



**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, scallop, and groundfish.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab

The 2023/24 Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery opened on July 1, 2023, for the Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishery and on August 1, 2023, for the Adak Community Allocation (ACA) and Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries. All fisheries closed by regulation on April 30, 2024. The overfishing level (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) are set by the Council and ADF&G sets the total allowable catch (TAC) so that total removals do not exceed the ABC. For the 2023/24 fishing year, the Aleutian Islands golden king crab TAC is 5.53 million pounds, apportioned east and west of 174° west longitude. The Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab (EAG) TAC is 3.72 million pounds, and the Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab (WAG) TAC is 1.81 million pounds. Ten percent of the EAG TAC is allocated to the CDQ fishery and ten percent of the WAG TAC is allocated to the ACA fishery. To date, 568,227 pounds have been harvested in the WAG fishery and harvest in the EAG fishery remains confidential (Figure 1).

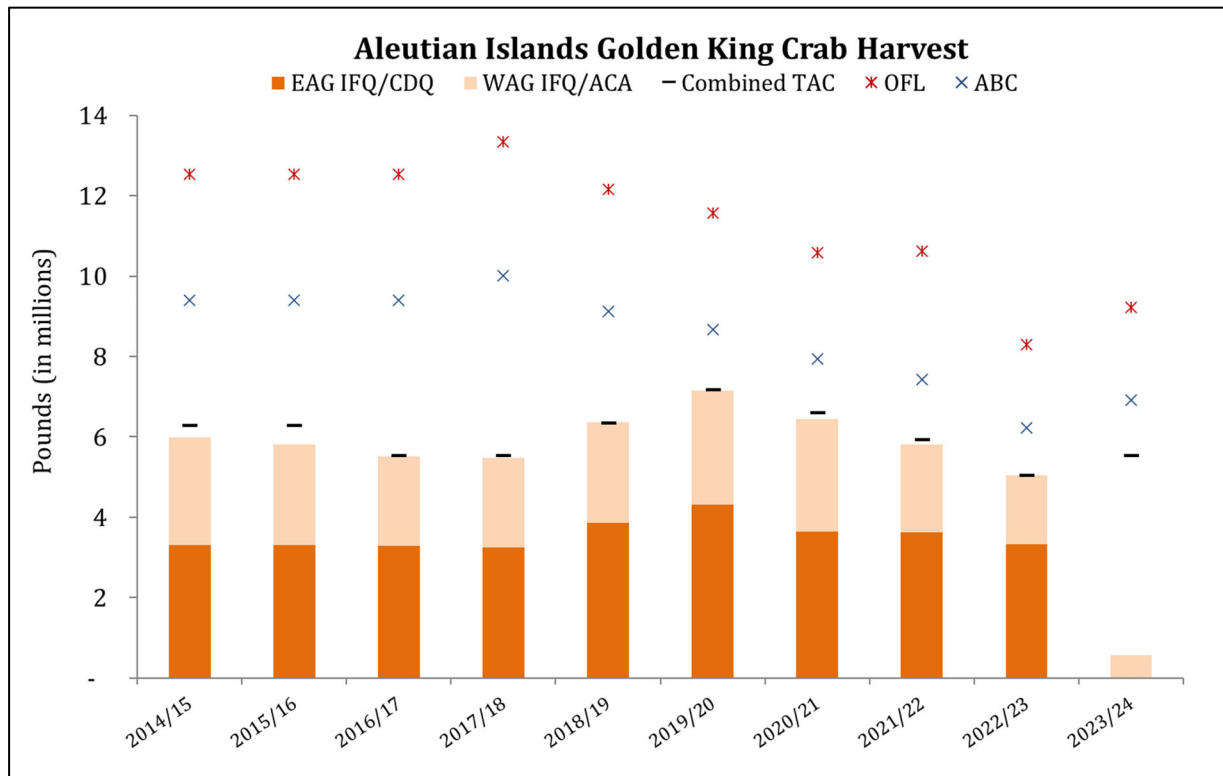


Figure 1. Aleutian Islands golden king crab harvest by area, 2014/15 – 2023/4 seasons.

Norton Sound Red King Crab

The Norton Sound red king crab GHL for 2023 is 392,500 pounds with 92% allocated to the summer season and 8% to the winter season; 7.5% of the total GHL is allocated to the CDQ fishery, available for harvest during the winter or summer season. The 2023 winter commercial fishery closed on April 30 with a total harvest of 11,115 pounds by 8 permit holders (Figure 2) and the remaining winter commercial GHL was rolled over to the summer fishery for a total summer GHL of 351,947 pounds. The summer open access fishery opened on June 21 and closed on July 19 with a total open access summer fishery harvest of 386,006 pounds.

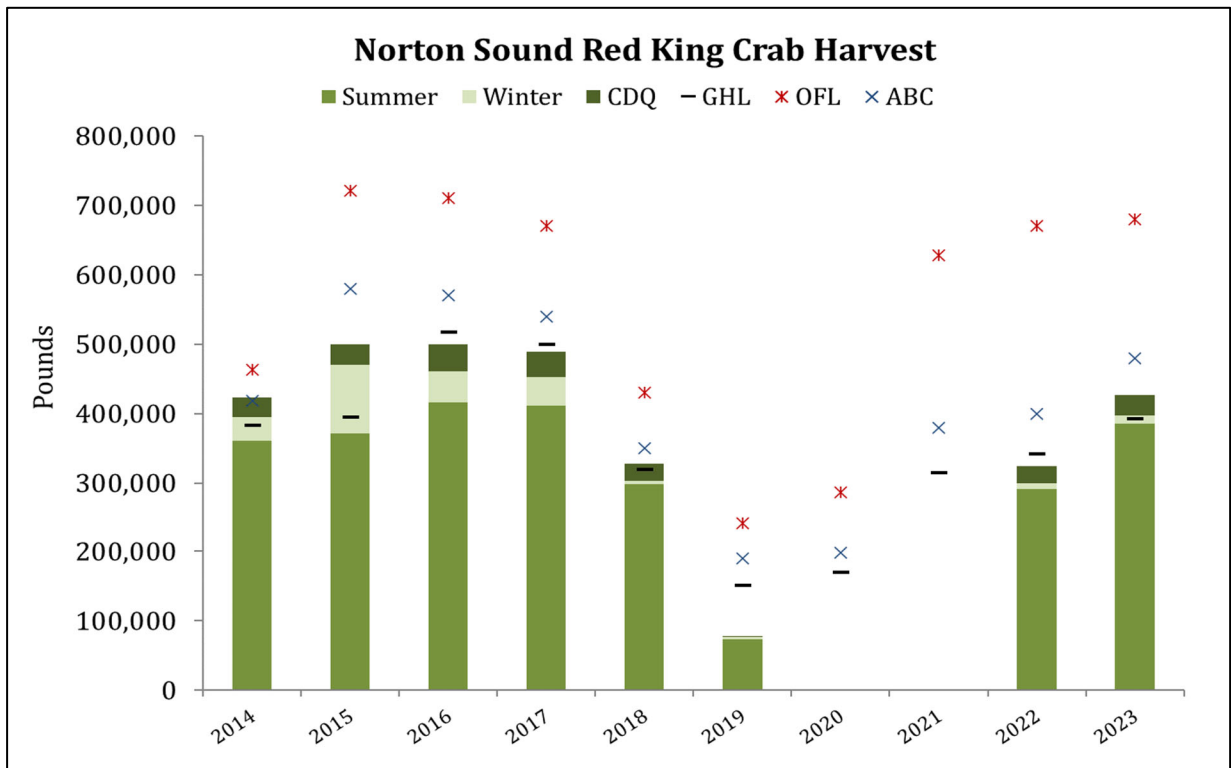


Figure 2. Norton Sound red king crab harvest, 2014-2023.

Scallop

Weathervane scallop fisheries in the Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Dutch Harbor, and Bering Sea Registration Areas opened on July 1, 2023. The cumulative guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2023/24 season is 374,700 pounds of shucked meats (Table 1). The Kodiak Northeast District closed on July 14, the Prince William Sound West Kayak Subsection closed on July 23, the Yakutat Area closed August 27, and the Kodiak Shelikof District closed on September 23, 2023. All other areas remain open and to date a total of 317,274 pounds of shucked meats have been harvested (Figure 3).

Table 1. Alaska Weathervane scallop GHLs for 2023/24 and crab bycatch limits

Registration Area	District/Management Unit	GHL (pounds of shucked meat)	Bycatch Limits (number of crab)	
			Tanner Crab	King Crab
Yakutat		145,000	N/A	N/A
Prince William Sound	East Kayak Subsection	<i>Closed</i>	N/A	N/A
	West Kayak Subsection	7,200	N/A	N/A
Cook Inlet	Kamishak Bay District	<i>Closed</i>	N/A	N/A
Kodiak	Northeast District	40,000	24,000	25
	Shelikof District	100,000	60,000	25
	Southwest District	35,000	21,000	25
	Southeast District	15,000	9,000	25
	Semidi Islands District ¹	<i>Exploratory Area (Commissioner's Permit)</i>		
Alaska Peninsula	Central (160° to 161° W. long)	7,500	4,500	25
	Unimak Bight ¹	7,500	4,500	25
Dutch Harbor	Bering Sea waters	5,000	3,750	10
	Pacific Ocean waters	5,000	3,750	10
Bering Sea		7,500	18,750	100
			<i>C. opilio & hybrids</i>	
			11,250	
¹ Commissioner's Permit required to harvest scallops in these areas.				

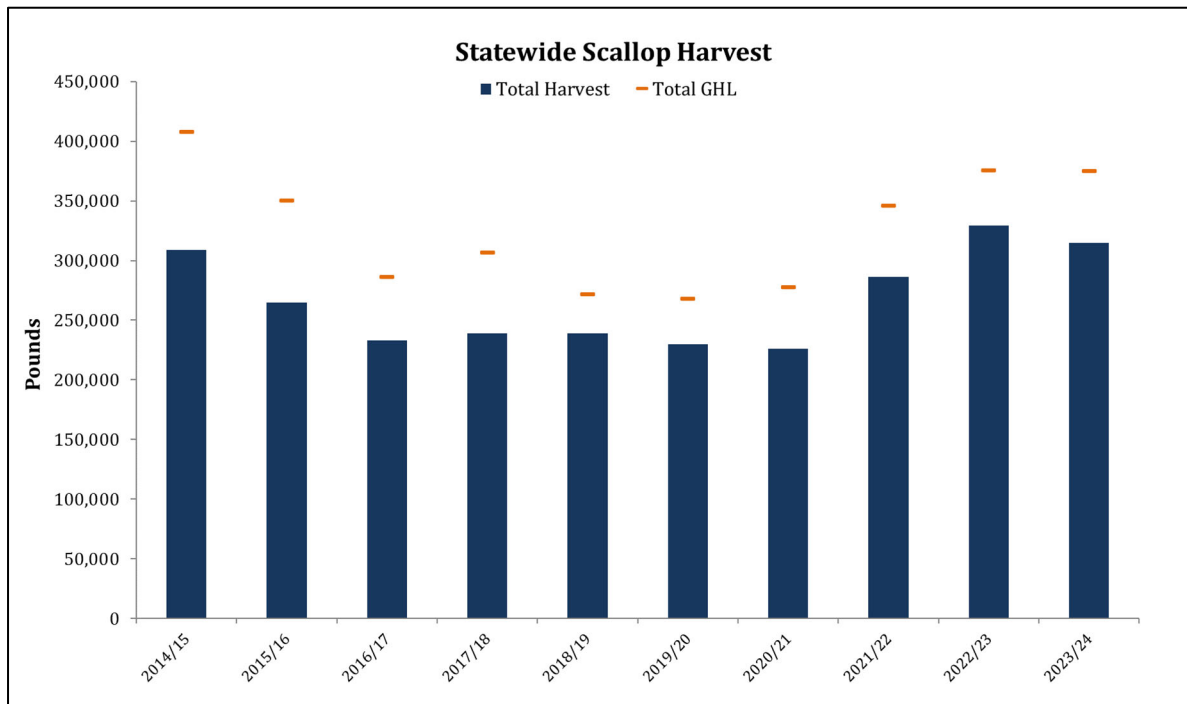


Figure 3. Statewide scallop harvest and GHL, 2014/15-2023/24 seasons.

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) are calculated as a percentage of area ABCs and 2023 GHLs are as follows:

State Water Pacific Cod GHL and Harvest					
State Management Area	ABC and GHL percentage in regulation		Gear	2023 GHL (pounds)	2023 GHL (mt)
Prince William Sound	EGOA - 25%		Jig/Pot	193,456	88
			Longline	1,096,249	497
Chignik	8.75%		Jig	286,074	130
			Pot	2,574,670	1,168
Kodiak	CGOA - 25%	12.50%	Jig	2,043,389	927
			Pot	2,043,389	927
Cook Inlet		3.75%	Jig	183,907	83
			Pot	1,042,139	473
South Alaska Peninsula	WGOA - 30%		Jig	740,481	336
			Pot	4,196,059	1,903
Dutch Harbor Subdistrict	Bering Sea - 12%		Jig	100,000	45
			Pot	38,316,000	17,380
Aleutian Islands Subdistrict	Aleutian Islands - 39%		All	11,875,000	5,386

Chignik

The 2023 GHL for the Chignik Area (Central Gulf of Alaska) is 2.86 million pounds and is allocated 90% to pot gear and 10% to jig gear. The state-waters fishery opened to vessels fishing with pot gear on March 5 and to vessels fishing with jig gear on March 15. The Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery management plan allows unharvested Pacific cod to be taken on or after August 15 with either pot or jig gear and for gear limits to be removed. Through July 31, less than 25% of the state-waters Pacific cod pot gear GHL allocation had been harvested and no state-waters harvest had occurred with jig gear and over 2.0 million pounds of Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod GHL remained available for harvest.

Effective August 15, pot or jig gear may be used to harvest the remaining Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod GHL and gear limits are not in effect. The state-waters season will remain open until the GHL is achieved or until the fishery closes on December 31, 2023. However, ADF&G may close the state-waters season on or after October 30, based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, remaining GHL, and federal fisheries status to allow the Chignik Area parallel Pacific cod season to open.

Cook Inlet

The 2023 GHL for Cook Inlet (Central Gulf of Alaska) is 1.226 million pounds with 1.042 million pounds allocated to pot gear and 184,000 pounds allocated to jig gear. The state-waters pot fishery for vessels greater than 58 feet in overall length (OAL) opened on February 27 and closed on March 5, harvest is confidential. The state-waters pot fishery for vessels less than or equal to 58 feet OAL opened on February 27 and closed on April 9, with six vessels harvesting 787,838 pounds (Figure 4). The jig fishery opened on April 29, following the closure of the federal sector, and remains open. Nine jig vessels have harvested 24,775 pounds.

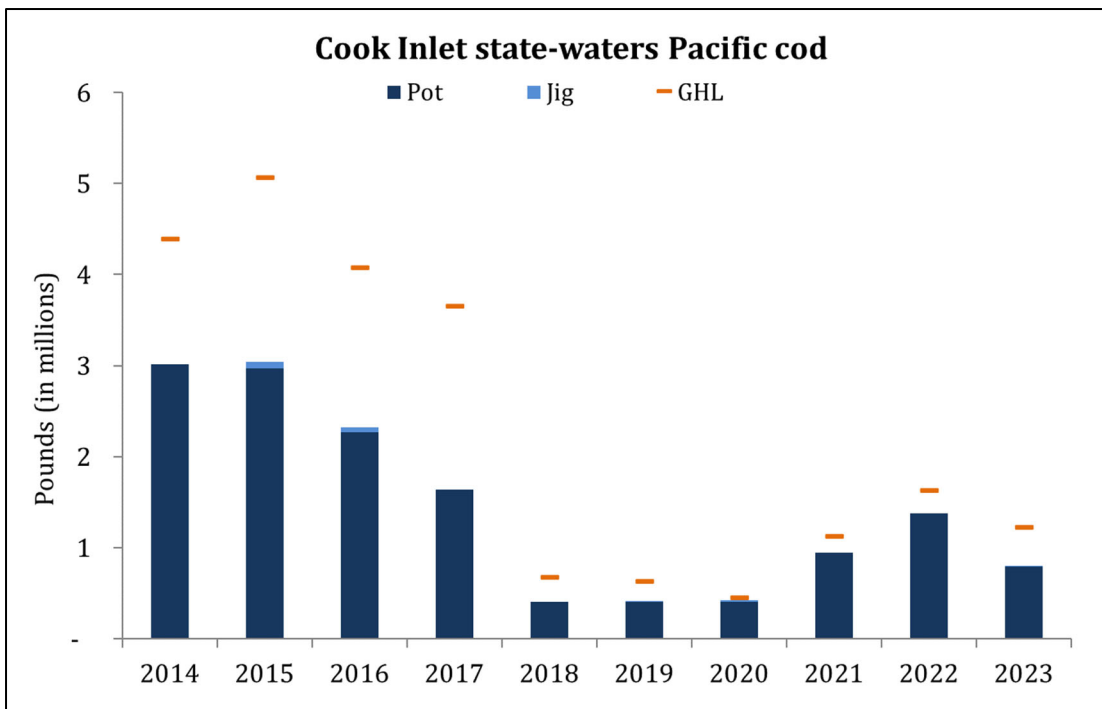


Figure 4. Annual Cook Inlet Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

South Alaska Peninsula

The 2023 GHL for the South Alaska Peninsula is 4.937 million pounds and is allocated 85% to pot gear and 15% to jig gear. The State-waters fishery opened to vessels fishing with pot gear on March 7 and closed on March 12, with a total harvest of 3.98 million pounds (Figure 5). The fishery opened to vessels fishing with jig gear on March 14 and closed on June 28, harvesting 963,863 pounds.

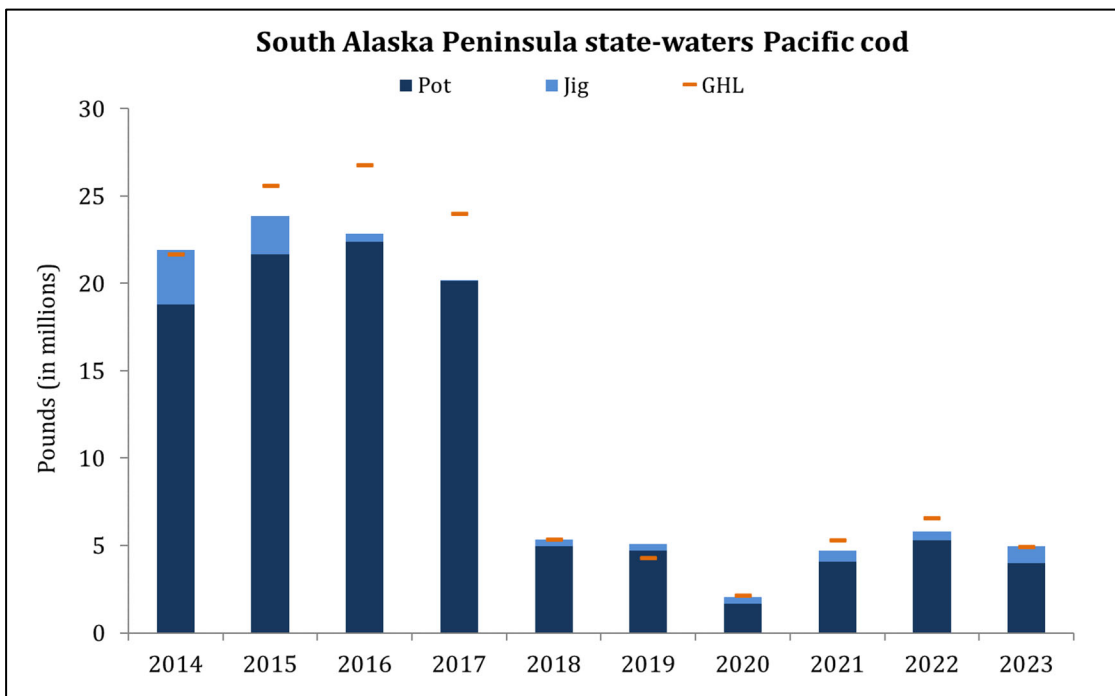


Figure 5. Annual South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

Dutch Harbor

The 2023 GHL for the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict was set at 38.316 million pounds. The fishery is limited to vessels 58 feet or less overall length. The state-waters pot fishery opened on January 23 and closed on April 7, with 26 vessels harvesting 37.6 million pounds (Figure 6). The Dutch Harbor jig fishery opened May 1 with a GHL of 100,000 pounds. By regulation, the jig fishery closes December 31, 2023, or when the GHL is achieved. To date there has been no activity in the jig fishery.

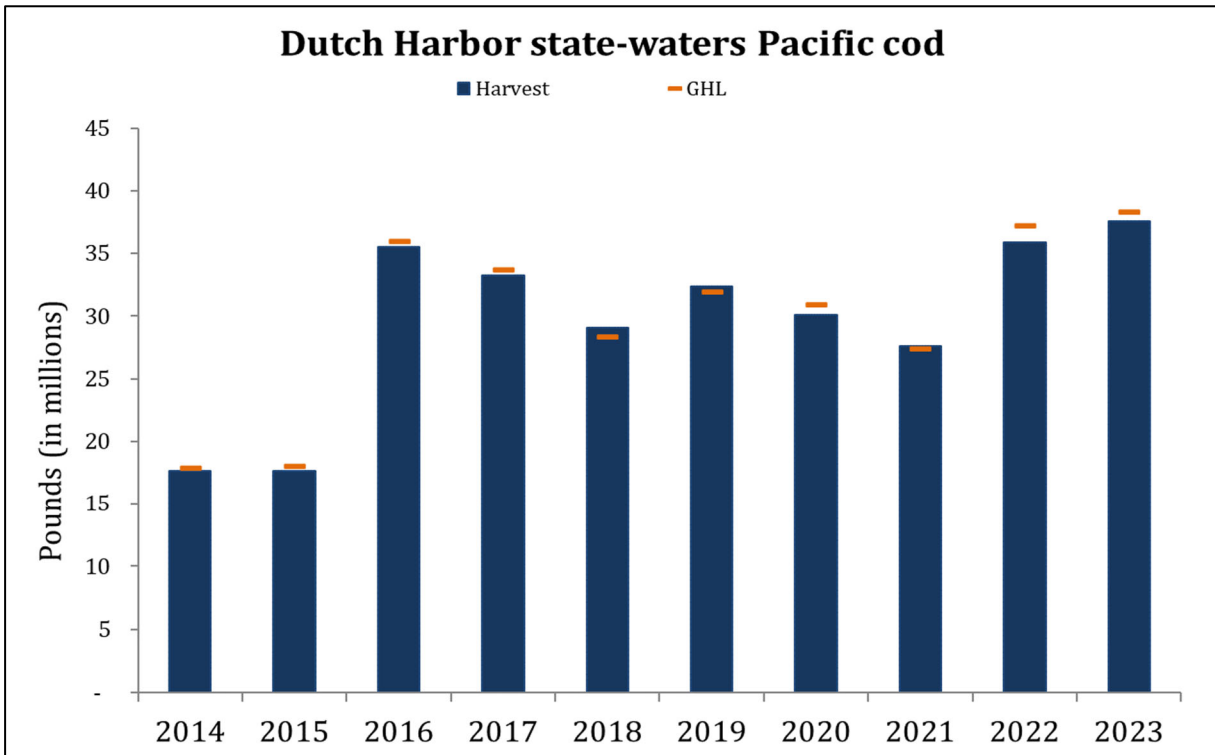


Figure 6. Annual Dutch Harbor Subdistrict Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

Aleutian Islands

The 2023 Aleutian Islands Subdistrict (AIS) GHL is 11.875 million pounds which represents 39% of the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod ABC. The state-waters fishery in the Adak Section, between 175° west longitude and 178° west longitude, opened January 1 to vessels 60 feet or less overall length, except for vessels fishing with longline gear which are limited to an OAL of 58 feet. On January 16, all state waters of the AIS opened to vessels 100 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 60 feet or less OAL using nonpelagic trawl or mechanical jig gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline gear. On March 15, the AIS opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear and vessels 100 feet or less OAL using nonpelagic trawl gear. On March 25, the AIS fishery was designated as a nonexclusive registration area. By regulation, the fishery closes December 31 or when the GHL is achieved. Nine vessels have harvested 9.9 million pounds, 84% of the GHL (Figure 7).

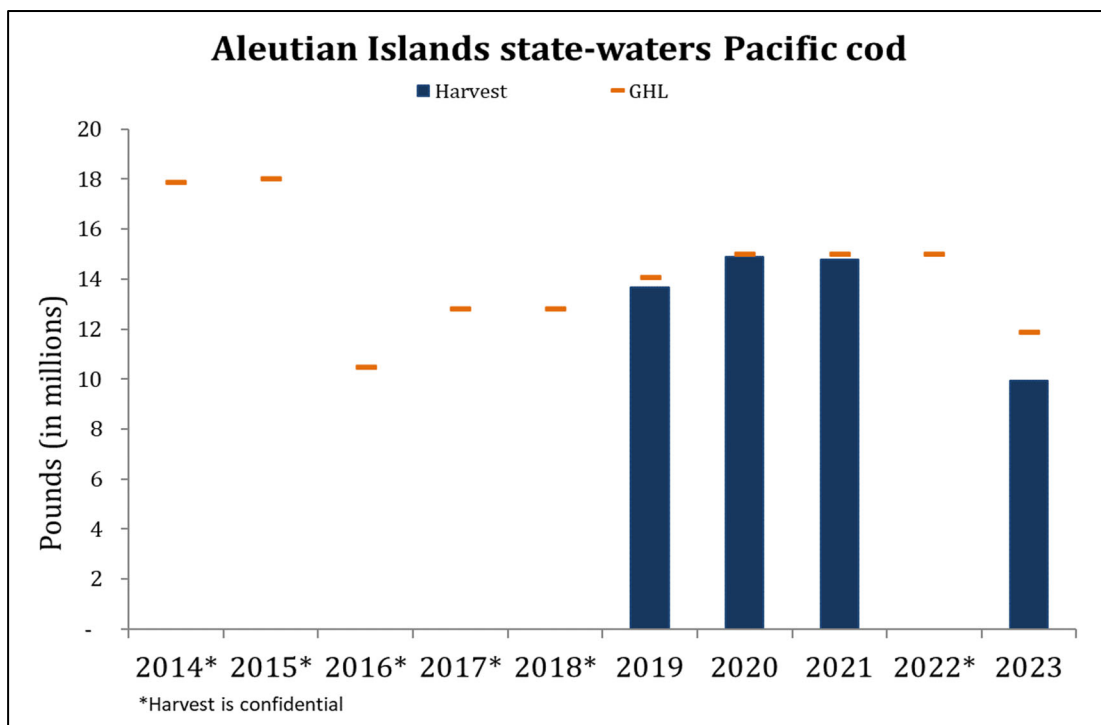


Figure 7. Annual Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific cod harvest and GHIL, 2014-2023.

Rockfish

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Rockfish Management Plan (5 AAC 28.265) establishes a GHIL of 150,000 pounds and requires full retention of all rockfish caught when participating in a directed groundfish or halibut fishery in the PWS Management Area. The plan also sets limits, by fishery, as a percentage of the round weight of the directed species on board the vessel. Any amount of rockfish that exceeds this bycatch limit is accounted for as overage and proceeds are surrendered to the state.

To stay within the annual PWS rockfish GHIL the department reduced rockfish bycatch limits and did not open the parallel Pacific cod season in PWS. Despite these directed management actions, the PWS rockfish GHIL has been exceeded this season.

The department has growing concerns about the status of rockfish stocks in Prince William Sound and is seeking the assistance of participants in the halibut longline fishery to set gear away from aggregates of rockfish. The department is considering pursuing additional regulatory management measures to control rockfish bycatch. Voluntary measures taken to aid in the conservation of rockfish are greatly appreciated and may have a positive effect on future opportunities.

Alaska Board of Fisheries - Upcoming meetings:

- [Work Session](#), October 12-13, 2023, Anchorage. No regulatory action will be taken at this meeting, but the Board may adopt Agenda Change Requests (ACRs) for out of cycle items to be taken up at future meetings.
- [Lower Cook Inlet finfish](#), November 28-December 1, 2023, Homer. Written comments are due November 13, 2023.