

**ADVISORY PANEL  
Motions and Rationale  
December 3-7, 2019 - Anchorage, AK**

**C2 GOA Groundfish Specs**

**AP Motion 1**

The AP recommends the Council set the 2020 and 2021 final annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the Gulf of Alaska as shown in the handout (tables 14 – 16).

*Motion passed 20-0*

**Table 14. Proposed 2020 and 2021 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments (Values are in metric tons)**

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear <sup>1</sup>				
			Other than DSR			DSR	
Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	30.5	519	January 1 - June 10	86	221	January 1 - December 31	9
April 1 - July 1	20	341	June 10 - September 1	2	5		
July 1 - August 1	27	462	September 1 - December 31	12	31		
August 1 - October 1	7.5	128					
October 1 - December 31	15	256					
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,706</b>			<b>257</b>		<b>9</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for hook-and-line gear is allocated to the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and fisheries other than DSR. The Council recommended and NMFS proposes that the hook-and-line sablefish fishery, and the pot and jig gear groundfish fisheries, be exempt from halibut PSC limits.

**Table 15. Proposed 2020 and 2021 Seasonal Apportionments of the Pacific Halibut PSC Limit Apportioned Between the Trawl Gear Shallow-Water and Deep-Water Species Fisheries (Values are in metric tons)**

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water <sup>1</sup>	Total
January 20 - April 1	384	135	519
April 1 - July 1	85	256	341
July 1 - August 1	121	341	462
August 1 - October 1	53	75	128
Subtotal, January 20 - October 1	643	807	1,450
October 1 - December 31 <sup>2</sup>			256
Total			1,706

<sup>1</sup> Vessels participating in cooperatives in the Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 through August 1) deep-water species fishery halibut PSC apportionment.

<sup>2</sup> There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fisheries during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

**Table 16. Proposed 2020 and 2021 Apportionments of the “Other hook-and-line fisheries” Halibut PSC Allowance Between the Hook-and-Line Gear Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Sectors (Values are in metric tons)**

“Other than DSR” allowance	Hook-and-line sector	Sector annual amount	Season	Seasonal percentage	Sector seasonal amount
257	Catcher Vessel	144	January 1 - June 10	86	124
			June 10 - September 1	2	3
			September 1 - December 31	12	17
	Catcher/Processor	113	January 1 - June 10	86	97
			June 10 - September 1	2	2
			September 1 - December 31	12	14

## AP Motion 2

The AP recommends the Council adopt the final 2020 and 2021 halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) for the Gulf of Alaska as shown in Table 17 of the action memo.

*Motion passed 20-0*

**Table 17. Proposed 2020 and 2021 Discard Mortality Rates for Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Alaska (Values are percent of halibut assumed to be dead)**

Gear	Sector	Groundfish fishery	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	All	100
	Catcher/processor	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	Rockfish Program	52
	Catcher vessel	All others	68
	Mothership and catcher/processor	All	75
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	All	11
	Catcher vessel	All	13
Pot	Catcher vessel and catcher/processor	All	0

## AP Motion 3

The AP recommends the Council adopt the final 2020 and 2021 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and set TACs as shown in the handout. The TACs for both Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod and Pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water GHL fisheries. The Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod adjustments are shown in table 2 of the action memo noting that final 2021 amounts would be the same as what is listed for 2020 due to the recommended change by the SSC for the cod ABC in 2021. <sup>1</sup>**The AP recommends the Council approve a ~~15%~~ 25% increase from 2019 TAC for the 2020 TAC for the GOA sablefish stock. GOA sablefish TAC would be set at ~~13307~~ 14463.75 MT with respective area apportionments: W ~~1818~~ 1976.25 MT, C ~~5955~~ 6477.5 MT, WYAK ~~2102~~ 2285 MT and SEO ~~23432~~ 3730 MT.**

*Amendment<sup>2</sup> to change 15% to 25% (and respective quantities) passed 12-8*

*Amendment<sup>1</sup> passed 12-8*

*Motion as amended passed 12-8*

Rationale:

- *A 25% increase to sablefish represents the plan team author's recommendation and is supported by the stock assessment model, which allows for a 49% buffer for uncertainty from the maximum permissible ABC. It is also a compromise from the SSC's higher recommendation of 46%, which also represents a conservative stair-stepped recommendation well below the maximum permissible ABC.*
- *Some fixed gear stakeholders expressed support for a 25% increase during public testimony, referencing the success of pot fishing and reduced impacts of whale depredation.*
- *50% of the 2014 sablefish year class are contributing to the spawning stock this year with more fish contributing each season.*
- *A scientifically supported quota increase will help the trawl industry minimize discards of sablefish early in the year and will help the rockfish program operate efficiently, without an overly constraining hard cap that is not reflective of high levels of sablefish abundance. Allowing vessels in the rockfish program to operate efficiently without the unnecessary risk of being shut down due to an artificially low TAC will allow for continued economic benefits to reach plants and communities in the GOA at a time when economic benefits from other fisheries such as P.cod will be significantly reduced.*

Minority Report

*A minority of the AP could not support the adoption of the AP's proposed TAC sheet, as amended, due to concerns about sablefish quota increases and the status of pacific cod. There are many concerning signals that persist in the sablefish fishery that suggest a need for a more conservative approach to setting TAC below ABC. Spawning biomass is still at B33%, which is below the target goal of B40 and sablefish is one of only two stocks in the GOA below the B target. The SAFE document explains how large year-classes of sablefish have failed to materialize in the past and most recently the 2014-year class size estimate has been downgraded by more than half since the 2017 stock assessment. The lack of large fish apparent in the directed fishery and survey data indicate that the sablefish stock is heavily dependent on a young stock of fish, and it was discussed in the SSC that the sablefish stock can be carried by a handful of large recruitment events as we are now seeing. Ensuring that these year classes reach spawning maturity is paramount to the future health of the sablefish stock. Additionally, the directed fishery CPUE is very low and the model did not adequately capture this as there was a large lack of fit to fishery CPUE and GOA trawl survey data. There is also little evidence of large young year classes appearing in GOA. Public comment did not support TAC=ABC and much of the directed fleet supported no increase. There is an economic benefit for all user groups in allowing the young sablefish stock to grow to a more marketable size; given their low M and longevity, it is possible to "bank" fish until they have time to grow.*

*Emphasis needs to be placed on understanding fish population swings in warming events and more funding for research is the only way to understand these changes. This should remain a top priority for decision-makers and industry.*

*With all gear groups closed to directed p.Cod fishing in the GOA, incidental catch becomes a big issue. It is problematic that the low fixed gear allocation in the GOA is automatically rolled over to incidental catch in the trawl fishery and that there is no mechanism for leaving this fish in the water or for controlling incidental catch up to the ABC. This is occurring while fixed-gear groups have no fishing opportunity. Focusing the pacific cod resource completely on incidental catch has also created a losing scenario for some processors that rely more on local labor and fixed gear boats, and an economic opportunity for processors that have a more automated-model and possess disproportionately high access to trawl catch. This will create long term consequences for the processing landscape in GOA communities.*

*Additionally, it is important to note that the state must be very cautious about opening a GHL fishery in the context of no directed federal cod fishery. If the assessment model is wrong, an overfishing status could be triggered because of a state fishery. MSC decertification is also a real threat and is something that all stakeholders should be concerned about.*

*Signed: Alexis Kwachka, Victoria O'Connell, Jim Johnson, Erik Velsko, Natasha Hayden, Jeff Kauffman and Jamie O'Connor*

## **Table 2. GOA TAC and GHL Considerations for State Waters Pacific Cod**

**Proposed 2020 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and State Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) in metric tons.**

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	4,942	8,458	1,221	14,621
State GHL	1,483	2,115	305	3,902
(%)	30%	25%	25%	25-30
Federal TAC	3,459	6,344	916	10,719

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**Table 1. AP recommended OFLs and ABCs and AP recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2020-2021.**

Species	Area	2019				Catch 11/2/2019	2020		2020 TAC	2021		2021 TAC
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL		ABC	OFL		ABC		
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	3,396	-		n/a	2,712	-	n/a	2,797	-	
	W (610)	n/a	24,875	24,875	21,867	n/a	19,175	19,175	n/a	19,775	19,775	
	C (620)	n/a	67,388	67,388	64,079	n/a	54,456	54,456	n/a	56,159	56,159	
	C (630)	n/a	34,443	34,443	24,461	n/a	26,597	26,597	n/a	27,429	27,429	
	WYAK	n/a	5,748	5,748	6,612	n/a	5,554	5,554	n/a	5,728	5,728	
	Subtotal		194,230	135,850	132,454	117,019	140,674	108,944	105,782	149,988	111,888	109,091
	EYAK/SEO	11,697	8,773	8,773	-	13,531	10,148	10,148	10,148	10,148	10,148	
	Total	205,927	144,623	141,227	117,019	154,205	118,642	115,930	163,519	122,036	119,239	
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	7,633	5,343	5,017	n/a	4,942	3,459	n/a	4,942	3,459	
	C	n/a	7,667	5,750	5,705	n/a	8,458	6,344	n/a	8,458	6,344	
	E	n/a	1,700	1,275	187	n/a	1,221	916	n/a	1,221	916	
	Total		23,669	17,000	12,368	10,909	17,719	14,621	10,719	30,099	14,621	10,719
Sablefish	W	n/a	1,581	1,581	1,438	n/a	2,278	1,942	n/a	3,003	3,003	
	C	n/a	5,178	5,178	5,970	n/a	7,560	6,445	n/a	9,963	9,963	
	WYAK	n/a	1,828	1,828	1,774	n/a	2,521	2,343	n/a	3,323	3,323	
	SEO	n/a	2,984	2,984	3,037	n/a	4,524	3,663	n/a	5,963	5,963	
	Total (OFL AK wide, TAC GOA wide)		25,227	11,571	11,571	12,219	50,481	16,883	14,393	64,765	22,252	22,252
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	25,620	13,250	72	n/a	23,849	13,250	n/a	24,256	13,250	
	C	n/a	25,731	25,731	2,303	n/a	27,732	27,732	n/a	28,205	28,205	
	WYAK	n/a	2,279	2,279	1	n/a	2,773	2,773	n/a	2,820	2,820	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,957	1,957	1	n/a	1,109	1,109	n/a	1,128	1,128	
Total		68,309	55,587	43,217	2,377	68,010	55,463	44,864	69,129	56,409	45,403	
Deep-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	416	416	2	n/a	226	226	n/a	225	225	
	C	n/a	3,443	3,443	92	n/a	1,948	1,948	n/a	1,914	1,914	
	WYAK	n/a	3,280	3,280	8	n/a	2,105	2,105	n/a	2,068	2,068	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,362	2,362	4	n/a	1,751	1,751	n/a	1,719	1,719	
Total		11,434	9,501	9,501	106	7,163	6,030	6,030	7,040	5,926	5,926	
Rex Sole	W	n/a	2,951	2,951	74	n/a	2,901	2,901	n/a	3,013	3,013	
	C	n/a	8,357	8,357	1,447	n/a	8,579	8,579	n/a	8,912	8,912	
	WYAK	n/a	1,657	1,657	2	n/a	1,174	1,174	n/a	1,206	1,206	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,727	1,727	-	n/a	2,224	2,224	n/a	2,285	2,285	
Total		17,889	14,692	14,692	1,523	18,127	14,878	14,878	18,779	15,416	15,416	
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	n/a	35,994	14,500	683	n/a	31,455	14,500	n/a	30,545	14,500	
	C	n/a	70,995	70,995	22,840	n/a	68,669	68,669	n/a	66,683	66,683	
	WYAK	n/a	15,911	6,900	85	n/a	10,242	6,900	n/a	9,946	6,900	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	22,941	6,900	24	n/a	17,694	6,900	n/a	17,183	6,900	
Total		174,598	145,841	99,295	23,632	153,017	128,060	96,969	148,597	124,357	94,983	
Flathead Sole	W	n/a	13,234	8,650	210	n/a	13,783	8,650	n/a	14,191	8,650	
	C	n/a	21,109	15,400	2,343	n/a	20,201	15,400	n/a	20,799	15,400	
	WYAK	n/a	2,016	2,016	-	n/a	2,354	2,354	n/a	2,424	2,424	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	423	423	-	n/a	1,858	1,858	n/a	1,912	1,912	
Total		44,865	36,782	26,489	2,553	46,572	38,196	28,262	47,919	39,326	28,386	
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	3,227	3,227	3,145	n/a	1,437	1,437	n/a	1,379	1,379	
	C	n/a	19,646	19,646	18,114	n/a	23,678	23,678	n/a	22,727	22,727	
	WYAK	n/a	3,296	3,296	3,288	n/a	1,470	1,470	n/a	1,410	1,410	
	W/C/WYAK	31,113	26,169	26,169	24,547	31,567	26,585	26,585	30,297	25,516	25,516	
	SEO	2,838	2,386	2,386	-	5,525	4,653	4,653	5,303	4,467	4,467	
Total		33,951	28,555	28,555	24,547	37,092	31,238	31,238	35,600	29,983	29,983	
Northern Rockfish	W	n/a	1,190	1,190	819	n/a	1,133	1,133	n/a	1,079	1,079	
	C	n/a	3,338	3,338	1,790	n/a	3,178	3,178	n/a	3,027	3,027	
	E	n/a	1	-	-	n/a	1	-	n/a	1	1	
	Total		5,402	4,529	4,528	2,609	5,143	4,312	4,311	4,898	4,107	4,107
Shortraker Rockfish	W	n/a	44	44	55	n/a	52	52	n/a	52	52	
	C	n/a	305	305	226	n/a	284	284	n/a	284	284	
	E	n/a	514	514	391	n/a	372	372	n/a	372	372	
	Total		1,151	863	672	722	944	708	708	944	708	708
Dusky Rockfish	W	n/a	781	781	198	n/a	776	776	n/a	759	759	
	C	n/a	2,764	2,764	2,071	n/a	2,746	2,746	n/a	2,688	2,688	
	WYAK	n/a	95	95	93	n/a	115	115	n/a	113	113	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	60	60	3	n/a	39	39	n/a	38	38	
Total		4,521	3,700	3,700	2,365	4,492	3,676	3,676	4,396	3,598	3,598	
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W	n/a	174	174	78	n/a	168	168	n/a	169	169	
	C	n/a	550	550	433	n/a	455	455	n/a	455	455	
	E	n/a	704	704	208	n/a	586	586	n/a	587	587	
	Total		1,715	1,428	1,428	719	1,452	1,209	1,209	1,455	1,211	1,211
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	411	261	261	140	375	238	238	375	238	238	
Thornyhead Rockfish	W	n/a	326	326	124	n/a	326	326	n/a	326	326	
	C	n/a	911	911	375	n/a	911	911	n/a	911	911	
	E	n/a	779	779	265	n/a	779	779	n/a	779	779	
	Total		2,688	2,016	2,016	764	2,688	2,016	2,016	2,688	2,016	2,016
Other Rockfish	W/C	n/a	1,737	1,737	684	n/a	940	940	n/a	940	940	
	WYAK	n/a	368	368	180	n/a	369	369	n/a	369	369	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	3,489	3,489	50	n/a	2,744	2,744	n/a	2,744	2,744	
	Total		7,356	5,594	5,594	914	5,320	4,053	4,053	5,320	4,053	4,053
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	3,000	1,254	6,200	4,700	3,000	6,200	4,700	3,000	
Big Skate	W	n/a	504	504	114	n/a	758	758	n/a	758	758	
	C	n/a	1,774	1,774	977	n/a	1,560	1,560	n/a	1,560	1,560	
	E	n/a	570	570	101	n/a	890	890	n/a	890	890	
	Total		3,797	2,848	2,848	1,192	4,278	3,208	3,208	4,278	3,208	3,208
Longnose Skate	W	n/a	149	149	59	n/a	158	158	n/a	158	158	
	C	n/a	2,804	2,804	616	n/a	1,875	1,875	n/a	1,875	1,875	
	E	n/a	619	619	308	n/a	554	554	n/a	554	554	
	Total		4,763	3,572	3,572	983	3,449	2,587	2,587	3,449	2,587	2,587
Other Skates	GOA-wide	1,845	1,384	1,384	867	1,166	875	875	1,166	875	875	
Sculpins	GOA-wide	6,958	5,301	5,301	574	6,932	5,199	5,199	6,932	5,199	5,199	
Sharks	GOA-wide	10,913	8,184	8,184	1,728	10,913	8,184	8,184	10,913	8,184	8,184	
Squids	GOA-wide	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,300	975	975	316	1,307	980	980	1,307	980	980	
TOTAL		664,889	509,507	430,569	209,982	607,120	465,956	403,527	639,768	471,990	412,271	

Sources: 2018 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2017; 2019 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from the harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2018, 2018 catches through December 31, 2018 and 2019 catches through November 2, 2019 from AKR Catch Accounting.

\* The SSC has requested that the OFL listed represents Alaska-wide OFL.

#### **AP Motion 4**

The AP recommends the Council approve the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report.

*Motion passed 20-0*

#### **Motion 5**

The AP recommends the council ask the assessment author to do a decision analysis when they propose a reduction from the max ABC. The decision analysis should be on max ABC and the Proposed reduction, ~~eliminate the risk table scoring system~~, also describe and discuss how uncertainties and their unquantifiable risk are not already captured.

*Amendment passed 14-6*

*Motion as amended passed 18-2*

#### Rationale:

- *Clarity and transparency via a more refined qualitative explanation of the factors that go into recommendations to reduce ABC below the maximum permissible, including the multiple layers of uncertainty, is important to increase stakeholder understanding and help inform the TAC setting process.*

#### Rationale in opposition to Amendment:

- *The main purpose of the risk table is clearly articulate and details stock-specific concerns (potentially positive and negative) that fall outside the stock assessment/harvest control rules to help to fully inform any decisions related to a potential reduction in the maximum permissible ABC. A subjective numerical scoring system without an understanding of what a particular score means is not informative for decision-making while also suggesting the risk table is meant to be prescriptive in nature rather than informing.*
- *A decision analysis could calculate projections under the maxABC and the recommended buffer in order for scientists and stakeholders to see what the added benefit or risk to the spawning biomass would be at the differing ABC levels.*

#### Rationale in opposition to amended Main motion:

- *Stock assessment authors already describe the reasons for recommending an ABC below max ABC. By requiring them to only use model outputs to justify lowering ABC takes away any historical knowledge or intuition of the author and in this rapidly changing climate that is not precautionary. The current system, where the author can recommend something below max ABC is helpful to understanding stock status.*

### **AP Motion 6**

The AP recommends the CIE review Gulf Pacific Ocean Perch in April of 2020, and the terms of reference for the CIE need to prioritize fixing the models' performance and exploring the VAST model. The model should be revised before the September Plan Team meeting to move forward with the new ABC for the November Plan Team and 2021 Specs.

*Motion passed 20-0*

#### Rationale:

- *The POP survey showed twice the POP biomass than the model; a CIE review of POP was recommended by the SSC and is important to model performance in time for use in next year's specification process*

### **AP Motion 7**

The AP recommends NMFS prioritize an additional GOA trawl survey with a particular focus on the pacific cod and black cod for 2020.

*Motion passed 20-0*

#### Rationale:

- *The emergency survey for cod is important for all groups, particularly in the context of rapidly changing ocean conditions and the stock being so close to an overfished status*