

Agenda Item: "B-4"



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

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

Salmon Troll Fishery (FIGURE 1)

The Southeast Alaska chinook salmon summer troll fishery opened July 1, 2003. The summer quota was approximately 202,000 fish. Operating under the Alaska Board of Fisheries' management plan, 70% of the summer quota is to be harvested during the first summer opening. That period was managed inseason with no pre-determined closure date. Reduced effort resulted in lower than expected catches for the fishery, and the quota was finally taken by July 31, 2003. The department anticipated that the second season would last until approximately mid-August. However, effort from waters north of Sitka nearly

doubled for the second chinook opening, and the catch rate in that area was approximately 45 chinook/boat/day, the highest since the fishery opened on July 1. At that rate and level of effort the summer and total troll quota was taken by August 8, 2003.

The preliminary total 2003 non-terminal troll chinook salmon catch was 326,834 fish. For the 2003 season, the Winter Troll season total was 50,818 chinook salmon, with Spring season catches of 35,426, and Summer season catches totaling approximately 240,598 chinook salmon. The troll Treaty quota for the 2003 fisheries was 273,400. The preliminary total 2003 Treaty catch was 302,147 chinook salmon, or approximately 28,750 (10.5%) over the quota. However, the all-gear Treaty catch will likely be less than 2% over the all-gear Treaty quota of 366,130, well within Treaty guidelines.

Aleutian Island Golden King Crab (FIGURE 2)

The Aleutian Islands (Area O) opened to commercial fishing for golden king crab on August 15, 2003 with guideline harvest levels (GHL) of 3.0 million pounds east and 2.7 million pounds west of 174° W longitude. Through September 3, 2003, approximately 2.3 million pounds of golden king crab had been landed from Area O east of 174° W longitude. Given that the harvest rate at that time was approximately 129,000 pounds per day, the GHL of 3.0 million pounds was projected to be reached by 12:00 NOON September 8, 2003. Therefore, that portion of Area O east of 174° W longitude closed to commercial fishing on September 8, 2003. Final harvest was approximately 2.97 million pounds. The golden king crab fishery west of 174° W longitude continues at this time. Present catch stands at just less than 400,000 pounds.

St. Matthew Island Section - Pribilof District King Crab Seasons (FIGURE 3)

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have completed analysis of the 2003 NMFS trawl survey results for the Pribilof District and St. Matthew Island Section of the Bering Sea. King crab population and biomass estimates for these areas were computed from survey data. Based on the results, the St. Matthew blue king crab and the Pribilof red and blue king crab fisheries will remain closed for the 2003 season.

Survey estimates for St. Matthew blue king crab indicate continued low abundance of mature male and female crab. The stock is above the minimum threshold of mature males as defined in the state harvest strategy, 2.9 million pounds. However, the calculated guideline harvest level (GHL) is only 0.634 million pounds, well below the minimum GHL of 2.5 million pounds.

Survey results of Pribilof District blue king crabs indicate continued low abundance. The abundance in each size class of blue king crab estimated by ADF&G is lower in 2003 than for 2002. The minimum mature male threshold for a fishery is 770,000 king crab, and the 2003 estimate is 291,000 mature male blue king crab. Due to the continued decline in the blue king crab stock, the high degree of uncertainty surrounding the estimate of red king crab abundance, poor fishery performance of recent years, and concern for blue king crab bycatch, the red and blue king crab fishery in the Pribilof District will remain closed for the 2003 season.

Bering Sea bairdi (FIGURE 4)

The Bering Sea Tanner crab biomass remains below the threshold necessary to allow a fishery. The Alaska Board of Fisheries harvest strategy for Bering Sea Tanner crabs specifies a mature female biomass threshold of 21.0 million pounds. In addition, a minimum GHL threshold of 4.0 million pounds applies in waters east of 168° W longitude. The 2003 survey estimated the mature female

biomass to be 20.8 million pounds, a 51% increase from the 2002 mature female biomass estimate of 13.8 million pounds; however the estimate is still below the female biomass threshold for a fishery opening. Additionally, a GHL calculated for the Bering Sea would be 1.21 million pounds which is well below the minimum GHL threshold. Therefore, the entire Bering Sea District will remain closed to the harvest of Tanner crab for the 2003 season.

Bristol Bay Red King Crab (FIGURE 5)

The Bristol Bay red king crab stock is estimated to be above the minimum stock size and mature female abundance thresholds. The Effective Spawning Biomass (ESB) of the Bristol Bay red king crab stock is estimated to be 60.7 million pounds. Based on the 2003 data, the Effective Spawning Biomass increased 27% between 2002 and 2003. Mature male abundance increased 16% over the 2002 estimate, and legal male abundance increased 26%. Based on the ESB being greater than 55.0 million pounds, a 15 percent exploitation rate is applied to the estimated mature male abundance to derive guideline harvest levels (GHL) for the 2003 season as follows:

<u>Fishery</u>	<u>GHL (million pounds)</u>
Bristol Bay red king crab	14.535 (general) ^{1/}
Bristol Bay CDQ red king crab	<u>1.178 (CDQ)</u>
	15.713 (total)

^{1/} The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has capped the American Fisheries Act (AFA) vessels to their historic proportion of the Bristol Bay red king crab harvest during the general fishery. The 41 AFA vessels' harvest will be capped at 10.96 percent (1,593,036 pounds) of the general GHL.

The preseason vessel registration deadline to participate in the 2003 general Bristol Bay red king crab fishery was 5:00 PM Wednesday, September 24, 2003. Because the 2003 Bristol Bay red king crab GHL is greater than 12.0 million pounds, the number of vessels preseason registered is not used to determine the pot limit. The 2003 Bristol Bay red king crab pot limit is 200 pots for vessels less than or equal to 125 feet in overall length and 250 pots for vessels greater than 125 feet in overall length.

Western Aleutian Island Red King Crab (FIGURE 6)

The Petrel Bank area of the western Aleutians will open to commercial fishing for red king crabs at noon on October 25, 2003. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game has established a GHL of 500,000 pounds of legal male red king crabs. The Petrel Bank area is defined as those waters of king crab Registration Area O west of 179° West longitude, east of 179° East longitude, and north of 51° 45' North latitude. Only those waters in the above described area that are 125 fathoms or less in depth will be open to fishing for red king crabs. Golden king crab fishermen participating in the Petrel Bank red king crab fishery are not required to remove golden king crab pots from the water, except from the area that is open to fishing for red king crabs. Pots used to take red king crabs may not be longlined and red king crab may not be harvested from longline gear.

Bering Sea opilio (FIGURE 7)

The department recently announced the guideline harvest level for the 2004 opilio crab fishery. The total harvest for the combined general and Community Development Quota fishery is 20.831 million pounds based upon the estimated total mature biomass (TMB) in the Bering Sea of 306.2 million pounds.

<u>Fishery</u>	<u>GHL (million pounds)</u>
Bering Sea opilio crab	19.269 (general)
Bering Sea opilio crab	<u>1.562 (CDQ)</u>
	20.831 (total)

The general fishery GHL is above the minimum 15.0 million pounds for a fishery opening, as defined in the State's harvest strategy. Under the harvest strategy the exploitation rate for the 2004 fishery will be 11.37% of the mature male biomass.

The stock in 2003 is below the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) with an estimated TMB that is the fourth lowest on record (Federal FMP definition of MSST for determining the "overfished" level is 460.8 million pounds TMB). The stock remains in a depressed condition and is unlikely to be estimated above the currently defined B_{MSY} in the next year; it is uncertain if it will be estimated above thresholds that would allow for a commercial harvest in the 2005 season under the current FMP and harvest strategy.

The 2004 Bering Sea snow crab pot limit will be 70 pots for vessels less than or equal to 125 feet in overall length and 90 pots for vessels greater than 125 feet in overall length. The regulatory opening date for this fishery is noon on January 15, 2004 in all waters of the Bering Sea District west of 166° West longitude.

Scallops (FIGURES 8, 8A)

The scallop fishery, in both state and federal waters, is managed by the department. Vessels eligible to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are limited by a North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Fisheries Management Plan, while vessels in state waters (0-3 nautical miles) are limited by an Alaska legislative moratorium (AS 16.43.906).

The regulatory fishing season is July 1 through February 15 or until closed by emergency order, with the exception of the Kamishak District of the Cook Inlet Registration Area where the season is August 15 through October 31. Current biological stock parameters and previous fishery performance were used to derive appropriate harvest levels. Guideline harvest ranges (GHR) for the 2003/2004 scallop season, and the king and Tanner crab bycatch limits are listed below:

SCALLOP FISHERY OPENING, GUIDELINE HARVEST RANGES			
Registration Area	Guideline Harvest Range	Bycatch Limits	
	(pounds of shucked meats)	Tanner Crab	King Crab
Yakutat			
Area D	0 to 200,000	NA	NA
District 16	0 to 35,000	NA	NA
Prince William Sound	0 to 20,000	11,400	NA
Cook Inlet			
Kamishak District	0 to 25,000	NA	NA
Outer District	open all year for exploratory fishing under a Commissioner's Permit		
Eastern District	open all year for exploratory fishing under a Commissioner's Permit		
Kodiak			
Shelikof District	0 to 180,000	93,139	25
Northeast District ¹	0 to 80,000 ¹	606,991	17
Alaska Peninsula	0 to 10,000	87,066	213
Dutch Harbor	Closed	NA	NA
Bering Sea	0 to 105,000	65,000 <i>C. bairdi</i>	500
		150,000 <i>C. opilio</i> <i>and hybrids</i>	
Adak	0 to 75,000	10,000	50

¹ The GHR for the Northeast District of the Kodiak Area is further divided into harvest caps by statistical area.

Crab bycatch limits (CBLs) were first instituted by the state in July 1993. Methods used to determine CBLs in 1993 and 1994 were approved by the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the NPFMC and, with few exceptions, remain unchanged. Annual CBLs are established preseason by ADF&G based on the most current crab resource abundance information. However, in some registration areas or districts the CBL is a fixed number of crabs and is not adjusted seasonally.

The fishery closed in the Bering Sea on July 15, 2003 to conserve scallop resources in the area. Cumulative Catch Per Unit of Effort was below the benchmark and below that seen the previous two years. Additionally, observer reports indicate that initial Tanner crab bycatch rates were high and that the Tanner crab bycatch limit could be reached if the fishery were to continue. The Bering Sea Tanner crab stock is currently overfished. Therefore to preserve the reproductive potential of the remaining Bering Sea scallop stock, and to protect Tanner crab stocks in the area, that fishery closed. Approximately 40% of the upper end of the GHR was taken.

A partial closure of the Northeastern District in Kodiak occurred on August 2, 2003 when the harvest in those waters approached the upper limits of the GHR for that statistical area. A day later, another portion of the district closed when it was determined that effort in the area had produced a catch nearing the upper end of the GHR for that statistical area as well.

Fishing for scallops continues in those remaining open areas.

Central Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 9)

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%

to pot gear and 50% 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. By regulation, the fishery reopened to pot gear on September 1, 2003. Total catch to date by 34 vessels making 89 landings is approximately 1.3 million pounds.

Prince William Sound

The 2003 Prince William Sound state managed Pacific cod season opened February 16, 2003 with a 0.71 million pound GHL allocated 60% to pot gear and 40% to jig gear. The GHL is calculated as 10% of the federal Eastern Gulf ABC. One vessel has participated to date in the fishery, so landing data remains confidential.

Westward Region Pacific Cod (FIGURE 10)

Kodiak (FIGURE 11), **Chignik** (FIGURE 12), **South Alaska Peninsula** (FIGURE 13)

This marks the first time in the seven year history of the state waters fisheries that the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula Areas all attained their GHLs before a fall allocation rollover or 'mop-up' season. The most likely explanation is that the overall ABC for Pacific cod in the Central and Western Gulf of Alaska has continually been reduced since 2000 as estimated cod abundance has decreased. At the same time as the quota reductions, exvessel price has remained attractive (ranging from mid \$0.20s to low \$0.40s per pound depending on delivery location and time of year).

The use of mechanical jig gear in particular has continued to develop; since 2000 the number of jig season participants has not necessarily risen, but many of the participants have made significant advances in the skill of finding and harvesting fish with this gear type. In the South Alaska Peninsula Area this year, 65 participating jig vessels were capable of harvesting nearly 1.0 million pounds per

week. This type of unprecedented jig efficiency paired with an already "fully developed" pot season in the three management areas, along with decreased quotas and apparently large concentrations of Pacific cod in state waters all contributed to the faster than usual attainment of the GHs.

Allocations between the two types of gears in the state-waters seasons have become somewhat contentious following the most recent seasons. Several proposals have been submitted to the Alaska Board of Fisheries seeking to change the allocation structure in the South Alaska Peninsula Area to secure more quota for mechanical jig gear. Similar proposals are expected in the regulatory cycle for Kodiak in 2005.

Southeast Groundfish (FIGURE 14)

In the Southeast District, from June 1, through August 31 2003, there was activity in the directed lingcod fishery, the directed black rockfish fishery, the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) and Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) sablefish fisheries and the directed Pacific cod fishery. The directed lingcod fishery opened on May 16, 2003. Forty-one CFEC permit holders participating in the lingcod fishery landed a total of 225,445 round pounds of lingcod, with several areas of Southeast remaining open at this time. The NSEI sablefish fishery opened on August 15, 2003 with a quota of 2,005,000 round pounds. There are 108 CFEC permit holders registered to fish in the 2003 fishery, and they have landed a total of 1,166,984 round pounds of sablefish to date. The SSEI sablefish fishery opened on June 1, 2003 and closed on August 15, 2003 by regulation, with a quota of 696,000 round pounds. There were 24 CFEC permit holders registered to fish in the 2003 fishery, and they landed a total of 544,326 round pounds of sablefish. The Pacific cod fishery opened January 1, 2003 with an annual quota of 1,000,000 round pounds, and to date the directed fishery has landed approximately 256,112 round pounds. It is anticipated that this fishery will remain open year round.

FIGURE 1.

2003 SE Alaska Chinook Salmon Catches (troll gear)

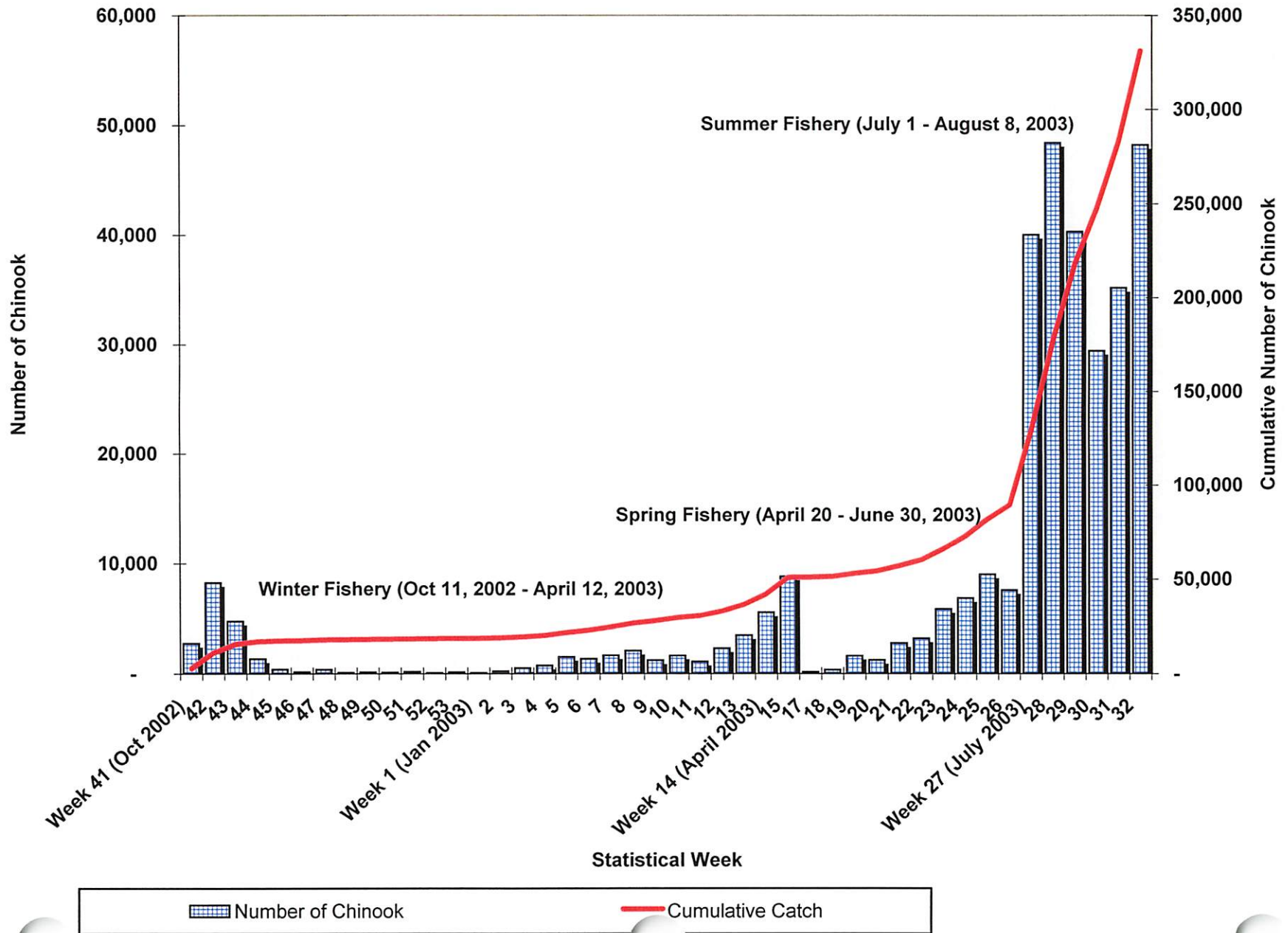


FIGURE 2

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS GOLDEN KING CRAB HARVEST 1992-2003 SEASONS

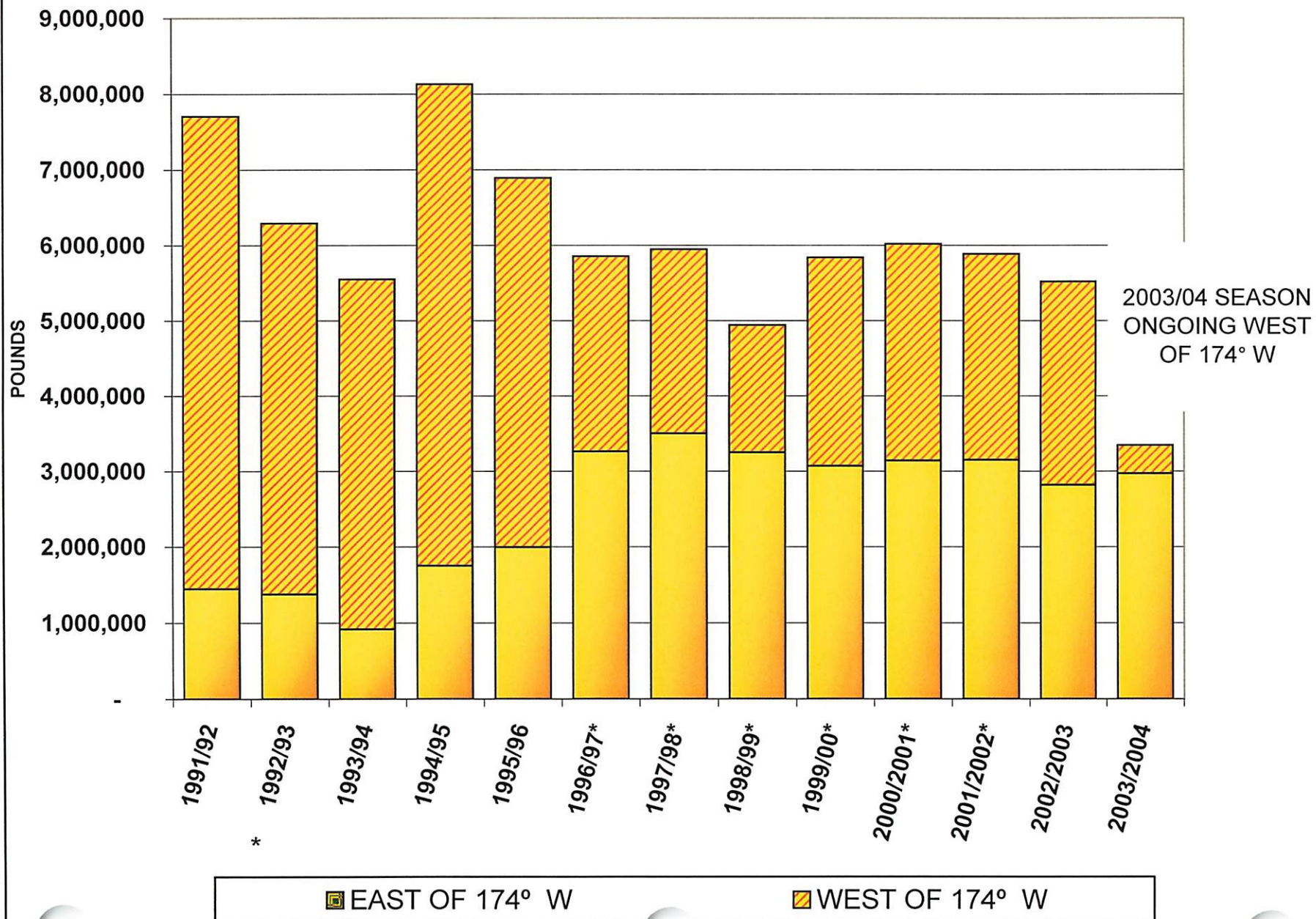
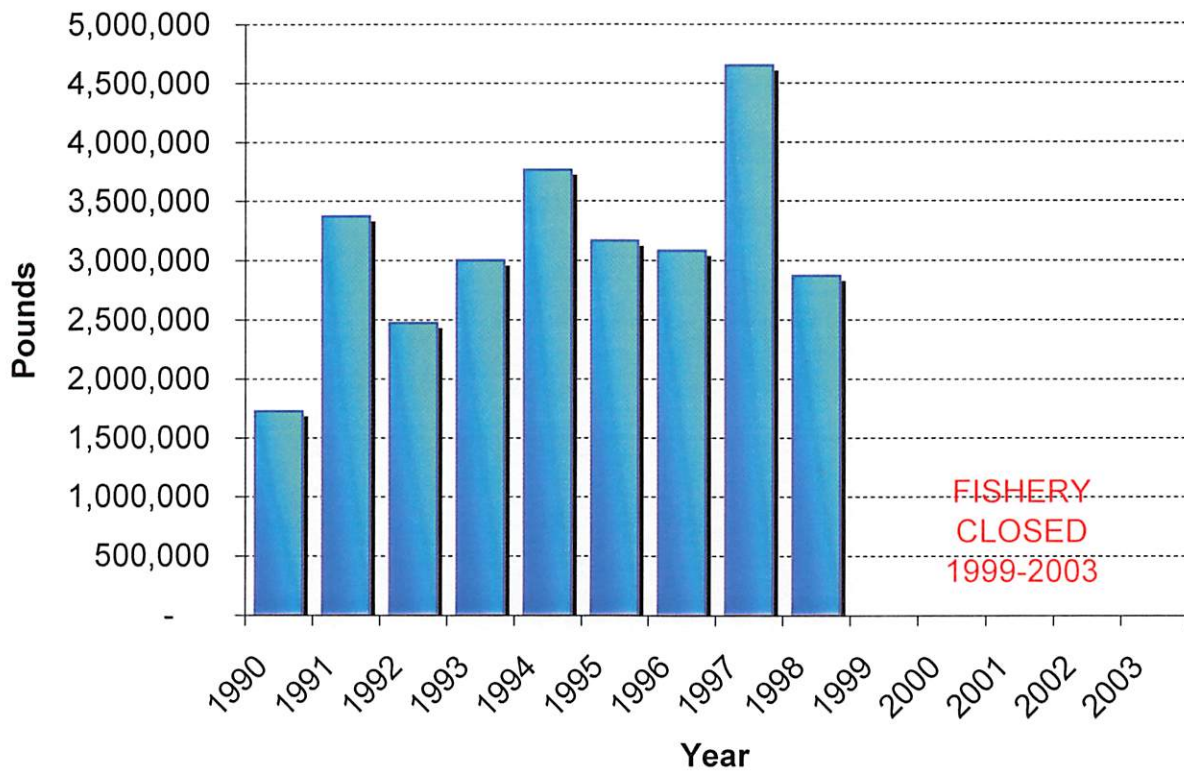


FIGURE 3.

St. Matthew Blue King Crab Harvests, 1990-2003



Pribilof Islands King Crab Harvests, 1990-2003

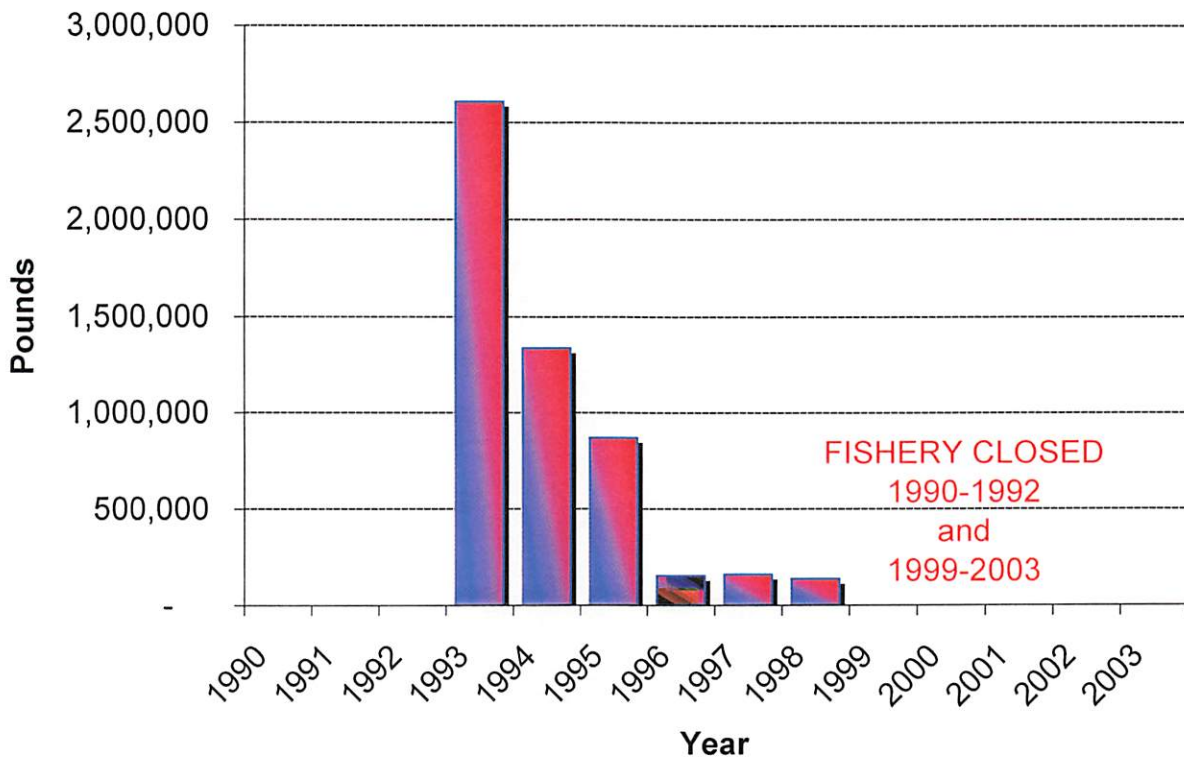


FIGURE 4.

Bering Sea *C. bairdi* Harvests, 1990-2003

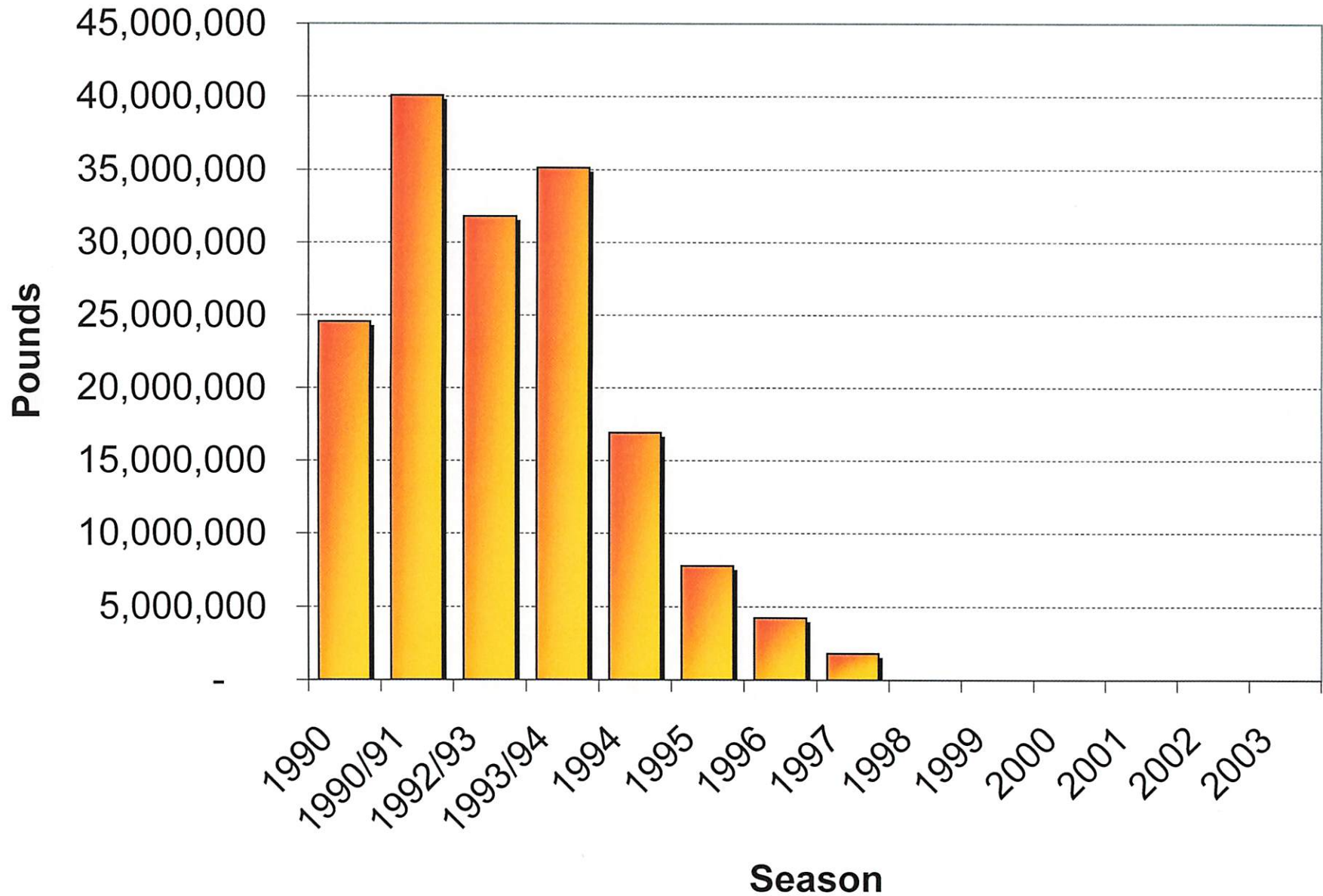


FIGURE 5.

Bristol Bay Commercial Red King Crab Catches (1990-2003*)

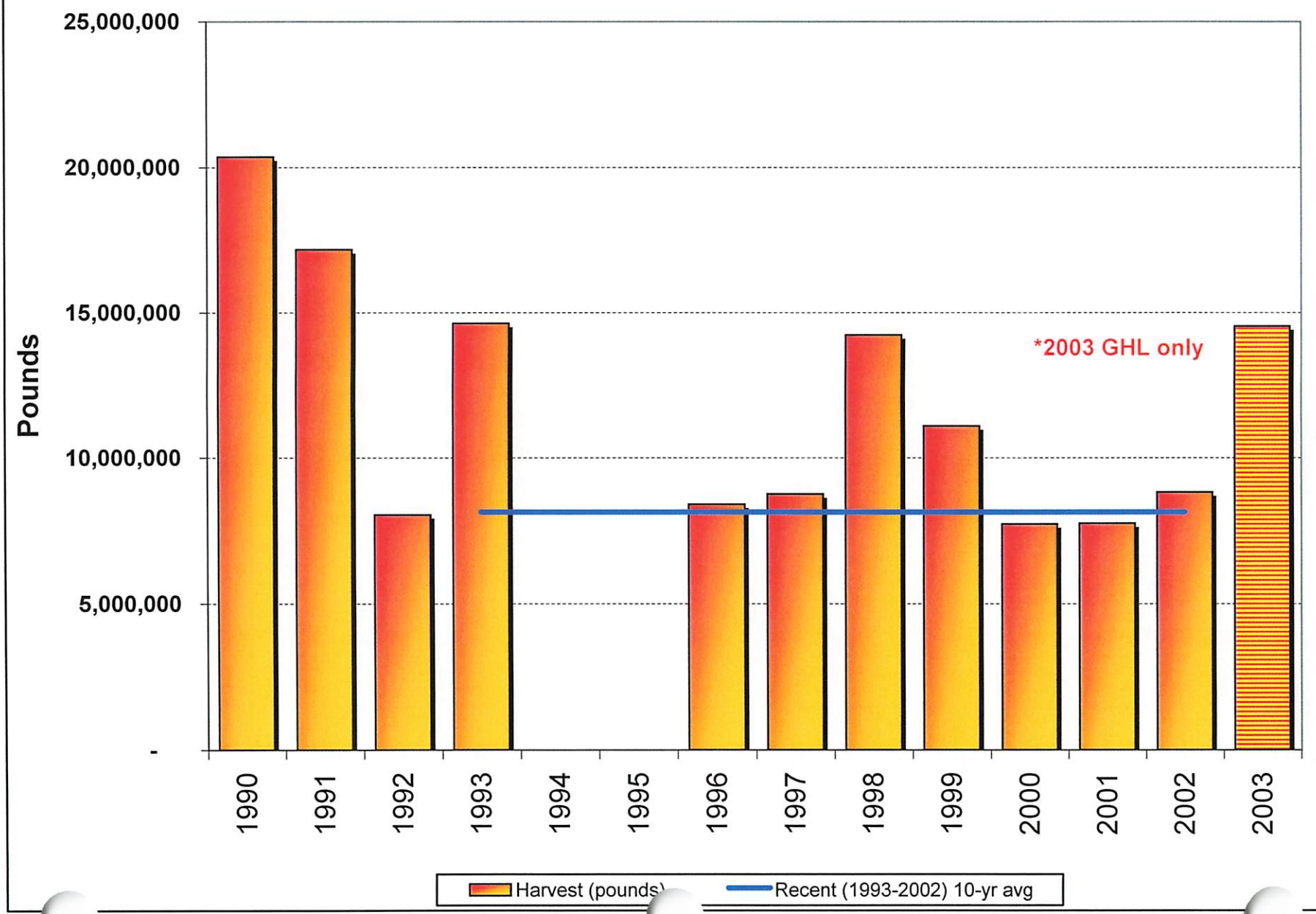


FIGURE 6.

Aleutian Islands Red King Crab Harvests

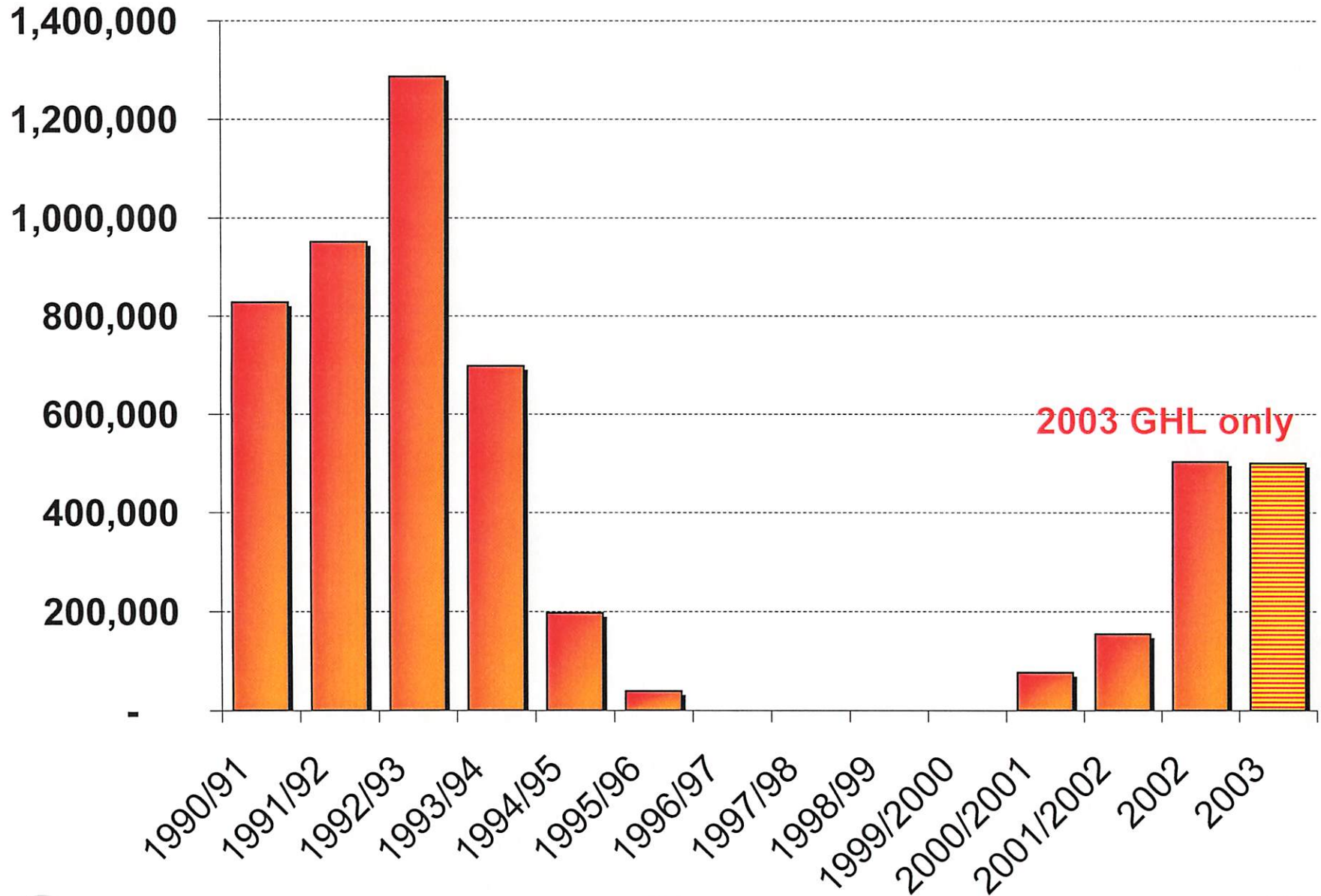
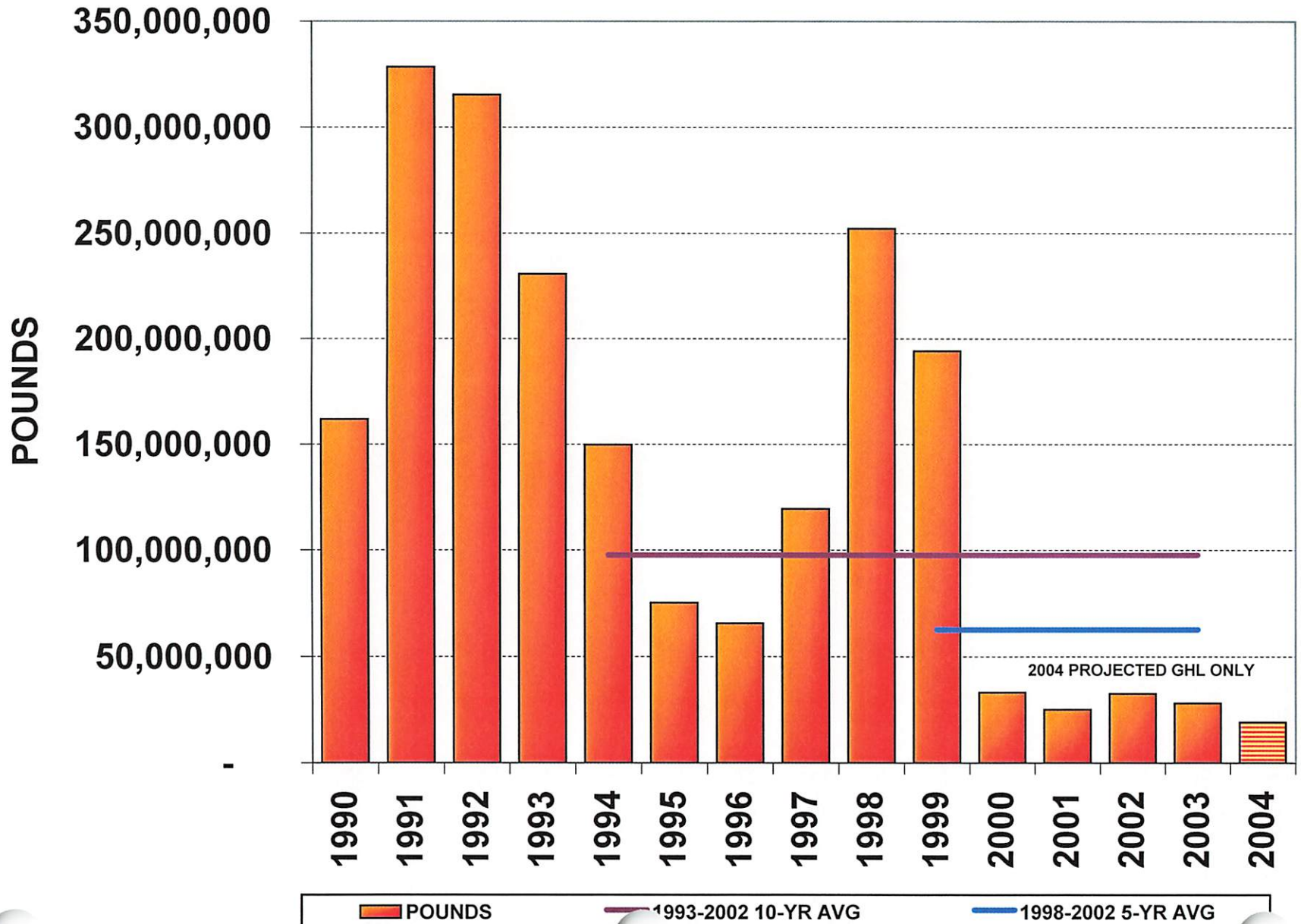


FIGURE 7.

ALASKA SNOW CRAB HARVESTS (OPEN ACCESS)



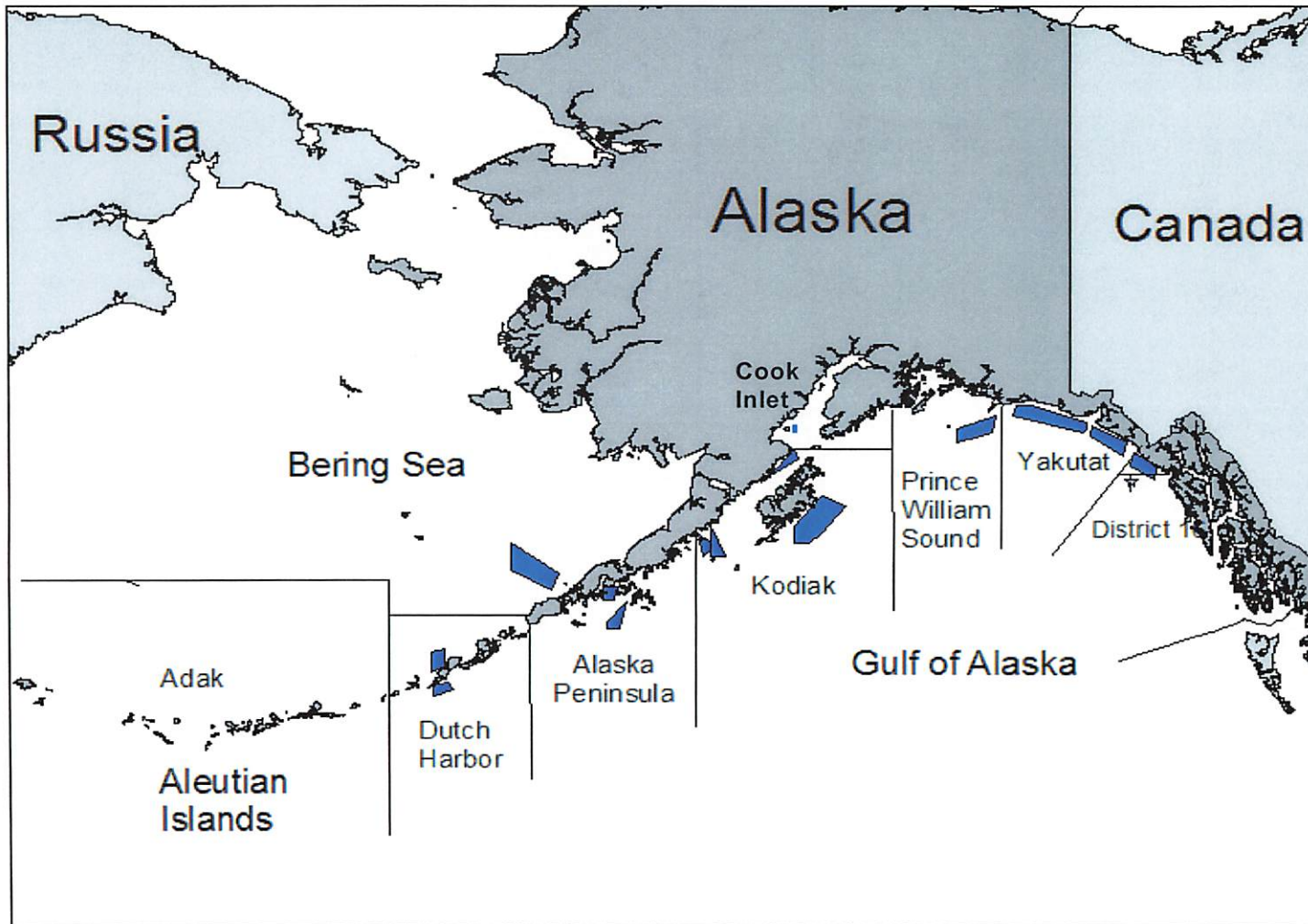


Figure 8. Major weathervane scallop fishing locations in coastal waters of Alaska.

FIGURE 8A.

Alaska Commercial Weathervane Scallop Harvests

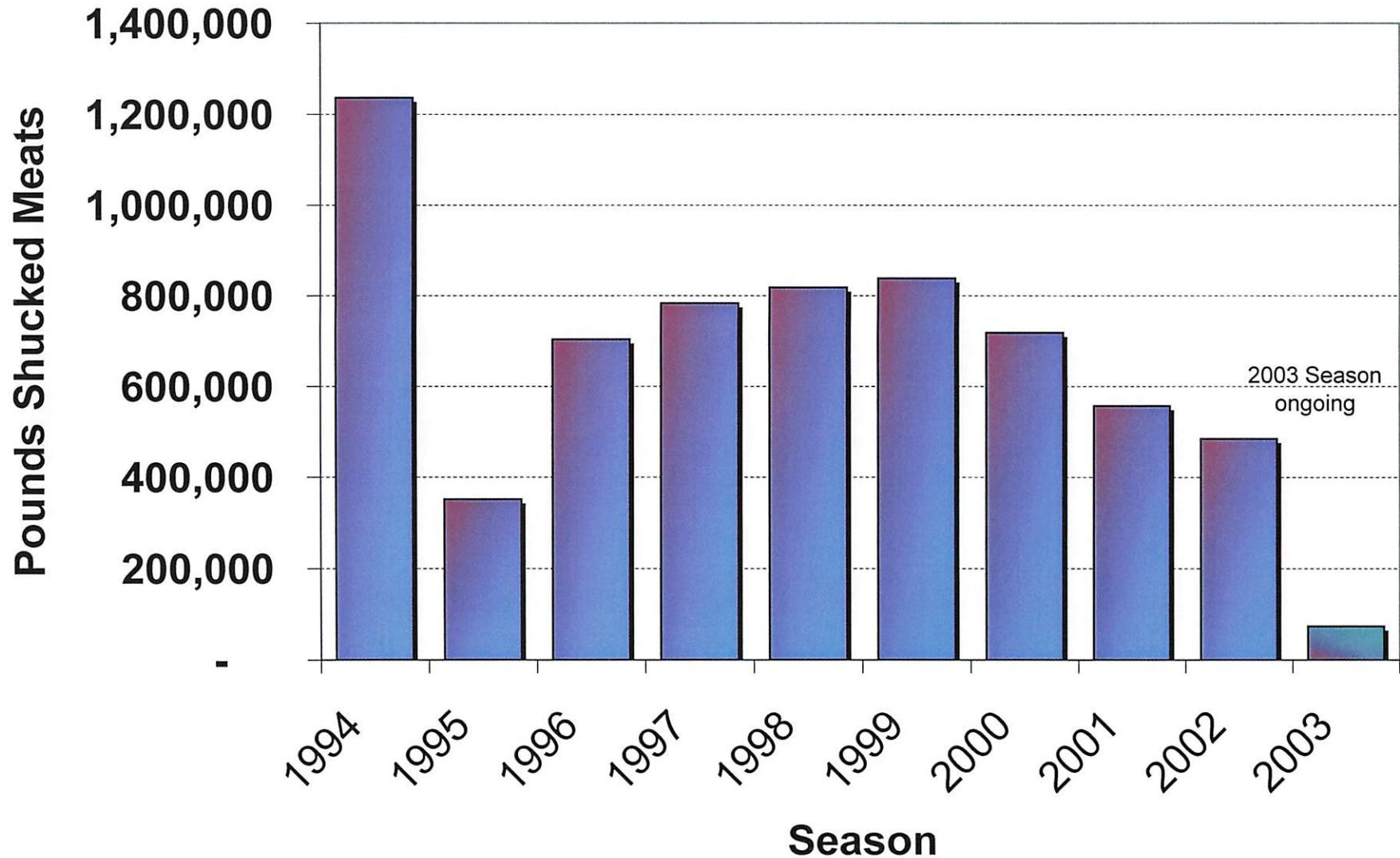


FIGURE 9. Harvest Guideline, Effort, and Catch reported for Central Region Pcod state water fisheries through September 30, 2003.

This summary censored for confidential data.

Pacific Cod

PARALLEL SEASON - STATE WATERS

Gear	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
Hand troll (05)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jigs (26)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trawl (47)	0	0	0	3	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL
Longline (61)	38	50	124,964	25	35	12,677
Pots (91)	7	89	292,809	0	0	0
Totals	45	139	417,773	28	35	12,677
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*

Gear	Cook Inlet Management Area			Prince William Sound		
	Vessels	Landings	Pounds	Vessels	Landings	Pounds
GHL (lb)		1.44mil.			*705,500 lbs.	
Hand troll (05)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jigs (26)	24	160	429,584	0	0	0
Pots (91)	10	89	880,023	1	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL
Totals	34	249	1,309,607	1	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL
State seasons: Jigs (26) Status	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 - open			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 - open		
State seasons: Pots (91)	Opened - Closed noon Feb 10 - 5 PM Feb 27 Sept 1 -			Opened - Closed noon Feb 16 -		
Status	Open			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.

Note; new GHL calculation effective 5/14/03.



FIGURE 10. 2003 STATE MANAGED GROUND FISH

UPDATED: June 2, 2003

PRELIMINARY WESTWARD REGION PACIFIC COD HARVEST BY FISHERY WEEK



VESSEL REGISTRATIONS	KODIAK			CHIGNIK			SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA					
	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig	Total	Pot	Jig			
2003 GHJ	138	37	101	34	15	19	91	26	65			
2003 GHJ	8.0 million pounds			4.5 million pounds			11.4 million pounds					
ALLOCATIONS:	50% Jigs, 50% Pots Pots >58' restricted to 25% of total GHJ 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, 15% Jigs Pots limited to 9.6 million pounds					
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	68,104	Opened 3/1/03	Opened 3/1/03	Opened 3/1/03	Opened 3/1/03	Opened 2/24/03	Opened 2/24/03	Opened 2/24/03	Opened 2/24/03
2/23 to 3/1	71	2,258,375	25	60,553	0	0	0	0	49	1,494,457	Confidential	Confidential
3/2 to 3/8	37	986,412	29	65,660	16	600,982	0	0	73	3,562,864	13	101,304
3/9 to 3/15	Closed 3/2	Closed 3/2	8	12,583	14	386,227	0	0	68	2,816,409	10	94,612
3/16 to 3/22	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	40	96,462	23	756,070	0	0	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	14	138,052
3/23 to 3/29	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	38	84,203	23	619,079	0	0	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	31	256,677
3/30 to 4/5	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	60	206,273	35	740,326	Confidential	Confidential	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	89	923,959
4/6 to 4/12	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	36	151,590	35	741,442	Confidential	Confidential	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	98	995,735
4/13 to 4/19	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	81	389,813	7	193,978	Confidential	Confidential	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	85	636,859
4/20 to 4/26	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	90	552,357	Fishery Closed 4/11	Fishery Closed 4/11	8	32,025	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	79	496,250
4/27 to 5/3	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	119	745,325	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	12	47,560	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed 4/11
5/4 to 5/10	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	141	754,389	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	20	89,489	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
5/11 to 5/17	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed 5/9	Fishery Closed 5/9	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	22	99,306	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
5/18 to 5/24	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	13	65,093	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
5/25 to 5/31	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	20	65,323	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
6/1 to 6/7	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	12	34,283	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
6/16	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed 6/4	Fishery Closed 6/4	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed	Fishery Closed
ACCUMULATIVE CATCH	149	4,957,231	686	3,187,312	153	4,038,104	107	433,079	190	7,873,730	419	3,643,448
	(Total combined)		8,144,543		(Total combined)		4,471,183		(Total combined)		11,517,178	

All state-water areas are closed to Pacific cod for remainder of 2003.

FIGURE 11.

Kodiak State Managed Pacific Cod Catches 2003

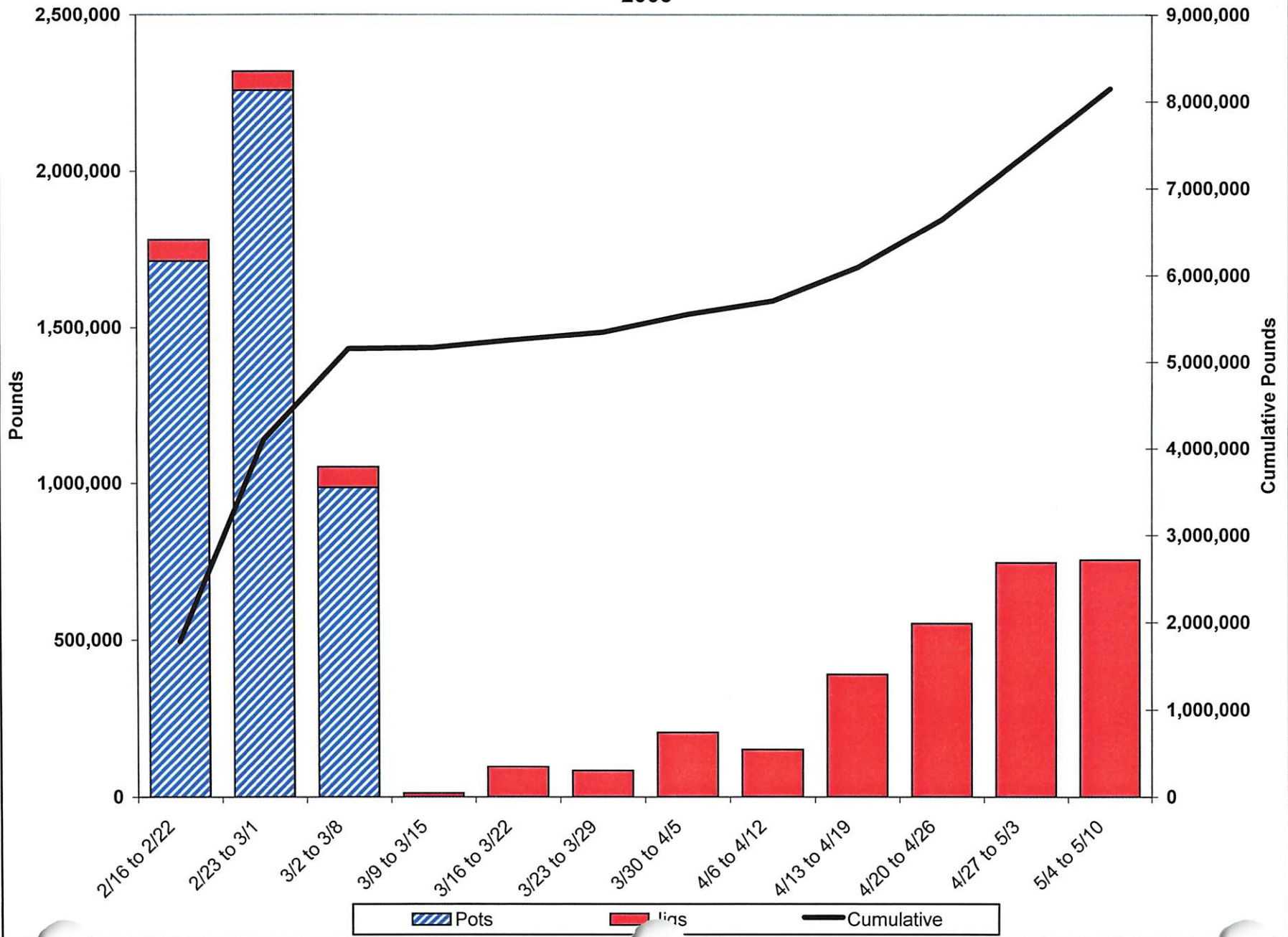


FIGURE 12.

Chignik State Managed Pacific Cod Catches 2003

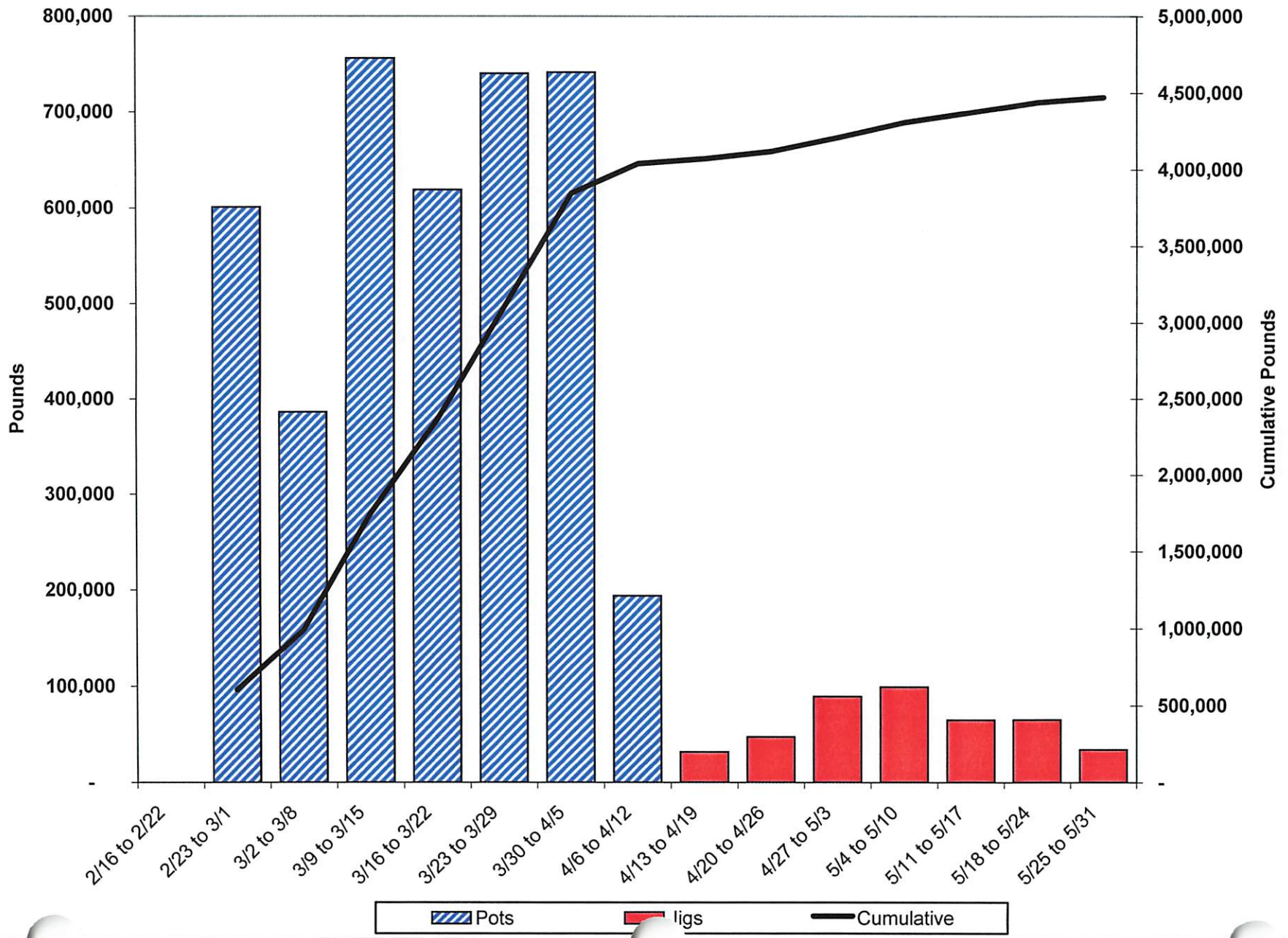
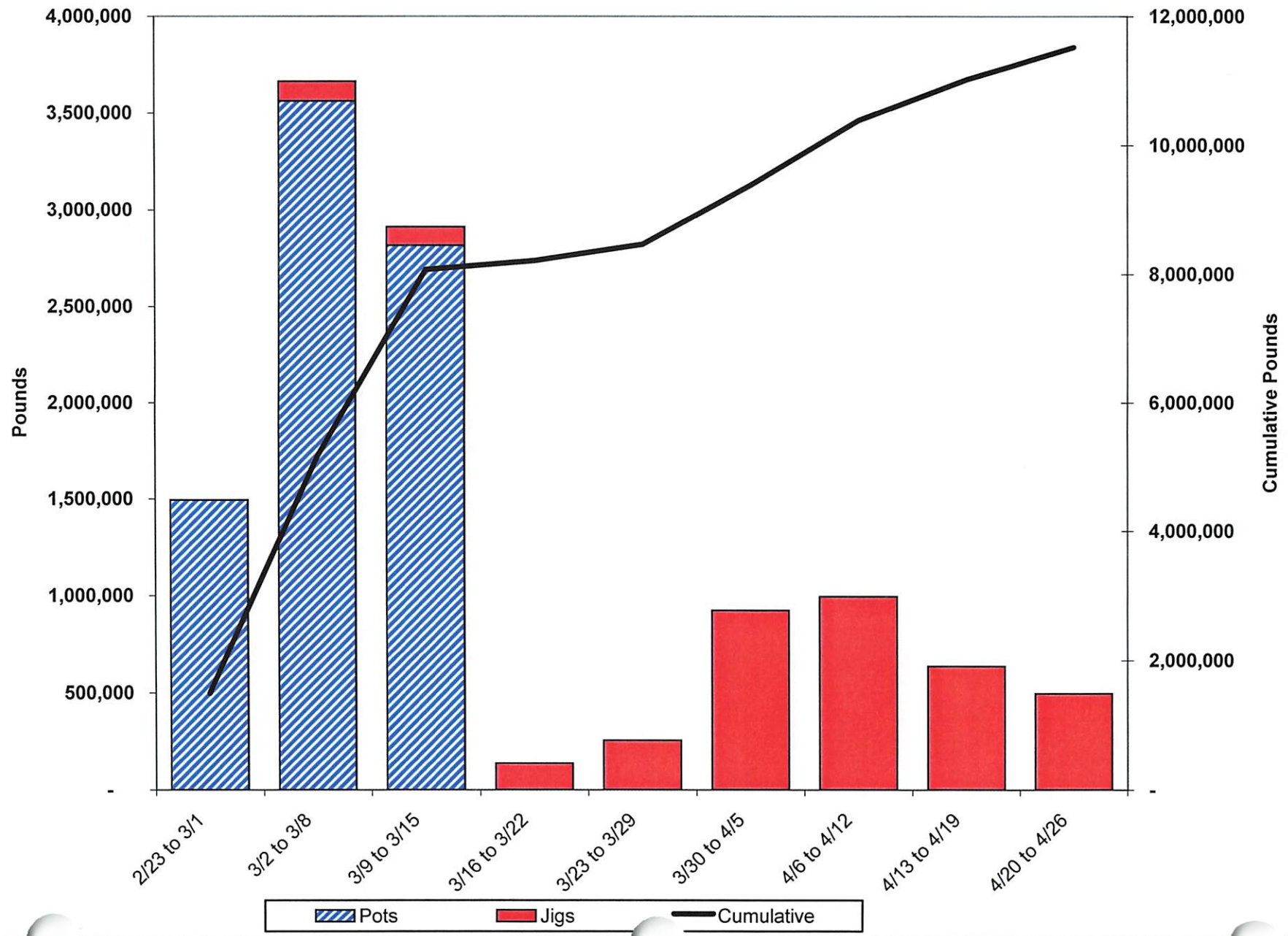


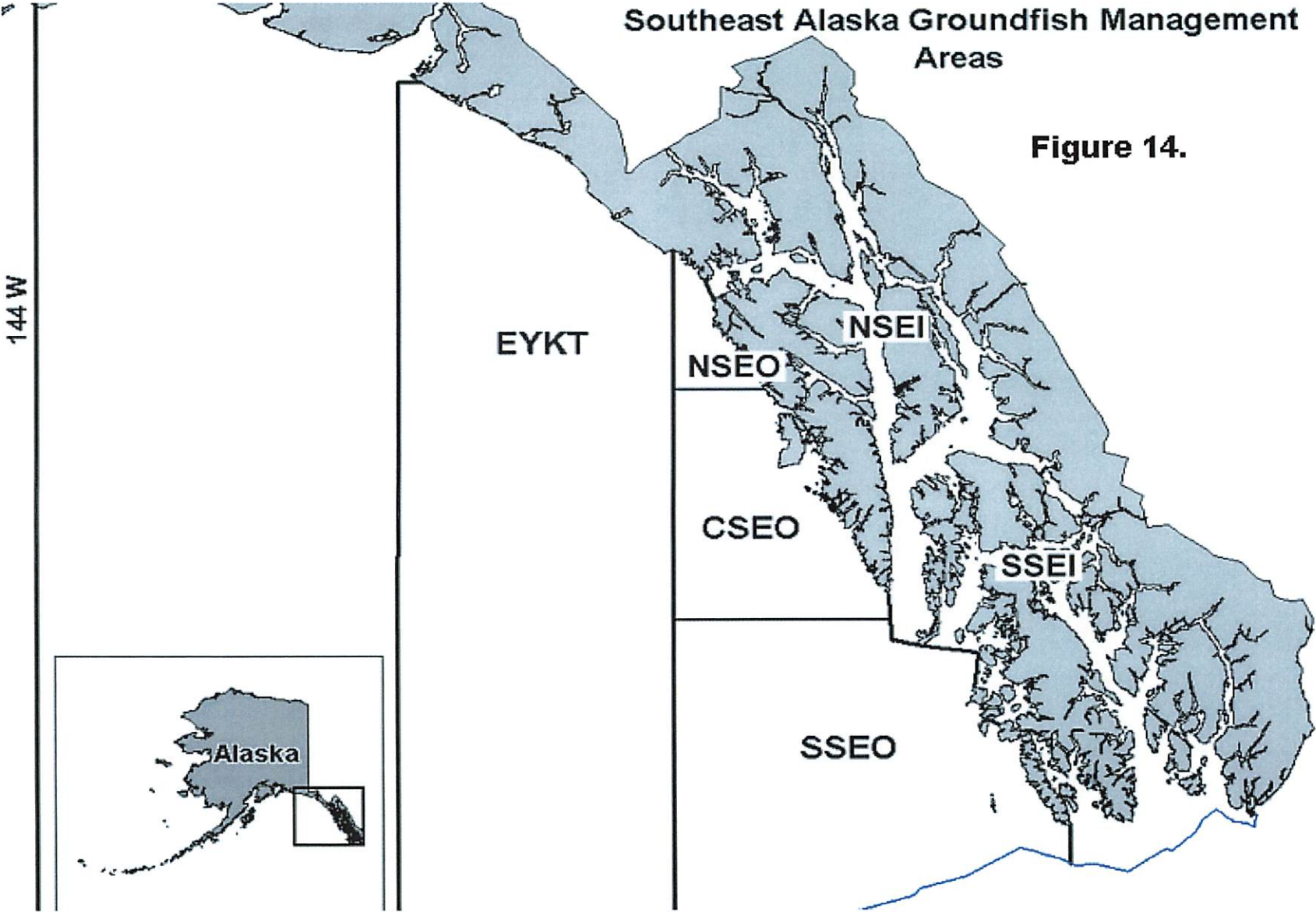
FIGURE 13.

S. Ak. Peninsula State Managed Pacific Cod Catches 2003



Southeast Alaska Groundfish Management Areas

Figure 14.



North Pacific Council/Board of Fisheries Joint Protocol Committee
Draft Meeting Summary
July 28, 2003

AGENDA B-4
OCTOBER 2003
Supplemental

The Joint Protocol Committee convened at approximately 9:00 AM at the Anchorage Hilton. Chair Dennis Austin, Hazel Nelson, and Stosh Anderson represented the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Co-Chair Ed Dersham, Art Nelson, and Mel Morris represented the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Council members Kevin Duffy and Stephanie Madsen also attended. Nineteen agency staff and ten members of the public attended. The meeting agenda is attached.

Subsistence halibut. The committee discussed the role of the Board in reviewing petitions for eligibility in the federal subsistence halibut program. The Board, Council, and USFWS staffs will confer to identify a plan for the respective agencies to review such petitions and report to the Council at its October 2003 meeting. The Board did not offer advice to the Council regarding related issues of eligibility of non-census designated places or communities associated with eligible communities. The use of "subsistence areas" or game management units was suggested for consideration. The Council's Finance Committee will review funding to support the Board's review of petitions for eligibility.

The committee also discussed the lack of uniformity in state and federal subsistence gear restrictions and the reasons for the respective gear limits. The committee noted that a federal subsistence halibut user could voluntarily comply with the lower state gear limit to retain rockfish and ling cod while targeting halibut, in some areas. This issue was recommended for additional discussion at the October 2003 Council meeting, specifically to address: (1) the national enforcement perspective; (2) estimation of rockfish mortality; and (3) Subsistence Halibut Committee recommendations.

GOA groundfish rationalization. Council and Board members noted that the respective management agencies have been addressing Gulf of Alaska allocation issues for years¹. A discussion paper describing issues related to the management of State parallel fisheries is attached (Attachment 2). The committee briefly discussed the current suite of options to manage State water and parallel fisheries under a federal rationalization program, that were adopted by the Council in June 2003 for discussion. The committee discussed the need for the State to refine those options, and noted that the solution is not readily apparent and would not be developed in time to meet the Council's current schedule for action.

After receiving testimony from six members of the public, State staff identified the following timeline: (1) State staff would report to the Board at its October 2003 work session on its progress in identifying a possible management solution(s); (2) the Board would identify a work group in October 2003 to address the issue; the work group would report on its recommendations to the Joint Protocol Committee at its December 2003 meeting; (3) the Board would meet with the Council in February 2004; (4) the Board would refine the options or select a preferred alternative at its February 2004 meeting; and (5) the Board would report its recommendations to the Council in April 2004. The committee recommended that the Council submit an agenda change request to the BOF so that it may consider broader options for managing all State water groundfish fisheries under a federal rationalization program. Staff reported that the Board would result in rescheduling of preparation of the supplemental environmental impact statement because this issue is a critical decision point in determining eligibility and individual fishing allocations.

The committee also discussed the need to expand observer coverage for any expanded State water fisheries. The committee requested that State staff include discussions of observer coverage in its review of State water and parallel fisheries management options and be reported on the same timeline as listed above.

Reports on **Essential Fish Habitat/Marine Protected Areas** and the **Pribilof Island Blue King Crab rebuilding plan** were provided as information items.

Next meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3 PM. The tentative date of the next meeting is Monday, December 8 at the Anchorage Hilton. The committee recommended that the Board and Council meet jointly on Tuesday, February 2, 2004 at the Anchorage Hilton.

¹ The Board's allocation criteria is posted at <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/boards/fishinfo/regs/allocate.pdf>
S:\4GAILA\OCT\JTPROTOC\JUL03.DOC

July 30, 2003