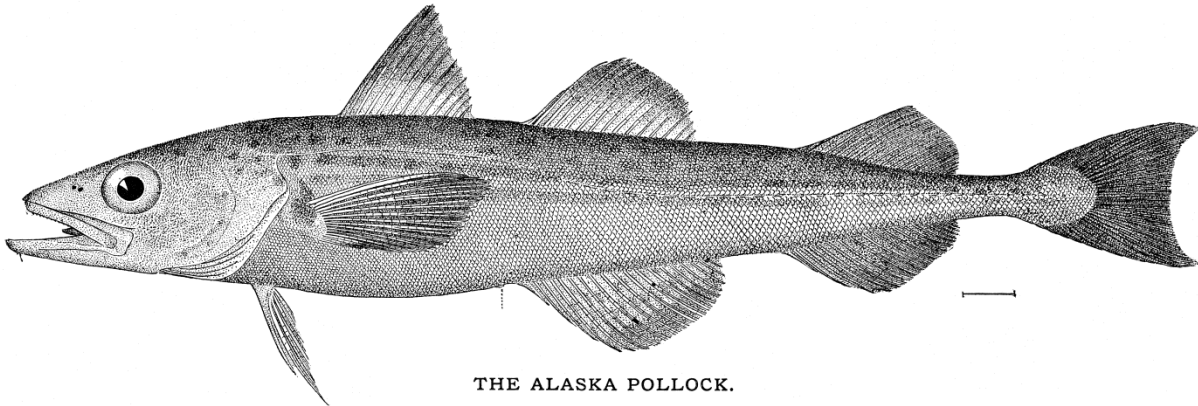


Assessment of the pollock stock in the Aleutian Islands

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Executive Summary

The Aleutian Islands (AI) pollock stock assessment is on a biennial cycle with full assessments every other year when we recommend harvest levels for the next two years. The most recent operational assessment was conducted in 2024 and can be found at (https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/Plan_Team/2024/AIpollock.pdf). An operational update stock assessment document with updated assessment and projection model results will be presented in next year's SAFE report.

The AI pollock assessment consists of a population model, which uses survey and fishery data to generate a historical time series of population estimates, and a projection model, which uses results from the population model to predict future population estimates and recommended harvest levels. The Aleutian Islands walleye pollock stock assessment uses the Assessment Model for Alaska (here referred to as AMAK). AMAK is a variation of the "Stock Assessment Toolbox" model presented to the Plan Team in the 2002 Atka mackerel stock assessment (Lowe *et al.* 2002). The data sets used in this assessment include total catch biomass, fishery age compositions, AI bottom trawl survey abundance estimates, and AI bottom trawl survey age compositions. For a partial assessment year, we do not re-run the assessment model, but do update the projection model with new catch data. This incorporates the most current catch information without re-estimating model parameters and biological reference points. The stock remains at tier 3a.

Summary of Changes in Assessment Inputs

Changes in the input data: There were no changes made to the assessment model inputs since this was an off-cycle year. New data added to the projection model included updated 2024 and 2025 catch estimates (4,999 t and 4,528 t) and new catch estimates for 2026. The 2026 catch was estimated at 2,820 t by increasing the official catch as of August 8, 2026 (2,067 t), by an expansion factor of 26.7%, which represents the average fraction of catch taken after August 8 in the last three complete years (2023-2025).

Changes in the assessment methodology: There were no changes in assessment methodology since this was an off-cycle year.

Summary of Results

For the 2027 fishery, we recommend the maximum allowable ABC of 48,763 t from the updated projection model. This ABC is up slightly from the 2026 ABC of 46,437 t. Reference values for AI pollock are summarized in the following table, with the recommended ABC and OFL values for 2027 and 2028.

Quantity	As estimated or specified last assessment for:		As estimated or recommended this year for:	
	2025	2026	2027	2028
<i>M</i> (natural mortality rate)	0.21		0.21	
Tier	3a		3a	
Total (age 1+) biomass (t)	288,407	305,528	331,314	356,554
Female spawning biomass (t)				
Projected	82,781	80,639	89,494	96,056
$B_{100\%}$	182,006		182,006	
$B_{40\%}$	78,802		78,802	
$B_{35\%}$	63,702		63,702	
F_{OFL}^{**}	0.406	0.406	0.406	0.406
$maxF_{ABC}$	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.325
F_{ABC}	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.325
OFL (t)	55,728	56,231	59,090	62,952
maxABC (t)	46,051	46,437	48,763	51,917
ABC (t)	46,051	46,437	48,763	51,917
Status	As determined this year for:			
	2023	2024	2025	2026
Overfishing	no	n/a	no	n/a
Overfished	n/a	no	n/a	no
Approaching overfished	n/a	no	n/a	no

* Projection based on estimated catches of 2,820 t for 2026 and 4,424 t for 2027, the three-year average (2023-2025), used in place of maximum permissible ABC.

** Long-term equilibrium F_{OFL} and F_{ABC} were 0.406 and 0.325, respectively.

The stock is not being subject to overfishing, is not currently overfished, nor is it approaching a condition of being overfished. The tests for evaluating these three statements on status determination require examining the official total catch from the most recent complete year and the current model projections of spawning biomass relative to $B_{35\%}$ for 2024 and 2025. The official total catch for 2025 is 4,528 t which is a small fraction of the 2025 OFL of 56,231 t; therefore, the stock is not subject to overfishing. The estimates of the 2025 and 2026 spawning biomass derived from this year's projection of the assessment model with updated catch are 82,866 t and 84,250 t, respectively. The 2027 estimate from the current year projection is above $B_{35\%}$ at 89,494 t and the 2028 estimate is above $\frac{1}{2} B_{35\%}$ and the stock is expected to be above $B_{35\%}$ in 2037 under projection Scenario 7, therefore, the stock is not currently overfished nor approaching an overfished condition.

Fishery Trends

Updated catch data (t) for AI pollock as of August 08, 2026 (NMFS Alaska Regional Office Catch Accounting System via the Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN) database, <http://www.akfin.org>) are summarized in the following table.

Year	Eastern 541	Central 542	Western 543	Aleutians Total	Aleutians ABC	Aleutians TAC
2024	3,757	358	884	4,999	42,654	19,000
2025	3,096	265	1,167	4,528	46,051	19,000
2026 ¹	1,455	136	476	2,067	46,437	19,000

¹Current as of August 08, 2026. Source: NMFS Alaska Regional Office Catch Accounting System via the AKFIN database (<http://www.akfin.org>).

Although open to fishing, there continues to be very little directed fishing for pollock in the Aleutian Islands. In 2025 there was a total of 5.7 t of pollock landed from pollock targeted fisheries and in 2026 there were no pollock landed in targeted fisheries as of August 8.

Summaries for Plan Team

Species	Year	Expected Catch	OFL	ABC	Mean SSB	Mean Relative Spawning Biomass
AI pollock	2024	4,999	51,516	42,654	84,731	0.466
	2025	4,528	53,030	43,863	82,866	0.455
	2026	2,820 ¹	53,030	43,863	84,250	0.463
	2027	5,432 ²	59,090	48,763	89,494	0.492
	2028	5,770 ²	62,952	51,917	96,056	0.528
	2029	6,272 ²	68,474	56,464	104,078	0.572
	2030	6,853 ²	74,763	61,660	113,230	0.622
	2031		80,980	66,810	117,630	0.646

¹Projected from 3-year average proportion caught as of August 8, 2026. Source: NMFS Alaska Regional Office Catch Accounting System via the AKFIN database (<http://www.akfin.org>).

²Projected from 5-year average F for 2021-2025.

Responses to SSC and Plan Team Comments on Assessments in General

No applicable comments.

Responses to SSC and Plan Team Comments Specific to this Assessment

No applicable comments.

References

Lowe, S., J.N. Ianelli, H. Zenger, K. and R Rueter 2002. Assessment of Aleutian Islands Atka Mackerel . In: Stock assessment and fishery evaluation report for the groundfish resources of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands regions. North Pac. Fish. Mgmt. Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, AK 99510. Section 14:609-668

Figures

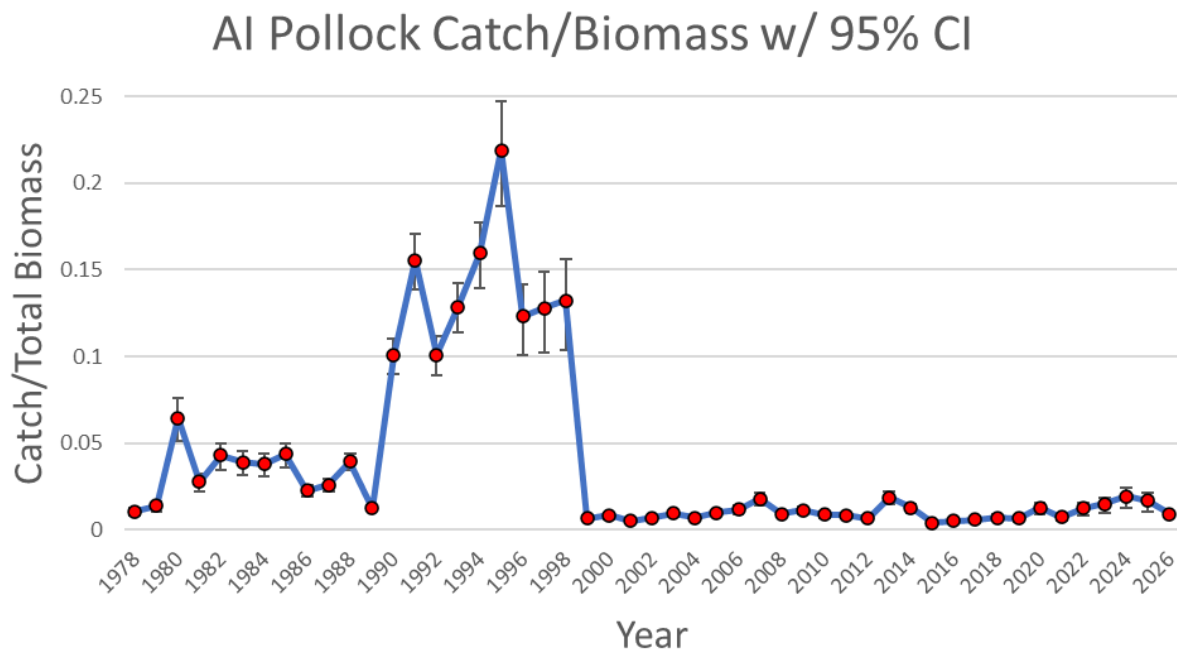


Figure A1:1. Modeled catch over total biomass (point estimates in red circles) with 95% confidence intervals for AI pollock from 1978-2026.