

#### **C4 GOA Groundfish Harvest Specs Motion #1**

The AP appreciates the exceptional work of Council and Agency staff in this unprecedented and abbreviated annual Gulf of Alaska Specifications process.

The AP recommends that the Council approve the Final 2026 and 2027 GOA Groundfish harvest 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, including the recent change by the Board of Fish to increase the deduction from the WGOA ABC to 35% for the South Alaska Peninsula state cod fishery. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in Table 2 in the action memo.
- The AP recommends that the Council set the Final 2025 and 2026 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments in the GOA as shown in Tables 3-5 in the C4 Additional Tables for GOA Groundfish document on the eAgenda.

*Motion passes 19-0*

#### *Rationale in Support of Main Motion*

- *The AP noted appreciation for Council and Agency staff at all levels for their exceptional work in pivoting in this unprecedented situation. The quality of leadership during this time, the level of information made available to explain this nuanced process, and the readiness to answer any and all questions was appreciated.*
- *The AP adopted the same Table 1 for GOA Specifications as the AP passed in October, which are reflective of the best available scientific information that we have at this meeting with the following changes:*
  - *The AP adopted the SSC's single change to the Deepwater Flats complex ABC, including the SSC's recommendation of ABC equal to TAC. The SSC was able to review the harvest projection for this change since it had already been completed before the lapse in appropriations.*
  - *The AP also included the deduction from the WGOA ABC to 35% to account for the change from the Board of Fisheries action for the South Alaska Peninsula state cod fishery. Since 35% of the WGOA ABC TAC is now deducted for that state fishery (rather than 30%), the WGOA cod TAC is now less.*
- *The TACs included in the motion are responsive to the AP's task to use the best available science and long term trends to maximize the long term yield of the fisheries.*
- *AP members did not support including the raw 2025 survey results as they represent one data point and are further complicated by the change to a new stratified random GOA bottom trawl survey that sampled 17% fewer stations. Without further analysis*

*and peer review, the raw survey data seems to show an across the board decline in deepwater species and increase in shallow water species, further confusing whether this is a signal from the stocks or a figment of survey design/dropped stations.*

- *AP members noted frustration that the GOA bottom trawl survey doesn't effectively sample deep water species, such as rockfish, that inhabit areas untrawlable by the survey gear and expressed continued interest in trying to get better information into the system.*

Table 1. Harvest Specifications for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2026 and 2027  
December 2025, AP Recommendations

Species	Area	2026			Catch through 11/8/2025	2026			2027		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	4,526	n/a		n/a	3,326	n/a	n/a	3,326	n/a
	W (610)	n/a	37,344	37,344	14,029	n/a	27,453	27,453	n/a	27,453	27,453
	C (620)	n/a	82,265	82,265	79,477	n/a	60,477	60,477	n/a	60,477	60,477
	C (630)	n/a	51,605	51,605	39,046	n/a	37,936	37,936	n/a	37,936	37,936
	WYAK	n/a	5,282	5,282	1,861	n/a	3,883	3,883	n/a	3,883	3,883
	Subtotal	210,111	181,022	176,496	134,413	153,971	133,075	129,749	153,971	133,075	129,749
Pacific Cod	SEO	12,998	9,749	9,749	2	12,998	9,749	9,749	12,998	9,749	9,749
	Total	223,109	190,771	186,245	134,415	166,969	142,824	139,498	166,969	142,824	139,498
Sablefish	W	n/a	8,710	6,097	5,340	n/a	8,182	5,318	n/a	8,182	5,318
	C	n/a	20,506	15,379	13,844	n/a	19,263	14,447	n/a	19,263	14,447
	E	n/a	2,925	2,194	532	n/a	2,748	2,061	n/a	2,748	2,061
	Total	38,688	32,141	23,670	19,716	36,459	30,193	21,826	36,459	30,193	21,826
Alaska-wide OFL and ABC	W	n/a	4,996	4,746	3,117	n/a	4,687	4,687	n/a	4,687	4,687
	C	n/a	10,257	9,744	7,319	n/a	9,622	9,622	n/a	9,622	9,622
	WYAK	n/a	3,125	2,686	2,160	n/a	2,652	2,652	n/a	2,652	2,652
	SEO	n/a	5,660	5,660	4,826	n/a	5,589	5,589	n/a	5,589	5,589
	GOA Total	n/a	n/a	22,836	17,422	n/a	n/a	22,550	n/a	n/a	22,550
Shallow-Water Flatfish	AK Total	58,532	47,605	n/a		57,797	47,008	n/a	57,797	47,008	n/a
	W	n/a	23,755	13,250	107	n/a	23,902	13,250	n/a	23,902	13,250
	C	n/a	28,279	28,279	2,025	n/a	28,455	28,455	n/a	28,455	28,455
	WYAK	n/a	2,828	2,828	25	n/a	2,846	2,846	n/a	2,846	2,846
	SEO	n/a	1,697	1,697	-	n/a	1,707	1,707	n/a	1,707	1,707
Deep-Water Flatfish	Total	69,277	56,559	46,054	2,157	69,610	56,910	46,258	69,610	56,910	46,258
	W	n/a	234	234	1	n/a	231	231	n/a	227	227
	C	n/a	2,616	2,616	76	n/a	2,570	2,570	n/a	2,518	2,518
	WYAK	n/a	1,828	1,828	6	n/a	1,796	1,796	n/a	1,759	1,759
Rex Sole	SEO	n/a	2,280	2,280	4	n/a	2,239	2,239	n/a	2,193	2,193
	Total	8,263	6,958	6,958	87	8,118	6,836	6,836	7,954	6,697	6,697
	W	n/a	3,382	3,382	12	n/a	3,353	3,353	n/a	3,353	3,353
	C	n/a	13,698	13,698	555	n/a	13,582	13,582	n/a	13,582	13,582
Arrowtooth Flounder	WYAK	n/a	1,436	1,436	-	n/a	1,413	1,413	n/a	1,413	1,413
	SEO	n/a	2,871	2,871	-	n/a	2,825	2,825	n/a	2,825	2,825
	Total	26,002	21,387	21,387	567	25,743	21,173	21,173	25,743	21,173	21,173
	W	n/a	33,593	14,500	260	n/a	33,716	14,500	n/a	33,716	14,500
Flathead Sole	C	n/a	68,261	68,261	12,765	n/a	68,511	68,511	n/a	68,511	68,511
	WYAK	n/a	6,695	6,695	22	n/a	6,719	6,719	n/a	6,719	6,719
	SEO	n/a	10,998	10,998	28	n/a	11,039	11,039	n/a	11,039	11,039
	Total	142,832	119,547	100,454	18,182	143,347	119,965	100,769	143,347	119,965	100,769
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	13,592	8,650	64	n/a	13,757	8,650	n/a	13,757	8,650
	C	n/a	21,817	21,817	836	n/a	22,083	22,083	n/a	22,083	22,083
	WYAK	n/a	3,970	3,970	-	n/a	4,018	4,018	n/a	4,018	4,018
	SEO	n/a	2,097	2,097	-	n/a	2,122	2,122	n/a	2,122	2,122
Northern Rockfish	Total	50,587	41,476	36,534	836	51,176	41,980	36,873	51,176	41,980	36,873
	W	n/a	1,753	1,753	1,800	n/a	1,688	1,688	n/a	1,688	1,688
	C	n/a	28,209	28,209	23,870	n/a	27,156	27,156	n/a	27,156	27,156
	WYAK	n/a	2,070	2,070	1,892	n/a	1,993	1,993	n/a	1,993	1,993
Shortfin Mako	SEO	n/a	6,930	6,930	-	n/a	6,672	6,672	n/a	6,672	6,672
	Total	46,562	38,962	38,962	27,562	44,826	37,509	37,509	44,826	37,509	37,509
	W	n/a	1,396	1,396	466	n/a	1,346	1,346	n/a	1,346	1,346
	C	n/a	3,680	3,680	1,213	n/a	3,549	3,549	n/a	3,549	3,549
Thornyhead Rockfish	E	n/a	-	-	-	n/a	-	-	n/a	-	-
	Total	6,064	5,076	5,076	1,679	5,848	4,895	4,895	5,848	4,895	4,895
	W	n/a	34	34	3	n/a	34	34	n/a	34	34
	C	n/a	189	189	361	n/a	189	189	n/a	189	189
Dusky Rockfish	E	n/a	424	424	136	n/a	424	424	n/a	424	424
	Total	863	647	647	500	863	647	647	863	647	647
	W	n/a	209	209	68	n/a	199	199	n/a	199	199
	C	n/a	5,818	5,818	2,179	n/a	5,527	5,527	n/a	5,527	5,527
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	WYAK	n/a	215	215	23	n/a	204	204	n/a	204	204
	SEO	n/a	96	96	-	n/a	91	91	n/a	91	91
	Total	7,705	6,338	6,338	2,270	7,319	6,021	6,021	7,319	6,021	6,021
	W	n/a	224	224	55	n/a	229	229	n/a	229	229
Demersal shelf rockfish	C	n/a	369	369	130	n/a	366	366	n/a	366	366
	E	n/a	597	597	69	n/a	608	608	n/a	608	608
	Total	1,576	1,190	1,190	254	1,631	1,203	1,203	1,631	1,203	1,203
	W/C/WYAK	361	271	271	253	361	271	271	361	271	271
Thornyhead Rockfish	SEO	524	394	394	266	524	394	394	524	394	394
	W	n/a	206	206	18	n/a	206	206	n/a	206	206
	C	n/a	590	590	73	n/a	590	590	n/a	590	590
	E	n/a	542	542	36	n/a	542	542	n/a	542	542
Other Rockfish	Total	1,784	1,338	1,338	127	1,784	1,338	1,338	1,784	1,338	1,338
	W/C/WYAK	n/a	1,084	1,084	400	n/a	1,084	1,084	n/a	1,084	1,084
	SEO	n/a	2,421	300	21	n/a	2,421	300	n/a	2,421	300
	Total	4,618	3,505	1,384	421	4,618	3,505	1,384	4,618	3,505	1,384
Alfa mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	3,000	967	6,200	4,700	3,000	6,200	4,700	3,000
	W	n/a	745	745	105	n/a	745	745	n/a	745	745
	C	n/a	1,749	1,749	1,724	n/a	1,749	1,749	n/a	1,749	1,749
	E	n/a	341	341	262	n/a	341	341	n/a	341	341
Big Skate	Total	3,780	2,835	2,835	2,091	3,780	2,835	2,835	3,780	2,835	2,835
	W	n/a	104	104	81	n/a	104	104	n/a	104	104
	C	n/a	1,894	1,894	684	n/a	1,894	1,894	n/a	1,894	1,894
	E	n/a	538	538	527	n/a	538	538	n/a	538	538
Longnose Skate	Total	3,380	2,536	2,536	1,292	3,380	2,536	2,536	3,380	2,536	2,536
	Other Skates	887	665	665	520	887	665	665	887	665	665
	Sharks	6,521	4,891	4,891	1,536	6,521	4,891	4,891	6,521	4,891	4,891
	Ootopuses	1,307	980	964	223	1,307	980	964	1,307	980	964
TOTAL	GOA-wide	708,422	680,782	614,818	233,343	648,088	638,288	484,338	648,804	638,180	484,187

Notes: ABCs are at the level of the stock or stock complex and shown in "Total" or "GOA-wide" rows. Any quantities shown by area are spatial apportionments of ABC and do not reflect ACLs. GOA catch (not AK wide catch) for sablefish included in catch totals. ABC for sablefish (AK wide) shown in ABC totals. Catch for Pacific cod does not include state fisheries catch. Sources: 2025 and 2026 Final GOA Harvest Specifications (published March 2025), 2026-2027 Proposed GOA Harvest Specifications (Council motion, October 2025), NMFS Catch Accounting System (CAS).

## **C4 GOA Groundfish Harvest Specs Motion #2**

The AP requests the Council explore whether there could be benefits from updating GOA pollock and cod 2026 harvest projections with 2025 survey information to be in effect for 2026.

*Motion passes 14-4*

### *Rationale in Support of Motion*

- *While the motion maker noted that the specifications passed in the prior motion reflected the best scientific information available at this meeting, this motion is a request to explore the possibility of providing additional updated information that would continue through the normal process after the conclusion of this meeting. The intent is that the Council would be considering whether updated information from the 2025 surveys used in pollock and cod assessments, as well as updated catch information could be put in the existing stock models with existing apportionments, since the current model and apportionments represent the best scientific information available.*
- *Note that after the AP took action, staff indicated to the motion maker that the correct term for this request is an “operational assessment” not an updated harvest projection.*
- *This motion is responsive to written comment that the AP received, stakeholder concerns discussed in preparation for the meeting, and oral testimony that the SSC received. It was noted that the GOA stakeholders, including communities, have been struggling for the last three years, they remain the last unrationalized trawl fisheries, and that pollock and cod are the species that keep the lights on for processors to be able to accept deliveries from other smaller fisheries. Further, updates to the GOA cod ABC and TAC would benefit all GOA sectors.*
- *During staff presentations, AFSC stated that Dr Foy stated that it would be possible specifically to update harvest projections but that there would be tradeoffs in work that they would be able to complete for that species. The motion maker noted that they had discussions with numerous GOA pollock and cod stakeholders who understand and are still eager to get updated information.*
- *GOA POP was not included in this motion due to the response from inseason that there were likely to be larger issues with midseason adjustments, especially when the TAC would be expected to decrease, since cooperative quota permits would potentially already be issued.*
- *AP members noted the difference between adjusting TAC numbers for an Open Access fishery, pollock, versus adjusting numbers for Pacific cod, which is assigned to the Rockfish Program Catcher Vessel Sector cooperative permits before the opening of the fishery April 1, and questioned whether adjustments to these permits midyear is possible within the current NMFS RAM/Inseason Management structure. Despite these concerns, since the GOA RP CV cod allocation is so small, the motion maker did not feel it was necessary to drop cod at this stage since benefits would still be significant if it is possible.*
- *AP members noted support for the intent of the motion, which may provide increased opportunity for the harvesters, processors, and communities of the Gulf of Alaska. However, one AP member noted concern with the precedent of going outside of the established process for groundfish specifications, but supported the motion based on the soft language for the Council to simply explore this idea further rather than offering a concrete recommendation to proceed.*
- *Concerns that we could also be in the same situation next year were also brought up under this agenda item, with the AP briefly discussing the need for contingency planning for all species in*

*the GOA and BS so that fisheries aren't continuing to operate on old information. The AP expressed hope that the Agency and Council were working on contingency plans for the future.*

- *The AP also noted that the challenges this year are indicative of the importance as well as the need for the EO 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness.*

*Rationale Against Motion*

- *An AP member noted concern about potential ecosystem impacts due to a change since there would not be updated ecosystem data included since there wouldn't be an updated 2025 Ecosystem Status Report that would be factored in.*
- *Another AP member noted that potentially a mid-season reallocation of GOA cod would have unequal benefits between sectors since some vessels may already be finished with GOA cod for the year before a reallocation is implemented.*