

Background information on AFA exempt and sideboarded catcher vessels. Sections excerpted from the Amendment 106 RIR/IRFA (NPFMC, 2013) for AFA Vessel Replacement (Final Rule implemented October 14, 2014)

BSAI and GOA Sideboards

As a part of AFA, the Council developed a variety of sideboards to prevent vessels from increasing their catch in other fisheries. Sideboard limits do not guarantee the sector that is sideboarded any amount of groundfish TAC. If other sectors take the available TAC before the sideboard limit is taken, both the sideboard fishery and the directed fishery will be closed to directed fishing. If the sideboard fleet reaches their sideboard limit before the TAC is taken, the sideboard fishery would be closed to directed fishing, but the remainder of the fleet may continue to fish under the remaining TAC.

NMFS will only open directed fishing for a species when adequate sideboard amounts exist at the start of the fishing year to cover both the bycatch needs of that species in other fisheries and the directed fishery harvests. NMFS will determine the bycatch of each species that is required in all of the catcher/processor target fisheries and the catcher vessel target fisheries, and then they will subtract that amount from the available sideboard cap. The remainder is the amount of a species the AFA catcher/processors and AFA catcher vessels could use in a directed fishery. If that sideboard amount is too small to manage as a target fishery, NMFS would issue a closure notice at the beginning of the year and directed fishing for that sideboard species would not open.

GOA Sideboards

In the GOA, AFA catcher vessels are divided into two categories, those vessels subject to sideboard limits and those vessels exempt from sideboard limits. Similar to the BSAI, the Council provided an exemption for AFA catcher vessels that have demonstrated dependence on GOA fisheries, while having limited history in the BSAI pollock fishery. To qualify as an exempt AFA catcher vessel, the vessel must 1) be less than 125 feet length overall, 2) have landings of pollock in the BSAI of less than 5,100 [or 1,700 metric tons, annually] from 1995 through 1997, and 3) made at least 40 landings of GOA groundfish from 1995 through 1997. Of the 117 AFA catcher vessels, 17 are exempt from GOA sideboards limit. Although not incorporated in regulation, the Council recommended and approved the exemption with the understanding that no GOA sideboard-exempt vessel would lease its BS pollock in a year that it exceeds its GOA average harvest level from 1995 through 1997. To ensure that Council's intent is satisfied, the Catcher Vessel Inter-cooperative Agreement binds vessels to this limitation.

The remaining 100 AFA catcher vessels are subject to the GOA sideboard limits, which are calculated based on the catch histories of these non-exempt vessels. Specifically, the sideboard ratio is aggregate retained catch for each groundfish species or species group during 1995 through 1995 period relative to the sum of the TACs for the species or species group. An inter-cooperative agreement divides the sideboard limit among the cooperatives and set penalties for exceeding the limits. Table 1-3 provides the GOA sideboard limits and usage for the non-exempt AFA catcher vessels for the 2011 fishing year.

Table 1-3 2011 listed GOA AFA catcher vessel groundfish sideboard limits (mt)

Species	Apportions by season	Area/component	Ratio of 1995-1997	Final 2011 TACs	Final 2011 non-exempt AFA CV sideboard limit	2011 AFA CV sideboard usage (mt)
			non-exempt AFA CV catch to 1995-1997 TAC			
Pollock	A Season Jan 20 - Mar 10	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	4,787	2,895	79
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	11,896	1,388	390
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	4,475	908	0
	B Season Mar 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	4,787	2,895	0
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	14,232	1,661	786
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	2,139	434	5
	C Season Aug 25 - Oct 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	8,729	5,278	1282
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	5,618	656	274
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	6,811	1,381	488
	D Season Oct 1 - Nov 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	8,729	5,278	188
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	5,618	656	402
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	6,811	1,381	402
Annual	WYK (640)	0.3495	2,239	783	129	
	SEO (650)	0.3495	9,245	3,231	0	
Pacific cod	A season Jan 10 - Jun 10	W inshore	0.1365	12,303	1,679	484
		W offshore	0.1026	1,367	140	0
		C inshore	0.0689	21,795	1,502	349
		C offshore	0.0721	2,422	175	0
	B Season Sept 1 - Dec 31	W inshore	0.1365	8,202	1,120	17
		W offshore	0.1026	911	93	0
		C inshore	0.0689	14,530	1,001	435
		C offshore	0.0721	1,614	116	0
	Annual	E inshore	0.0079	1,758	14	Closed to directed fishing
		E offshore	0.0078	195	2	Closed to directed fishing
Sablefish	Annual, trawl gear	W	0	334	0	Closed to directed fishing
		C	0.0642	948	61	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.0433	247	11	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0156	4,500	70	5
Flatfish shallow-water	Annual	C	0.0587	13,000	763	82
		E	0.0126	1,228	15	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0	529	0	Closed to directed fishing
Flatfish deep-water	Annual	C	0.0647	2,919	189	13
		E	0.0128	2,083	27	0
		W	0.0007	1,517	1	Closed to directed fishing
Rex sole	Annual	C	0.0384	6,294	242	87
		E	0.0029	868	3	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0021	8,000	17	Closed to directed fishing
Arrowtooth flounder	Annual	C	0.028	30,000	840	676
		E	0.0002	2,500	1	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0036	2,000	7	Closed to directed fishing
Flathead sole	Annual	C	0.0213	5,000	107	63
		E	0.0009	2,064	2	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0023	2,798	6	Closed to directed fishing
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	C	0.0748	10,379	776	429
		E	0.0466	1,937	90	0
		W	0.0003	2,573	1	Closed to directed fishing
Northern rockfish	Annual	C	0.0277	2,281	63	53
		W	0	134	0	Closed to directed fishing
Shortraker rockfish	Annual	C	0.0218	325	7	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.011	455	5	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0034	212	1	Closed to directed fishing
Other rockfish	Annual	C	0.01699	507	9	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0	276	0	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0001	611	0	Closed to directed fishing
Pelagic shelf rockfish	Annual	C	0	3,052	0	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.0067	407	3	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0	81	0	Closed to directed fishing
Rougheye rockfish	Annual	C	0.0237	868	21	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.0124	363	5	Closed to directed fishing
		W	0.0001	611	0	Closed to directed fishing
Demersal shelf rockfish	Annual	SEO	0.002	300	1	Closed to directed fishing
Thornyhead rockfish	Annual	W	0.028	425	12	Closed to directed fishing
		C	0.028	637	18	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.028	708	20	Closed to directed fishing
Atka mackerel	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0309	2,000	62	Closed to directed fishing
Big skates	Annual	W	0.0063	598	4	Closed to directed fishing
		C	0.0063	2,049	13	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.0063	681	4	Closed to directed fishing
Longnose skates	Annual	W	0.0063	81	1	Closed to directed fishing
		C	0.0063	2,009	13	Closed to directed fishing
		E	0.0063	762	5	Closed to directed fishing
Other skates	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0063	2,093	13	Closed to directed fishing
Squids	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0063	1,148	7	Closed to directed fishing
Sharks	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0063	6,197	39	Closed to directed fishing
Octopuses	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0063	954	6	Closed to directed fishing
Sculpins	Annual	Gulfw ide	0.0063	5,496	35	Closed to directed fishing

¹ The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until Jan 20.

² The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes Nov 1.

AFA sideboard-exempt catcher vessels that participate in the Central GOA Rockfish Program are restricted by Central GOA Rockfish Program sideboard limits. Originally implemented in 2006, the Central GOA Rockfish Program includes a suite of GOA groundfish sideboard limits for catcher vessels. These sideboard limits are in effect only during the month of July. They are designed to restrict fishing during the historical month of the rockfish fishery, but allow eligible rockfish harvesters to participate in fisheries before and after that time period. Sideboard limits apply to harvest in other GOA rockfish fisheries (pelagic shelf rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, and northern rockfish) fisheries and halibut PSC (which limits participation in GOA flatfish fisheries). In 2011, 13 AFA catcher vessels participated in the Central GOA Rockfish Program, of which 11 were limited by the Central GOA Rockfish Program sideboards, and two were not limited by Rockfish Program sideboards.

In addition to the AFA sideboards in the GOA, there are stand down requirements for trawl catcher vessels that fish in both the BSAI and GOA (§ 679.23(h)) that impact AFA catcher vessels. These measures were implemented in 1998, and are intended to prevent unexpected shifts of fishing effort between BSAI and GOA fisheries that can lead to overharvests of total allowable catch in the Western and Central regulatory areas of the GOA. There are three standdown requirements:

- (1) Trawl catcher vessels operating in the BSAI while the pollock or Pacific cod fisheries are open for directed fishing are prohibited from deploying trawl gear in the Western and Central GOA for three days after landing or transferring all BSAI groundfish. An exception applies to trawl catcher vessels that participate in the directed Pacific cod fisheries in the GOA and deliver to processors operating in the offshore sector.
- (2) Trawl catcher vessels operating in the Western GOA area while pollock or inshore Pacific cod are open for directed fishing are restricted from using trawl gear in the BSAI for three days after landing or transferring all Western GOA groundfish.
- (3) Trawl catcher vessels operating in the Central GOA area while pollock or inshore Pacific cod are open to directed fishing are restricted from using trawl gear in the BSAI for two days after landing or transferring all Central GOA groundfish.

In addition to standdown requirements, there are exclusive fishing seasons for trawl catcher vessels that participate in the directed pollock fisheries in both the BSAI and GOA that impact AFA catcher vessels. These measures were implemented by emergency interim rule on January 25, 2000 (65 FR 3892) to address competitive interactions between the groundfish fisheries and Steller sea lions. As shown in Table 1-5, catcher vessels fishing in one season in the GOA or BSAI are prohibited from fishing in the alternative management area until the following season. This prohibition limits the concentration of fishing effort in one area and reduces the potential for localized depletion of Steller sea lion prey. Vessels less than 125 ft. LOA are exempt from this restriction when fishing east of 157° 00' W longitude.

Table 1-5 Exclusive fishing seasons for trawl catcher vessels operating in the BSAI and GOA directed pollock fisheries

If you own or operate a catcher vessel and engage in directed fishing for pollock in the...	During the...	Then you are prohibited from subsequently engaging in directed fishing for pollock with that catcher vessel in the...
BSAI	A season	GOA until the following C season
	B season	GOA until the A season of the next year
GOA	A season	BSAI until the following B season
	B season	BSAI until the following B season
	C season	BSAI until the A season of the following year
	D season	BSAI of the A season the following year

Further, AFA catcher vessels are subject to trip limits for pollock that were implemented as part of the package of Steller sea lion mitigation measures adopted in 1999 (64 FR 3441). Catcher vessels are prohibited from retaining on board more than 300,000 lbs. (136 mt) of unprocessed pollock harvested in the GOA at any time during a trip (§ 679.7(b)(2)). This trip limit does not exempt vessels from regulations that require 100 percent retention of pollock when directed fishing for pollock is open. In addition, vessels in the GOA pollock fisheries are limited to landing no more than 300,000 lbs. through any delivery means, during a calendar day. A calendar day is defined as 12 AM to 12 AM (or 0001 hrs. to 2400 hrs.). The cumulative amount of pollock harvest from any GOA reporting area by an individual trawl catcher vessel is 300,000 lbs. times the number of calendar days the fishery is open in the respective reporting area.

Finally, trawl catcher vessels are prohibited from operating as pollock tenders and retaining on board more than 600,000 lbs. (272 mt) of unprocessed pollock in the GOA east of 157° 00' W longitude (§679.7(b)(3)). This regulation is intended to preclude the large scale use of tender vessels to circumvent the trip limit restriction. Tendering west of 157° 00' W longitude is allowed because smaller vessels delivering to Sand Point and King Cove are more dependent to tenders than the larger vessels that operate east of 157° 00' W longitude and deliver primarily to Kodiak.

AFA Catcher Vessel Participation and Catch

In 2011, 92 AFA trawl catcher vessels made at least one delivery of groundfish (Table 1-6). Over the years, the number of active vessels in this sector has declined as a result of the removal of less efficient vessels. Some of the oldest AFA catcher vessels are active in the GOA groundfish fisheries and are exemption from AFA GOA groundfish sideboard limits. AFA catcher vessels range in length from 73 feet to 189 feet. Of the 92 active vessels, 28 vessels are less than 100 feet in length, 15 vessels are between 100 feet and 120 feet in length, 24 vessels are between 120 feet and 129 feet, and the remaining 25 vessels are greater than 129 feet. Of the 92 active catcher vessels in 2011, 57 vessels have a BSAI only endorsement, while 35 vessels also have GOA endorsements. Of those 35 GOA-endorsed vessels, 15 vessels are exempt from GOA sideboards and 20 vessels are restricted by GOA sideboards. Eleven of the GOA sideboard-exempt vessels have both a Central and Western GOA endorsement, while four of the exempt vessels only have a Central GOA endorsement in addition to their BS endorsement. Finally, of the 20 AFA non-exempt sideboard vessels, 11 vessels have only a Central GOA endorsement, five vessels

only have a Western GOA endorsement, and four vessels have both a Central and Western GOA endorsement.

Table 1-6 Number of AFA catcher vessels (inshore and mothership eligible) active in 2011 by vessel length with sideboard exemptions and GOA area endorsements

Vessel length (feet)	Number of active AFA eligible CVs	Number of active AFA eligible CVs with GOA sideboard exemption	Number of active AFA eligible CVs with BSAI Pcod exemption	Number of active AFA eligible CVs with CGOA endorsement	Number of active AFA eligible CVs with WGOA endorsement
<100	28	14	9	19	12
100-109	8	1	0	3	2
110-119	7	0	0	2	1
120-129	24	0	0	4	5
130-139	6	0	0	1	0
140-149	5	0	0	0	0
150-159	3	0	0	0	0
160-169	4	0	0	1	0
170-179	3	0	0	0	0
180-189	4	0	0	0	0
Total	92	15	9	30	20

Source: RAM LLP file, AK Vessel file, AK Region Sources, and Blend data
Table from AFA_Active(08-14)

Table 1-18 Count of sideboard-exempt and non-exempt AFA GOA-endorsed catcher vessels active in the BSAI by species from 2003 through 2011

AFA CV type	Year	Pollock	Pacific cod	Atka mackerel	Flatfish	Rockfish	Sablefish	Other
Sideboard exempt	2003	14	14	9	11	11	8	11
	2004	14	14	8	11	9	5	9
	2005	14	14	11	14	9	3	14
	2006	11	11	8	11	10	1	11
	2007	12	12	10	12	9	4	12
	2008	12	12	9	12	11	1	12
	2009	13	13	9	13	10	0	13
	2010	14	14	8	13	8	0	13
Non-exempt vessels	2003	21	22	17	20	15	15	18
	2004	21	21	20	21	18	7	20
	2005	22	22	18	21	14	11	21
	2006	22	22	19	20	17	12	18
	2007	21	22	18	20	18	16	18
	2008	21	22	13	21	14	4	19
	2009	21	22	14	20	16	2	18
	2010	21	21	14	21	17	3	17
2011	20	20	15	20	18	5	20	

Source: RAM LLP file, AK vessel file, AK Region Sources, and Blend data

Table 1-19 Catch (mt) of sideboard-exempt and non-exempt AFA GOA-endorsed catcher vessels in the BSAI by species from 2003 through 2011

AFA CV type	Year	Pollock	Pacific cod	Atka mackerel	Flatfish	Rockfish	Sablefish	Other
Sideboard exempt	2003	31,267	1,305	8	23	5	0	25
	2004	28,625	520	34	29	126	6	4
	2005	26,344	766	34	41	9	*	8
	2006	16,129	640	28	42	3	*	16
	2007	22,725	1,153	1	342	3	0	12
	2008	15,424	1,280	2	38	4	*	9
	2009	14,965	804	1	250	4	0	42
	2010	13,578	1,087	3	125	13	0	53
2011	22,523	1,738	337	75	16	*	31	
Non-exempt vessels	2003	109,167	16,014	118	173	54	2	139
	2004	118,760	17,194	84	190	27	1	71
	2005	131,584	14,784	96	236	81	3	122
	2006	131,329	15,215	82	526	120	2	123
	2007	121,893	13,713	29	754	60	1	129
	2008	83,151	11,869	4	658	51	0	348
	2009	70,576	12,792	5	1,206	44	*	160
	2010	73,674	9,496	39	535	42	*	162
2011	114,658	12,428	197	782	54	0	92	
Source: RAM LLP file, AK vessel fine, AK Region Sources, and Blend data								
*Withheld for confidentiality								