

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver
Executive Director *Chris*

DATE: September 24, 2013

SUBJECT: Groundfish Harvest Specifications

ESTIMATED TIME 4 HOURS All C-4 items
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ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Review Stock Structure Workshop Report; take action as necessary
- (b) Receive report on BS Sablefish TAC Apportionment; take action as necessary.
- (c) Receive Plan Team Reports
- (d) Groundfish Harvest Specifications: Adopt proposed harvest specifications.

BACKGROUND

(a) Stock Structure Workshop Report

More than 70 people participated in a workshop on April 16, 2013, which was designed to assist the Council in developing a policy for spatial management of finfish and shellfish stocks under its management authority. Workshop participants reviewed and discussed information on application for groundfish, crab, and scallop stocks of spatial management (i.e., subarea allocations of annual harvest specifications (OFL, ABC, and/or TAC)) discussed case studies where subarea allocations have/have not been adopted based on these discussions, the following recommendations were suggested for the Council to consider in developing policy.

- Spatial management should encompass management actions (e.g., subarea TACs) other than subarea splits of overfishing level (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC).
- The Council should adopt a management policy or policies for spatial management of stocks that have been identified by scientific advisors as being at biological risk of reduced biomass and yield to commercial fisheries.
- Stock structure is only one biological parameter that should be considered when determining that a stock is at risk.
- Economic impacts on industry of 1) short term costs of more, smaller quotas that are more likely to close earlier with target species left unharvested and 2) long term costs on lost yield should be considered by the Council when adopting its policy.
- Council policy should identify a default management action that automatically would be implemented for stocks with insufficient data to determine biological risk.
- Several unanswered policy questions were posed for future consideration.
- The Council, or its policy, should articulate the role of the stock assessment author(s), plan team(s), and SSC in determining spatial management.
- Request that the plan teams review this report at their next meetings and provide comments for SSC and Council consideration during their respective meetings in October 2013.

The workshop report is provided under Item C-4(a)(1). Comments from the plan teams for groundfish and crab are under Item C-4(c)(1) and Item C-3(a).

(b) BS Sablefish TAC Apportionment

In April 2013, the Council reviewed a discussion paper to revise sablefish TAC apportionments in order to attain higher optimum yield under the 2 million mt cap on BSAI Groundfish TACs starting in 2014. The paper described two potential approaches to reapportion BS sablefish trawl TAC, which is allocated 50% of the total BS sablefish TAC under the BSAI Groundfish FMP. The trawl fisheries take less than 10 percent of that allocation, and the fixed gear fisheries take less than 60% of that allocation.

The Council may wish to reallocate unused sablefish trawl allocation to:

- 1) The sablefish fixed gear sector to increase attainment of sablefish optimum yield (OY) by each IFQ holder; and/or
- 2) Any other BSAI groundfish TAC(s) to increase total groundfish yield under the 2 million mt OY.

Two potential management approaches to reallocate unused sablefish trawl allocations and increase yield under the OY were identified.

- 1) Reapportion some of the non-specified reserve during the annual harvest specifications cycle (this would recover a small amount of foregone OY but could be accomplished in the next harvest specification cycle), and/or
- 2) Amend the BSAI Groundfish FMP to allow the Council to recapture some or all of the foregone OY (equal to the unharvested sablefish TAC) through greater flexibility in the annual harvest specification process.

In April, the Council encouraged stakeholders to work together to identify additional potential management approaches to Bering Sea sablefish to increase yield. Industry members have convened twice and will provide a report at this meeting.

(c) Plan Team Reports

During their meetings on September 10-13, 2013, the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams recommended proposed groundfish harvest specifications for 2014 and 2015. The Teams also considered numerous informational reports, including the Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan and Stock Structure Workshop which will be reported under other agenda items. Team recommendations for the next two fishing years are based on rollovers of the published 2014 final harvest specifications, which were adopted by the Council in December 2012. The reports from the meetings of the Joint BSAI/GOA Groundfish Plan Team, BSAI Groundfish Plan Team (page 21), and GOA Groundfish Plan Team (page 32) are attached under Item C-4(c)(1).

(d) Proposed Harvest Specifications

The Council is scheduled at this meeting to recommend proposed BSAI and GOA groundfish harvest specifications for the next two-year period to notify the public of likely outcomes for Council action to set final harvest specifications in December 2013. Following this practice, 2014 annual harvest specifications were published in the *Federal Register* in February 2013 (GOA) and March 2013 (BSAI) and will start the groundfish fisheries in January 2014. Proposed harvest specifications for 2015 will be adopted at this meeting and are set equal to the 2014 annual harvest specifications. Any proposed

Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, *opilio* crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments, should be adopted by the Council at this meeting so that the final rule, based on final harvest specifications from December 2013, is a logical outgrowth of the proposed rule. Final harvest specifications will be based on stock assessments included in the respective Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports for the BSAI and GOA, which will be released in late November 2013.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. The BSAI Plan Team recommendations for proposed 2014/2015 BSAI groundfish annual harvest specifications are listed below. The Team adopted proposed 2014 BSAI OFLs and ABCs that were published in the *Federal Register* last year for the purpose of notifying the public of potential final specifications, except for two cases. For Pacific cod, separate BS and AI specifications were adopted. For the EBS the Team used 93 percent of the combined 2014 BSAI OFL and ABC published last year. For the AI, the Team used Tier 5 estimates from last year's preliminary assessment, noting that it will review a revised model in November 2013. The proposed 2014 OFL and ABC for Kamchatka flounder was obtained from the assessment author, using results from the preliminary Tier 3 assessment that was approved for use by the Team. Final BSAI harvest specifications include PSC limits for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, *opilio* crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments, which are set in federal regulations. NMFS staff will be available to assist the Council in adopting proposed PSC limits for 2014/2015. The 2014/2015 crab and herring PSC numbers will be revised when the most current biomass amounts are known.

September 2013 BSAI Plan Team Proposed OFL and ABC Recommendations (mt) for 2014 – 2015

Species	Area	2014			2015		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,730,000	1,430,000		2,730,000	1,430,000	
	AI	48,600	39,800		48,600	39,800	
	Bogoslof	13,400	10,100		13,400	10,100	
Pacific cod	BSAI	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	
	BS	352,470	300,390		352,470	300,390	
	AI	22,500	16,900		22,500	16,900	
Sablefish	BS	1,760	1,480		1,760	1,480	
	AI	2,370	2,010		2,370	2,010	
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	219,000	206,000		219,000	206,000	
Greenland turbot	BSAI	3,270	2,650		3,270	2,650	
	BS	n/a	2,070		n/a	2,070	
	AI	n/a	580		n/a	580	
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	186,000	152,000		186,000	152,000	
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	8,300	7,100		8,300	7,100	
Northern rock sole	BSAI	229,000	204,000		229,000	204,000	
Flathead sole	BSAI	80,100	66,700		80,100	66,700	
Alaska plaice	BSAI	60,200	55,800		60,200	55,800	
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,800	13,300		17,800	13,300	
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	39,500	33,100		39,500	33,100	
	BS	n/a	7,680		n/a	7,680	
	EAI	n/a	9,240		n/a	9,240	
	CAI	n/a	6,590		n/a	6,590	
	WAI	n/a	9,590		n/a	9,590	
Northern rockfish	BSAI	12,000	9,320		12,000	9,320	
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish	BSAI	524	429		524	429	
	EBS/EAI	n/a	189		n/a	189	
	CAI/WAI	n/a	240		n/a	240	
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	493	370		493	370	
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,540	1,159		1,540	1,159	
	BS	n/a	686		n/a	686	
	AI	n/a	473		n/a	473	
Atka mackerel	BSAI	56,500	84,900		56,500	84,900	
	EAI/BS	n/a	16,500		n/a	16,500	
	CAI	n/a	15,700		n/a	15,700	
	WAI	n/a	16,700		n/a	16,700	
Skates	BSAI	44,100	37,300		44,100	37,300	
Sculpins	BSAI	56,400	42,300		56,400	42,300	
Sharks	BSAI	1,360	1,020		1,360	1,020	
Squids	BSAI	2,620	1,970		2,620	1,970	
Octopuses	BSAI	3,450	2,590		3,450	2,590	
Total	BSAI	4,193,257	2,686,688		4,193,257	2,686,688	

TABLE 10-FINAL 2013 AND 2014 APPORTIONMENT OF PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES TO NON-TRAWL GEAR, THE CDQ PROGRAM, AMENDMENT 80, AND THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTORS

PSC species and area ¹	Total non-trawl PSC	Non-trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ ²	Total trawl PSC	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ ²	CDQ PSQ reserve ²	Amendment 80 sector ³	BSAI trawl limited access fishery
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	900	832	3,675	3,349	393	2,325	875
Herring (mt) BSAI	n/a	n/a	2,648	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	n/a	n/a	97,000	86,621	10,379	43,293	26,489
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	n/a	n/a	10,501,333	9,377,690	1,123,643	4,609,135	3,013,990
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	n/a	n/a	980,000	875,140	104,860	368,521	411,228
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	n/a	n/a	2,970,000	2,652,210	317,790	627,778	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of zones.

² Section 679.21(e)(3)(i)(A)(2) allocates 326 mt of the trawl halibut mortality limit and § 679.21(e)(4)(i)(A) allocates 7.5 percent, or 67 mt, of the non-trawl halibut mortality limit as the PSQ reserve for use by the groundfish CDQ program. The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

³ The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits by 150 mt for halibut mortality and 20 percent for crab. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 11-FINAL 2013 AND 2014 HERRING AND RED KING CRAB SAVINGS SUBAREA PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES FOR ALL TRAWL SECTORS

Fishery Categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	180	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ¹	30	n/a
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ²	20	n/a
Rockfish	13	n/a
Pacific cod	40	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,165	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ^{3,4}	200	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ⁵	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,648	97,000

¹ "Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

² "Arrowtooth flounder" for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

³ Pollock other than pelagic trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.

⁴ "Other species" for PSC monitoring includes skates, sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses.

⁵ In December 2012 the Council recommended that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 12—FINAL 2013 AND 2014 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTOR

BSAI trawl limited access fisheries	Prohibited species and area ¹				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	C. opilio (animals) COBLZ	C. bairdi (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	167	23,338	2,840,175	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ²	0	0	0	0	0
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ³	0	0	0	0	0
Rockfish April 15 - December 31	5	0	4,828	0	1,000
Pacific cod	453	2,954	120,705	60,000	50,000
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ⁴	250	197	48,282	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access PSC	875	26,489	3,013,990	411,228	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

² “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, Kamchatka flounder, and arrowtooth flounder.

³ Arrowtooth flounder for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

⁴ “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses.

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 13—FINAL 2013 AND 2014 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR NON-TRAWL FISHERIES

Non-trawl fisheries	Catcher/processor	Catcher vessel
Pacific cod-Total	760	15
January 1 - June 10	455	10
June 10 - August 15	190	3
August 15 - December 31	115	2
Other non-trawl-Total		58
May 1 - December 31		58
Groundfish pot and jig		Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line		Exempt
Total non-trawl PSC		833

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

Gulf of Alaska. The GOA Plan Team recommendations for proposed 2014/2015 GOA groundfish harvest specifications are listed below. Since 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals of not more than 25 percent of the Federal Pacific cod ABC from the State Guideline Harvest Level fisheries. Using the area apportionments of the proposed 2014 Pacific cod ABC that was recommended by the Plan Team, the 2014/2015 Federal TACs for Pacific cod would be adjusted as listed below.

Proposed 2014/2015 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and State Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) (mt).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	2,9470	51,362	3,368	84,200
State GHL	7,368	12,841	842	21,050
(%)	25	25	25	25
Federal TAC	22,103	38,522	2,526	63,151

The halibut PSC apportionments recommended are based on the 2013 apportionments for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries are shown below. Salmon PSC limits are set in regulation. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, Amendment 95 to the GOA FMP would reduce the GOA halibut PSC limits for the groundfish trawl gear sector and groundfish catcher vessel (CV) hook-and-line gear sector by 15 percent. The hook-and-line catcher/processor sector's halibut PSC apportionment would be reduced by 7 percent.

September 2013 GOA Plan Team Proposed OFL and ABC Recommendations (mt) for 2014-2015

Species	Area	2014			2015		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)		25,648			25,648	
	C (62)		47,004			47,004	
	C (63)		25,011			25,011	
	WYAK		3,093			3,093	
	Subtotal	138,610	100,756		138,610	100,756	
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774		14,366	10,774	
	Total	152,976	111,530		152,976	111,530	
Pacific Cod	W		29,470			29,470	
	C		51,362			51,362	
	E		3,368			3,368	
	Total	101,100	84,200		101,100	84,200	
Sablefish	W		1,641			1,641	
	C		5,195			5,195	
	WYAK		1,902			1,902	
	SEO		2,993			2,993	
	Total	13,871	11,731		13,871	11,731	
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W		18,033			18,033	
	C		18,660			18,660	
	WYAK		4,299			4,299	
	EYAK/SEO		1,092			1,092	
	Total	51,580	42,084		51,580	42,084	
Deep-Water Flatfish	W		176			176	
	C		2,308			2,308	
	WYAK		1,581			1,581	
	EYAK/SEO		1,061			1,061	
	Total	6,834	5,126		6,834	5,126	
Rex Sole	W		1,287			1,287	
	C		6,310			6,310	
	WYAK		823			823	
	EYAK/SEO		1,040			1,040	
	Total	12,362	9,460		12,362	9,460	
Arrowtooth Flounder	W		26,970			26,970	
	C		140,424			140,424	
	WYAK		20,754			20,754	
	EYAK/SEO		20,663			20,663	
	Total	245,262	208,811		245,262	208,811	

Flathead Sole	W		16,063			16,063	
	C		27,126			27,126	
	WYAK		4,785			4,785	
	EYAK/SEO		1,797			1,797	
	Total	62,296	49,771		62,296	49,771	
Pacific Ocean Perch	W		2,005			2,005	
	C		10,740			10,740	
	WYAK		1,613			1,613	
	W/C/WYAK	16,555			16,555		
	SEO	2,046	1,775		2,046	1,775	
	E(subtotal)						
	Total	18,601	16,133		18,601	16,133	
Northern Rockfish	W		1,899			1,899	
	C		2,951			2,951	
	E		-			-	
	Total	5,791	4,850		5,791	4,850	
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104			104	
	C		452			452	
	E		525			525	
	Total	1,441	1,081		1,441	1,081	
Dusky Rockfish	W		354			354	
	C		3,317			3,317	
	WYAK		465			465	
	EYAK/SEO		277			277	
	Total	5,395	4,413		5,395	4,413	
Rougeye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W		83			83	
	C		871			871	
	E		300			300	
	Total	1,508	1,254		1,508	1,254	
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	487	303		487	303	
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150			150	
	C		766			766	
	E		749			749	
	Total	2,220	1,665		2,220	1,665	

Other Rockfish (Other slope)	W		44			44	
	C		606			606	
	WYAK		230			230	
	EYAK/SEO		3,165			3,165	
	Total	5,305	4,045		5,305	4,045	
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700		6,200	4,700	
Big Skate	W		469			469	
	C		1,793			1,793	
	E		1,505			1,505	
	Total	5,023	3,767		5,023	3,767	
Longnose Skate	W		70			70	
	C		1,879			1,879	
	E		676			676	
	Total	3,500	2,625		3,500	2,625	
Other Skates	Total	2,706	2,030		2,706	2,030	
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,614	5,884		7,614	5,884	
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028		8,037	6,028	
Squids	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148		1,530	1,148	
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455		1,941	1,455	
Total		723,580	584,094		723,580	584,094	

Final 2013 and 2014 halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments.

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear				
Season	Percent	Amount	Other than DSR			DSR	
			Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	27.5%	543	January 1 - June 10	86%	249	January 1 - December 31	10
April 1 - July 1	20%	395	June 10 - September 1	2%	6		
July 1 - September 1	30%	592	September 1 - December 31	12%	35		
September 1 - October 1	7.5%	148					
October 1 - December 31	15%	296					
Total		1,973			290		10

Note: The trawl PSC limit was reduced by 27 mt to 1,973 mt from 2,000 mt per Rockfish Program regulatory revisions in 2011.

Final 2013 and 2014 apportionment of halibut PSC trawl limits between the trawl gear deep-water species fishery and the shallow-water species fishery.

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water ¹	Total
January 20 - April 1	444	99	543
April 1 - July 1	99	296	395
July 1 - September 1	197	395	592
September 1 - October 1	148	Any remainder	148
Subtotal January 20 - October 1	888	789	1,677
October 1 - December 31 ²	n/a	n/a	296
Total	n/a	n/a	1,973

¹ The third season deep-water apportionment of 395 mt is reduced by 191.4 mt for the Rockfish Program Halibut PSC allocation.

Apportionment of the "Other Hook-and-line fisheries" final 2013 and 2014 halibut PSC allowance between the hook-and-line catcher vessel and catcher/processor sectors

HAL gear (other than DSR) annual PSC amount	Sector	Percent of Annual limit ¹	Annual Amount	Season	Seasonal Percentage	Seasonal Amount
290	CV	57.3%	166	A	86%	143
				B	2%	3
				C	12%	20
	CP	42.7%	124	A	86%	106
				B	2%	2
				C	12%	15

¹ The basis calculations for these percentages incorporate the 2013 WGOA and CGOA cod TACs.