

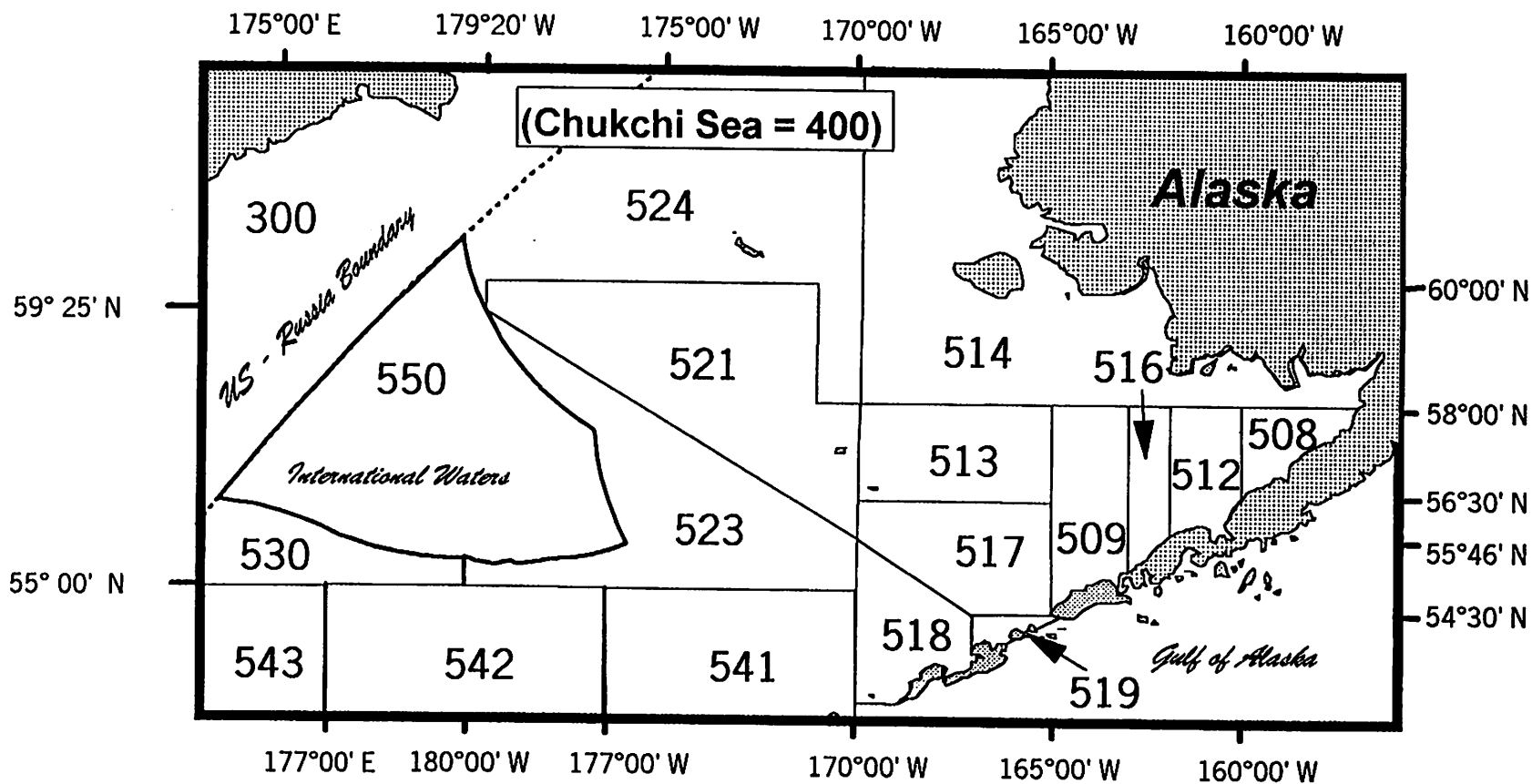
DECEMBER 1996

**NMFS FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT REPORT**



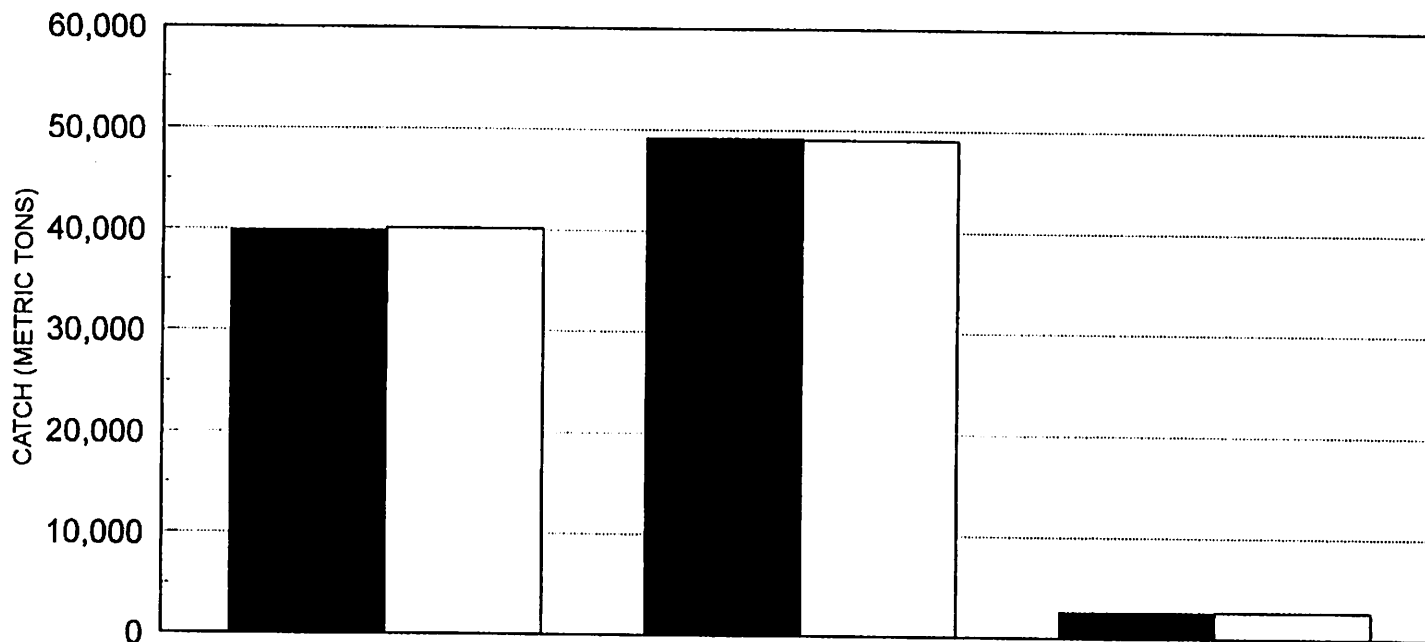
BERING SEA & ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

1997 REPORTING AREAS OF THE BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS



BYCATCH PROTECTION AREAS
 Zone 1 = 508 + 509 + 512 + 516
 Zone 2 = 513 + 517 + 521

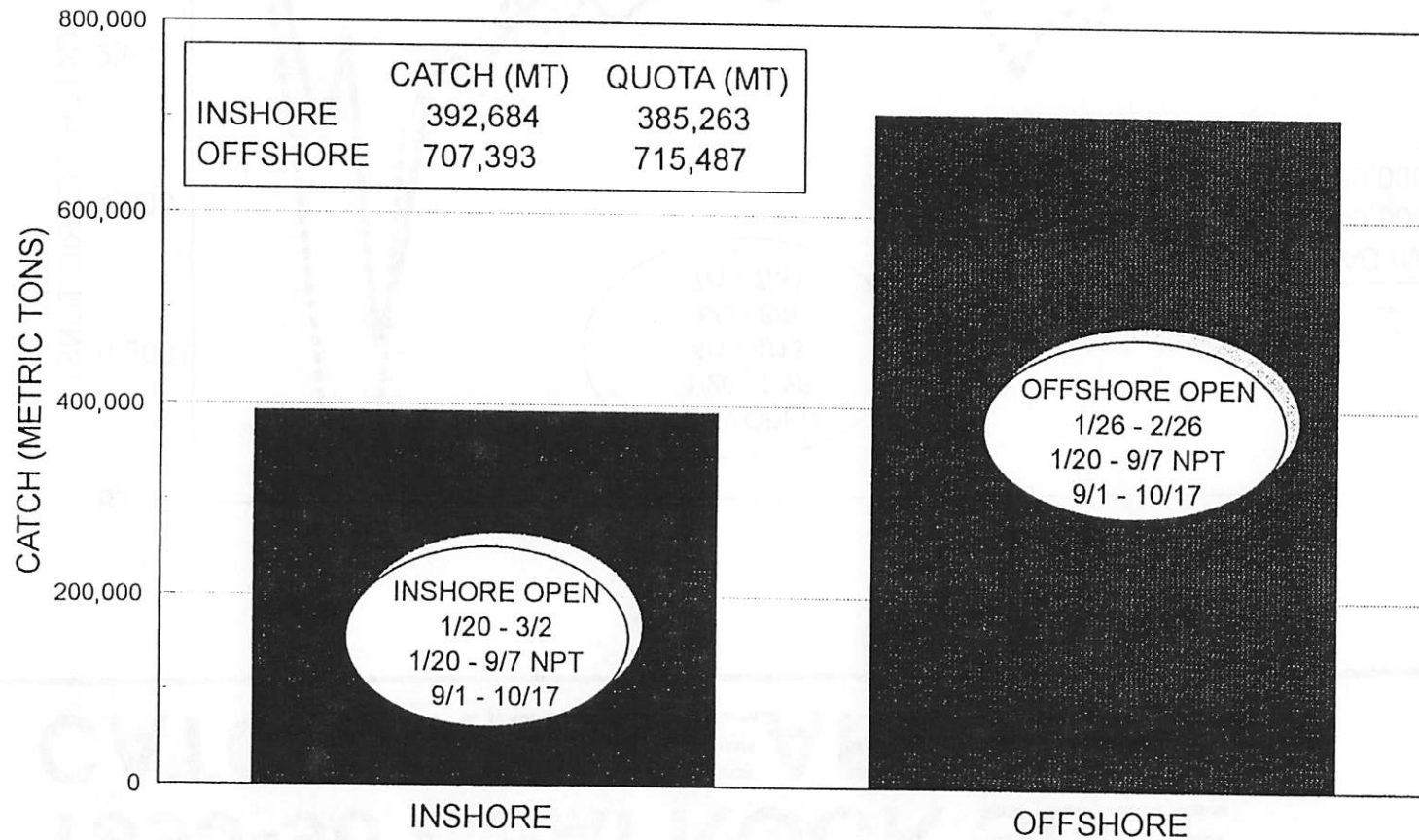
1996 BSAI CDQ POLLOCK



	BS 'A' Season	BS non-'A' Season	Aleutians
CATCH ■	39,948	49,188	2,634
QUOTA □	40,163	49,087	2,670

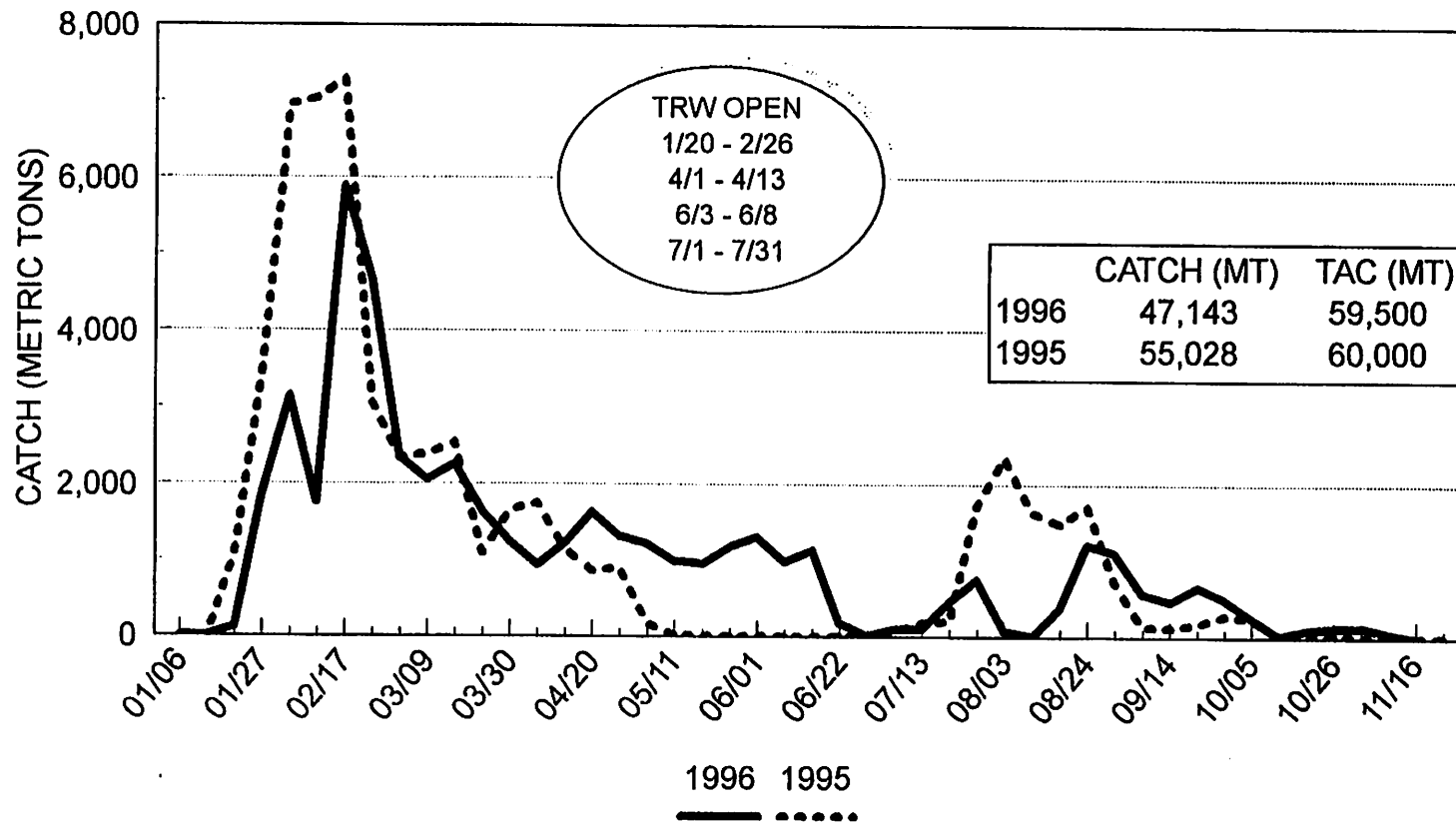
(through 11/23/96)

1996 BERING SEA INSHORE/ OFFSHORE POLLOCK CATCH*



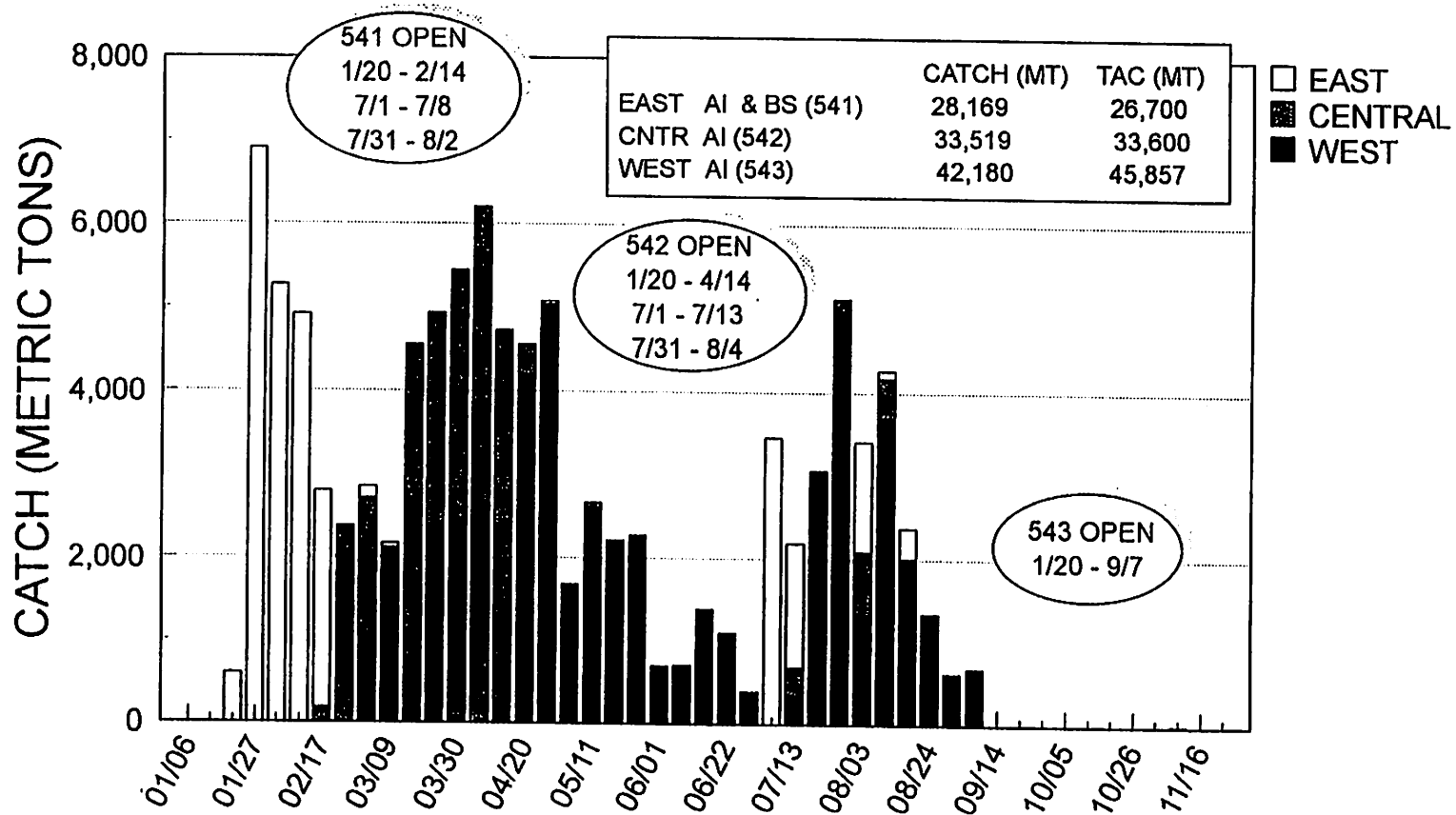
*EXCLUDES CDQ POLLOCK
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 BSAI ROCK SOLE CATCH, ALL GEAR



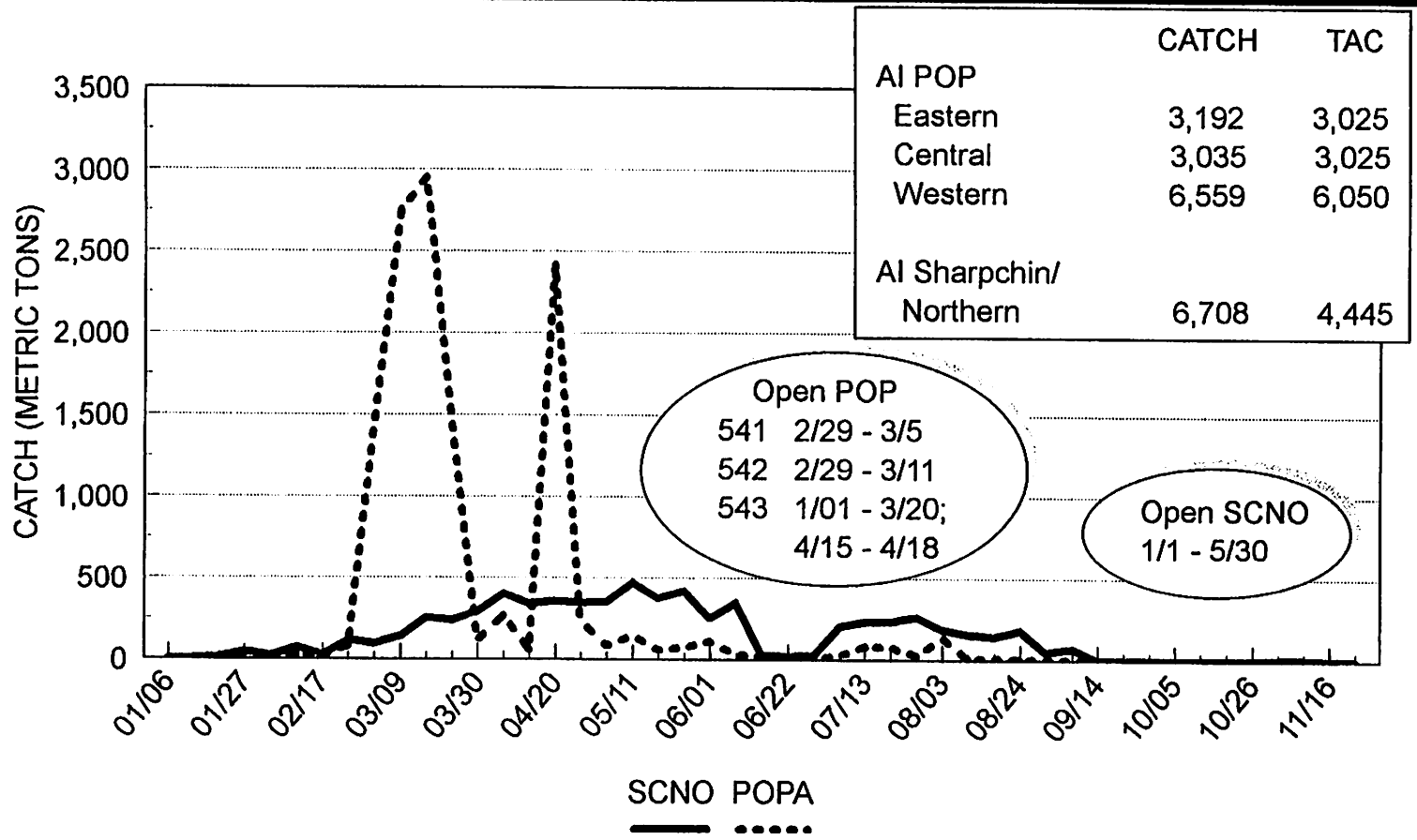
(through 11/23/96)

1996 BSAI TRAWL ATKA MACKEREL CATCH



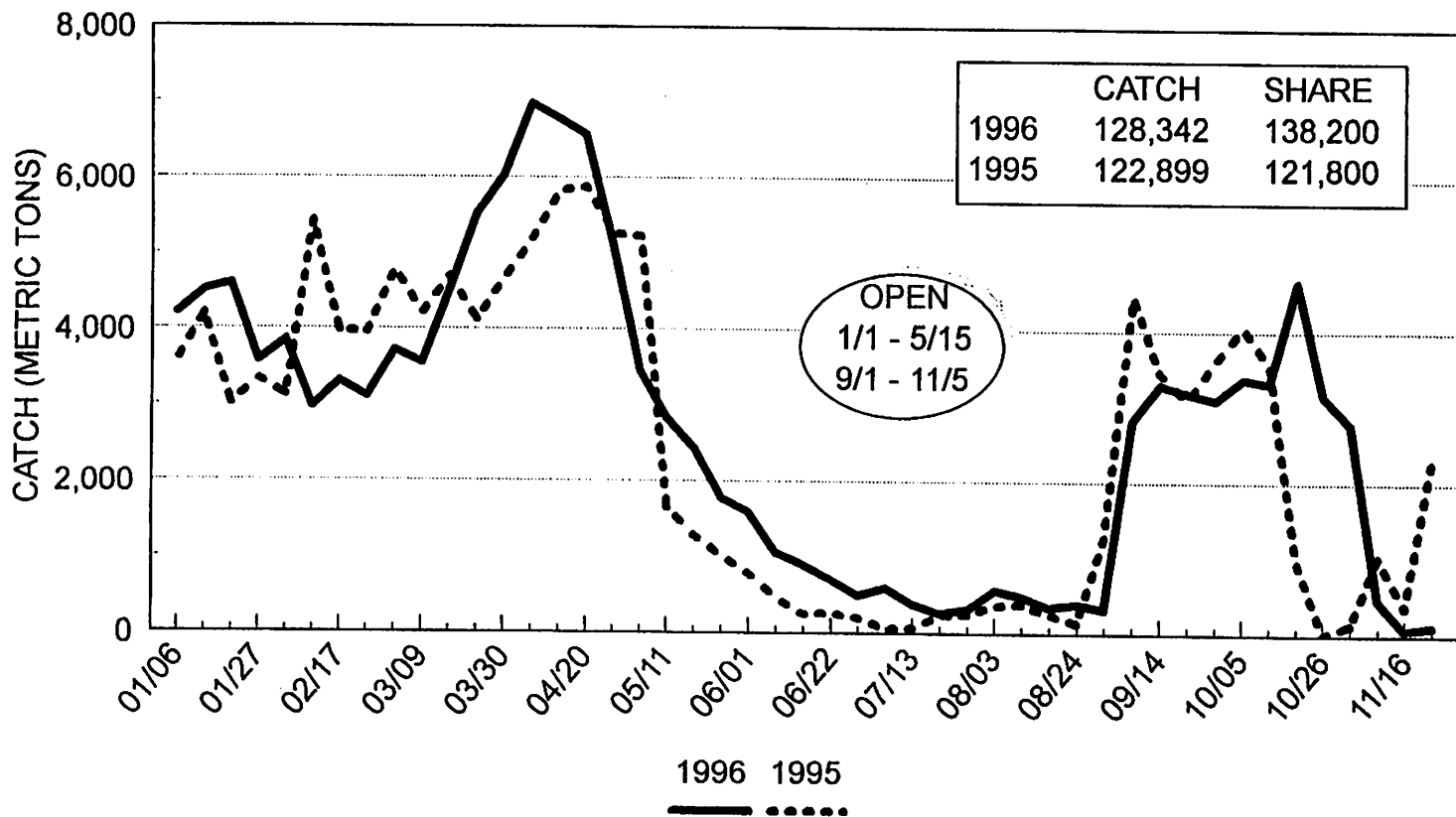
(through 11/23/96)

1996 ALEUTIAN ISLANDS ROCKFISH CATCH



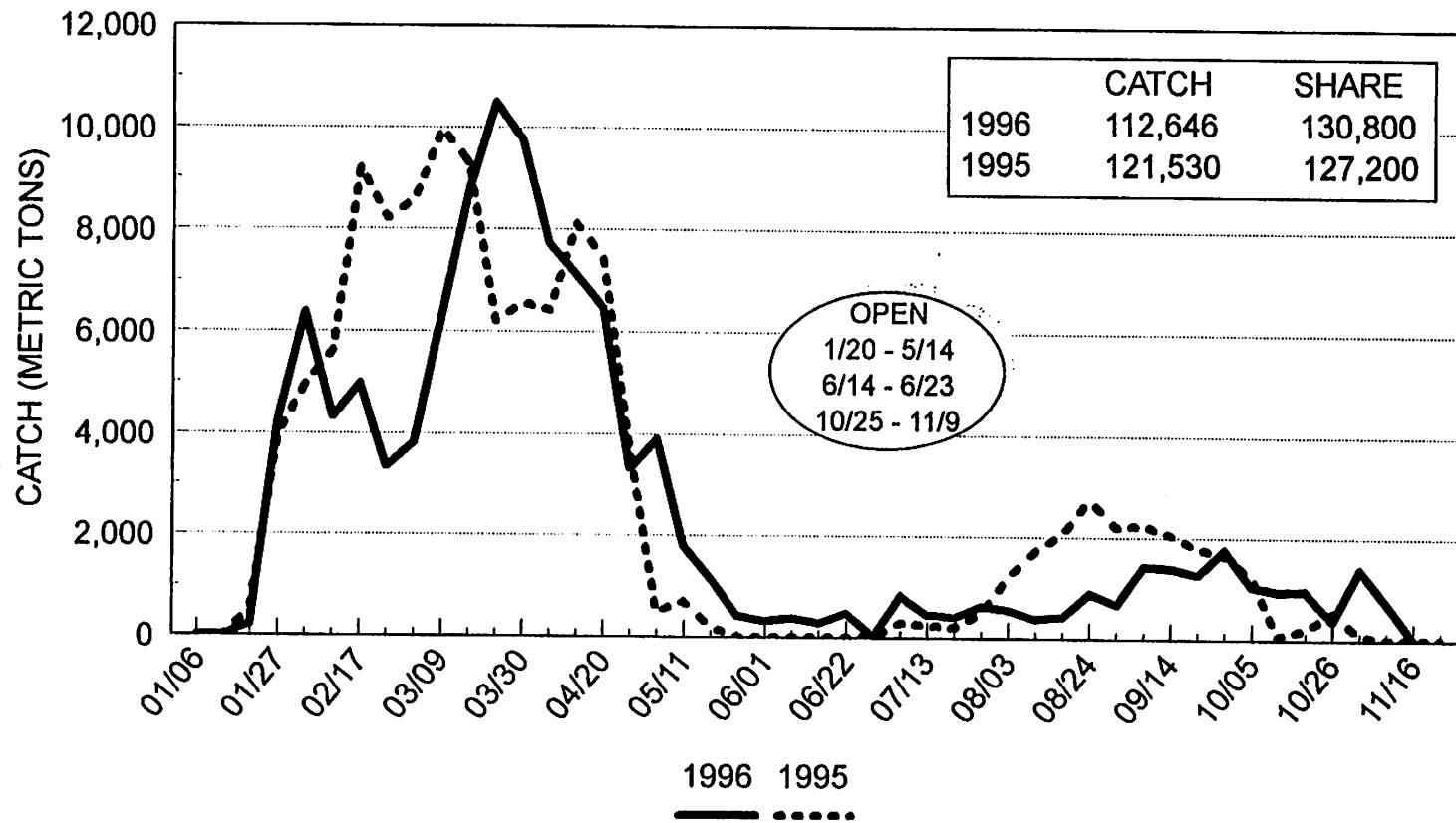
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 BSAI FIXED GEAR PACIFIC COD CATCH



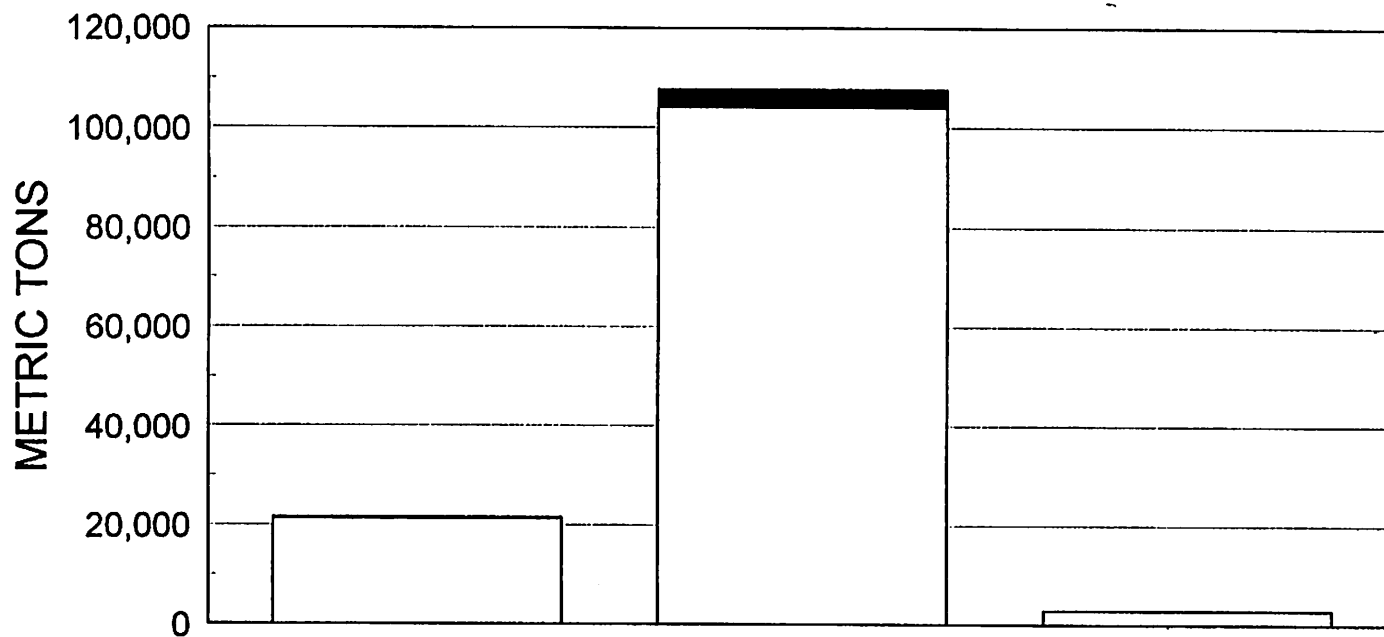
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 BSAI TRAWL PACIFIC COD CATCH



(through 11/23/96)

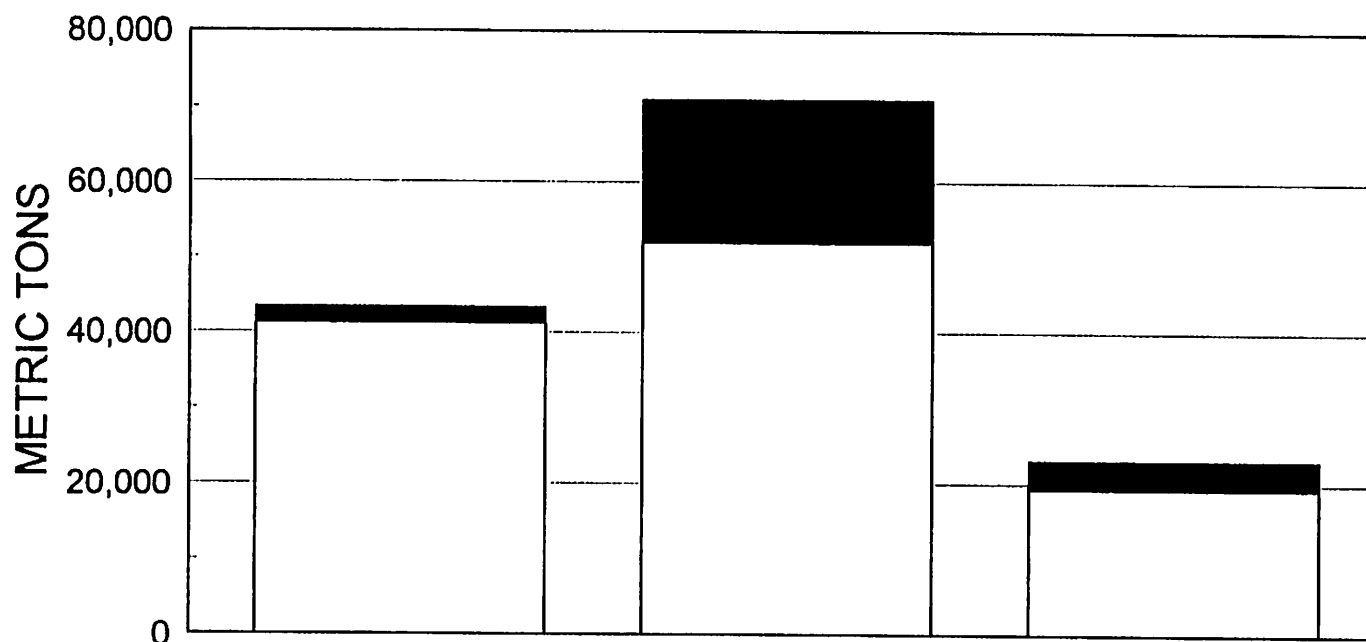
1996 BSAI FIXED GEAR, PCOD DISCARDS, ALL FISHERIES



	SHORESIDE	CATCH/PROC	MOTHERSHIP
RETAIN <input type="checkbox"/>	21,236	104,217	2,889
DISCARD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	366	3,609	33

(through 11/23/96)

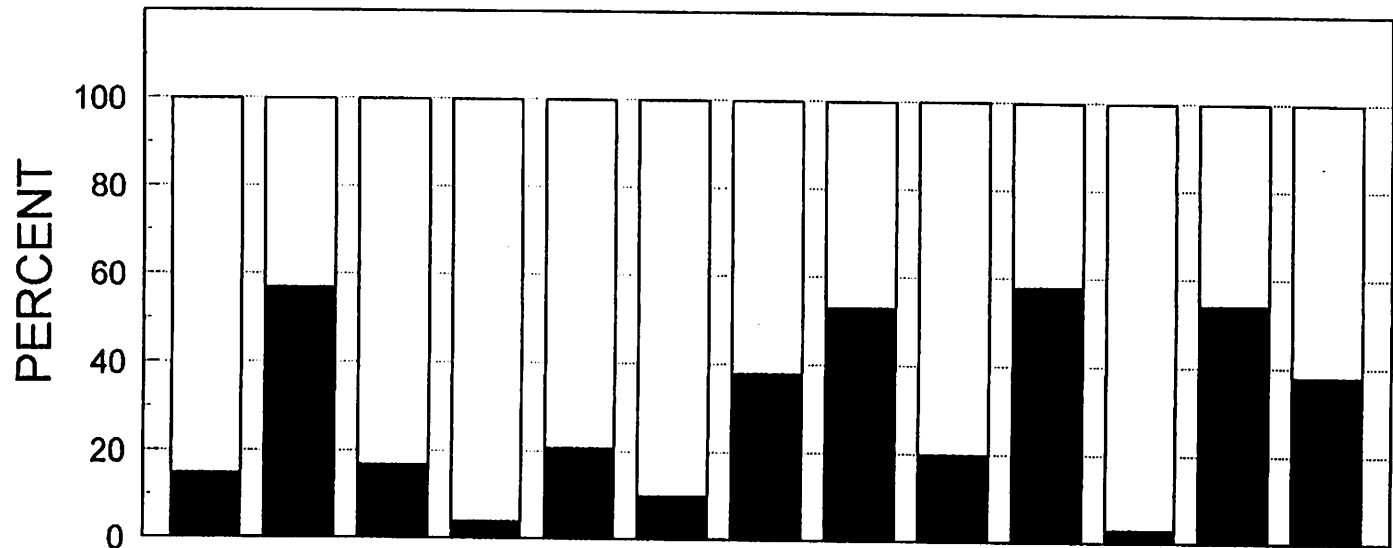
1996 BSAI TRAWL, PACIFIC COD DISCARDS, ALL FISHERIES



	SHORESIDE	CATCH/PROC	MOTHERSHIP
RETAIN <input type="checkbox"/>	41,301	51,939	19,406
DISCARD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,979	19,084	3,871

(through 11/23/96)

1996 BSAI GROUND FISH DISCARDS BY GEAR & TARGET

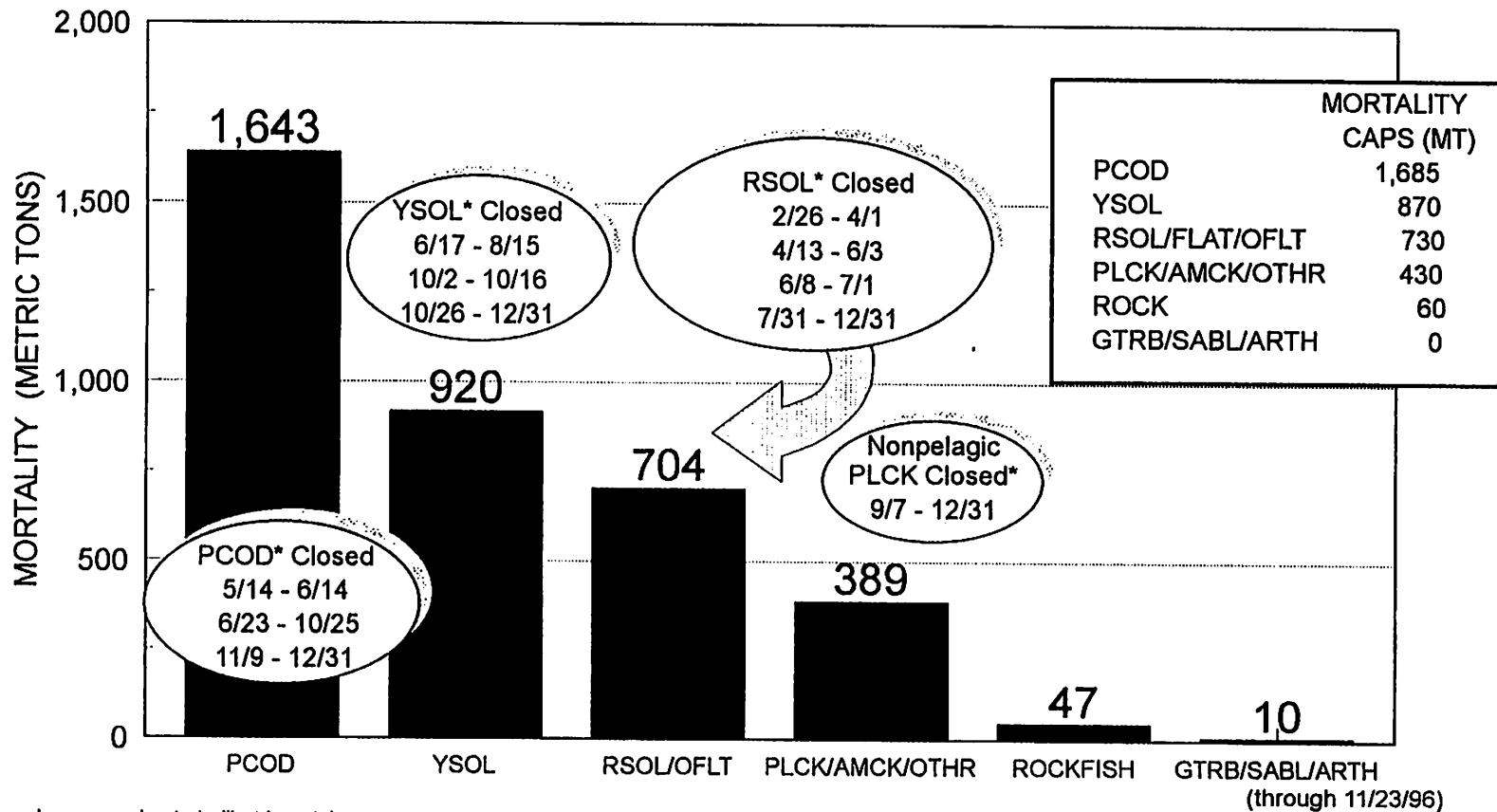


	C-HAL	S-HAL	T-HAL	C-POT	A-TRW	B-TRW	C-TRW	F-TRW	K-TRW	L-TRW	P-TRW	R-TRW	Y-TRW
DISCARDED 	16,119	1,591	692	1,362	24,875	10,828	42,401	4,537	3,899	14,361	29,794	25,200	66,075
RETAINED 	94,610	1,212	3,389	32,085	94,761	95,481	69,488	3,958	15,235	10,308	1,053,543	21,221	108,075

1,053,543 (through 11/23/96)

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

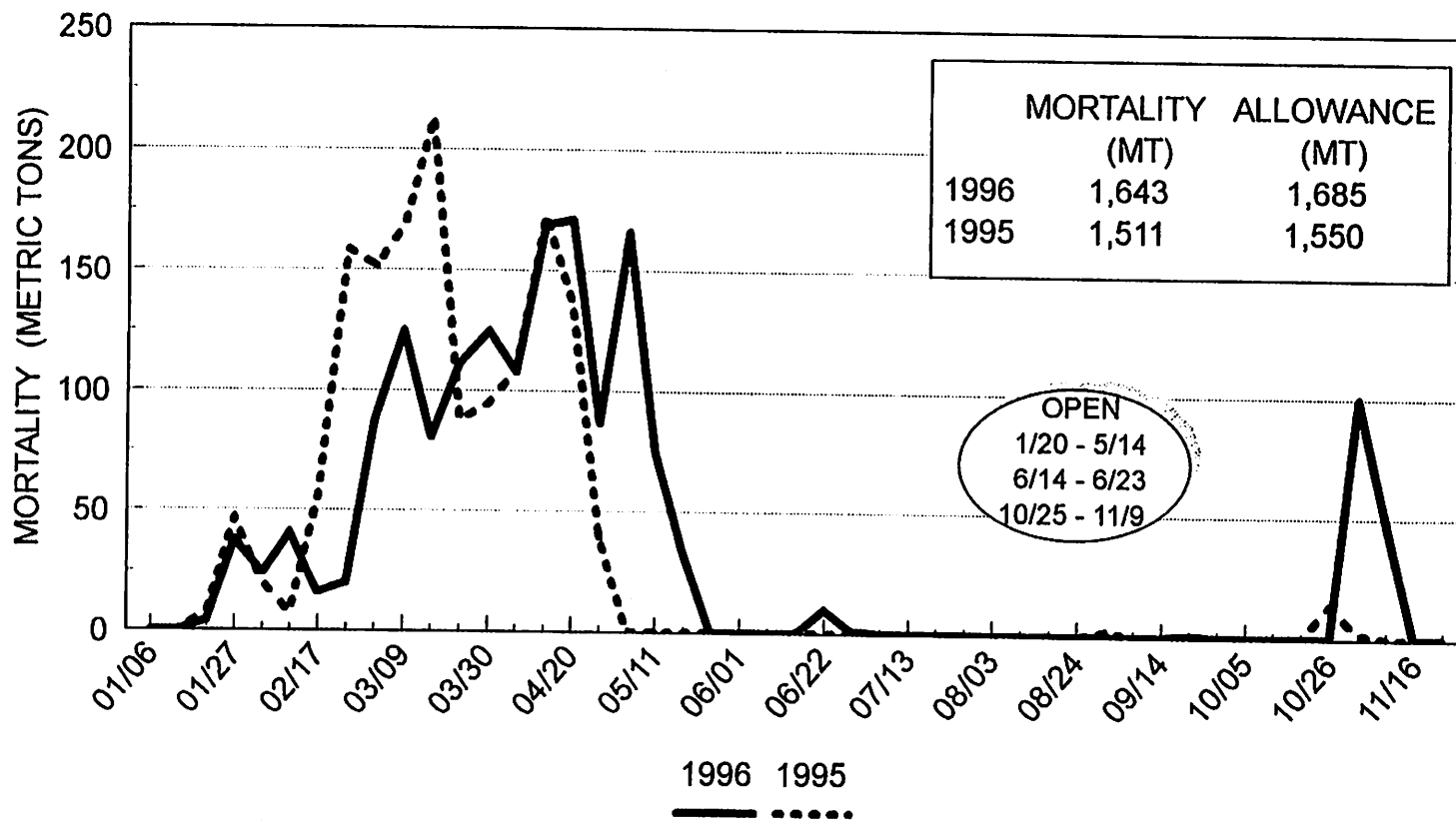
1996 BSAI TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY



*Closures shown are due to halibut bycatch
 Total halibut mortality thru 11/23: 3,713
 Annual total halibut cap: 3,775

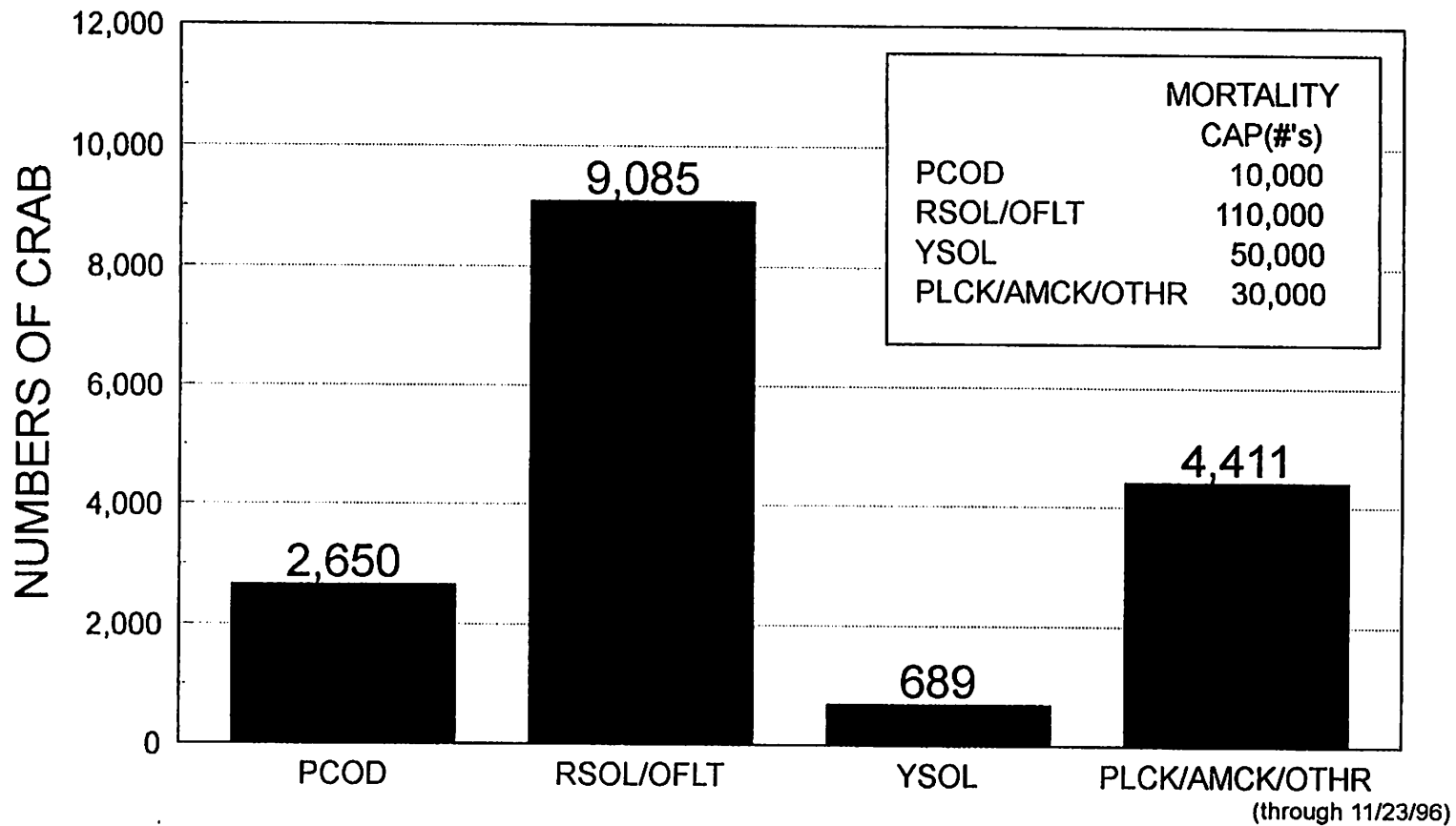
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 BSAI TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY, PCOD

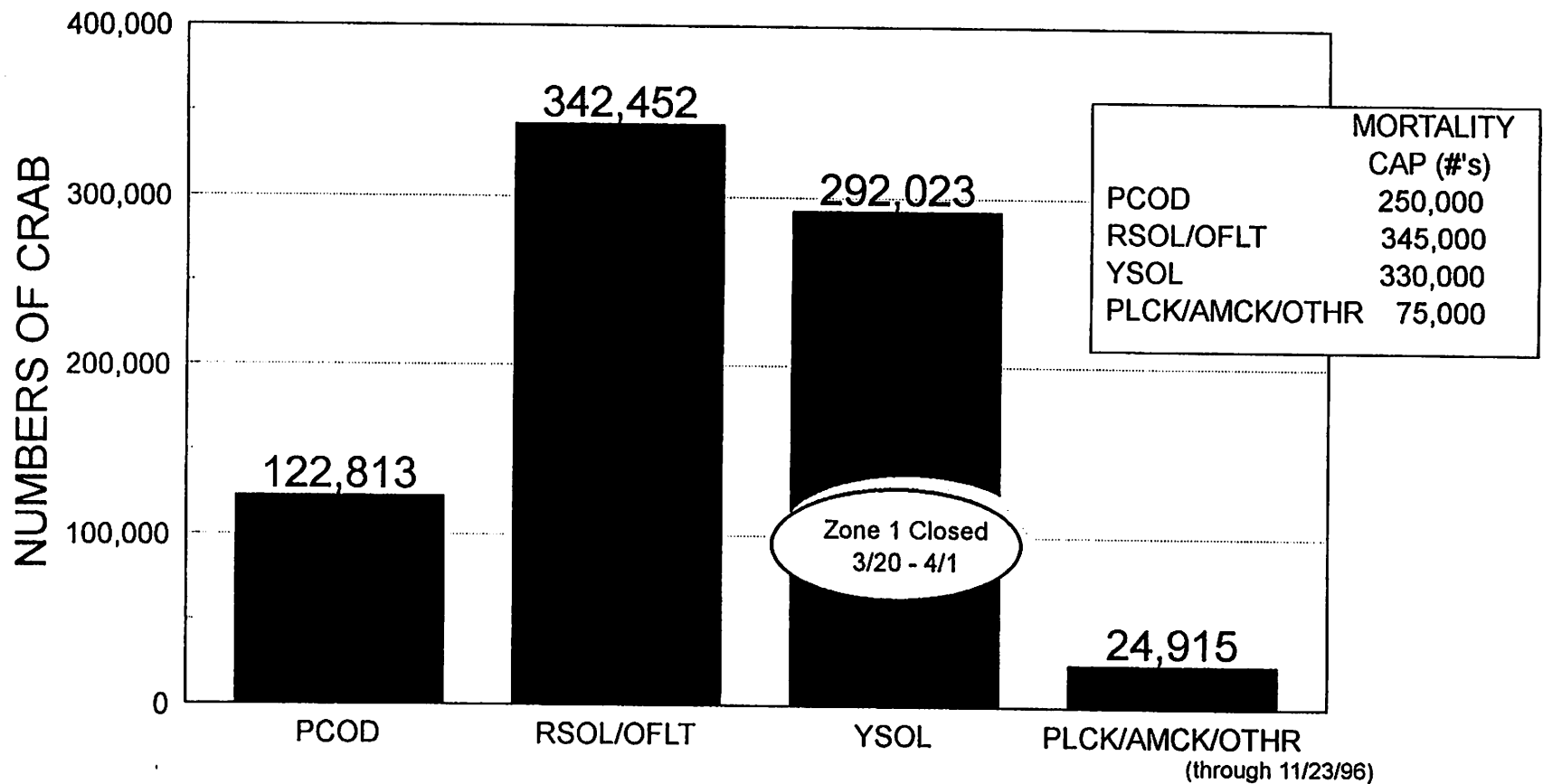


(through 11/23/96)

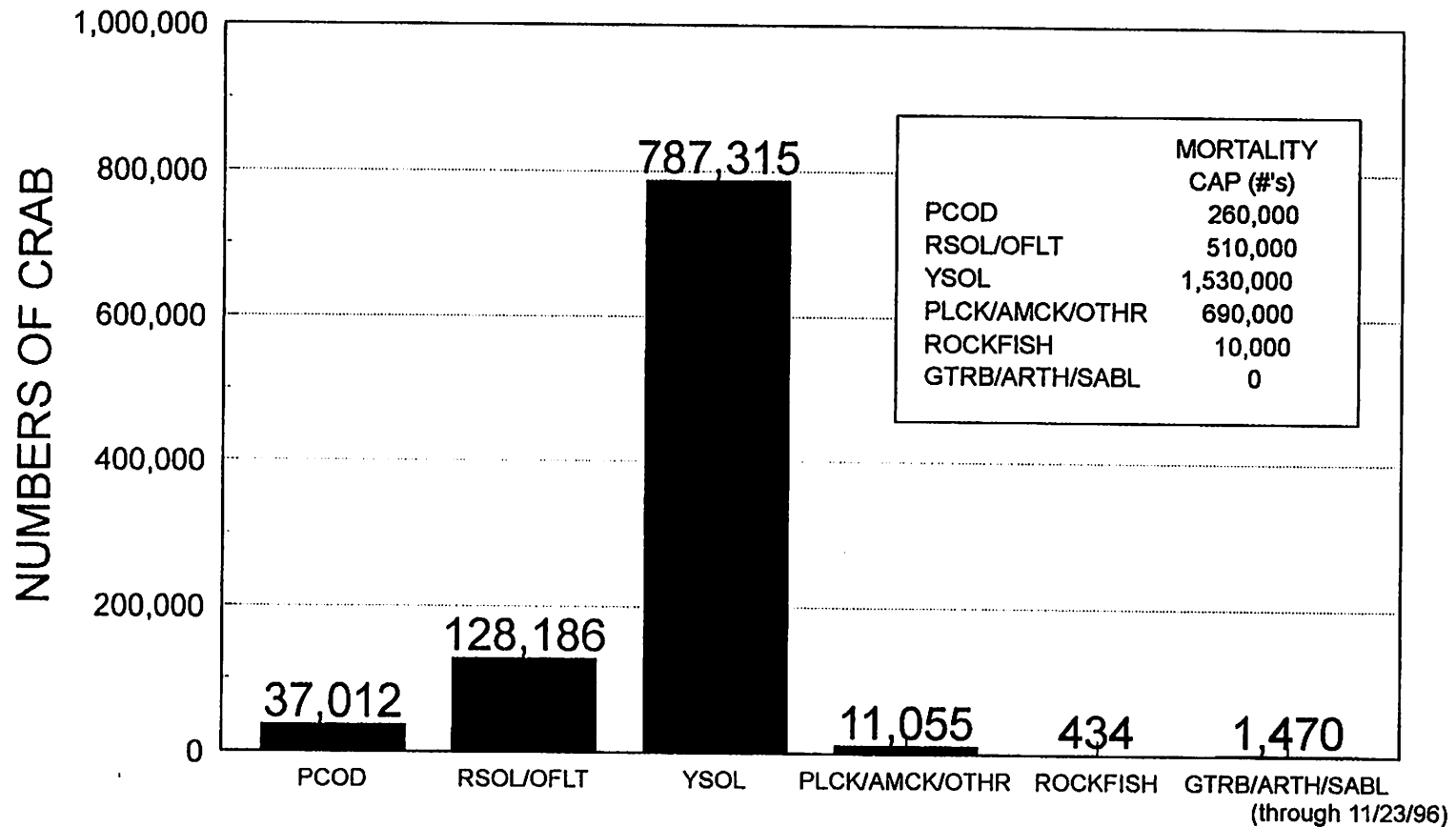
1996 BSAI ZONE 1, TRAWL RED KING CRAB BYCATCH



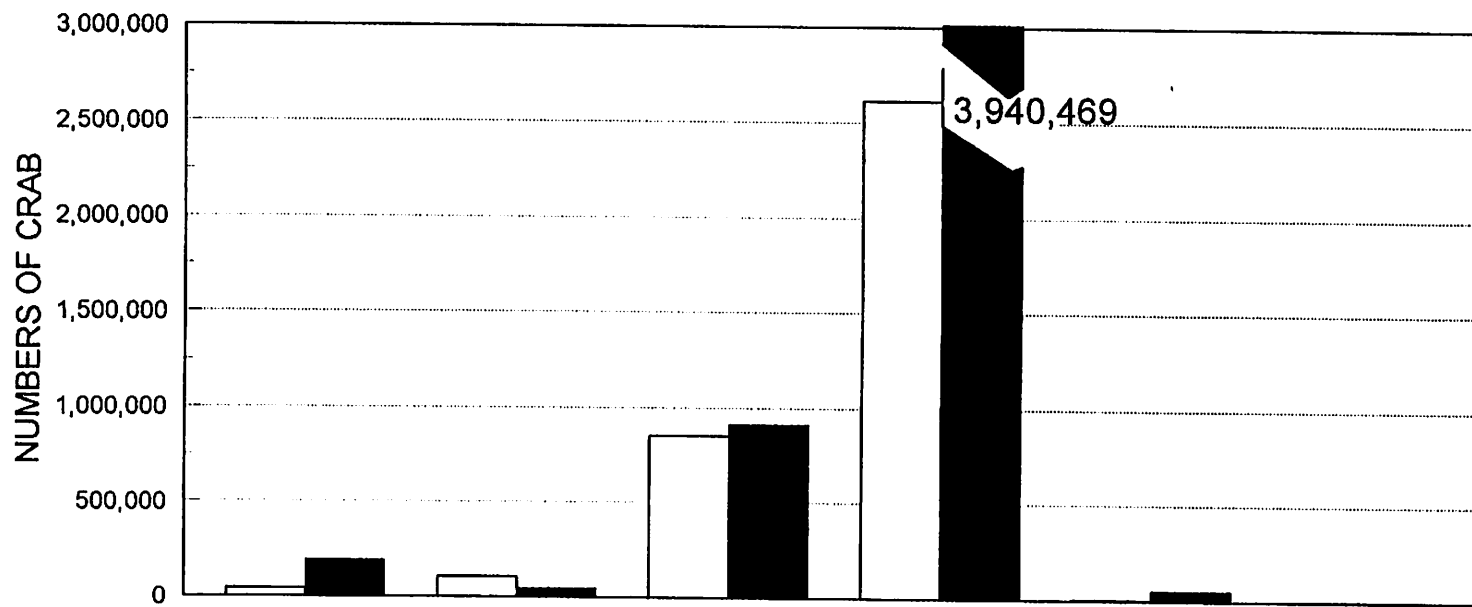
1996 BSAI ZONE 1 TRAWL, BAIRDI TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



1996 BSAI ZONE 2, TRAWL BAIRDI TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



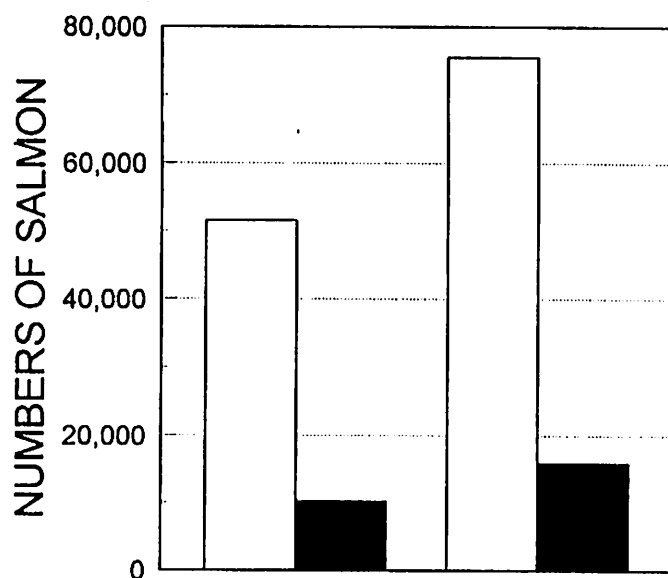
1995-96 BSAI TRAWL, OPILIO TANNER CRAB BYCATCH



	PLCK/AMCK/OTHER	PCOD	RSOL/FSOL/OFLT	YSOL	GTRB/ARTH/SABL	ROCKFISH
1996 □	43,707	105,503	856,039	2,615,678	5,927	138
1995 ■	191,461	47,422	915,754	3,940,469	52,935	74

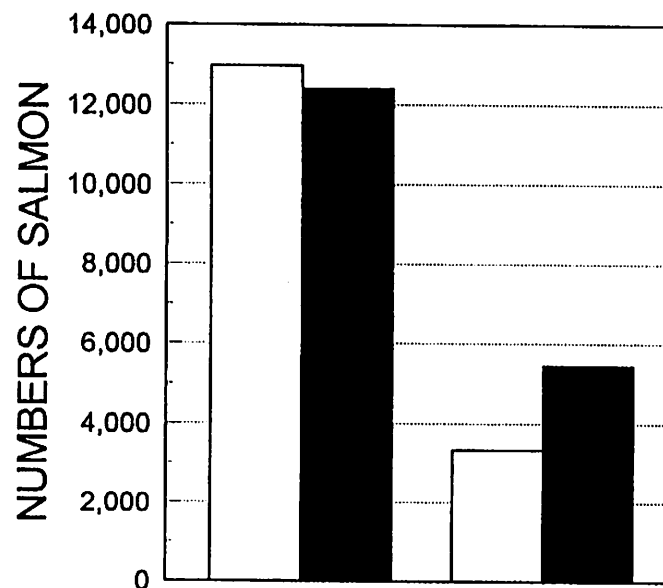
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 BSAI TRAWL, CHINOOK & OTHER SALMON BYCATCH



	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	51,576	75,532
1995 ■	10,281	16,018

MIDWATER POLLOCK



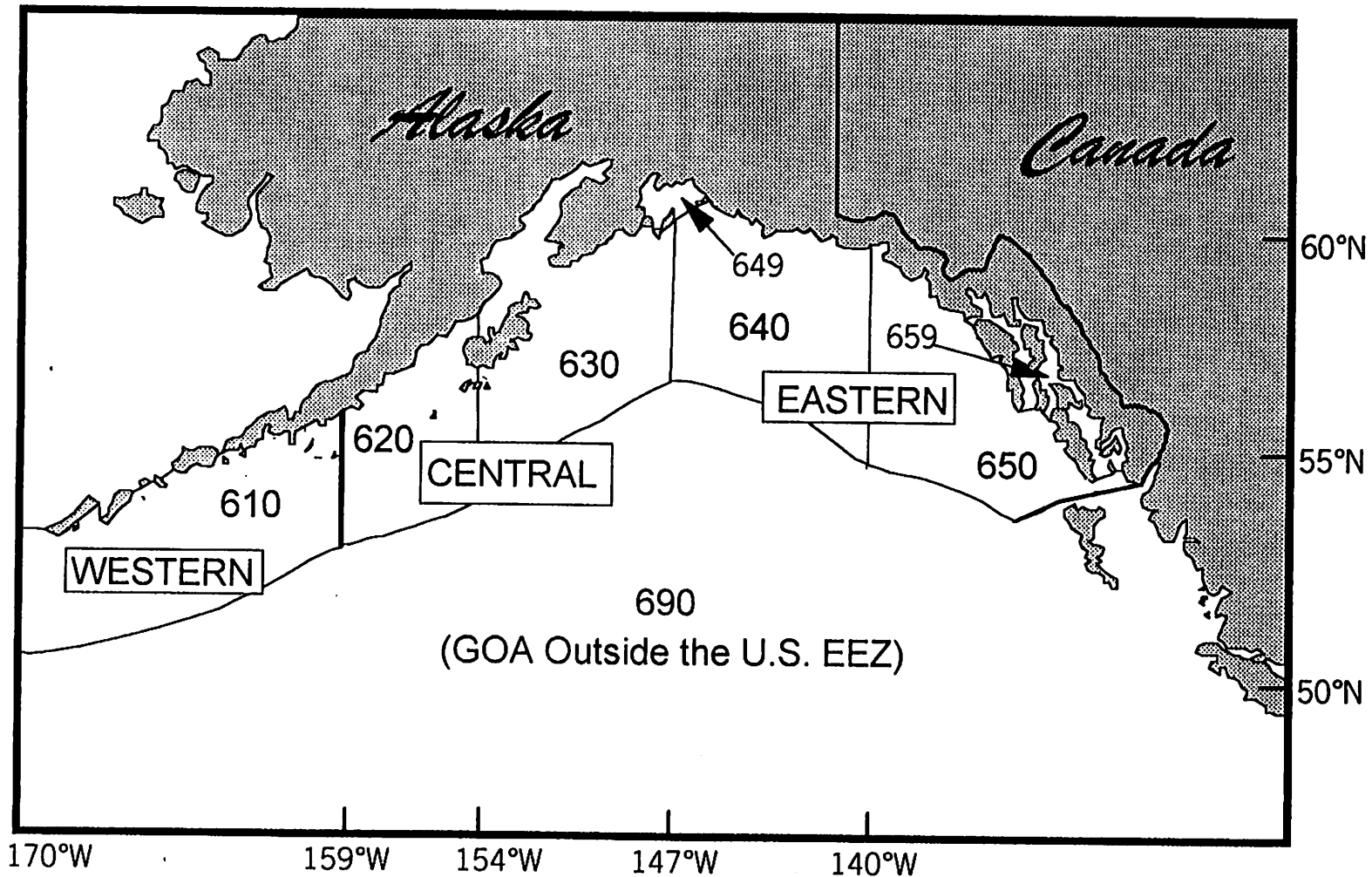
	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	12,973	3,347
1995 ■	12,411	5,463

OTHER FISHERIES

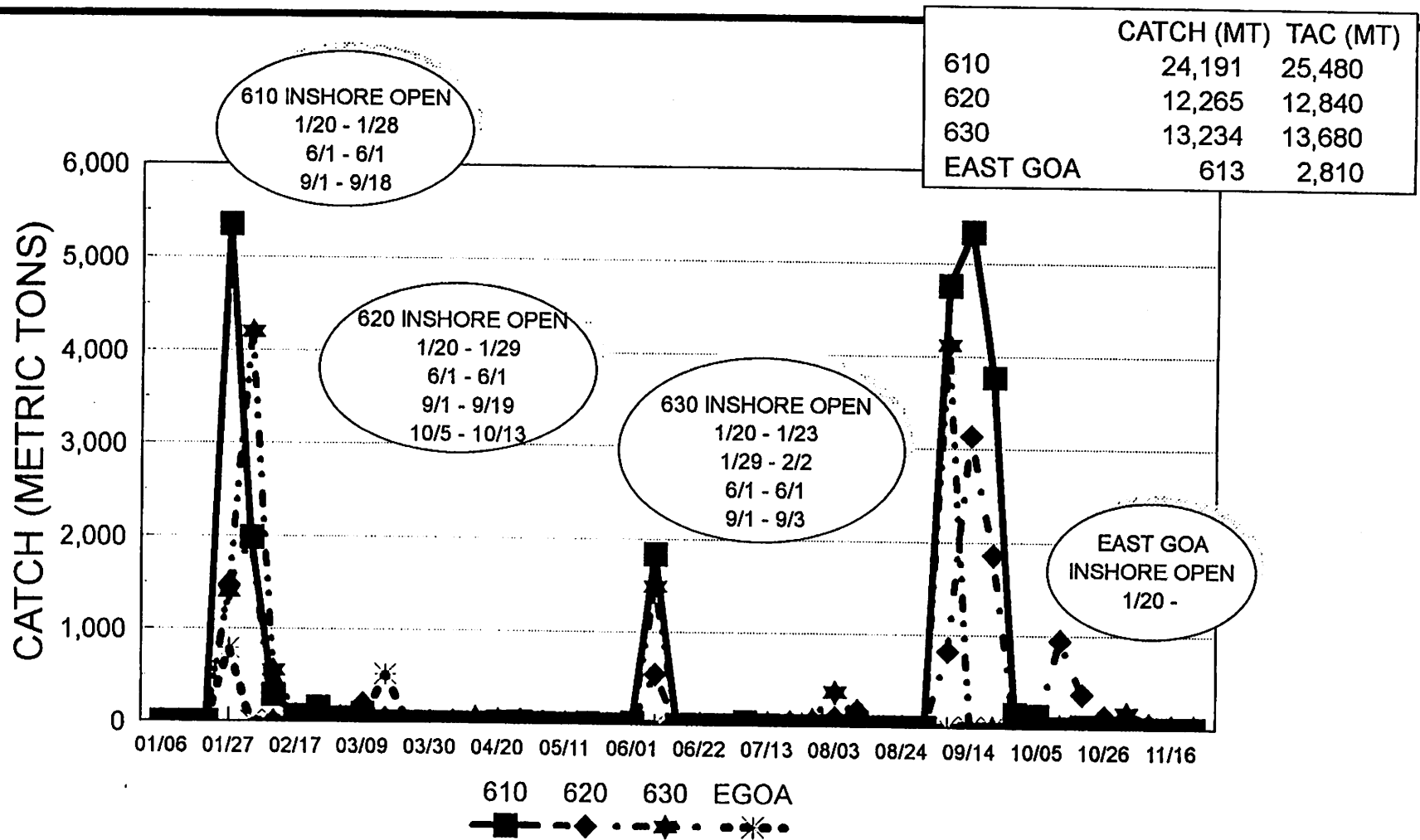
(through 11/25/95 and 11/23/96)

GULF OF ALASKA

1997 REPORTING AREAS OF THE GULF OF ALASKA

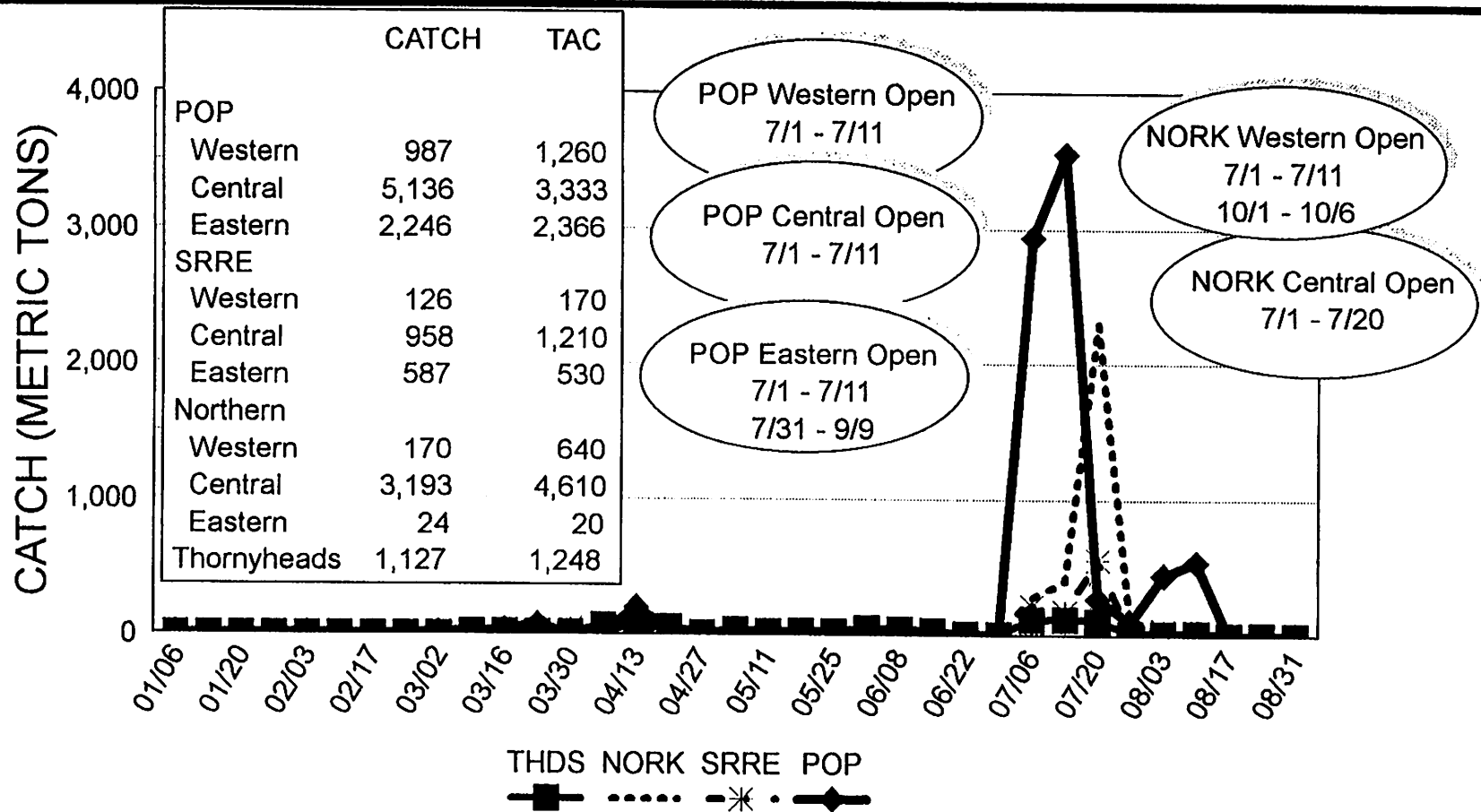


1996 GOA POLLOCK CATCH



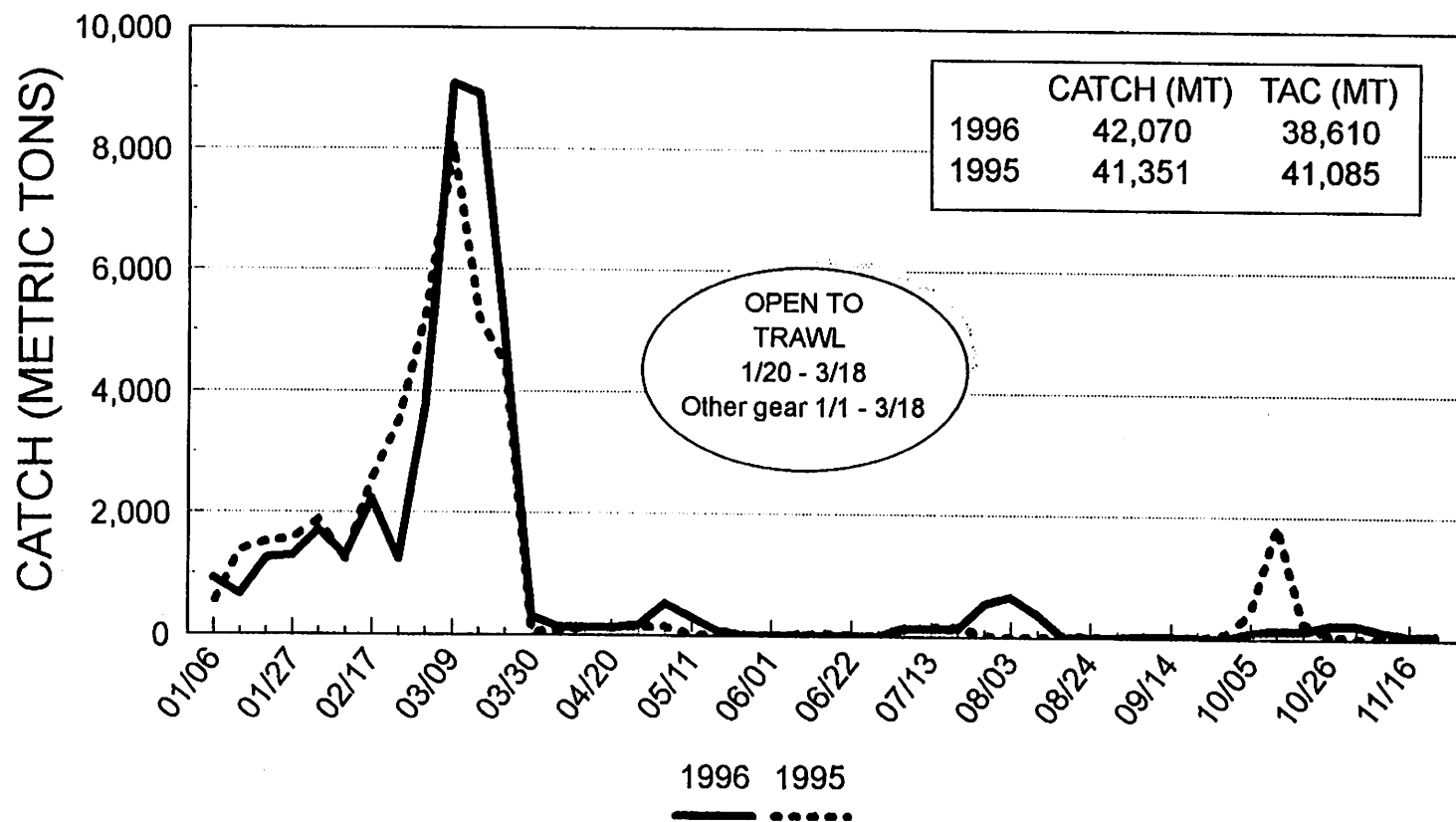
(through 11/23/96)

1996 GOA ROCKFISH CATCH



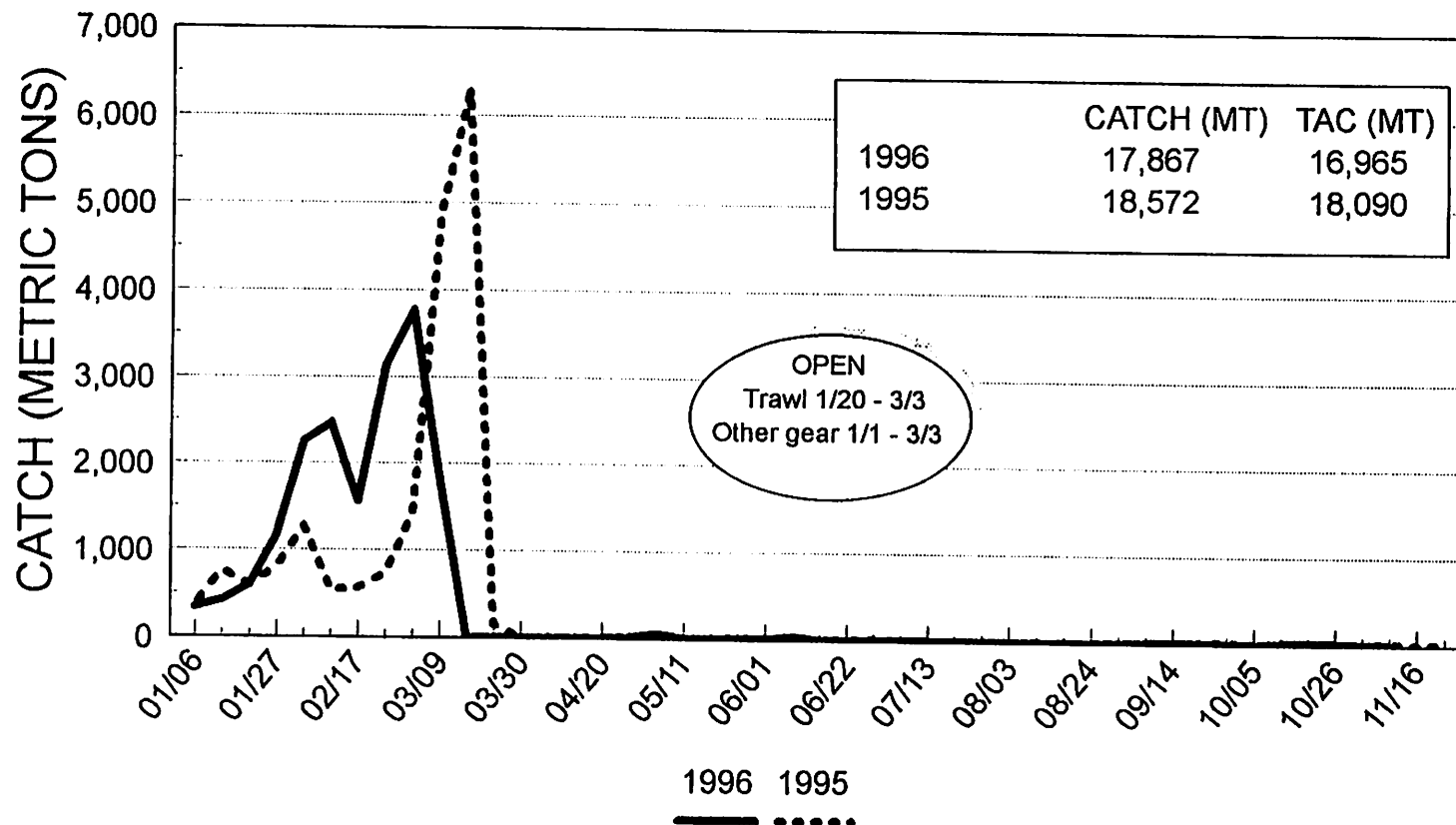
(through 11/23/96)

1996 CENTRAL GOA INSHORE PACIFIC COD CATCH



(through 11/23/96)

1996 WESTERN GOA INSHORE PACIFIC COD CATCH



NOTE: Discard of Pacific cod attributed to 610 Inshore Pacific cod through 11/23/96 = 483 mt

(through 11/23/96)

1996 GOA GROUND FISH DISCARDS BY GEAR & TARGET

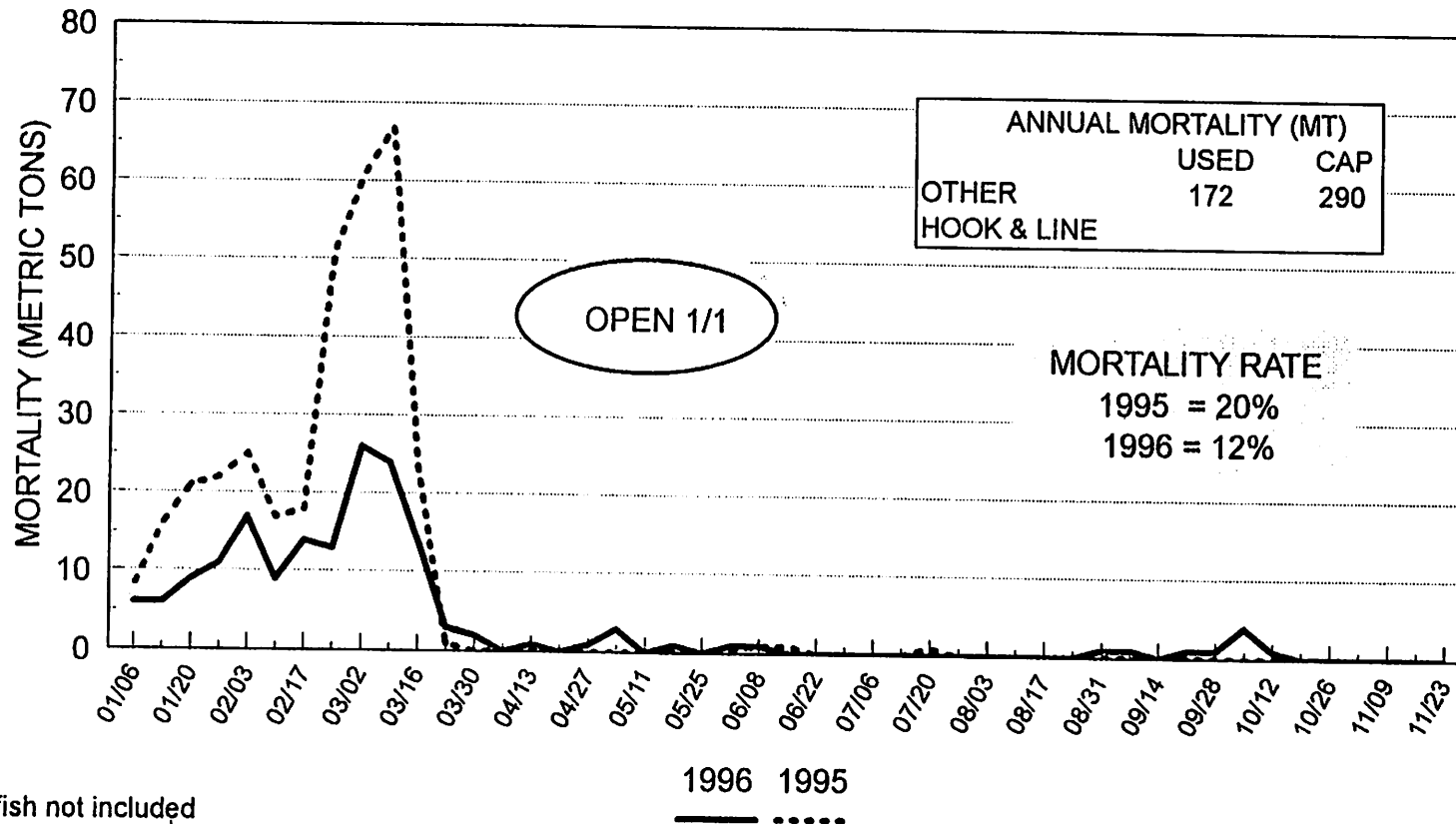


	C-HAL	S-HAL	C-POT	A-TRW	B-TRW	C-TRW	D-TRW	H-TRW	K-TRW	L-TRW	P-TRW	W-TRW	X-TRW
DISCARD <input type="checkbox"/>	628	1,895	177	308	997	3,783	1,159	6,652	5,129	2,241	1,715	5,697	10,201
RETAIN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9,820	16,479	12,077	1,222	4,734	39,247	1,624	8,094	14,398	1,134	41,646	6,404	5,516

(through 11/23/96)

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

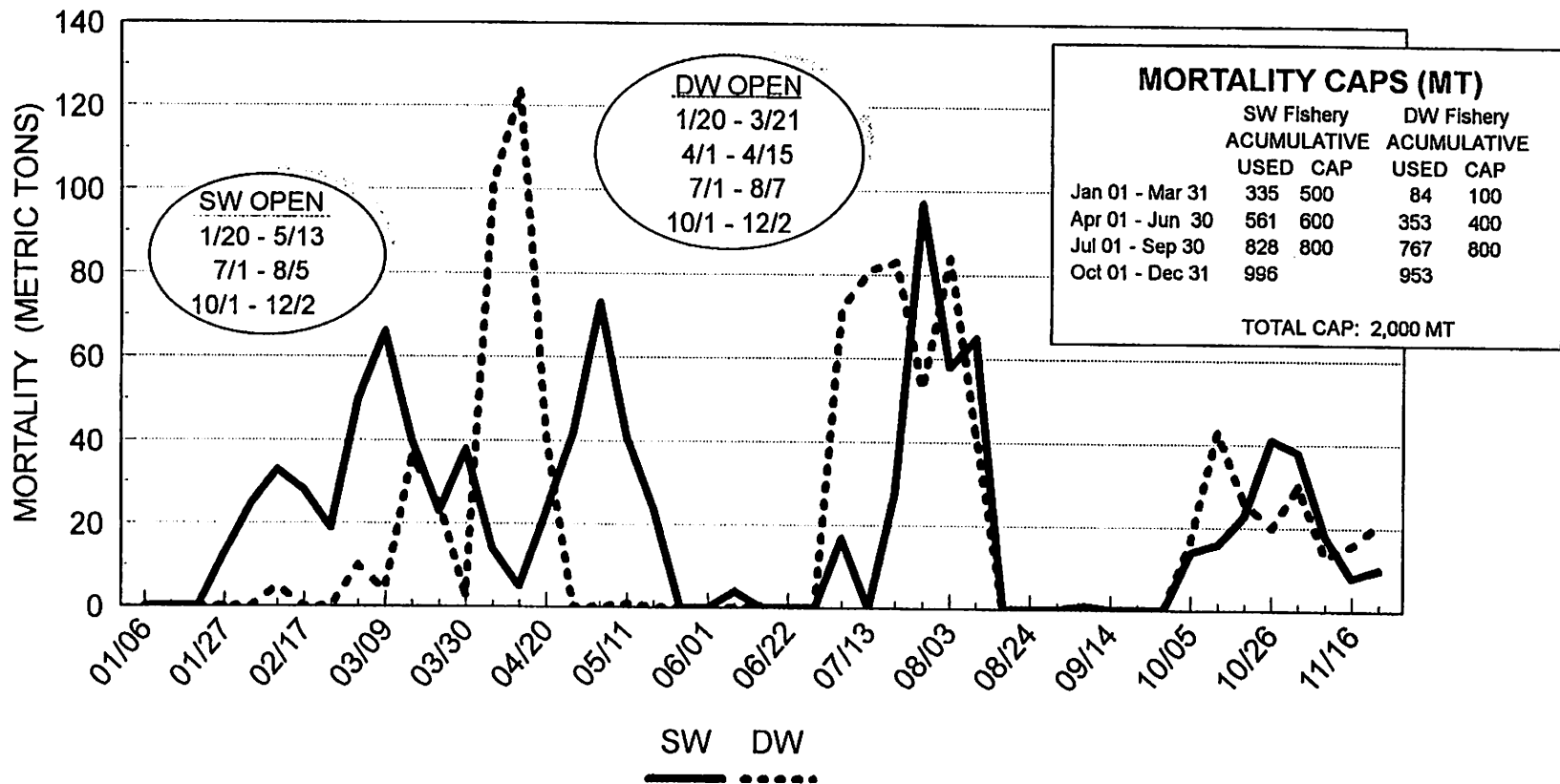
1995-96 GOA HOOK & LINE*, HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY



*Sablefish not included

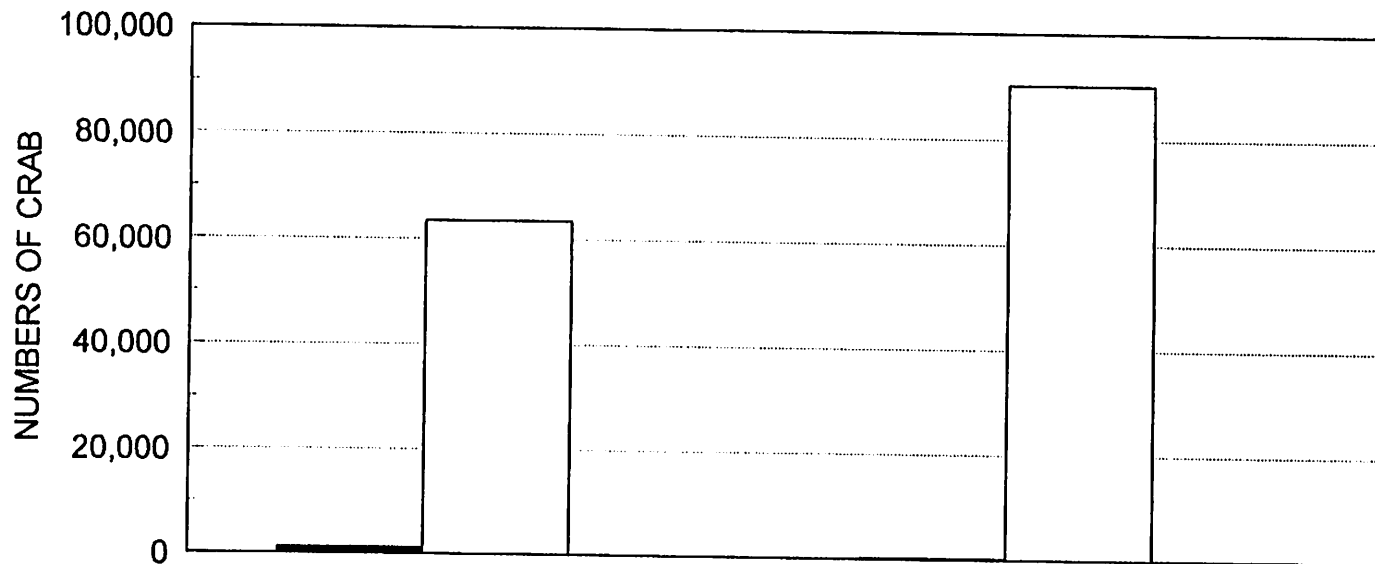
** 1995 demersal shelf rockfish fishery, Southeast District is not listed due to insufficient observer coverage. (through 11/23/96)

1996 GOA SW & DW TRAWL HALIBUT BYCATCH MORTALITY



(through 11/23/96)

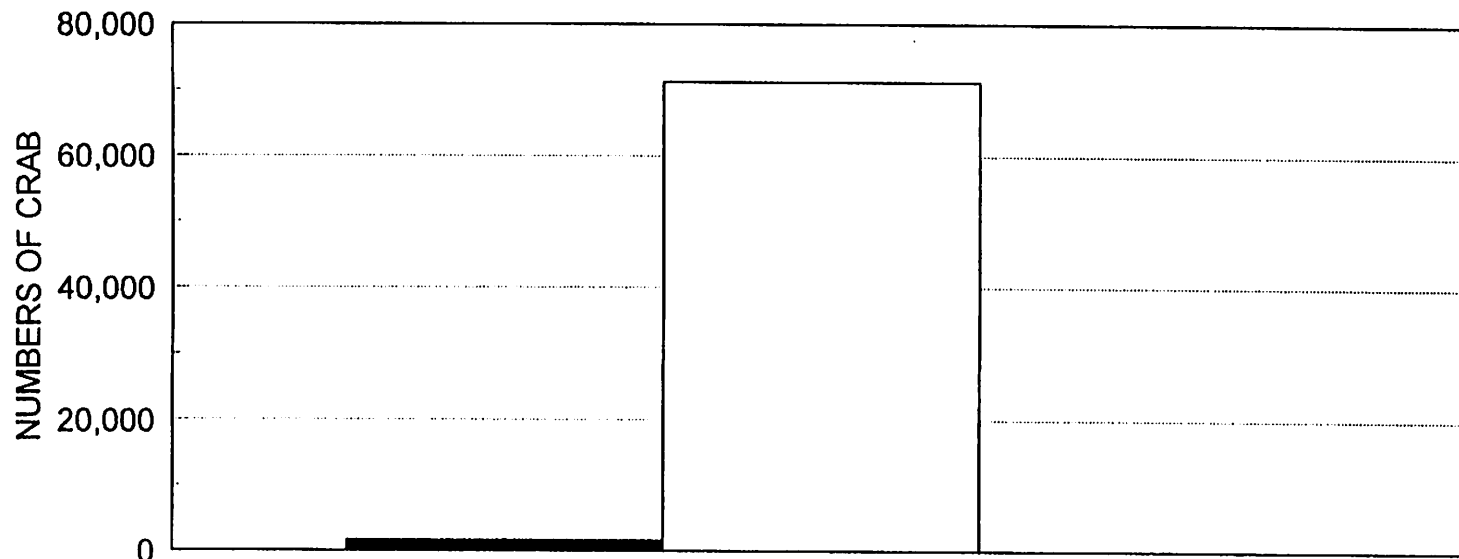
1996 GOA TRAWL, TANNER & RED KING CRAB BYCATCH



	DW FISHERY	SW FISHERY
OTANNER ■	1,336	347
BAIRDI □	63,579	90,355
RED KING ▨	0	187

(through 11/23/96)

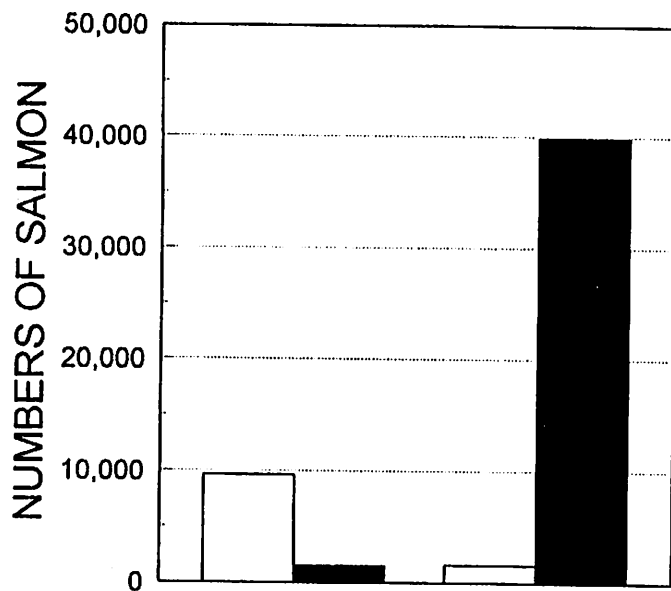
1996 GOA POT, TANNER & RED KING CRAB BYCATCH



OTANNER	■	1,719
BAIRDI	□	71,225
RED KING	■	13

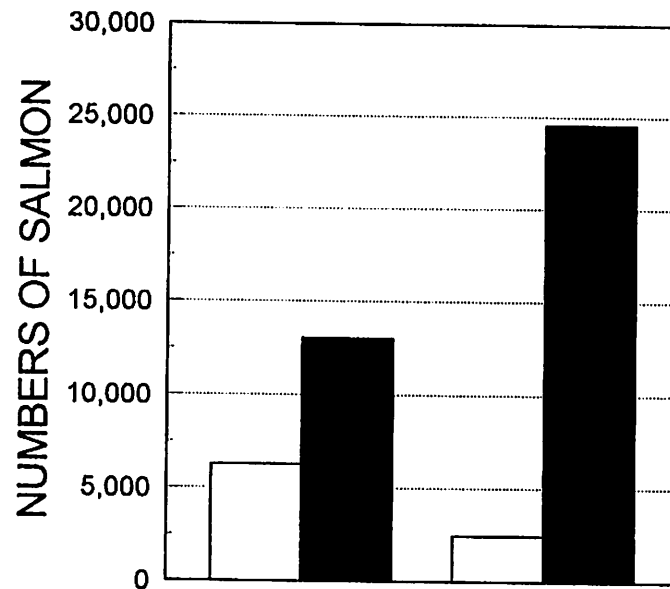
(through 11/23/96)

1995-96 GOA TRAWL, CHINOOK & OTHER SALMON BYCATCH



	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	9,650	1,590
1995 ■	1,579	39,898

MIDWATER POLLOCK

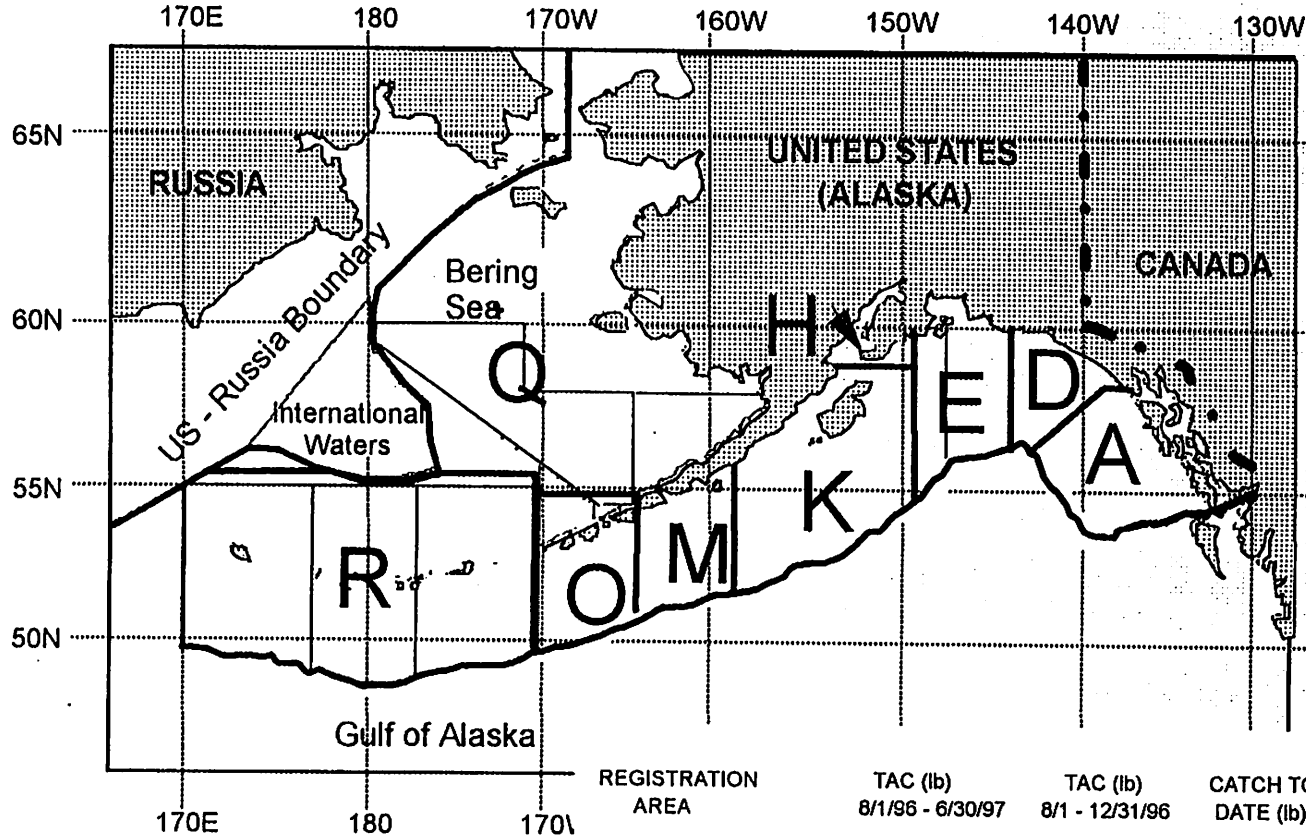


	CHINOOK	OTHER SALMON
1996 □	6,292	2,478
1995 ■	13,067	24,611

OTHER FISHERIES

(through 11/25/95 and 11/23/96)

SCALLOP REGISTRATION AREAS



REGISTRATION AREA	TAC (lb) 8/1/96 - 6/30/97	TAC (lb) 8/1 - 12/31/96	CATCH TO DATE (lb)	STATUS
Southeastern (Area A)	0	0		Prohibited
Yakutat (Area D)				
District 16	35,000	27,000	27,000	Closed 11/29 (TAC)
All other districts	250,000	195,000	195,000	Closed 9/4 (TAC)
Prince William Sound (Area E)	50,000			Prohibited
Cook Inlet (Area H)				
Kamishak District	20,000		28,000	Closed 8/27 (TAC)
Kodiak (Area K)	400,000		0	
Shelikof	218,000			Closed 10/30 (TAC)
Alaska Peninsula (Area M)	200,000		12,700	Closed 10/31 (Crab bycatch)
Dutch Harbor (Area O)	170,000		Confidential	
Bering Sea (Area Q)	600,000		Confidential	
Adak (Area R)	75,000		Confidential	No effort

*Data supplied by ADF&G
(through 11/23/96)

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Region
Juneau, Alaska
12/11/96

Status of Regulatory Actions Through December 11, 1996

Revised Gulf of Alaska rebuilding plan for Pacific Ocean Perch (md 38)	Effective September 25, 1996
Interim observer plan (Amds 47/47 & Crab Amd 6)	Final rule effective January 1, 1997
Pacific cod gear allocations in the BSAI (Amd 46)	Final rule effective January 1, 1997
Require computer and satellite/modem capability by processors for use by NMFS-certified observers	Final rule scheduled to be effective July 1, 1997
Bairdi Tanner crab PSC limits in BSAI (Amendment 41)	Comments invited through January 1, 1997
Red King Crab Savings Area, Revised RKC PSC limit, & Northern Bristol Bay Closure (Amd 37)	Approved November 26, 1996; Final rule being reviewed by WDC offices
Authorize blocks of halibut IFQ to be swept up to 3,000 lbs, and blocks of sablefish IFQ to be swept up to 5,000 lbs (Amds 43/43)	Final rule being reviewed by WDC offices
Overfishing definitions (Amd 44/44)	Comments invited through December 10, 1996
Moratorium in the Scallop fishery (Amd 2 to Scallop FMP)	Comments invited through February 3, 1997
Record keeping & Reporting (3-year processor permit)	Proposed rule being reviewed by WDC offices

Status of Regulatory Actions
Through December 11, 1996 (continued)

Revisions to Gulf of Alaska Maximum Retainable Bycatch percentage for sablefish & Allow arrowtooth flounder as a "basis species"	Proposed rule being reviewed by WDC offices
Groundfish/Crab License Program and CDQs (Groundfish Amds 39/41 & BSAI Crab Amd 5)	Proposed rule being prepared by Regional Office
Improved retention/utilization of pollock, cod, rocksole, & yellowfin sole in BSAI (Amd 49)	Proposed rule being prepared by Regional Office
Withdrawal of the salmon FMP	Proposed rule withdrawn on November 27, 1996
Amd 2 to the Commercial Scallop Fishery Off Alaska (establish a moratorium on further entry into the scallop fishery)	Comments on proposed rule invited until February 3, 1997
Extension of sablefish season in Aleutians	No further action, see letter to Council
Cod end mesh size restrictions	No further action, see letter to Council
Require groundfish vessels fishing on the GOA seamounts to have transponders on board	Proposed regulations being prepared by Regional Office
NMFS certified scales program	Proposed regulations being reviewed by WDC offices
Require processors to use scales to weigh pollock caught in pollock fisheries	Proposed regulations being prepared by Regional Office



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-2168

AGENDA B-3
DECEMBER 1996
SUPPLEMENTAL

October 30, 1996



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

Dear Mr. Lauber:

At its September 1994 meeting, the Council recommended that NMFS establish, by regulation, minimum mesh size and design standards for codend top quarter panels in the directed fisheries for Pacific cod, rock sole, yellowfin sole and pollock in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI). After substantial review by the Alaska Enforcement Division and NOAA General Counsel-Enforcement, we have determined that we are unable to develop enforceable regulations to implement the Council's recommendation. In attempting to draft regulations, we have sought input from industry, net manufacturers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the experience of other regions. However, we believe that the types of changes that would be required to create an enforceable mesh size regulation are beyond the scope of the Council's original proposal. In addition, we believe that a mesh size regulation intended to reduce discards may be largely unnecessary in light of the Council's recent passage of an improved retention/improved utilization (IR/IU) program for the same four species. Finally, we are concerned about the possible conflicts between mesh size regulations and the existing vessel incentive program (VIP).

Our primary concern with the mesh size proposal is the fishery-specific approach recommended by the Council. At present, no definitions of the Pacific cod, pollock, rock sole, and yellowfin sole fisheries exist that can be used to enforce a mesh size regulation applicable only to those four fisheries. The Council was faced with a similar problem when developing the IR/IU program, and chose instead, a species-specific rather than fishery-specific approach to IR/IU. To implement a fishery-specific approach to mesh size regulations, NMFS would need to determine a vessel's fishery category using a formula based on percentages of retained catch. However, this approach would require that monitoring and enforcement be accomplished through burdensome and time consuming case counts by boarding officers or observers. In addition, we believe such an approach could create a trap for the unwary fisherman who may be targeting a species not covered by the mesh size regulation, but who may inadvertently find himself classified in the Pacific cod, pollock, rock sole, or yellowfin sole fishery as a result of compliance with IR/IU. We are concerned that the potential



interactions between a fishery-specific mesh size regulation and the IR/IU program may not be adequately understood.


The stated purpose of the mesh size proposal was to reduce the discards of undersize fish in the Pacific cod, pollock, rock sole and yellowfin sole fisheries. However, we believe that the 100 percent retention requirement in the IR/IU program, if approved, will provide sufficient incentive for industry to improve gear selectivity to avoid the unwanted capture of undersize fish. In addition, we are concerned that imposing gear regulations at this time may have the unintended effect of restricting industry from pursuing other innovative solutions to improving the selectivity of fishing gear. This result could occur if industry is forced to devote resources to meeting a less than ideal gear standard, or if the mesh size regulation itself restricts industry from pursuing other innovative approaches to reducing bycatch.

With respect to the VIP, we have heard extensive industry testimony at the IR/IU committee and at the September Council meeting, suggesting that the VIP is the primary barrier preventing industry from moving to larger-sized mesh on a voluntary basis. At this time, we believe we need to work with industry to seek solutions to the problems identified with the VIP. Pursuing a mesh size regulation without addressing the VIP will simply squeeze industry between two apparently conflicting standards. To this end, we intend to coordinate with Joe Kyle to meet with the industry IR/IU implementation committee members and explore alternative options for a VIP.

If the Council wishes to pursue the development of codend mesh size regulations in light of IR/IU, we would recommend, first, allowing IR/IU some time to alter fleet behavior. Second, we would recommend against an approach that is restricted to fisheries that are defined by retained catch percentages. A possible alternative approach would be to specify a minimum codend mesh size for bottom trawls and a minimum codend mesh size for pelagic trawls irrespective of the target fishery. A regulation should allow an enforcement officer to determine the mesh size regulation applicable to a certain vessel without conducting an inventory of the vessel's retained catch. In addition, we would recommend that any codend mesh size requirements be applied to the entire codend rather than just the top panel. This approach would alleviate additional concerns with how the codend top panel would be defined and measured, especially when diamond mesh is used.

We look forward to working with the Council in the continued development of innovative approaches to reducing bycatch, discards, and discard mortality in the groundfish fisheries of the North Pacific.

Sincerely,


for Steven Pennoyer
Administrator, Alaska Region