



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Meeting Summary

247th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
December 4-10, 2019
Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska

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Attachments

Timelog
Newsletter

BSAI Groundfish Specifications
GOA Groundfish Specifications

The time log is included as a reference attachment for names, dates and times of each agenda item, and the newsletter is included to provide details of the agenda items and the meeting as a whole.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met December 2-10 2019 at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. The following Council, Council staff, SSC, and AP members attended the meetings.

Council Members

Jim Balsiger/Glenn Merrill/ Chris Oliver <i>National Marine Fisheries Service</i>	Kimball, Nicole <i>Appointed</i>
Rachel Baker/Karla Bush (for Doug Vincent-Lang) <i>Alaska Department Fish and Game</i>	Kinneen, Simon, Chair <i>Appointed</i>
Cora Campbell <i>Appointed</i>	Steve Marx (for Curt Melcher) <i>Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife</i>
Craig Cross <i>Appointed</i>	Andy Mezirow <i>Appointed</i>
Kenny Down <i>Appointed</i>	Bill Tweit (for Kelly Susewind), Vice Chair <i>Washington Department Fish & Wildlife</i>
Dave Hanson <i>Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission</i>	RADM Matthew Bell Jr/LCDR Yvonne Yang <i>United States Coast Guard</i>
John Jensen <i>Appointed</i>	

Council Staff

Armstrong, Jim	Fey, Mike (PSMFC)	McCracken, Jon
Cleaver, Sara	Haapala, Kate	Schmidt, Nicole
Cunningham, Sam	Henry, Anna	Stram, Diana
Davis, Maria	La Belle, Sarah	Witherell, Dave (ED)
Evans, Diana (DD)	MacLean, Steve	

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from December 2-4 at the Hilton Hotel. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings.

Gordon Kruse, Co-Chair <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Anne Hollowed, Co-Chair <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Sherri Dressel, Vice Chair <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>
Amy Bishop <i>Alaska Sea Life Center</i>	Curry Cunningham <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>	Mike Downs <i>Wislow Research</i>
Jason Gasper <i>NOAA Fisheries – Alaska Region</i>	Dana Hanselman <i>NOAA Fisheries—AFSC</i>	Brad Harris <i>Alaska Pacific University</i>
George Hunt <i>University of Washington</i>	Dayv Lowry <i>Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>	Franz Mueter <i>University of Alaska Fairbanks</i>
Andrew Munro <i>Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game</i>	Kate Reedy <i>Idaho State University Pocatello</i>	Matt Reimer <i>University of Alaska Anchorage</i>
Heather Renner <i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>	Ian Stewart <i>Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission</i>	Alison Whitman <i>Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>

Chris Anderson was absent

Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel met Tuesday, December 3, through Saturday, December 7, 2019, at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent members are stricken):

Christiansen, Ruth	Johnson, Jim	Scoblic, John
Cochran, Kurt	Kauffman, Jeff	Stevens, Ben
Donich, Daniel	Kwachka, Alexis	Upton, Matt (Co-Vice Chair)
Drobnica, Angel (Co-VC)	Lowenberg, Craig	Vanderhoeven, Anne
Gruver, John	Victoria O’Connell	Velsko, Erik
Gudmundsson, Gretar	O’Connor, Jamie	Weiss, Ernie (Chair)
Hayden, Natasha	O’Donnell, Paddy	Wilt, Sinclair
	Peterson, Joel	

A CALL MEETING TO ORDER/Oath of Office/ Election of Officers

The Council approved the agenda without objection.

B REPORTS

The following reports were given and discussed. Public testimony was heard, and actions were deferred to staff tasking.

B1 Executive Director’s Report – David Witherell

B2 NMFS Management Report (including Final 2020 ADP, year-end inseason management report) – Glenn Merrill, Mary Furuness – In-season management

B3 NOAA GC Report – Molly Watson

B4 NOAA Enforcement Report – Will Ellis and Nathan Lagerway

B5 ADF&G Report (including biennial Halibut Subsistence report)– Kendall Henryl and Jim Fall

B6 USCG Report – Lt YvonneYang

B7 USFWS Report - Jon Gerken

B8 IPHC Report – Steve Keith and Dr. Ian Stewart

C1 BSAI Groundfish Specifications

Council Staff: Steve MacLean

Other Presenters: Dr. Stephani Zador (AFSC), Dr. Elizabeth Siddon (AFSC), Dr. Steve Barbeaux (AFSC), Dr. Jim Ianelli (AFSC)

SSC Report: Dr. Gordon Kruse

AP Report: Matt Upton

Action Required:

1. Review the 2019 Ecosystem Status Report for the Eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.
2. Approve the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report

3. Recommend final BSAI groundfish harvest specifications for 2020 and 2021

Summary: The Council will receive a report from a team of technical experts (the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team) with the final assessments of groundfish stocks and recommend final catch limits for the 2020 and 2021 BSAI groundfish fisheries.

After staff presentations, reports, and public comment, the following action was taken:

Mr. Cross moved, which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow, to adopt the 2020/2021 OFL's, ABC's, and TAC's for Groundfish in the BSAI as shown in table 1 (attached).

Mr. Down moved to amend the motion by setting the 2020 TAC for BSAI sablefish at 1861 mt.
The motion was seconded by Andy Mezirow

Mr. Cross moved to amend the amendment, which was seconded by Dr. Balsiger, to set the 2020 TAC for skates to 16313 mt.

The amendment to the amendment passed unanimously, and the first amendment passed 8/3 with Ms. Baker, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Twiet in objection at 4:08 PM.

VOTE ON MOTION: The amended main motion passed without objection at 12/5/2019 4:25 PM.

Mr. Cross moved, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen, to set flatfish flexibility reserves in Table 7 to maximize the ABC reserves for 2020/2021.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/5/2019 4:26 PM.

Mr. Cross moved, which was seconded by Mr. Mezirow to approve the PSC amounts and distributions shown in Tables 8,9,10, and 11 (attached) and approve the BSAI Safe report for 2020/2021.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/5/2019 4:30 PM.

Mr. Cross moved, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen, to approve the DMR's for 2020/2021 as shown in Table 12 (attached).

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/5/2019 4:31 PM.

Ms. Kimball moved, which was seconded by Mr. Cross, to reiterate the dual purpose of the risk table in the harvest specifications process: 1) to facilitate further collaboration and communication among stock assessment scientists and those in other disciplines (for example, ecosystem and climate scientists) and 2) to increase transparency and consistency in the rationale for reducing from maximum permissible ABC based on exceptional risks/circumstances that are not already addressed in the stock assessment. The Council supports the SSC guidance to the plan teams on future use of the risk table as provided in the December 2019 SSC minutes (under C-1) and expects iterative changes to occur over time as we gain experience with its use.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/5/2019 4:36 PM.

Mr. Tweit moved to add the text “tier system, and harvest control rules” after the words “stock assessment” in the above paragraph.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/5/2019 4:39 PM.

C2 GOA Groundfish Specifications

Council Staff: Sara Cleaver

Other Presenters: Dr. James Ianelli (NMFS AFSC, GOA Plan Team co-chair)
Dr. Stephani Zador (NMFS AFSC), Dr. Steve Barbeaux, Chris Lunsford (NMFS)

SSC Report: Dr. Gordon Kruse, Sherri Dressel

AP Report: Matt Upton

Action Required:

1. Review the 2019 Ecosystem Status Report for the Gulf of Alaska
2. Approve the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.
3. Recommend final GOA Groundfish harvest specifications for 2020 and 2021

Summary: The Council will receive a report from a team of technical experts (the GOA Groundfish Plan Team) with the final assessments of groundfish stocks and recommend final catch limits for the 2020 GOA groundfish fisheries.

After staff presentations, reports, and public comment, **Ms. Kimball moved, seconded by Mr. Jensen the following:**

To approve the 2019 Gulf of Alaska SAFE report.

To approve the final 2020 and 2021 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. (attached)

The TACs for both GOA Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water Guideline Harvest Level fisheries. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in the attached Table 2. (attached)

To set the final 2020 and 2021 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments in the GOA in Tables 14, 15, and 16 (attached).

To approve the updated halibut discard mortality rates for 2020 and 2021 as shown in attached Table 17. (attached)

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/6/2019 1:59 PM.

Ms. Baker made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:

The Council recommends the Center of Independent Experts (CIE) review the Gulf of Alaska Pacific Ocean Perch stock assessment in April of 2020. The terms of reference for the CIE review should

prioritize fixing the models' performance and exploring the VAST model. The model should be revised before the September Plan Team meeting.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/6/2019 2:24 PM.

C3 2020 Charter Halibut Management Measures for Areas 2C and 3A

Council Staff: Steve MacLean, Sam Cunningham

Other Presenters: Sarah Webster (ADF&G)

AP Report: Angel Drobinica

Action Required:

1. Review ADF&G analysis of proposed measures
2. Review Charter Halibut Management Committee minutes
3. Identify preferred management measures for 2020

Summary: Every year in December, the Council selects restrictions to ensure that charter halibut fisheries in Southeast (2C) and Southcentral (3A) Alaska do not exceed set amounts. Charter representatives on the Council's Charter Halibut Management Committee will provide the Council with recommendations at their meeting on Tuesday.

After staff presentations, reports, and public comment, **Andy Mezirow made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council recommends to the International Pacific Halibut Commission the following management measures for IPHC regulatory areas 2C and 3A:

In Area 2C – A progression of management measures in the following order:

1. A reverse slot with an upper limit fixed at O80, and a lower limit raised until the allocation is reached, but no lower than U40; .772 million
2. If the allocation is insufficient to maintain at least a U40 on the lower limit, add Wednesday closures beginning on September 9th and work consecutively toward the beginning of the season until a lower limit of U40 is reached; Yield .658 MP
3. If a lower limit of U40 can't be reached after closing all Wednesdays, add a 4-fish annual limit in addition to closing all Wednesdays, and use any unused allocation to increase the lower limit above U40 until the allocation is reached; Yield .646 MP
4. If a lower limit of U40 can't be reached by closing all Wednesdays and adding a 4-fish annual limit, reduce the annual limit to 3 fish in addition to closing all Wednesdays, and use any unused allocation to increase the lower limit above U40 until the allocation is reached. Yield.615 MP

If an annual limit is adopted in Area 2C, implement a requirement for charter anglers to record, immediately upon retaining a halibut, the date, location (IPHC area), and species (halibut) on their harvest record, consistent with the current reporting requirement in Area 3A.

In Area 3A the preliminary recommendation is:

– for Status quo TCEY. Maintain status quo management measures, except:

1. Closure of Tuesdays throughout the year
2. Include second fish of 26" or less. –

Yield 1.696 MP

For Reference TCEY, additional information needs to be provided to propose catch limit to meet the harvest goal of 2.24 M

The Council requests that ADF&G staff analyze a wider range of management measure options to include combining day of the week closures and reverse slot limits to achieve harvest goals specified by the IPHC. The committee will be allowed to make a recommendation based on that analysis, in the form of a publicly noticed teleconference taking place prior to the Council's February 2020 meeting and the IPHC's Annual Meeting. The Council intends to review and adopt the Committee's recommended management measures at the February 2020 meeting. If the Committee is not able to review options that could achieve the reference TCEY, the members are concerned that they would be ceding the decision on the *mechanism* to reduce removals to the IPHC. If the council approves this request the public should be noticed as soon as practicable and a meeting scheduled about 30 days from now

The Charter Halibut Committee met on December 3rd to make recommendations to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding 2020 harvest measures for the charter sector under the CSP. The level of frustration demonstrated by the sheer volume of written comments and the number of charter operators attending this meeting, emphasized the concerns over the potentially drastic cuts in allocation coming out of the recent IPHC Interim meeting and the added burdensome restrictions that will have to be imposed to keep the sector within allocation. While better data on the sex ratios of commercial catch this year may have improved the IPHC's understanding of realized harvest rates, taking the brunt of this new information all at once will have dire economic consequences on charter businesses. With the new information coming out of the IPHC's MSAB (Management Strategy Advisory Board) regarding the range of SPR's available for Commissioners to select that would not significantly affect the current trajectory of the halibut biomass, *the committee encourages the Council to inform the IPHC of the difficulty this committee had in making this year's recommendations and that a selection of a harvest level intensity that would buffer the impacts and allow a gradual adjustment that would be important to charter businesses and the Alaskan coastal communities that depend of their economic viability.*

Mr. Tweit moved, seconded by Mr. Hanson to amend the motion by deleting the last paragraph.
Amendment passed unanimously at 12/7/2019 11:30 AM.

Ms. Kimball moved, seconded by Mr. Cross, to delete the last two sentences in the first paragraph.
Amendment passed unanimously at 12/7/2019 11:39 AM.

Ms. Baker moved, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit, to add a sentence after number 4 that reads, "If the allocation is not reached, decrease the lower limit below u40 until the allocation is reached."
Amendment passed unanimously at 12/7/2019 11:40 AM.

VOTE ON MOTION: The amended main motion passed without opposition 12/7/2019 11:51 AM.

C4 BSAI parallel waters – Final Action

Council Staff: Jon McCracken

AP Report: Angel Drobnica

Action Required:

1. Review public review draft of BSAI parallel water analysis
2. Identify a preferred alternative and final recommendations

Summary: The Council is reviewing a proposal to prohibit all Federal vessels from fishing for Pacific cod in waters from shore to 3 miles in the BSAI without the proper permits and licenses. Even with the proper permit, these vessels would still be required to stop fishing if the federal waters fishery to which they are linked closes. The analysis also evaluates an additional requirement that if a vessel removes the permit from their vessel, they must wait three years before it could be re-issued.

After staff presentations and reports (there was no public comment) **Mr. Down made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need and alternative for final action. The preferred alternative is indicated in **bold**.

Purpose and Need statement:

Currently, there are no limits on entry by federally permitted catcher vessels into the Bering Sea /Aleutian Islands (BSAI) parallel waters groundfish fisheries, and no limits on the proportion of BSAI Pacific cod TAC that may be harvested in parallel waters. Currently management inadvertently allows fishing in BSAI parallel waters off a federal Pacific cod TAC even when a sector's federal Pacific cod allocation has been achieved. There is concern that harvests of Pacific cod in the parallel waters fishery by vessels that do not hold BSAI groundfish LLP licenses or the appropriate Pacific cod endorsement may continue to increase. This complicates conservation and management measures which hold sectors to their allocations and circumvents the intent of previous Council decisions regarding license limitation, sector allocations, and catch reporting. The Council, in consideration of options and recommendations for federal catcher vessels that participate in the parallel fishery, intends to ensure robust catch accounting while considering participation in, and reliance on, Pacific cod fisheries while recognizing that new entrants who do not hold Federal fishery permits may participate in the parallel fishery.

Alternative 1: Status quo

Alternative 2: Limit access to the parallel fishery for Federal fishery participants.

Hook and line and pot gear vessels - require any pot or hook and line vessel designated on an LLP or FFP to have the appropriate Pacific cod endorsement and area endorsement on the LLP; and the Bering Sea (BS) or Aleutian Islands (AI) area designation and the appropriate gear and operation type designations on the FFP in order to participate in the BS or AI Pacific cod parallel waters fishery.

Trawl gear vessels - require any trawl vessel with an LLP or an FFP to have the appropriate gear and area endorsements on the LLP; and the BS or AI area designation and the appropriate gear and operation type designations on the FFP in order to participate in the BS or AI Pacific cod parallel waters fishery.

In addition, require the above Federally permitted or licensed vessels that fish in the parallel waters to adhere to Federal seasonal closures of the BSAI sector allocations corresponding to the sector in which the vessel operates.

Vessels with a BS or AI area, gear, and operation type designations specified in this alternative cannot remove these designations from the FFP and can only surrender or reactivate the FFP once every three years.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Marx:

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions.

The amendment passed without objection 12/7/2019 1:43 PM.

VOTE ON MOTION: The amended main motion passed unanimously by roll call vote 12/7/2019 1:57 PM.

C5 Crab partial deliveries/offloads – Final Action

Council Staff: Sam Cunningham
Other Staff: Doug Duncan, Megan Mackey (NMFS; presenters)
AP Report: Matt Upton
Action Required: 1. Review revised analysis
 2. Final action - identify a preferred alternative

Summary: The Council will consider whether or not to allow crab vessels to continue fishing for king and Tanner crab in the BSAI crab fisheries after offloading only some of the crab on their vessel. The Council has indicated preliminary support for the change.

After staff presentations, reports and public comment, **Karla Bush made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit:**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need and preferred alternative (in **bold**) for final action: *The purpose of this action is to allow vessels participating in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization (CR) Program to make partial deliveries of crab and then continue fishing before fully offloading all harvested crab. This action would remove Federal regulations that prohibit the continuation of a fishing trip subsequent to a partial offload of crab in the CR program. The need for this action is to provide operational flexibility to vessels to conduct their business in an efficient manner, in particular when emergencies or special circumstances arise, while also ensuring proper catch accounting.*

Alternative 1 (No Action): Status quo is maintained. Vessels are prohibited from resuming fishing for CR crab on board a vessel once a landing has commenced and until all CR crab are landed, unless fishing in the Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery.

Alternative 2: Remove the prohibition on resuming fishing for CR crab on board a vessel once a landing has commenced and until all CR crab are landed. This will allow vessels to make partial deliveries of CR crab and then continue fishing before fully offloading all harvested crab.

Option: In the event of a partial offload within a fishing trip, only entire tank crab contents may be offloaded (any tank started for offload must be fully offloaded).

Ms. Kimball moved, seconded by Mr. Jensen, to amend the motion by adding the following text:

This issue, and the resulting biological economic and management impacts should be incorporated into the next 7-year review of the BSAI Crab Rationalization program.

Amendment passed without objection 12/7/2019 2:37 PM.

Mr. Tweit made the following amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Down:

The Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c). The Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions.

The amendment passed without objection 12/7/2019 2:38 PM.

VOTE ON MOTION: Vote on the amended main motion passed unanimously 12/7/2019 2:43 PM.

C6 St Matthew Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan – Initial Review

Council Staff: Jim Armstrong, Anna Henry

AP Report Matt Upton

SSC Report Gordon Kruse

Action Required:

1. Review the initial review draft of the EA.
2. Determine whether to release the document and schedule final action.
3. Select a Preliminary Preferred Alternative, as appropriate.

Summary: A rebuilding plan is needed for the Saint Matthew Island blue king crab stock, which was declared overfished in October 2018. The analysis estimates rebuilding time frames based on alternatives and options that would either prohibit or allow directed fishing during stock recovery.

After staff presentations, reports and public comment, **Karla Bush made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council recommends the following changes to the alternatives (in strikethrough) and a preliminary preferred alternative (in **bold**) for public review. Analysts should incorporate suggestions from the SSC as practicable.

Alternative 1: No Action: ~~State harvest strategy with no rebuilding plan~~

Alternative 2: Set target rebuilding time frame (T_{TARGET}) for the number of years necessary to rebuild the stock to the B_{MSY} level at a probability $\geq 50\%$. The stock will be considered “rebuilt” once it reaches B_{MSY} .

Option 1: No directed fishing until the stock is rebuilt (T_{MIN})

Option 2: Allow the directed fishery to open based on the state harvest strategy while the stock is rebuilding (T_{MAX})

VOTE ON MOTION: Vote on the motion passed unanimously 12/7/2019 4:30 PM.

C7 Central GOA Rockfish Reauthorization – Initial Review

Council Staff:	Jon McCracken
Other Presenters:	Stephanie Warpinski (NMFS), Darrell Brannan (Brannan & Associates) Mike Downs (Wislow Research Associates)
AP Report	Ernie Weiss
SSC Report	Dr. Gordon Kruse
Action Required:	1. Review the initial review draft of the EA/RIR/SIA. 2. Determine whether to release the document and schedule final action. 3. Select a Preliminary Preferred Alternative, as appropriate.

Summary: Action is required to continue the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program, which allocates certain rockfish to specific vessels and processor groups. Changing allocation of Pacific cod and rockfish, and changing limits that apply to crab vessels may also be considered.

After staff presentations, reports and public comment, **Glenn Merrill made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cross:**

The Council adopts the following alternatives for public review. Staff should consider and address comments from the AP and the SSC to the extent practicable. The preliminary preferred alternative is shown in **bold**; changes to the Alternatives, Elements and Options: new language is underlined, deleted language is shown in ~~strike through~~.

No changes have been made to the Purpose and Need Statement.

Alternatives:

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the CGOA rockfish fisheries would revert to LLP management. Because the fishery would no longer be managed under a LAPP structure, the management regulations associated with a LAPP would also be removed.

Alternative 2: Reauthorize the Rockfish Program (RP).

Reauthorize the RP with the existing management framework unless modified under this alternative. Each element of Alternative 2, as proposed by the Council, is presented. Immediately following the Council's element for analysis is a brief discussion of the "context" of the provision. The context is not part of the Council's motion. It was provided by the analysts.

Element 1: Modify regulations at 679.80(a)(2) to specify the duration of the program.

Option 1: Remove sunset date.

Option 2: Replace with new sunset date (10-20 years).

Element 2: Consider options to Reallocate unharvested RP Pacific cod from onshore RP cooperatives to fixed gear open access fisheries after the RP fisheries close on November 15. The Regional Administrator would consider a reallocation of the projected unused allocation first to the CV pot, jig, and hook-and-line sectors first, then to the combined CV and CP pot sectors, and then to all other CP sectors, taking into account the capability of a sector, as determined by the Regional Administrator, to harvest the reallocated Pacific Cod.

Element 3: Exempt vessels from crab program sideboard limits ~~for vessels when fishing in the RP.~~

Element 4: Require annual NMFS cost recovery reports in regulations.

Element 5: Clarify regulations at § 679.5(r)(10) to specify that only shoreside processors receiving RP Cooperative Quota (CQ) must submit the Rockfish Ex-Vessel Volume and Value Report.

Element 6: Remove regulations in § 679.5(r)(6)(iii)(B) requiring that an annual RP cooperative report be submitted to NMFS. The Council may request that the RP cooperatives voluntarily provide annual reports to the Council. ~~Modify language in § 679.5(r)(6)(iii)(B) to require RP cooperatives to report catch by CGOA reporting area.~~

Element 7: Revise § 679.5(r)(6)(iii)(D) to replace “any actions” with “any civil actions”.

Element 8: Revise § 679.81 (i)(D)(3) to remove requirements for a Fishing Plan to be submitted with a cooperative application for CQ.

Element 9: Revise § 679.84(f)(1) to exempt shoreside processors under the RP from the requirement to provide an observer work station and observer communication described at § 679.28(g)(7)(vii) and (viii).

Element 10: Allow NMFS to reallocate unused rockfish ICAs to the RP catcher vessel (CV) cooperatives to prevent exceeding the TACs in the CGOA.

Element 11: Clarify regulations regarding accounting for inseason use caps to specify that any transfer of unused rockfish ICAs or CP CQ to CV cooperatives does not apply to CV ownership, cooperative, or shoreside processor CQ use caps. Clarify regulations regarding accounting for inseason use caps when catcher/processor (CP) quota share (QS) is transferred for use by the CV sector.

Element 12: Modify cooperative check-in times from 48 to 24 hours.

Element 13: Remove CP rockfish program sideboard limits in the WGOA rockfish fisheries in § 679.82(e)(4).

Element 14: Modify regulations at § 679.23(h)(1) by removing the 3-day stand down for CVs that fish for groundfish in the BSAI while pollock or Pacific cod is open to directed fishing in the BSAI from the GOA stand down if they check into the RP and fish in the CGOA RP.

Ms. Baker moved to amend Element 11, in the 3^d line adding “Harvester CQ” after “cooperative.” The amendment was seconded by Mr. Down.

Amendment passed with no objection 12/8/2019 11:07AM.

Ms. Kimball moved to amend, seconded by Mr. Mezirow, to add in Element 10 “with a preference to reallocate to CV’s first.”

Mr. Tweit moved to amend the amendment by changing the text to a suboption.

Amendment to the amendment passed without objection 12/8/2019 11:07AM.

Amendment passed without objection 12/8/2019 11:08AM.

VOTE ON MOTION: Amended main motion passed unanimously. 12/8/2019 11:20 AM

C8 Unguided halibut rental boat registration – Initial Review

Council Staff:	Sara Cleaver
Other Presenters:	Kurt Iverson (NMFS AKR)
AP Report:	Ernie Weiss
Action Required:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review draft RIR 2. Review Charter Halibut Committee minutes, and Enforcement Committee minutes, AP report, as well as public testimony 3. If desired, identify preliminary preferred alternative(s)

Summary: The Council is considering establishing a registration requirement for unguided rental vessels used to catch halibut in the recreational fisheries in Areas 2C (Southeast) and 3A (Southcentral). The analysis also evaluates an option to require anglers on unguided rental boats to comply with bag and size limits currently applicable to charter vessels.

After staff presentations, reports and public comment, **Mr. Tweit made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen:**

The Council takes no further action at this time. The Council requests that staff coordinate with the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Region, and recreational stakeholders to explore alternative non-regulatory methods to quantify the number and geographic scope of non-guided rental boat activities in recreational halibut fisheries off Alaska.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously 12/8/2019 3:53 PM.

D1 Halibut ABM – Review staff workplan (Council only)

Council Staff:	Dr. Diana Stram
Action Required:	Review workplan for revising the BSAI Halibut ABM analysis

Summary: The Council will review a plan for revising the analysis to set BSAI halibut prohibited species catch limits based on abundance. Based on this workplan, the Council will decide when to schedule the next review.

After the staff presentation and public comment, **Ms. Baker made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Marx:**

The Council asks staff to prioritize the following tasks from the work plan to facilitate Council review of the analysis in June:

- Low and alternative recruitment scenarios and 30:20 harvest control rule simulation (#3 in work plan)
- PSC usage assumptions (#1 in work plan)
- Analysis of control rule scenarios recommended by stakeholders (Alternatives 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2a, and 3.3a from the draft Initial Review Analysis)

The Council is concerned that the current BSAI halibut ABM approach involves development of complex control rules that adjust halibut PSC limits. Over the past two years, the Council, stakeholders, and the public have been challenged to understand the mechanics of the control rule options and the PSC limits. There are also concerns about the time it has taken to develop the analysis for the control rule options.

The BSAI halibut ABM workplan indicates that June 2020 is the earliest possible meeting for the Council to receive the initial review analysis of the current alternatives and model development. While working on the next version of the analysis, the Council requests stakeholder input on additional management alternatives that serve to streamline the action and meet the Council’s objectives to establish abundance-based PSC limits that minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable, and aid the directed halibut fisheries at low levels of abundance. The Council will consider stakeholder suggestions at a future meeting and determine whether further development is warranted. The Council notes that stakeholder suggestions would not be included in the June 2020 initial review draft.

Mr. Merrill moved to amend the motion by adding the following before the last sentence: “The Council may consider revisions to the suite of alternatives prior to June 2020 but would do so without an additional analytical product,” and add the word “substantive” in the last sentence before the word “stakeholder.” The motion was seconded by Mr. Cross.

Ms. Kimball provided a substitute motion that would remove the last sentence in the paragraph. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cross.

The substitute motion passed unanimously 12/8/2019 5:15 PM.

VOTE ON MOTION: The amended main motion passed unanimously 12/8/2019 5:25 PM.

D2 Sablefish discards – Discussion paper

Council Staff: Jim Armstrong
Other Presenters: Dr. Joseph Krieger, NMFS (AKRO)
AP Report: Angel Drobnica
Action Required: 1. Review discussion paper
 2. Determine what further action is necessary.

Summary: The Council will review a paper that analyzes issues associated with a proposal to allow discarding of small sablefish by the IFQ sablefish fishery.

After the staff presentation and public comment, **Ms. Campbell made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Down:**

The Council adopts the following purpose and need statement and alternative for analysis.

Purpose and Need

Large year classes of sablefish result in significant catches of small sablefish in the IFQ fixed gear fisheries. Small sablefish have low commercial value and current regulations require IFQ holders to retain all sablefish. Available data suggest that survival rates for carefully released sablefish are high. Operational flexibility to carefully release sablefish may increase the value of the commercial harvest and allow small fish to contribute to the overall biomass.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Allow voluntary careful release of sablefish in the IFQ fishery

Element 1: DMRs

Apply a DMR to discarded sablefish of:

- a. 5%
- b. 12%
- c. 16%
- d. 20%

Sub-option: Select different DMRs for pot gear and hook and line gear

Element 2: Catch Accounting

Option 1: Sablefish discards will be estimated using observer and EM data with a DMR applied annually as part of the specifications process.

Option 2: Sablefish discards will be estimated pre-season based on AFSC longline survey encounter rates of sub-three pound sablefish with the DMR applied annually as part of the specifications process.

Element 3: Discard Mortality Accounting

Sablefish discard mortality associated with the IFQ fishery will be accounted for in the stock assessment. The analysis should describe the potential implications of voluntary discards on the sablefish stock assessment and specifications process.

Element 4: Monitoring and Enforcement

The analysis should describe potential monitoring and enforcement provisions that could improve estimates of voluntary and regulatory discards.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed without objection 12/9/2019 10:34 AM.

D3 Aleutian Islands Community follow-up – Discussion paper

- Staff:** Jon McCracken
- AP Report:** Angel Drobnica
- Action Required:**
 - 1. Discussion paper - review
 - 2. Determine if further action is warranted

Summary: The Council will review a discussion paper on management options available to promote sustained participation of Aleutian Islands fishing communities in the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod fishery.

After staff presentations, reports and public comment the Council discussed the issue and no action was taken.

E Staff Tasking

After staff presentation, including an overview of upcoming meeting items by Executive Director David Witherell and Steve MacLean presenting a report from the CEC and public comment, the Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, as well as tasking issues.

Crab PSCs

Mr. Down moved and was seconded by Mr. Tweit to adopt the following purpose and need statement and alternatives for analysis:

Draft Purpose and Need

The current crab PSC management using abundance-based limits and closed areas may not be minimizing bycatch in groundfish fisheries to the extent practicable. This has heightened consequences in cases where the directed crab fisheries are closed.

This action would establish stronger incentives to minimize crab bycatch in groundfish fisheries managed with PSC limits when a directed crab fishery is closed. This action is intended to ensure we are meeting national standards and balancing impacts to all the fisheries and communities that interact with that stock.

Draft Alternatives

Alternative 1: No action

Alternative 2: Reduced PSC limits for groundfish fishing when the corresponding directed crab fishery is closed.

When no Crab Rationalization Program individual fishing quota (IFQ) is issued in a season for BBRKC, bairdi, or opilio, set the crab PSC limit for that stock at the lowest abundance-based level. As described in regulation at 50 CFR 679.21(e)(1), the PSC limits for the groundfish fisheries would be as follows under this alternative when the directed crab fishery is closed:

- Bairdi Zone 1 – 730,000 animals
- Bairdi Zone 2 – 2,070,000 animals
- BBRKC Zone 1 – 32,000 red king crab
- Opilio – 4.350 million animals

The Council requests that the analysis include source numbers for the crab abundance estimates used to calculate the PSCs and clearly state whether they are from raw numbers from the NMFS bottom trawl survey or from stock assessment model estimates.

Mr. Tweit moved to amend, with Mr. Jensen seconding, to change the Purpose and Need Statement to the following:

Draft Purpose and Need

At present, most Bering Sea crab stocks are experiencing low productivity and small population sizes, leading to large reductions in directed harvest levels. These problems appear to be ongoing, and lead the Council to examine existing harvest controls to determine whether both directed harvest and bycatch measures are responsive to these adverse conditions.

~~The current crab PSC management using abundance-based limits and closed areas may not be minimizing bycatch in groundfish fisheries to the extent practicable. This has heightened consequences in cases where the directed crab fisheries are closed.~~

This action would increase the linkage between controls on ~~establish stronger incentives to minimize~~ crab bycatch in groundfish fisheries managed with PSC limits when a ~~and the harvest controls on the~~ directed crab fishery by established explicit reductions in allowable bycatch levels when the directed fishery is closed. This action is intended to ensure ~~we are meeting national standards and there is~~

consistency in management measures between directed fisheries and bycatch in groundfish fisheries, making more explicit the balance of impacts to all the fisheries and communities that are affected by the status of depressed stocks interact with that stock.

The amendment passed with no objection 12/9/2019 4:33 PM.

Ms. Kimball moved to amend the motion and was second by Mr. Mezirow to replace “harvest controls” with “PSC limits.” The amendment passed without objection 12/9/2019 4:40 PM.

Ms. Kimball moved, and was seconded by Mr. Jensen to make an change in Alternative 2 to add the words “BSAI Trawl CDQ and non-CDQ” before the word ‘groundfish’. The amendment passed without objection 12/9/2019 4:43 PM.

Mr. Tweit moved and was seconded by Mr. Jensen to change the following:

- Bairdi Zone 1 – ~~730,000 animals~~ 0.5% of total abundance minus 20,000 animals
- Bairdi Zone 2 – ~~2,070,000 animals~~ 1.2% of the total abundance minus 30,000 animals

The amendment passed unanimously 12/9/2019 4:46 PM.

VOTE ON MOTION: The amended main motion passed without objection: 12/9/2019 4:50 PM.

Cook Inlet Salmon FMP

Dr. Balsiger moved, which was seconded, to requests that staff move forward with development of the analysis for preliminary initial review at the April 2020 Council meeting with the following draft purpose and need statement and alternatives. This action is consistent with NMFS’s intent to have the FMP amendment implemented by the 2022 fishing season.

Draft Purpose and Need

The Council intends to amend the Salmon FMP to manage the traditional net fishing area that occurs in Federal waters of Cook Inlet. Federal management in an FMP must meet the Magnuson-Stevens Act required provisions for an FMP in section 303(a) and related Magnuson-Stevens Act provisions. This proposed action is necessary to bring the Salmon FMP into compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act consistent with the recent Ninth Circuit ruling and the Judgement of the District Court in UCIDA et al., v. NMFS.

Draft Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action. No amendment to the Salmon FMP. This alternative would maintain status quo. Alternative 1 is not a viable alternative given the Ninth Circuit decision, however, NEPA requires that Federal agencies analyze a no action alternative.

Alternative 2: Federal management with specific management measures delegated to the State. Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP’s fishery management unit in the West Area and establish a Federal management regime for these salmon fisheries that delegates specific management measures to the State of Alaska, to use existing State salmon management infrastructure, in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Ninth Circuit ruling. Alternative 2 would identify the management measures that would be managed by the Council and NMFS, the management measures that would be delegated to the State to manage with Federal oversight, and the process for delegation and oversight of management.

Alternative 3: Federal management. Amend the Salmon FMP to include the Cook Inlet EEZ in the FMP's fishery management unit in the West Area and apply Federal management to those portions of the fisheries that occur in the EEZ.

Furthermore, the Council requests that the Cook Inlet Salmon Committee (Committee) meet again before the April 2020 Council meeting to develop its recommendations for an FMP amendment for the Cook Inlet drift gillnet fishery in the EEZ adjacent to Cook Inlet. The Council also requests that the Committee provide its recommendations for consideration at the April 2020 Council meeting. It is expected that the Council could consider and incorporate the Committee's recommendation prior to initial review.

At this time, the Council anticipates it will be able to take final action by December 2020. This schedule should provide the Council with sufficient time to develop its preferred alternative for the FMP amendment and allow NMFS to complete Secretarial review of the FMP amendment by the start of the 2022 fishing season.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously without objection at 12/9/2019 4:55 PM.

The following items were also tasked:

The Council requested several reports for the January/February meeting:

- from NMFS on the development of the proposed rule for humpback whale critical habitat
- from NMFS on an annual process to vet with stakeholders any proposed changes to the procedures required for decksorting
- from the Coast Guard on the VHF outage in Southeast Alaska
- an update on the progress with implementing the charter halibut recreational quota entity (RQE) program

The Council directed staff to develop the following letters:

- To the IPHC United States Commissioners, providing input for their deliberations at the 2020 IPHC Annual meeting. The letter will highlight the anticipated significant and adverse impacts to US harvesters that are currently forecast for 2020 and identify potential measures that could mitigate the severity of such impacts.
- To NMFS, commenting on the proposed rule setting critical habitat for humpback whales. Staff will develop a draft of the letter which the Council will review and finalize at the January/February Council meeting prior to the comment deadline (January 31st).
- To NMFS, conveying the SSC's comments on the proposed revisions to National Standard 1 guidelines with respect to carry-over and phase-in provisions.

THE COUNCIL ADJOURNED ON MONDAY DECEMBER 9, 2019 AT 12/9/2019 4:59 PM



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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TIME LOG Anchorage Hilton Hotel Anchorage, AK December 4-10, 2019

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

12/4/2019 8:09 AM Call to order

B Reports

12/4/2019 8:28 AM **B1 REPORT** Executive Director Report David Witherell
12/4/2019 8:30 AM Mark Fina Alaska Seafood Cooperative Report
12/4/2019 9:51 AM Pollock Cooperative Sablefish Bycatch in the CV pollock fishery, Karl Haflinger, Brent Paine
12/4/2019 10:26 AM **B2 NMFS Report** George Pollock and Dave Fraser EFP Presentation
12/4/2019 10:32 AM Glenn Merrill
12/4/2019 10:54 AM Mary Furuness GOA in-season management, BSAI in-season management
12/4/2019 12:19 PM Break for lunch
12/4/2019 1:26 PM **B3 NOAA GC Report** Molly Watson
12/4/2019 1:28 PM **B4 NOAA Enforcement Report** Will Ellis and Nathan Lagerwey
12/4/2019 1:53 PM **B5 ADFG Report** Kendall Henryl
12/4/2019 2:03 PM Jim Fall, Subsistence Harvest of Halibut
12/4/2019 2:22 PM **B6 USCG Report** Yvonne Yang
12/4/2019 2:33 PM **B7 USFW Report** Jon Gerken
12/4/2019 2:38 PM **B8 IPHC Report** Steve Keith and Ian Stewart

B Public Comment

12/4/2019 3:42 PM Jimmy Hurley Bristol Bay resident
12/4/2019 3:49 PM Heather McCarty CBSFA
12/4/2019 3:57 PM Bernie Burkholder and Paul Clampitt SHPA
12/4/2019 4:05 PM Linda Behnken

C1 BSAI Groundfish Specifications

12/4/2019 4:11 PM Steve MacLean
12/4/2019 4:13 PM Elizabeth Siddon, EBS Ecosystem Status Report

Thursday, December 5, 2019

12/5/2019 8:04 AM Call to order
12/5/2019 8:05 AM GOA Ecosystem Report, Elizabeth Siddon
12/5/2019 9:00 AM Joint PT report, Jim Ianelli
12/5/2019 9:25 AM GOA Sablefish Dana Hanselman
12/5/2019 10:28 AM Steve Barbeaux BSAI Plan Team Report
12/5/2019 10:30 AM Jim Ianelli EBS Pollock

12/5/2019 12:03 PM Break for lunch
12/5/2019 1:08 PM Gordon Kruse, SSC Report on C1
12/5/2019 2:06 PM AP Report, Matt Upton

C1 Public Comment

12/5/2019 2:10 PM Paul Clampitt
12/5/2019 2:11 PM Heather McCarty CBSFA
12/5/2019 2:16 PM Austin Esterbooks, Tood Loomis, Julie Bonney, Ruth Christiansen
12/5/2019 2:29 PM John Warrenchuk
12/5/2019 2:37 PM Lenny Hertzog
12/5/2019 2:42 PM Mateo Paz Soldan Simeon Swetzoff
12/5/2019 2:48 PM Brent Paine, Chris Barrows, Stephanie Madsen, Chris Woodley
12/5/2019 2:59 PM Chad See
12/5/2019 3:07 PM Linda Behnken
12/5/2019 3:21 PM Arne Fuglvog
12/5/2019 3:23 PM Natasha Hayden Native village of Afognak

C1 Action

12/5/2019 3:47 PM Craig Cross motion

C2 GOA Groundfish Specifications

12/5/2019 4:46 PM Sara Cleaver – walk through action memo
12/5/2019 4:52 PM Recess for day

Friday, December 6, 2019

C2 GOA Groundfish Specifications

12/6/2019 8:06 AM Chris Lundsford, Jim Ianelli, GOA PT SAFE report
12/6/2019 8:37 AM Dr. Steve Barbeaux GOA Pcod
12/6/2019 9:49 AM Mary Furuness and Obie Davis
12/6/2019 10:20 AM Gordon Kruse and Sherri Dressel SSC report on C2
12/6/2019 10:42 AM Matt Upton AP report

C2 Public Comment

12/6/2019 10:53 AM Paul Clampitt, Bernie Burkholder
12/6/2019 11:03 AM Paul Gronholdt
12/6/2019 11:08 AM Charlotte Levy
12/6/2019 11:13 AM Alexis Kwachka
12/6/2019 11:23 AM Linda Behnken
12/6/2019 11:30 AM Malcom Milne
12/6/2019 11:40 AM Natasha Hayden
12/6/2019 11:50 AM Beth Stewart
12/6/2019 11:58 AM Break for lunch
12/6/2019 1:07 PM Balance of SSC report, Gordon Kruse, Sherri Dressel
12/6/2019 1:20 PM Julie Bonney
12/6/2019 1:27 PM John Warrenchuk
12/6/2019 1:33 PM Megan O'Neil PVOA

12/6/2019 1:36 PM Lenny Hertzog
12/6/2019 1:37 PM Ilia Kuzman
12/6/2019 1:40 PM Tory Oconnel Carran
12/6/2019 1:59 PM Kimball Motion on C2
12/6/2019 2:25 PM Rachel Baker Motion CIE POP

C3 2020 Charter Halibut Management Measures for Areas 2C and 3A

12/6/2019 2:33 PM Steve Maclean
12/6/2019 2:34 PM Sarah Webster ADFG Presentation
12/6/2019 2:45 PM Recess for the day - Council continues with Executive Session

Saturday, December 7, 2019

12/7/2019 8:08 AM Sarah Webster, ADFG Presentation
12/7/2019 8:39 AM Sam Cunningham CHMC report
12/7/2019 9:08 AM Angel Drobnika AP Report

C3 Public Comment

12/7/2019 9:11 AM Clay Duda North Country Charters
12/7/2019 9:14 AM Ben Martin
12/7/2019 9:29 AM Gerri Martin
12/7/2019 9:32 AM Josh Wickboldt
12/7/2019 9:38 AM Mike Crawford
12/7/2019 9:44 AM Brian Richie
12/7/2019 9:53 AM Bob Caudopolis
12/7/2019 10:01 AM Break
12/7/2019 10:17 AM Steve Zernia
12/7/2019 10:25 AM Tom Gemmell
12/7/2019 10:28 AM Richard Yamata
12/7/2019 10:38 AM Carl Hughes
12/7/2019 10:40 AM Ken Yockey
12/7/2019 10:44 AM Forrest Braden

12/7/2019 11:04 AM Action on C3 – Andy Mezirow

C4 BSAI parallel waters – Final Action

12/7/2019 1:08 PM C4 Jon McCracken
12/7/2019 1:31 PM Angel Drobnika AP Report
No public comment
12/7/2019 1:43 PM Kenny Down motion

C5 Crab partial deliveries/offloads – Final Action

12/7/2019 1:59 PM Megan Mackey and Doug Duncan NMFS
12/7/2019 2:19 PM Matt Upton AP Report

C5 Public Comment

12/7/2019 2:20 PM Jamie Goen and Lance Farr
12/7/2019 2:29 PM Jake Jacobsen
12/7/2019 2:36 PM Action on C5 Karla Bush

C6 St. Matthew Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding Plan

12/7/2019 3:07 PM Jim Armstrong Staff Report, Anna Henry
12/7/2019 4:15 PM Matt Upton, AP Report
12/7/2019 4:16 PM Jamie Goen – Public Testimony
12/7/2019 4:32 PM Action on C6 Karla Bush

C7 Central GOA Rockfish Reauthorization – Initial Review

12/7/2019 4:40 PM Darrell Brannan, Stephanie Warpinski Staff Reports
12/7/2019 4:54 PM Recess for the evening

Sunday, December 8, 2019

C7 Central GOA Rockfish Reauthorization

12/8/2019 8:04 AM Darrell Brannan, Stephanie Warpinski Staff Reports continued
12/8/2019 9:05 AM Mike Downs SIA
12/8/2019 9:21 AM AP Report Ernie Weiss

C7 Public Comment

12/8/2019 9:29 AM Christopher Oliver, Todd Loomis, Best use cooperative
12/8/2019 9:40 AM Alexis Kwachka
12/8/2019 9:47 AM Julie Bonney
12/8/2019 9:55 AM Rebecca Skinner and Patrick O'donnell
12/8/2019 10:03 AM Don Ashley Bert Ashley
12/8/2019 10:09 AM Mark Fina
12/8/2019 10:12 AM Break
12/8/2019 10:29 AM Darrell Brannan – Staff clarification
12/8/2019 10:46 AM Glenn Merrill, Action on C7
12/8/2019 11:17 AM Stand down to start C8

C8 Unguided Halibut Rental Vessels

12/8/2019 11:22 AM Sara Cleaver, Kurt Iverson, Staff Report
Lunch

12/8/2019 1:15 PM Return from lunch, continue with C8
12/8/2019 2:30 PM Halibut Charter Committee Report – Sam Cunningham
12/8/2019 2:35 PM Enforcement Committee Report – Jon McCracken
12/8/2019 2:41 PM AP Report Ernie Weiss

C8 Public Comment

12/8/2019 2:45 PM Richard Yamada
12/8/2019 2:50 PM Tim Comer – Sea Otter Sound Lodge
12/8/2019 2:56 PM Mike Warner
12/8/2019 3:01 PM Jeff Wedekind
12/8/2019 3:09 PM Forrest Braden

12/8/2019 3:20 PM Tom Gemmell
12/8/2019 3:42 PM Bill Tweit - Motion

D1 Halibut PSC Workplan

12/8/2019 3:53 PM Staff Report, Diana Stram

D1 Public Comment

12/8/2019 4:13 PM Mark Fina
12/8/2019 4:19 PM Linda Behnken
12/8/2019 4:30 PM Chris Woodley, Groundfish Forum
12/8/2019 4:32 PM Heather McCarty and Jeff Kauffmann
12/8/2019 4:43 PM Mateo Paz Soldon and Simeon Swetsoff
12/8/2019 4:55 PM Action on D1 Rachel Baker
12/8/2019 5:34 PM Recess for the day.

Sunday, December 8, 2019

D2 Sablefish Discarding Allowance

12/9/2019 8:05 AM Jim Armstrong Joe Kriger Staff Report
12/9/2019 9:33 AM AP Report Angel Drobnica

D2 Public Comment

12/9/2019 9:36 AM Paul Clampitt
12/9/2019 9:43 AM Bernie Burkholder
12/9/2019 9:49 AM Linda Behnken
12/9/2019 9:55 AM Megan O’Neil – PVOA
12/9/2019 9:58 AM Patty ODonnell
12/9/2019 10:20 AM Cora Campbell – Motion

D3 Aleutian Islands Community follow-up – Discussion paper

12/9/2019 10:33 AM Jon McCracken Staff Report
12/9/2019 11:06 AM Angel Drobnica

D3 Public Comment

12/9/2019 11:12 AM Bernie Burkholder
12/9/2019 11:14 AM Hannah Heimbuch
12/9/2019 11:17 AM Dave Fraser
12/9/2019 11:28 AM Brent Paine
12/9/2019 11:42 AM SteveMinor
12/9/2019 11:51 AM Heather Mann
12/9/2019 12:02 PM Julie Kavanaugh
12/9/2019 12:08 PM George Pollock
12/9/2019 12:10 PM Layton Lockett
12/9/2019 1:24 PM Discussion on D3 Rachel Baker

E1 Staff Tasking

12/9/2019 1:34 PM David Witherell Staff Report, Review of items
12/9/2019 1:37 PM Steve MacLean Community Engagement Committee

12/9/2019 1:58 PM Angel Drobnica AP report

E Public comment

12/9/2019 2:12 PM Bernie Burkholder
12/9/2019 2:16 PM Chris Woodley
12/9/2019 2:20 PM Lance Farr, Jamie Goen, Lou Foristall
12/9/2019 2:37 PM Oysten Lone
12/9/2019 2:40 PM Linda Behnken
12/9/2019 2:47 PM John Gauvin
12/9/2019 2:58 PM Nikolai Siverstol
12/9/2019 3:00 PM Heather McCarty
12/9/2019 3:15 PM Iam Pitzman
12/9/2019 3:39 PM Action on Staff Tasking
12/9/2019 4:03 PM Kenny Down Crab PSC Motion
12/9/2019 4:50 PM Motion for Salmon Balsiger

Adjourn 12/9/2019 4:59 PM

December 2019 Newsletter

Appointments

Advisory Panel

The following members of the AP have been reappointed to a 3-year term: Ruth Christiansen, Jeff Kauffman, Patrick O'Donnell, John Scoblic, and Sinclair Wilt. Also, John Gruver has been reappointed for a 1-year term, and Victoria O'Connell Curran has been reappointed to complete the term of her seat, which expires at the end of 2020. Finally, Julie Kavanaugh and Heather Mann have been newly appointed to the AP for 3-year terms.

A complete listing of Advisory Panel members is posted on the [Council website AP page](#).

SSC

All current members of the SSC have been reappointed, with the exception of Heather Renner who is stepping down. Dr. Curry Cunningham has been appointed to replace Dr. Terry Quinn.

A complete listing of SSC members is posted on the [Council website SSC page](#).

Plan Teams

The Council appointed [Dr. Andrew Olson](#) to serve on the [Scallop Plan Team](#), as a replacement for Mr. Quinn Smith who has resigned from the Team. Mr. Olson is the Groundfish and Shellfish Program Coordinator for the Southeast Region, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He currently provides oversight and evaluation of fisheries research and management activities within the Southeast and Yakutat management areas.

Committees

The Council Chair appointed Charlotte Levy to the Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee.

The Council Chair also appointed the following members of the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Taskforces as taskforce co-chairs:

- Bering Sea FEP Climate Change Action Module Taskforce: Dr. Diana Stram (Council staff) and Dr. Kirstin Holsman (AFSC staff) appointed as co-Chairs.
- Bering Sea FEP LK/TK/Subsistence Action Module Taskforce: Dr. Kate Haapala (Council staff) and Dr. Sarah Wise (AFSC staff) appointed as co-Chairs.

BSAI Groundfish Specifications

Status of stocks and specification of OFL, ABC, and TAC

The Council reviewed the Ecosystem Status Report for the Eastern Bering Sea, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island (BSAI) Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report, and made final recommendations on groundfish harvest specifications, PSC limits, and halibut DMRs to manage the 2020 and 2021 BSAI groundfish fisheries. Harvest and prohibited species catch (PSC) specifications for 2020 and 2021 fishing years are available [in the Council motion](#).

The Council reviewed the Ecosystem Status Report for the Eastern Bering Sea, which is summarized in a [BSAI Ecosystem Brief](#). The eastern Bering Sea experienced the second year of low sea ice conditions due to residual heat in the Chukchi Sea in fall 2018, and anomalous winds from the south in February 2019. The 2018-2019 mean sea ice extent was the second lowest on record. No cold pool was present over the southern shelf in 2018, and unprecedented warm bottom temperatures occurred in coastal waters. A small cold pool was presented over a portion of the northern shelf in 2019.

The BSAI SAFE report forms the basis for BSAI groundfish harvest specifications for the next two fishing years. Some groundfish stocks in the BSAI are assessed annually, while others are assessed less frequently due to stock prioritization, including assessment methods and data availability. Full assessments were last produced for all stocks in the BSAI in 2018. In 2019 full assessments were conducted for 8 stocks (EBS pollock, EBS Pacific cod, AI Pacific cod, Sablefish, Yellowfin sole, Alaska plaice, Northern rockfish, and Atka mackerel), partial assessments for 10 stocks, and no assessment for 6 stocks. For stocks with partial or no assessment, specifications are rolled over from the previous assessment. A report was provided for forage species and squid which are both Ecosystem Component species, a category of non-targeted species that are not in need of conservation and management.

In specifications, the Council identified the Overfishing Level (OFL) for sablefish as Alaska-wide, which is how the stock is assessed, rather than identifying specific OFLs for the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska, as has been done in previous years. In doing so, the Council accepted the recommendations from the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team and the SSC to combine the OFL and identify the OFL for the recognized stock.

In 2019 the Council took final action to amend the FMPs for the BSAI (Amendment 121) and GOA (Amendment 110) to move the sculpin stock complex to the Ecosystem Component category. If Amendments 121 and 110 and their implementing regulations are approved by the Secretary of Commerce, no assessment will be required for sculpins in the future, and information will be presented to the Council in a report produced every four years. Until then, NMFS will continue to publish OFLs, ABCs and TACs for sculpins in the BSAI groundfish harvest specifications.

Overall, the status of stocks continues to appear favorable. No stocks are experiencing overfishing or are overfished, and nearly all stocks or stock complexes are above B_{MSY} or the B_{MSY} proxy of $B_{35\%}$. Eastern Bering Sea pollock, EBS Pacific cod, all rockfishes managed under Tier 3, and all flatfishes managed under Tier 1 or Tier 3 are projected to be above B_{MSY} or the proxy of $B_{35\%}$ in 2020, while Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish are very close to this target level.

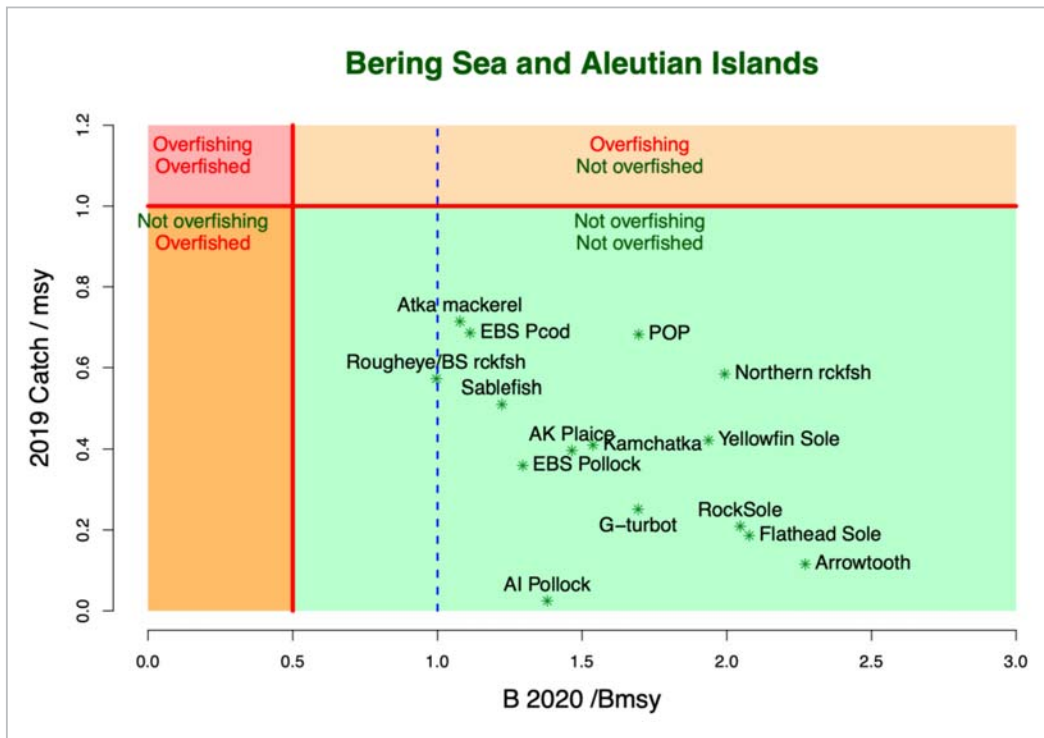


Figure: Summary of Bering Sea stock status in 2020 (spawning biomass relative to BMSY) and current catch year relative to fishing at FMSY where FOFL is taken to equal FMSY.

In setting TACs for 2020 and 2021, the Council accounts for the Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) for groundfish fisheries in State waters. The Alaska Board of Fisheries took action in 2018 that modified how GHLs in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands are set for Pacific cod. In 2020, the GHL in the AI will be set at 6,804 mt, the maximum GHL for the AI. The BS GHL will be set at 14,074 mt, 9% of the EBS Pacific cod ABC. GHL in 2021 is expected to increase to 39% of the BS ABC, and 10% of the AI ABC. The Council's OFLs, ABCs, and TACs posted [here](#) take the GHLs into account.

The Council also specified an ABC reserve for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole, which was specified as the ABC surplus for the species (i.e., the difference between the ABC and TAC); specified Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut, crab, and herring; and specified halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) for the BSAI.

Species-specific Risk Tables

The Council also took action to reiterate the dual purpose of the risk table that is produced by stock assessment authors for each full assessment. The purposes of the risk table are identified as: 1) to facilitate further collaboration and communication among stock assessment scientists and those in other disciplines (for example, ecosystem and climate scientists) and 2) to increase transparency and consistency in the rationale for reducing from maximum permissible ABC based on exceptional risks/ circumstances that are not already addressed in the stock assessment, tier system, and harvest control rules. The Council also supported the SSC guidance to the Plan Teams on future use of the risk table as provided in the [December 2019 SSC minutes](#), and expects iterative changes to occur over time as we gain experience with its use.

Sablefish apportionment workshop

As noticed in the Upcoming Meetings newsletter article, the AFSC is planning presentations and open discussions about the sablefish apportionment analysis at Juneau's Auke Bay Lab in February. For more information contact Kari Fenske at (907)789-6653 or kari.fenske@noaa.gov.

Staff contact for BSAI Groundfish Plan Team and specifications is Steve MacLean.

GOA Groundfish Final Harvest Specifications

The Council approved the 2019 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final harvest specifications for the 2020 and 2021 GOA groundfish fisheries. For final rulemaking for the 2020 and 2021 fishing years, the Council recommended OFLs and ABCs consistent with SSC recommendations, and final TACs. The Council also recommended halibut PSC limit apportionments and adopted updated halibut DMRs for 2020. In setting the TACs for 2020 and 2021, the Council accounts for guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for groundfish fisheries in state waters; full details are included in the [Council motion for the GOA](#).

The 2019 GOA Groundfish SAFE report includes stock status updates for all 21 stocks or stock complexes managed through the GOA Groundfish FMP. The GOA SAFE report forms the basis for GOA groundfish harvest specifications for the next two fishing years.

Based on consideration of stock prioritization including assessment methods and data availability, some stocks are assessed on an annual basis while others are assessed less frequently. Full assessments were produced for all stocks in the GOA in 2019 with the following exceptions: partial assessments were produced for shallow-water flatfish, northern and southern rock sole, rex sole, northern rockfish, dusky rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, sculpins; an executive summary was produced for flathead sole; and no assessments were produced for sharks or thornyhead rockfish. For these exceptions, specifications were rolled over from the previous assessment for that stock.

The Council also reviewed the Ecosystem Status Report for the GOA, including a 4-page [GOA ecosystem brief](#). The report highlighted unusually warm temperatures through 2019, similar to the 2014-2016 heat wave. Summer 2019 surface temperatures were warmer than the "blob" years. The report also provided information of phytoplankton and zooplankton densities as well as forage fish, seabird and marine mammal trends.

The GOA Pacific cod stock continues to be at a low biomass level. According to the 2019 update of the Pacific cod stock assessment, the spawning biomass is projected to reach an all-time low in 2020, just above the "overfished level" of $B_{17.5\%}$. As the stock is below the $B_{20\%}$ threshold, Federal regulations at CFR 679.20 require the directed fishery for Pacific cod to be closed for 2020-2021 due to Steller sea lion conservation measures. The 2020 GOA Pacific cod Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is for incidental catch in other fisheries and accounts for the State GHL.

As the GOA Pacific cod stock is close to crucial management and biological thresholds ($B_{20\%}$ and $B_{17.5\%}$), improved estimates of the probability of being above or below these thresholds in the future could better inform Council decisions. The SSC requested the authors compare results using different assumptions about

natural mortality and recruitment, due to the considerable uncertainty about future recruitment and potential effects of the impending marine heat wave on cod mortality. For these reasons, the SSC set the 2021 ABC to be the same as the 2020 ABC until next year's assessment provides more clarity about future trends.

The sum of the ABCs for all GOA groundfish stocks in 2020 is 465,956 mt, which is a reduction of 8.5% compared to the 2019 (509,507 mt) aggregate ABC. Maximum permissible ABCs were set for all stocks in the Gulf in 2019, except for pollock, sablefish, and demersal shelf rockfish. ABC less than the maximum permissible is recommended when there are additional conservation considerations that are not accounted for in the stock assessment, tier system, or harvest control rules. The GOA Groundfish Plan Team and the Council's SSC will continue to explore use of the species-specific risk tables for appropriate reductions from maxABC in future harvest specification exercises (see also discussion in BSAI specifications newsletter).

For most stocks, the Council established TACs equal to ABCs. Exceptions where the TAC is set below ABC include pollock, Pacific cod, sablefish, shallow water flatfish in the Western GOA, flathead sole in Western and Central GOA, arrowtooth flounder (except in the Central GOA), and Atka mackerel.

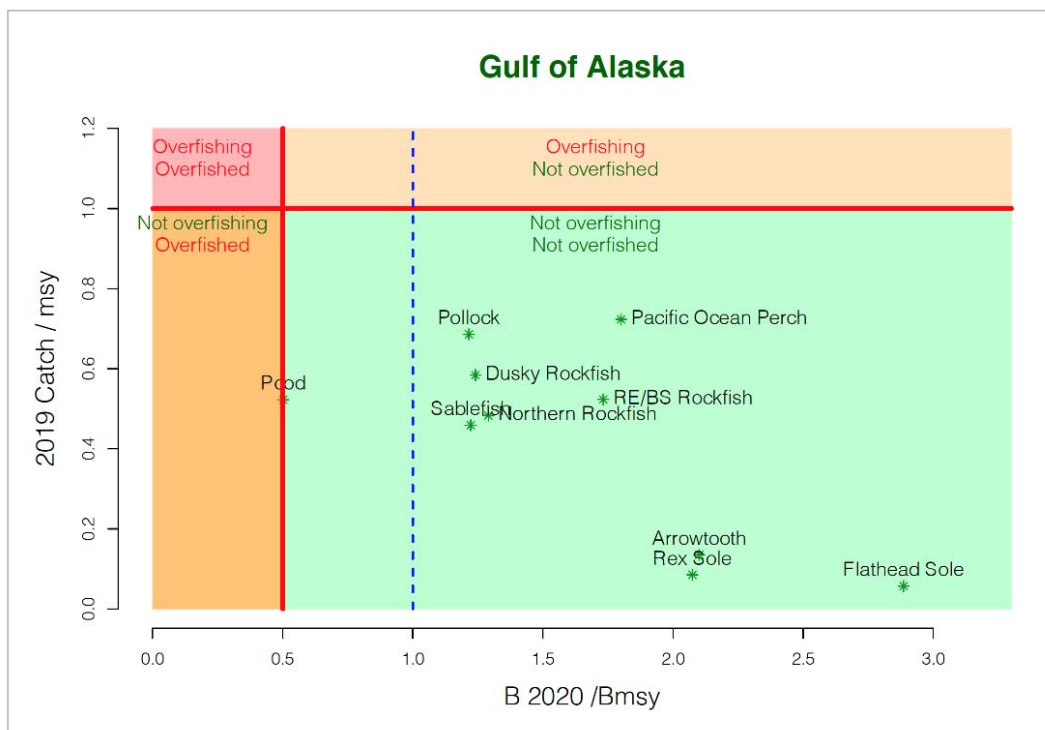


Figure: Summary of Gulf of Alaska stock status next year (spawning biomass relative to BMSY; horizontal axis) and current year catch relative to fishing at FMSY (vertical axis). Note that sablefish is for Alaska-wide values including the BSAI catches.

The GOA Groundfish Plan Team report summarized the issues discussed and actions taken by the Plan Team at its November meeting in Seattle, WA. Highlights of the GOA Plan Team report included stock assessments incorporating this year's survey data presentations from individual assessment authors. The SSC recommended 2020 and 2021 OFLs and ABCs and provided guidance regarding including new survey data and updating apportionments when conducting partial assessments. Some of the issues that pertain to GOA Groundfish, such as moving to Alaska-wide sablefish OFLs, were covered in the Joint Plan Team Report (discussed further under the [BSAI Groundfish newsletter article](#)).

The Council also recommended that the terms of reference for the Center of Independent Experts (CIE) review for the Gulf of Alaska Pacific Ocean Perch stock assessment (April 2020) should prioritize fixing the models' performance and exploring the VAST model. The model should be revised before the September Plan Team meeting.

Sablefish Apportionment Workshop

As noticed in the Upcoming Meetings newsletter article, the AFSC is planning presentations and open discussions about the sablefish apportionment analysis at Juneau's Auke Bay Lab in February. For more information contact Kari Fenske at (907)789-6653 or kari.fenske@noaa.gov.

Staff contact for the GOA Groundfish Plan Team is Sara Cleaver.

2020 Charter Halibut Management Measures for Areas 2C and 3A

After reviewing ADF&G's analysis of potential charter management measures and the recommendations of the Charter Halibut Management Committee, the Council established preliminary recommendations for 2020 charter measures in Areas 2C and 3A.

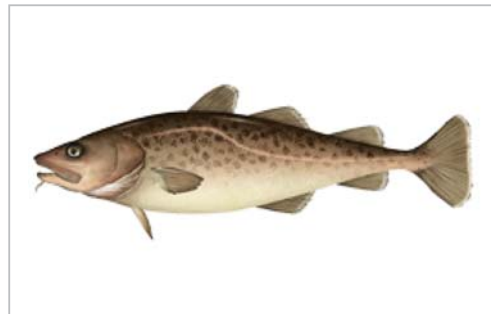
For Area 2C, the Council recommends a progression of catch restrictions that would be applied in an additive measure to status quo measures until the area's charter allocation – as set by the IPHC in February 2020 – will be achieved. The baseline measure is a U40/O80 reverse slot limit. If that measure is not sufficient to limit anticipated catch to the allocation, fishing will be closed on Wednesdays in addition to the reverse slot. Wednesday closures would begin on September 9, 2020 and additional Wednesday closures would be applied in sequence moving toward the beginning of the calendar year. If that combination of measures will not reach the allocation, a four-fish annual angler limit would also be applied. If further reduction to projected catch is required, the annual limit would be reduced to three fish. Any further reduction required beyond what is achieved with the reverse slot, Wednesday closures throughout the year, and a three-fish annual limit would be achieved by reducing the maximum size limit on the low end of the slot from 40" to a smaller fish (e.g., 39"). Finally, if an annual limit is adopted in Area 2C, charter anglers would be required to record the date and location (IPHC area) on their harvest record upon retaining a halibut – as is currently required in Area 3A.

For Area 3A, none of the management measure options analyzed by ADF&G for this meeting were projected to achieve a harvest level in line with the goal of 1.24 million pounds identified at the IPHC's interim meeting in November 2019. Due to this unprecedented situation, the Council identified a preliminary recommendation that would achieve harvest at the status quo 3A charter allocation. **The Council also instructed the Charter Halibut Management Committee's 3A representatives to convene a public teleconference meeting prior to the Jan/Feb 2020 Council meeting and the IPHC's February 2020 Annual Meeting at which they will make recommendations on management measures that could achieve a 1.24 million pound harvest.** The timing of that meeting and instructions for public accessibility will be noticed in the Federal Register and publicized on the NPFMC website in the coming weeks. The Council's preliminary recommendation for Area 3A is to maintain the status quo management measures with the additional measures of closing all Tuesdays (in addition to all Wednesdays) and reducing the maximum size of the second fish in the existing two-fish bag limit from 28" to 26" or less.

Staff contacts are Sam Cunningham and Steve MacLean.

BSAI Pacific cod Parallel Fishery Limited Access

At this meeting, the Council took final action to adopt a preferred alternative (Alternative 2) that would prohibit all Federal vessels from fishing for Pacific cod in waters from shore to 3 miles in the BSAI without the proper permits and licenses. The directed fisheries for Pacific cod in state waters (0 to 3 nm) that are open concurrently with the directed fisheries in federal waters (3 nm to 200 nm) are referred to as the parallel fishery and are prosecuted under virtually the same rules as the federal fisheries, with catch counted against the federal TAC. The parallel State waters fisheries are managed separately from the State waters Pacific cod fisheries.



The Council's preferred alternative would preclude hook-and-line, pot, and trawl gear vessels from participating in the BSAI Pacific cod parallel fisheries unless they have a License Limitation Program license with the correct license endorsements and a designated Federal Fisheries Permit. The preferred alternative would also require the above Federally permitted or licensed vessels that fish in the parallel fishery to adhere to federal sector and seasonal BSAI Pacific cod closures and would restrict those vessels from surrendering and later reapplying for the FFP within a three-year time period. Jig vessels and those vessels that do not hold an FFP or an LLP license would not be affected by the preferred alternative and can continue to participate in the parallel fishery.

Implementation of the preferred alternative would ensure robust catch accounting while preventing all Federal vessels from circumventing the intent of previous Council decisions regarding license limitation and sector allocations when participating in the BSAI Pacific cod parallel fisheries. The alternative also recognizes that jig vessels, and new entrants who do not hold federal fishery permits, may participate in the parallel fishery.

Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Crab Partial Offloads

The Council took final action to recommend a preferred alternative that removes the prohibition on a vessel continuing to fish for Crab Rationalization Program (CR) crab between the time of a partial delivery and the time at which all CR crab are offloaded by the vessel. The purpose of the action is to provide flexibility that can enhance operational efficiency under special circumstances or safety-related circumstances while also ensuring proper catch accounting. The Council did not select an option that would have required all crab in a tank to be offloaded if offloading from that tank has begun. It was understood that the draining and refilling required to partially offload a single tank would result in costly deadloss, and thus such a practice is unlikely to occur. Requiring a tank to be fully offloaded could have also reduced the effectiveness of the action when an offload is interrupted by safety considerations.



Allowing fishing after partial offloads may help vessels respond to an advancing ice pack. For example, a vessel could suspend an offload to retrieve and save gear still on the grounds that would otherwise be lost. The ability to resume fishing after a partial offload could also allow a vessel to maintain efficiency after delivering regionally designated quota shares to the Pribilof Islands before continuing to fish and completing their delivery in the southern region. Also, if an offloading vessel is forced out of a harbor by weather, this action would allow the vessel to fish rather than wait multiple days at anchor for weather to come down. Finally, the ability to fish after a partial offload could reduce disincentives to make smaller deliveries to processing partners who are innovating new product forms

at small volumes (e.g., live crab markets).

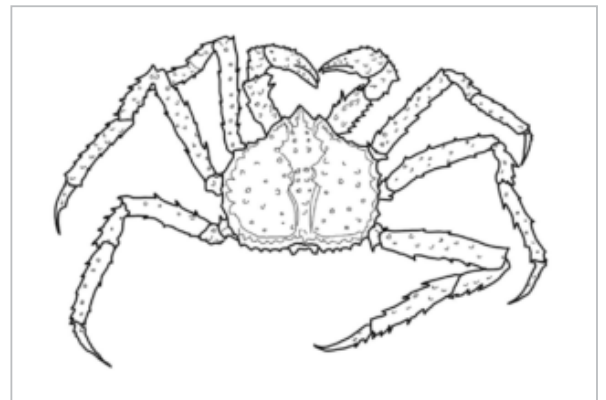
While the Council recognized the importance of additional flexibility, it was understood that this provision is likely to be used in rare circumstances. As a result, the Council does not expect the provision to create significant challenges for catch accounting or to substantially increase deadloss in the fishery. The Council directed staff to specifically review the biological, economic, and management impacts of this action during the next required Crab Rationalization Program review that is scheduled for completion in 2023.

Staff contact is Sam Cunningham.

St Matthew Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding

The Council reviewed an initial draft environmental assessment of a rebuilding plan for St Matthew Island blue king crab. The Council chose a preliminary preferred alternative that would allow directed harvest during rebuilding if estimates of stock biomass are sufficient to open the fishery under the State of Alaska's crab harvest strategy. Official notice that the stock was overfished was communicated to the Council in October 2018, which started a two-year process at the end of which the rebuilding plan must be implemented. The draft EA will be revised based on Council and SSC input, and the Council is scheduled to make a final recommendation in April in order for implementation to occur before the October 2020 deadline.

Under the alternative rebuilding approaches considered by the Council, the St Matthew blue king crab stock could take between 14 to 25 years to recover. The directed fishery has been closed since 2016 under the State of Alaska harvest strategy, and has only been open 6 out of the past 20 years. Multiple measures for habitat protection and bycatch reduction are in place for the stock, and fishing mortality is not considered to be the primary constraining factor. The groundfish fisheries incur low levels of bycatch of St Matthew blue king crab, but in analytical projections, average bycatch rates had no constraining effect on rebuilding. Instead, rebuilding will depend on successful recruitment of crab under ecosystem conditions that



have recently been very unfavorable. Warm bottom temperatures, low pre-recruit biomass, and northward movement of predator species, primarily Pacific cod, have constrained stock growth.

Given the intermittent openings of the targeted St Matthew blue king crab fishery over the last 20 years, vessel and community reliance on harvest of blue king crab is relatively low. Under the draft rebuilding plan, ecosystem indicators developed for the stock will be monitored in the coming years.

Staff contact is Jim Armstrong

Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program Reauthorization

The Council approved the Initial Review draft of the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) Rockfish Program (RP) for release to the public with suggested changes by the Council, SSC, and Advisory Panel. No changes were made to the Council's Purpose and Need statement. The Council selected a **Preliminary Preferred Alternative** (PPA) that is posted on the Council's website.

Elements selected as part of the PPA include removal of the sunset date provision, and inclusion of elements that were recommended by the NMFS and stakeholders. All elements considered in the initial review draft were directly or indirectly included as part of the PPA, and two new elements were added at this meeting. Both of the new elements were not included in the PPA because they had not yet been evaluated in the current analysis.

The two new elements will be considered at final action and could be moved forward at that time as part of the preferred alternative. Those elements would remove catcher/processor (CP) RP sideboard limits that apply to Western Gulf of Alaska (WGOA) during the month of July. CP sideboards established for the Amendment 80 sector would remain in place. The second new element would remove the 3-day stand down for vessels that fish groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI), while Pacific cod or pollock is open to directed fishing, and move from the BSAI to the CGOA RP fishery. Vessels that are moving into other CGOA fisheries would still be subject to the 3-day stand down.

Element 10 was clarified to allow NMFS to reallocate unused RP primary species incidental catch allowance to both CVs and CPs, with a preference to allocate to onshore cooperatives first. Elements 6 and 7, which define required elements of the cooperative reports to NMFS, were modified as a new Element 6. That element would remove regulations that require RP cooperatives to submit an annual report to NMFS. NMFS does not need the information included in the report to manage the fishery, so the information is unnecessary for their management needs. Information important to the Council could be voluntarily provided by the cooperatives at the April Council meetings, when the Council takes annual reports from Limited Access Privilege Program participants.

Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

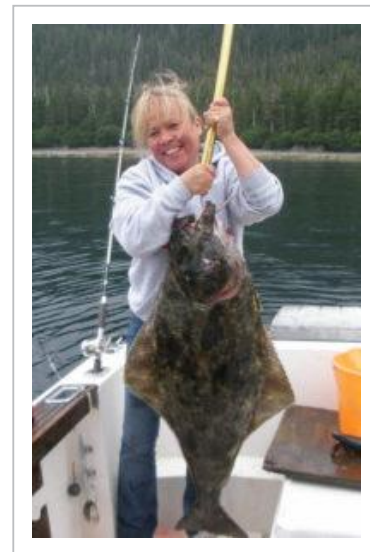
Unguided Halibut Rental Vessels

The Council reviewed an initial review draft of an action that evaluated the potential impacts of: 1) a registration requirement for unguided halibut rental vessels and 2) aligning bag and size limits of unguided anglers using rental vessels to harvest halibut with those of charter anglers in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. After reviewing the analysis, reports from the Charter Halibut Management Committee and Enforcement Committee, and public testimony, the Council moved to take no further action on this item.

This action was proposed to address concerns that, in addition to the differences in harvest regulations between charter (guided) and unguided recreational halibut anglers, growth of the rental boat segment of the unguided sector may negatively impact other halibut fishing sectors. The analysis provided a description of status quo recreational halibut management, trends in subarea harvest in the recreational halibut fisheries, and minimum estimates of the number of rental vessel businesses in Areas 2C and 3A. It also outlined existing vessel registration programs and the extent to which they could satisfy the Council's purpose and need for the action. The initial review draft outlined management and enforcement considerations of the proposed action alternatives, highlighting administrative costs of a registration requirement and logistical details that would benefit from Council clarification.

Given the lack of existing data on the unguided halibut rental vessel subsector, and the potential costs of implementing regulatory solutions to gather those data, the Council requested that staff coordinate with the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, NMFS Alaska Region, and recreational stakeholders to explore alternative non-regulatory methods to quantify the number and geographic scope of unguided rental boat activities in recreational halibut fisheries off Alaska. The Council acknowledged the importance of gaining more information on the unguided halibut rental vessel subsector, but noted that this proposal was not likely to be an effective method to do so. The Council encouraged participation by the recreational sector in upcoming efforts to gather this information.

Staff contact is Sara Cleaver.



Recreational halibut fishing in Alaska

BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management

The Council reviewed a workplan for addressing October 2019 SSC comments on the BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management (ABM) Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits management action analysis, and provided feedback on prioritizing tasks to facilitate Council review of the analysis in June 2020.

The Council continues to consider proposed management measures to index Pacific halibut PSC limits in the BSAI groundfish fisheries to halibut abundance. The alternatives include PSC limit modifications for various groundfish sectors, including the BSAI trawl limited access sector (TLAS), the Amendment 80 sector, longline catcher vessels (CVs), longline catcher processors (CPs), and the Community Development Quota (CDQ) sector

(i.e., a reduction to the CDQ's allocated prohibited species quota reserve). At this meeting, staff was provided an overview of their plans for addressing SSC comments and any additional workload issues for revising the draft analysis.

Following review and discussion, the Council directed staff to prioritize the following tasks from the work plan, to facilitate Council review of the analysis in June 2020:

- Low and alternative recruitment scenarios and 30:20 harvest control rule simulation
- PSC usage assumptions
- Analysis of control rule scenarios recommended by stakeholders

To the extent possible, staff will also address all other aspects of the SSC comments in the revised analysis.

The Council further requested an opportunity, at the upcoming January/February 2020 Council meeting, for stakeholders to provide input on additional management alternatives that serve to streamline the action and meet the Council's objectives to establish abundance-based PSC limits that minimize halibut PSC to the extent practicable, and aid the directed halibut fisheries at low levels of abundance. The Council may then consider revisions to the suite of alternatives, understanding that requesting additional analysis to be included in the June 2020 draft will be contingent upon the scope of the requested changes. An interactive [spreadsheet](#) of the current stakeholder scenarios is available as a tool for understanding the behavior of these alternatives, and to help the public in developing any modifications for February. Input from stakeholders on modifications to the alternative set can be submitted through the public comment portal for the Council's January/February agenda.

Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Small Sablefish Discarding/Release

The Council and AP reviewed a discussion paper on the potential creation of a discard allowance for the fixed gear individual fishing quota (IFQ) sablefish fishery, and took action to initiate an analysis. The Council's motion for the analysis cites the low commercial value and high survival rate of small sablefish, and suggests that allowing IFQ fishing operations to return these fish to the water could contribute to stock biomass and the future value of the commercial harvest.

The alternatives proposed for analysis include voluntary release of sablefish and a range of discard mortality rates (DMRs) for pot and hook and line gear. Voluntary discarding was preferred over setting a size limit because it accommodates differences in sablefish size between the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska, and also provides needed flexibility when catches of small sablefish and the conditions that favor keeping these fish can be unpredictable.

Additionally, the motion includes two options for catch accounting including observer-based or survey-based discard estimation. Discard mortality was recommended to be estimated in the sablefish stock assessment with a request for analysis of voluntary discarding on the process for stock assessment and catch limit specifications. Finally, an evaluation of monitoring and



enforcement provisions that could improve discard estimation are requested.

Under current regulations, all sablefish caught in the IFQ fishery must be retained. The discussion paper looked at a range of issues including voluntary discarding, area-based size limits, management accounting for discards, proxy discard mortality rates, discard reporting methods, and the potential impacts of discarding to sablefish stock abundance. Stakeholders in the IFQ fishery have asked the Council to take action to change to those regulations so that fishing operations have the ability to return small sablefish to the water so they can grow to marketable size. Unusually large numbers of small sablefish from the 2014 and 2016 year classes have been getting caught and must be kept.

Among the many challenges associated with IFQ sablefish discarding are the potential addition of extensive observer monitoring workloads and costs, which would be necessary to accurately estimate the quantity of discards that could occur as well as the size and condition of the discards. The accounting system for the IFQ fishery would also need to be overhauled since an allowance for IFQ discards would reduce allocations to both trawl and IFQ vessels or IFQ vessels only. Additionally, because IFQ is assigned to an individual, and discards may be attributed based on observer program estimates, individual liability may need to be addressed. Finally, avoiding harvest of small fish from the recent large year classes will have to be done carefully to avoid fishing down less abundant portions of the stock. Across all of these issues, the Council seeks to find balance between ensuring conservation and data quality on one hand and providing needed flexibility for fishing operations on the other.

AI Pacific Cod Set-Aside

At the December meeting, the Council reviewed a discussion paper that included a status report on Amendment 113 litigation and potential regulatory approaches that could be used to provide opportunities for trawl catcher vessels harvesting Pacific cod in the AI and delivering the Pacific cod to AI shoreplants. After review and public testimony, the Council highlighted its strong commitment for conservation of AI Pacific cod and the sustained participation of AI fishing communities, and considered the different approaches available meet these management objectives. Ultimately, the Council decided these objectives would best be met through the expeditious development the BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV cooperative style LAPP. The intent of this approach is to provide a comprehensive, long-term solution for the BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV fishery, of which an AI set-aside is one of several important elements.

The Council chose not to start a new action focused exclusively on an AI set-aside, along the lines of revising Amendment 113, because of concern about its ability to implement a similar action outside of a limited access privilege program, given the opinion provided by the U.S. District Court (Court) with respect to Amendment 113's consistency with National Standard 8. The Council recognized that the fundamental objectives and structure for focused analysis would be the same as previously incurred legal challenge, in terms of promoting sustained participation in the Pacific cod fishery for shoreside processors in the AI where there continues to be one active shoreside processor. While the Court's judgement is under appeal, the Council decided that the current uncertainty, as to whether Amendment 113 is available as a management tool, was sufficient for the Council to focus staff resources on the larger BSAI trawl CV cooperative style LAPP which utilizes the LAPP authority in section 303A of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to promote participation in the Pacific cod fishery for shoreside processors located in two fishing communities in the AI.

Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

National Standard 1 Guidance on ABC Control Rule Provisions

The SSC reviewed a draft document on technical guidance for designing, evaluating and implementing carry-over and phase-in provisions associated with annual catch limits, and provided comments to the Council. The document was prepared in conjunction with the NMFS revisions to NS1 guidelines.

Carry-over and phase-in provisions are intended to provide additional flexibility within existing catch limits. The SSC noted that carry-over catch provisions could disrupt the NPFMC's approach to TAC-setting in particular in the BSAI where the 2 million ton OY cap is constraining. It was also noted that the frequency of North Pacific assessment as compared to other regions may preclude the necessity of carry-over provisions.

The SSC does not support the use of phase-in provisions when recommendations support a substantial reduction on ABC, but notes the utility of these types of actions in a precautionary manner when there is substantial uncertainty surrounded a recommended increase in ABC. Additional comments are provided in the SSC minutes on implementation of these provisions and the need for full analyses of the provisions on the NPFMC ABC control rules prior to adoption. The Council will submit the SSC's feedback to NMFS on behalf of the Council.

Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Staff Tasking

The Council discussed the relative priority and scheduling of previously tasked projects, as well as the following tasking issues.

- See revised [3 meeting outlook](#) for changes to scheduling.
- The Council affirmed their schedule for developing the [Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment](#), requesting preliminary initial review in April 2020, with an intent to have the FMP amendment implemented by the 2022 fishing season.
- The Council initiated a [new action](#) to develop a preliminary / initial review draft analysis to reduce BSAI crab PSC limits for trawl CDQ and non-CDQ fisheries when the corresponding directed crab fishery is closed.

The Council requested several reports for the January/February meeting:

- from NMFS on the development of the proposed rule for humpback whale critical habitat



- from NMFS on an annual process to vet with stakeholders any proposed changes to the procedures required for decksorting
- from the Coast Guard on the VHF outage in Southeast Alaska
- an update on the progress with implementing the charter halibut recreational quota entity (RQE) program

The Council directed staff to develop the following letters:

- To the IPHC United States Commissioners, providing input for their deliberations at the 2020 IPHC Annual meeting. The letter will highlight the anticipated significant and adverse impacts to US harvesters that are currently forecast for 2020, and identify potential measures that could mitigate the severity of such impacts.
- To NMFS, commenting on the proposed rule setting critical habitat for humpback whales. Staff will develop a draft of the letter which the Council will review and finalize at the January/February Council meeting prior to the comment deadline (January 31st).
- To NMFS, conveying the SSC's comments on the proposed revisions to National Standard 1 guidelines with respect to carry-over and phase-in provisions.

Committees and advisory groups (see also the [Appointments newsletter article](#)):

- The Council announced appointments to the Advisory Panel and SSC for 2020.
- The Council appointed Dr. Andrew Olson to the Scallop Plan Team.
- The Council appointed Charlotte Levy to the Trawl EM Committee.
- The Council Chair announced co-Chairs for the Bering Sea FEP Action Module Taskforces for Climate Change and LK/TK/Subsistence.

Community Engagement Committee

The Council's Community Engagement Committee met on Monday, December 2 to continue to develop recommendations for the Council to improve their engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities. The committee's final report is expected to be presented to the Council in June, 2020.

VHF Outages in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska

The Council heard a report from the U.S. Coast Guard that they have experienced various VHF outages in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska throughout the summer and into the winter. Extra caution is advised in areas of Shelikof Strait, Southern Cook Inlet, and offshore Southeast Alaska. Repairs are ongoing, but due to extreme weather and remote locations, intermittent outages are expected to continue in various locations in both Southeast and Southcentral Alaska. Mariners are reminded that due to mountains terrain, and limited VHF coverage, even with fully operational VHF sites, the USCG cannot hear VHF calls in all areas, and mariners should have secondary means on communications onboard at all times, file a float plan with a trusted person, and carry safety equipment onboard in the event you are in a survival situation. The Coast Guard command centers can be reached at the following numbers:



Sector Juneau Command Center: 907-463-2980

Sector Anchorage Command Center: 907-428-4100

17th District command center: 907-463-2000

Upcoming Meetings

Council Committees and Plan Teams

January

- Charter Halibut Management Committee 3A teleconference, early January (exact date TBD)
- **Crab Plan Team**, January 13-17, Kodiak, AK
- **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Climate Change Action Module Taskforce**, Jan 13-15, Seattle, WA
- **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan LK/TK/Subsistence Action Module Taskforce**, Jan 16-17, Anchorage, AK
- Ecosystem Committee, January 28, Seattle, WA
- **Partial Coverage FMAC**, January 28, Seattle, WA



Joint Groundfish Plan Teams in Seattle

February

- Scallop Plan Team, February 19, Kodiak, AK

March

- Community Engagement Committee, March or April (date and location TBD)
- Bering Sea FEP Team, March 3-5, Seattle, WA
- IFQ Committee, March 30 or 31, Anchorage, AK
- Ecosystem Committee, March 30 or 31, Anchorage, AK
- Enforcement Committee, March 31, Anchorage, AK

May

- BSAI Crab Plan Team, May 4-8, Seattle, WA
- Social Science Planning Team, May (date and location TBD)

- Trawl EM Committee, May 18, Seattle, WA
- FMAC, May 19-20, Seattle WA

Other meetings

- [Alaska Marine Science Symposium](#), Jan 27-30, Anchorage, AK
- [IPHC Annual Meeting](#), February 3-7, Anchorage, AK
- NMFS Sablefish apportionment workshop: mid-February (exact date TBD), Auke Bay Lab, Juneau, AK
- [NMFS National EM Workshop](#), Feb 12-13, Seattle, WA
- NMFS Deep Sea Coral Workshop, May 13-15, Juneau, AK

Regarding the Sablefish Apportionment Workshop:

AFSC staff will be hosting the fishing industry and the public for presentations and open discussions about the sablefish apportionment analyses. This event will be held at Juneau's Auke Bay Lab, and will occur over a full day in mid-February 2020. It will be open to the public and will be broadcast for remote participation. If you are interested in attending in person or remotely, wish to receive updates on the date and agenda, or have questions, please contact Kari Fenske, 907-789-6653 or kari.fenske@noaa.gov.

Regarding Deep Sea Coral Workshop:

NMFS has scheduled a workshop on 13-14 May, 2020 in Juneau, AK to discuss the research focus and develop a strategic plan for the Alaska Region Deep Sea Coral Research Initiative. The initiative will guide three years of extensive research on deep sea corals in the Alaska region.

Council Motion
Agenda Item C1 – BSAI Groundfish Specifications
December 5, 2019

Motion 1:

The Council moves to adopt the 2020/2021 OFL's, ABC's, and TAC's for Groundfish in the BSAI as shown in table 1.

Motion 2:

The Council moves to set flatfish flexibility reserves in Table 7 to maximize the ABC reserves for 2020/2021.

Motion 3:

The Council moves to approve the PSC amounts and distributions shown in Tables 8,9,10,and 11 and approve the BSAI Safe report for 2020/2021.

Motion 4:

The Council moves to approve the DMR's for 2020/2021 as shown in Table 12.

NOTE: Table 13 is included for informational purposes only

Table 1 Council TAC sheet with SSC OFL and ABC recommendations for Groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2020-202

Species	Area	2019		TAC	Catch as of 11/2/2019	2020			2021		
		OFL	ABC			OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	3,914,000	2,163,000	1,397,000	1,406,063	4,085,000	2,043,000	1,425,000	3,385,000	1,767,000	1,450,000
	AI	64,240	52,887	19,000	1,592	66,973	55,120	19,000	70,970	58,384	19,000
	Bogoslof	183,080	137,310	75	8	183,080	137,310	75	183,080	137,310	75
Pacific cod	BS	216,000	181,000	166,475	148,142	191,386	155,873	141,799	125,734	102,975	92,633
	AI	27,400	20,600	14,214	12,954	27,400	20,600	13,796	27,400	20,600	13,796
Sablefish	AK-Wide					50,481			64,765		
	BS	3,221	1,489	1,489	3,202	n/a	2,174	1,861	n/a	2,865	2,865
	AI	4,350	2,008	2,008	662	n/a	2,952	2,039	n/a	3,891	2,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	290,000	263,200	154,000	122,309	287,307	260,918	150,700	287,943	261,497	168,900
Greenland turbot	BSAI	11,362	9,658	5,294	2,855	11,319	9,625	5,300	10,006	8,510	5,376
	BS	n/a	8,431	5,125	2,681	n/a	8,403	5,125	n/a	7,429	5,125
	AI	n/a	1,227	169	174	n/a	1,222	175	n/a	1,081	251
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	82,939	70,673	8,000	9,591	84,057	71,618	10,000	86,647	73,804	10,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	10,965	9,260	5,000	4,494	11,495	9,708	6,800	11,472	9,688	7,000
Northern rock sole	BSAI	122,000	118,900	47,100	25,497	157,300	153,300	47,100	236,800	230,700	49,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	80,918	66,625	14,500	15,062	82,810	68,134	19,500	86,432	71,079	24,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	39,880	33,600	18,000	15,812	37,600	31,600	17,000	36,500	30,700	20,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	21,824	16,368	6,500	3,756	21,824	16,368	4,000	21,824	16,368	5,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	61,067	50,594	44,069	41,653	58,956	48,846	42,875	56,589	46,885	42,036
	BS	n/a	14,675	14,675	13,178	n/a	14,168	14,168	n/a	13,600	13,600
	EAI	n/a	11,459	11,009	10,324	n/a	11,063	10,613	n/a	10,619	10,619
	CAI	n/a	8,435	8,385	8,263	n/a	8,144	8,094	n/a	7,817	7,817
	WAI	n/a	16,025	10,000	9,888	n/a	15,471	10,000	n/a	14,849	10,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	15,507	12,664	6,500	9,057	19,751	16,243	10,000	19,070	15,683	10,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	676	555	279	387	861	708	349	1,090	899	424
	EBS/EAI	n/a	351	75	82	n/a	444	85	n/a	560	85
	CAI/WAI	n/a	204	204	305	n/a	264	264	n/a	339	339
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	722	541	358	355	722	541	375	722	541	375
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,793	1,344	663	1,254	1,793	1,344	1,088	1,793	1,344	1,088
	BS	n/a	956	275	685	n/a	956	700	n/a	956	700
	AI	n/a	388	388	569	n/a	388	388	n/a	388	388
Atka mackerel	BSAI	79,200	68,500	57,951	56,563	81,200	70,100	59,305	74,800	64,400	54,482
	EAI/BS	n/a	23,970	23,970	22,802	n/a	24,535	24,535	n/a	22,540	22,540
	CAI	n/a	14,390	14,390	14,320	n/a	14,721	14,721	n/a	13,524	13,524
	WAI	n/a	30,140	19,591	19,441	n/a	30,844	20,049	n/a	28,336	18,418
Skates	BSAI	51,152	42,714	26,000	17,873	49,792	41,543	16,313	48,289	40,248	16,000
Sculpins	BSAI	53,201	39,995	5,000	5,300	67,817	50,863	5,300	67,817	50,863	5,000
Sharks	BSAI	689	517	125	141	689	517	150	689	517	150
Octopuses	BSAI	4,769	3,576	400	244	4,769	3,576	275	4,769	3,576	300
Total	BSAI	5,340,955	3,367,578	2,000,000	1,904,826	5,584,382	3,272,581	2,000,000	4,910,201	3,020,327	2,000,000

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

TABLE 7-FINAL 2020 AND 2021 ABC SURPLUS, ABC RESERVES, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUOTA (CDQ) ABC RESERVES, AND AMENDMENT 80 ABC RESERVES IN THE BSAI FOR FLATHEAD SOLE, ROCK SOLE, AND YELLOWFIN SOLE

Sector	2020 Flathead sole	2020 Rock sole	2020 Yellowfin sole	2021 ¹ Flathead sole	2021 ¹ Rock sole	2021 ¹ Yellowfin sole
ABC	68,134	153,300	260,918	71,079	230,700	261,497
TAC	19,500	47,100	150,700	24,000	49,000	168,900
ABC surplus	48,634	106,200	110,218	47,079	181,700	92,597
ABC reserve	48,634	106,200	110,218	47,079	181,700	92,597
CDQ ABC reserve	5,204	11,363	11,793	5,037	19,442	9,908
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	43,430	94,837	98,425	42,042	162,258	82,689

¹ The 2021 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2020.

TABLE 8-PROPOSED 2020 AND 2021 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 PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve ²	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector ³	BSAI trawl limited access sector
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,515	710	315	n/a	1,745	745
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,532	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	97,000	n/a	10,379	86,621	43,293	26,489
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	8,580,898	n/a	918,156	7,662,742	3,766,238	2,462,805
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	980,000	n/a	104,860	875,140	368,521	411,228
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,970,000	n/a	317,790	2,652,210	627,778	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of zones.

² 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 for crab below the total PSC limit. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

TABLE 9-PROPOSED 2020 AND 2021 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	110	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ¹	54	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	7	n/a
Rockfish	7	n/a
Pacific cod	13	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,299	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ²⁻³	42	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ⁴	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,532	97,000

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

²Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

³“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopuses.

⁴In October 2019, 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 10–PROPOSED 2020 AND 2021 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTOR

BSAI trawl limited access sector fisheries	Prohibited species and area ¹				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	150	23,338	2,321,656	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ²	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish April 15-December 31	4	-	3,835	-	1,000
Pacific cod	391	2,954	98,959	60,000	49,999
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ³	200	197	38,356	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	2,462,805	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), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

³ “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopuses.

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

TABLE 11–PROPOSED 2020 AND 2021 HALIBUT PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR NON-TRAWL FISHERIES

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI				
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher vessel	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Annual Pacific cod	648	13	n/a
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 15	162	2	n/a
	August 15-December 31	98	2	n/a
Non-Pacific cod non-trawl-Total	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	49
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710

TABLE 12–PROPOSED 2020 AND 2021 PACIFIC HALIBUT DISCARD MORTALITY RATES (DMR) FOR THE BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	75
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	58
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Pot	All	27

TABLE 13–BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS PACIFIC COD ABC, GHL, AND MAXIMUM TAC FOR 2020 AND 2021

	Aleutian Islands	Bering Sea
2020		
ABC	20,600	155,873
GHL ¹	6,804 ²	14,074
MaxTAC	13,796 ³	141,799
2021		
ABC	20,600	102,975
GHL	6,804*	10,343
MaxTAC	13,796 ³	92,633

¹GHL in the Bering Sea includes 9% for the pot gear fishery and an addition 45 tons for the jig gear fishery. GHL in the Aleutian Islands is 35% of ABC in 2020, expected to increase to 39% of ABC in 2021.

²GHL in the Aleutian Islands is capped at 6,804 t, (15,000,000 pounds). Without the cap the GHL would be 7,210 t in 2020 and 8,034 in 2021

³MaxTAC in the Aleutian Islands is ABC – 6,804 t (GHL cap)

C-2 Council motion
2020 and 2021 Gulf of Alaska groundfish harvest specifications
December 6, 2019

The Council approves the 2019 Gulf of Alaska SAFE report.

The Council approves the final 2020 and 2021 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the **attached Table 1**.

The TACs for both GOA Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water Guideline Harvest Level fisheries. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in the **attached Table 2**.

The Council sets the final 2020 and 2021 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments in the GOA in **Tables 14, 15, and 16 (attached)**.

The Council approves the updated halibut discard mortality rates for 2020 and 2021 as shown in **attached Table 17**.

Table 1. SSC recommended OFL and ABCs, and Council recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2020-2021.

Species	Area	2019		Catch		SSC Rec 2020		2020 TAC	SSC Rec 2021		2021 TAC
		OFL	ABC	TAC	11/2/2019	OFL	ABC		OFL	ABC	
Pollock	State GH	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	108,494	105,782	149,988	111,888
EYAK/SEO		11,697	8,773	8,773	-	13,531	10,148	10,148	13,531	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	2,076	n/a	4,942	2,076
	C	n/a	7,667	5,750	5,705	n/a	8,458	3,806	n/a	8,458	3,806
	E	n/a	1,700	1,275	187	n/a	1,221	549	n/a	1,221	549
	Total		23,669	17,000	12,368	10,909	17,794	14,621	6,431	30,099	14,621
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		25,227	11,571	11,571	12,219	50,481	16,883	14,393	64,765	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
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
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
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
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
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

Table 1. SSC recommended OFL and ABCs, and Council recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2020-2021.

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	-
	Total		5,402	4,529	4,528	2,609	5,143	4,312	4,311	4,898	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	863	672	944	708	708	944	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
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
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
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
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
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
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	399,239	639,768	471,990	407,982

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

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

Final 2020 and 2021 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	2,076	3,806	549	6,431

Table 14--Final 2020 and 2021 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments (Values are in metric tons)

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear ¹				
			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					
Total		1,706			257		9

¹ 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--Final 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 ¹	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 ²			256
Total			1,706

¹ 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.

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

**Table 16--Final 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

**Table 17--Final 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