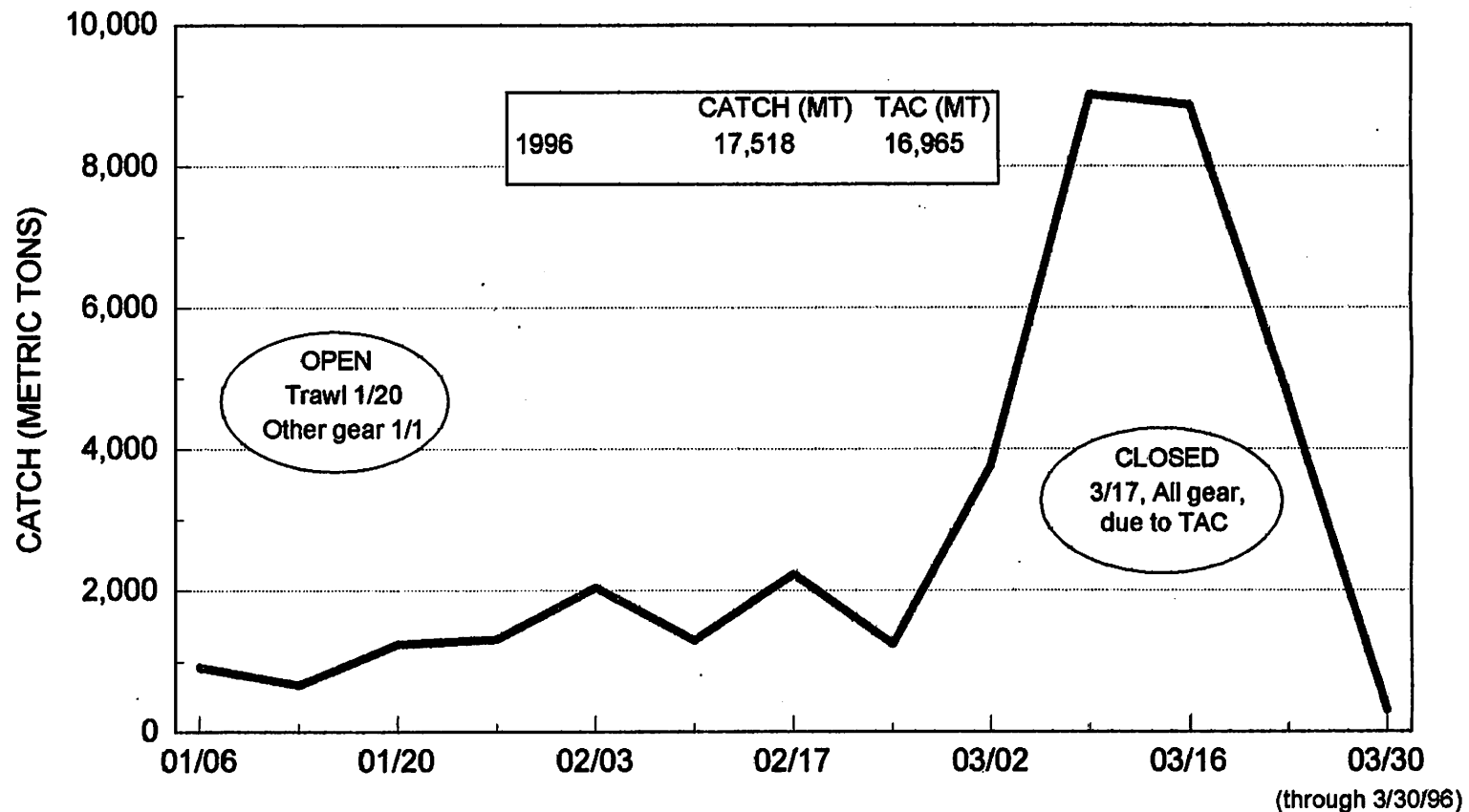
(through 3/30/96)



# 1996 CENTRAL GOA INSHORE PACIFIC COD CATCH

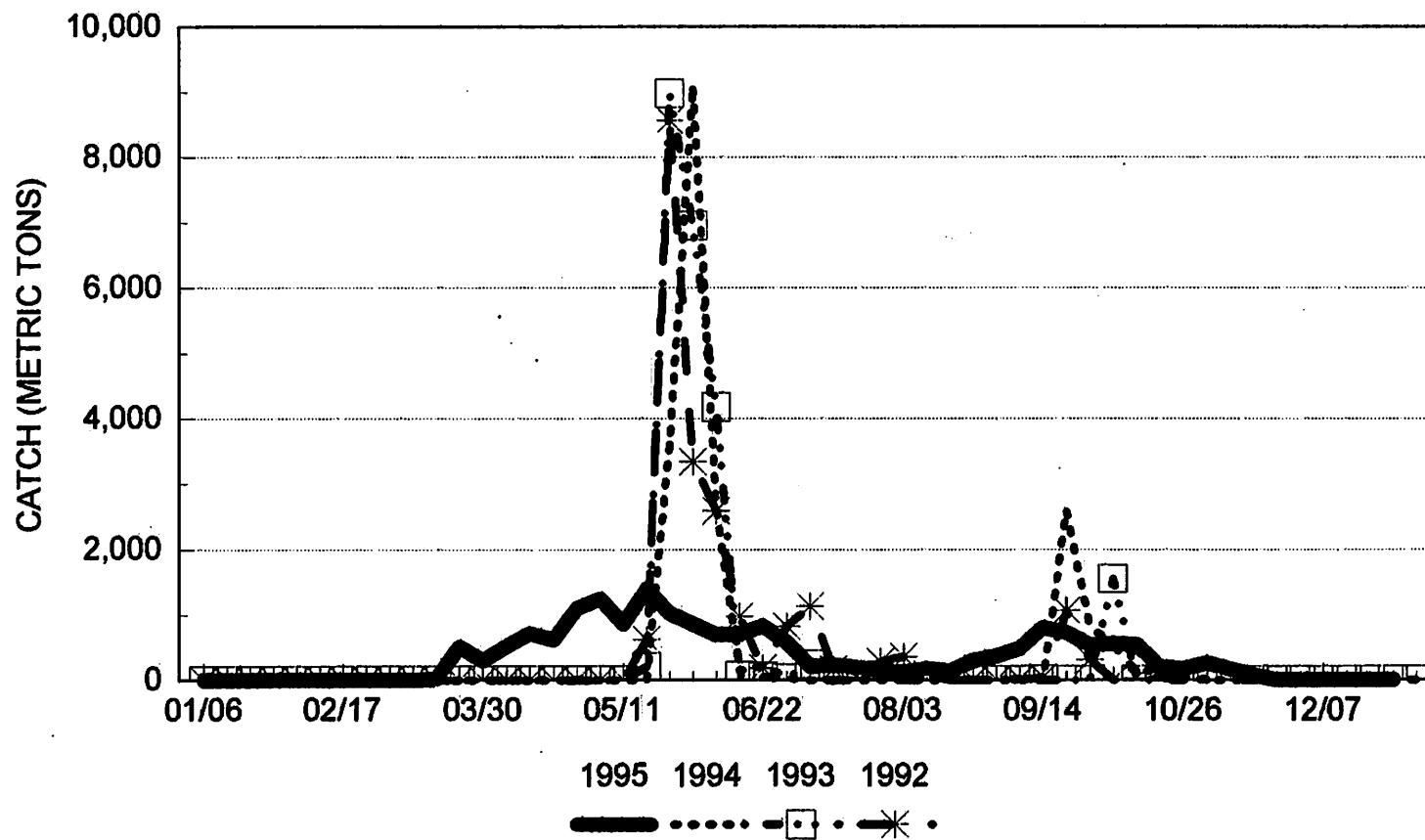


# 1996 WESTERN GOA INSHORE PCOD CATCH

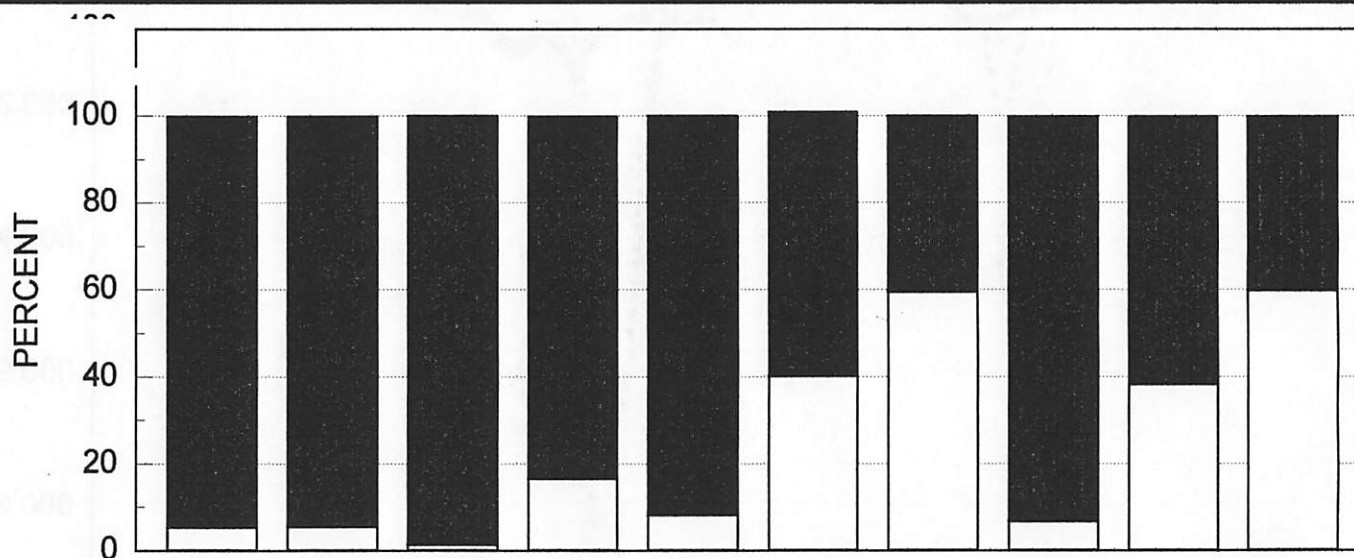


NOTE: Discard of Pacific cod attributed to 610 inshore Pacific cod through 3/30/96 = 221 mt

# 1992-95 GOA HOOK & LINE SABLEFISH SUMMARY



# 1996 GOA PERCENT DISCARDS BY GEAR & TARGET FISHERY

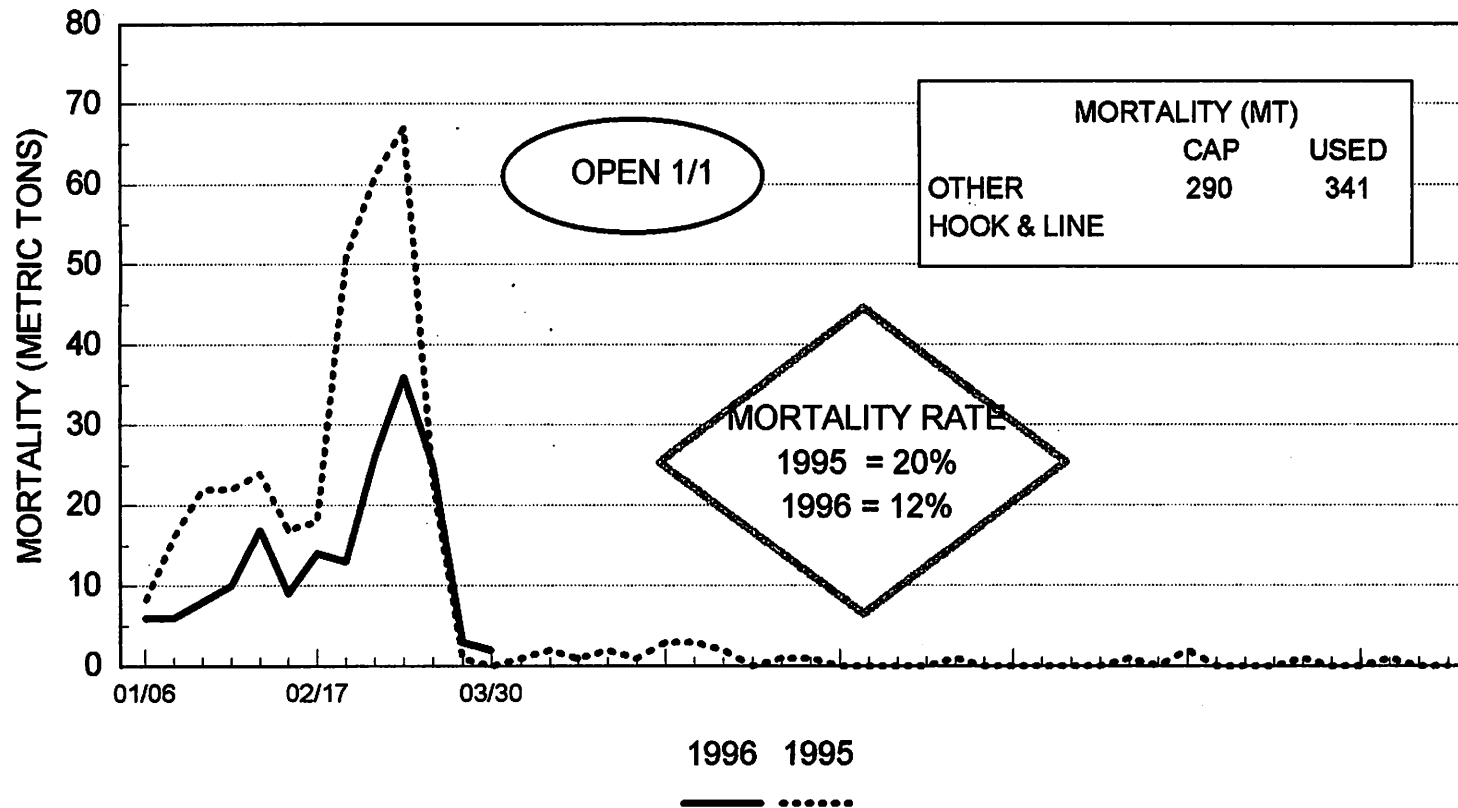


	C-HAL	S-HAL	C-POT	B-TRW	C-TRW	H-TRW	L-TRW	P-TRW	W-TRW	X-TRW
DISCARD <input type="checkbox"/>	548	51	171	715	3,491	541	550	1,065	91	2,800
RETAIN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9,655	894	12,065	3,594	39,246	806	374	14,681	148	1,881

(through 03/30/96)

TARGETS	B - Bottom pollock	L - Flathead sole
	C - Pacific cod	P - Midwater pollock
	D - Deep Water Flatfish	S - Sablefish
	H - Shallow Water Flatfish	W - Arrowtooth flounder
	K - Rockfish	X - Rex sole

# 1995-96 GOA HOOK & LINE\*, HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY

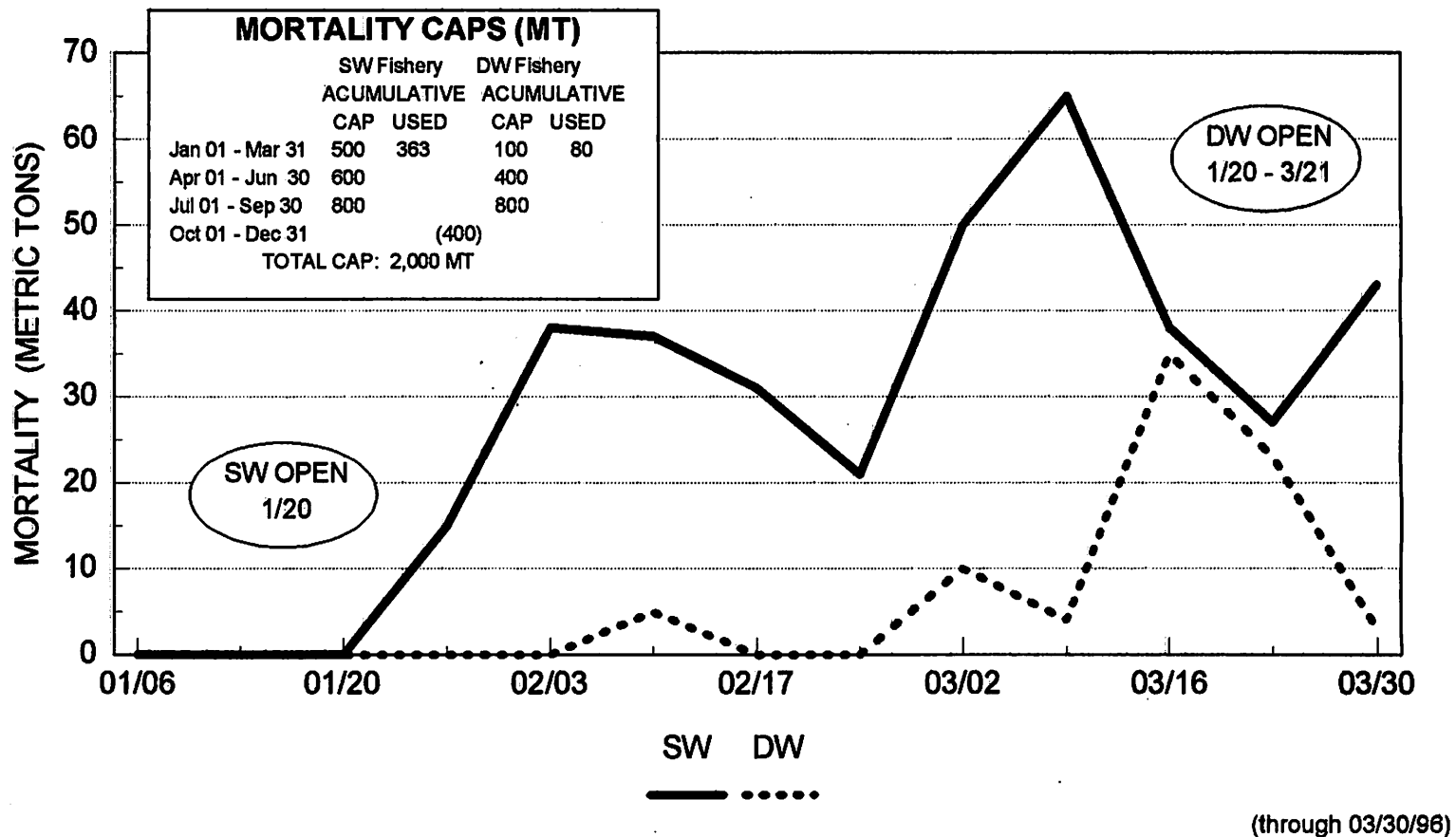


\*Sablefish not included

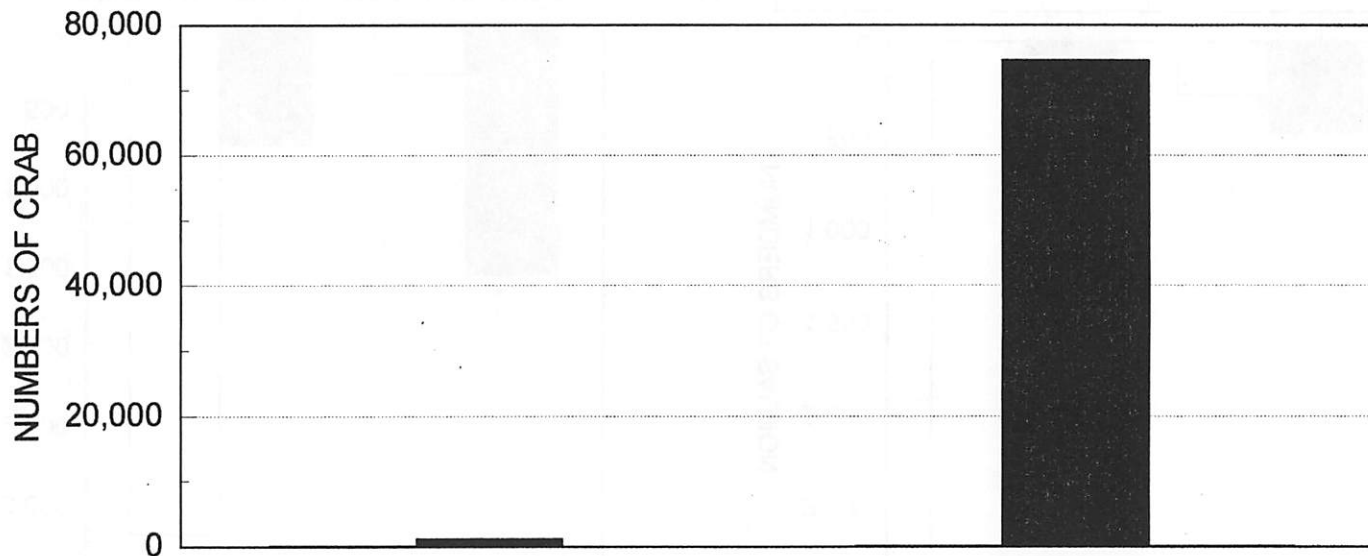
\*\* 1995 demersal shelf rockfish fishery, Southeast District is not listed due to insufficient observer coverage.

(through 03/30/96)

# 1996 GOA SW & DW TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY



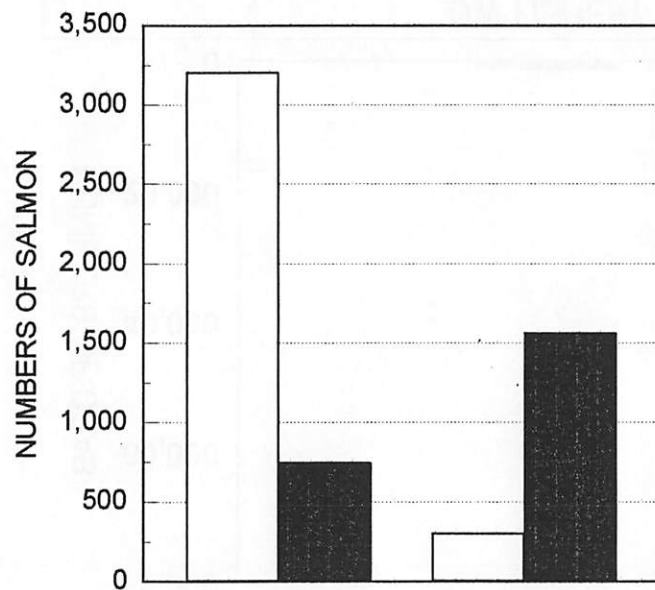
# 1996 GOA TRAWL, TANNER & RED KING CRAB BYCATCH



	DW FISHERY	SW FISHERY
OTANNER <input type="checkbox"/>	34	116
BAIRDI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,140	74,498
RED KING <input type="checkbox"/>	0	3

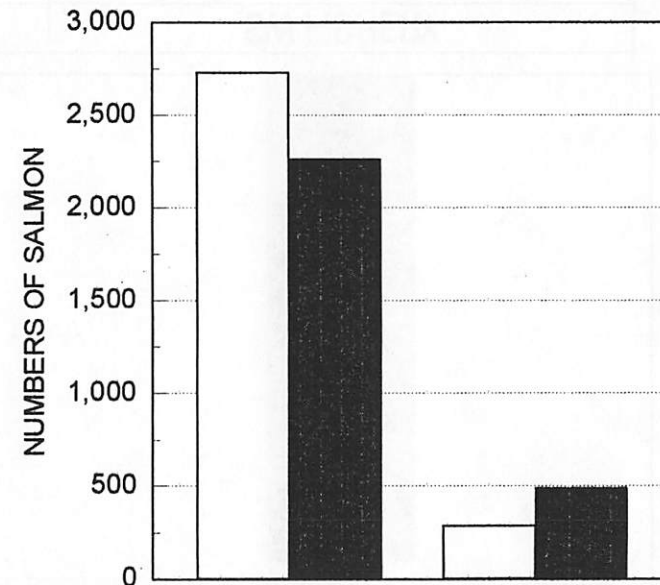
(through 03/30/96)

# 1995-96 GOA TRAWL, CHINOOK & OTHER SALMON BYCATCH



	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	3,202	300
1995 ■	749	1,561

MIDWATER POLLOCK



	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	2,730	288
1995 ■	2,261	490

OTHER FISHERIES

(through 04/01/95 and 03/30/96)

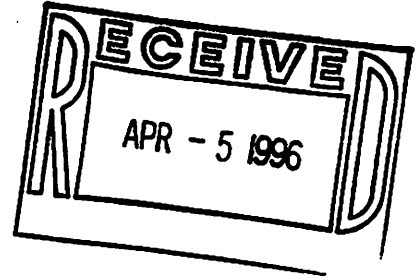




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
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AGENDA B-3  
APRIL 1996  
Supplemental

April 1, 1996



Richard B. Lauber  
Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

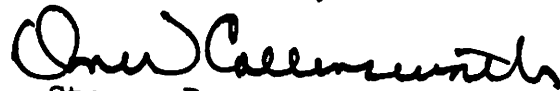
Dear Rick:

In September, 1995, the Council adopted a regulatory amendment to establish a year-round IFQ sablefish fishery in the Aleutian Islands. The Council's analysis of this proposed action largely contemplates that a halibut bycatch allowance would be granted by the International Pacific Halibut Commission to cover the extended fishery. The analysis further proposes that bycatch be deducted from a fisherman's halibut IFQ.

At its January, 1996, meeting, however, the Commission rejected the proposal to allow retention of bycatch in an extended Aleutian Islands sablefish fishery. With the Commission's rejection of this proposal, IFQ fishermen participating in the extended fishery would be required to deduct from their halibut IFQ fish they are not allowed to retain.

In light of the Commission's decision, the Council may wish to reevaluate the current proposal for the disposition of halibut bycatch in an extended AI sablefish fishery and consider, as an alternative, calculating bycatch against Prohibited Species Catch limits rather than against IFQ. We will be available at the Council's April meeting to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

  
Steven Pennoyer  
Director, Alaska Region





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

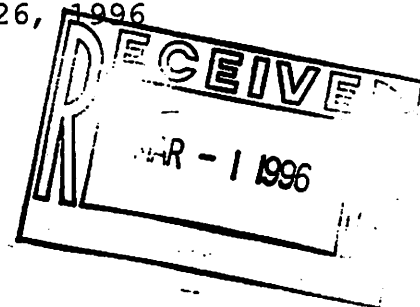
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

AGENDA B-3

APRIL 1996

Supplemental

February 26, 1996



Richard B. Lauber, Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Rick:

During its January 30-February 4, 1996, meeting, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) decided not to approve a regulatory amendment that would have required vessels to use a grid to sort fish in the non-pelagic trawl groundfish fisheries. The Council's decision was based, in part, on lack of support for this measure by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (Commission). The Commission withdrew its support for grid sorting, because it believed that the anticipated increase in halibut survival would have been too small to justify the loss of observer-collected data necessary for halibut bycatch management.

During Council discussions, you expressed your concern about the industry being constrained by current regulations that prohibit a vessel from returning halibut to the sea as soon as possible, which would promote their survival. You will recall that regulations implementing the Council's Vessel Incentive Program (VIP) require a NMFS-certified observer to sample a vessel's hauls, selected at random, prior to sorting or discarding any catches by the vessel's crew. This provision was necessary to provide the statistical tools necessary to implement the VIP program.

Nonetheless, a crew is allowed to sort all hauls on unobserved vessels as well those hauls on observed vessels, which will not be sampled for VIP purposes. A vessel would not obtain any particular benefit, however, by doing so. NMFS only uses observer-reported information for bycatch management purposes, and applies this information as being representative for the total catch in each specified target fishery category. I question, therefore, whether a vessel would impose costs on its operations as a result of slowing down its operations for purposes of sorting and discarding halibut from its catches, given the competitive nature of an open access fishery.

I am also concerned about additional monitoring burdens that would be imposed on observers, should they be requested by vessel operators to monitor grid sorting activity on deck. Additional



observer coverage likely would be necessary if on-deck monitoring of grid sorting were expected of observers.

I believe that the Council needs to take a fresh look at management measures intended to reduce halibut mortality in the groundfish fisheries, and in so doing, be prepared to reject measures that have not been effective. As the industry has continually stressed, these measures must rely on individual vessel accountability. The Council's consideration of the Vessel Bycatch Allowance Program as suggested by the industry might be the answer. I look forward to the Council's June 1996, meeting, when it will consider this issue.

Sincerely,



Steven Pennoyer,  
Director, Alaska Region

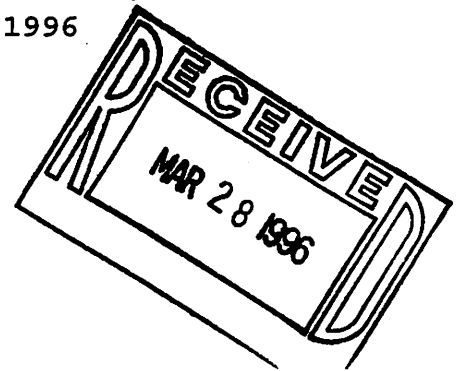
cc: Bill Karp  
Rich Marasco



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

AGENDA B-3  
APRIL 1996  
Supplemental

March 25, 1996



Dr. Clarence Pautzke  
Executive Director, North Pacific  
Fishery Management Council  
605 W. 4th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Clarence,

The current closure of Federal waters off Alaska to fishing for scallops expires on August 29, 1996. This closure is authorized under the Fishery Management Plan for the Scallop Fishery off Alaska (FMP) that was implemented on August 29, 1995. At its April 1995 meeting, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted an amendment to the FMP that would provide for a fishery in Federal waters by implementing a Federal management program for the scallop fishery that essentially mirrored the scallop management regime currently implemented under Alaska State regulations, as well as implement a Federal vessel moratorium.

We have prepared Amendment 1 to the FMP and associated rulemaking that would carry out the intent of the Council to open up Federal waters to fishing for scallops as soon as possible. Sufficient time does not exist, however, to implement all State management measures if Amendment 1 is to be effective by the end of August. For this same reason, we intend to implement the vessel moratorium adopted by the Council for the scallop fishery under a separate FMP amendment that, if approved, would be effective by the start of the 1997 fishing season.

Our approach for Amendment 1 to the FMP is to constrain the number of Federal regulations to those we believe are necessary for the conservation and management of the scallop resource should the need arise for direct Federal management of vessels fishing for scallops outside the jurisdiction of the laws of the State of Alaska. We have cooperatively developed this approach with staff of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to include the following measures:

1. scallop management areas identical to ADF&G's scallop registration areas;
2. a procedure for specifying total allowable catch (TAC) and prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for the scallop fishery in coordination with ADF&G;



3. fishing seasons identical to ADF&G's scallop fishing seasons;
4. NMFS inseason management authority identical to the NMFS inseason management authority for groundfish;
5. closed areas identical to those areas already closed to trawling and non-pelagic trawl gear;
6. gear and efficiency restrictions identical to ADF&G's gear and efficiency restrictions; and
7. Observer coverage requirements identical to ADF&G's observer coverage requirements; 100 percent coverage with exceptions for Cook Inlet.

The above measures are consistent with current State of Alaska management of the scallop fishery and do not preclude the State from imposing any additional regulations on vessels registered under the laws of the State. In the event that a vessel not subject to State fishery regulations chose to participate in the scallop fishery, it would fall under Federal regulations implementing the above listed measures to ensure conservation of the scallop resource.

In the event that the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act is amended to allow the State of Alaska to manage all vessels fishing in Federal waters, the Council may wish to cease the development of Amendment 1 to the FMP and rescind the current closure in Federal waters. The vessel moratorium would then become the only Federal management measure for the scallop fishery off Alaska.

Amendment 1 to the FMP must be forwarded to NMFS Headquarters by April 6, 1996, if it is to be implemented with full comment and cooling off periods before the current closure expires on August 29, 1996. This schedule does not allow the Council opportunity to address scallop management issues during its April meeting. Please inform us by March 31 if you believe that our intended approach for Amendment 1 is consistent with the Council's intent. At that time we will initiate the rulemaking process without further Council input recognizing that the Council will have opportunity to comment on the proposed rule once it is published in the Federal Register.

Sincerely,



Steven Pennoyer  
Director, Alaska Region