

C3 Joint Groundfish September Plan Team Report

Steve Barbeaux, Sara Cleaver, Jim Ianelli, Chris Lunsford,
Kalei Shotwell, Diana Stram, Cindy Tribuzio



October 2024, Presentation to the AP



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Groundfish Plan Team Meeting, Sept 17-19, 2024

BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Members:

Steve Barbeaux	AFSC REFM (co-chair)
Kalei Shotwell	AFSC REFM (co-chair)
Cindy Tribuzio	AFSC ABL (vice chair)
Diana Stram	NPFMC (coordinator)
Lukas DeFilippo	AFSC
Allan Hicks	IPHC
Lisa Hillier	WDFW
Kirstin Holsman	AFSC REFM
Andy Kingham	AFSC FMA
Beth Matta	AFSC REFM
Andrew Seitz	UAF
Jane Sullivan	AFSC ABL
Steven Whitney	NMFS AKRO

GOA Groundfish Plan Team Members:

Jim Ianelli	AFSC REFM (co-chair)
Chris Lunsford	AFSC ABL (co-chair)
Sara Cleaver	NPFMC (coordinator)
Abby Jahn	NMFS AKRO
Craig Faunce	AFSC FMA
Lisa Hillier	WDFW
Pete Hulson	AFSC ABL
Sandra Lowe	AFSC REFM
Nat Nichols	ADF&G
Jan Rumble	ADF&G
Paul Spencer	AFSC REFM
Ben Williams	AFSC ABL



Joint Teams Presentation Summary

- Met Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 9:00 am AKDT
 - Virtual meeting only via Zoom, Team's [electronic agenda](#)
 - Presentations are linked in the header (in report)
- Future meetings:
 - November 12-15, 2024
 - Tentative 2025 dates:
 - Week of September 15-19 (4 days TBD)
 - November 2025 date is TBD.

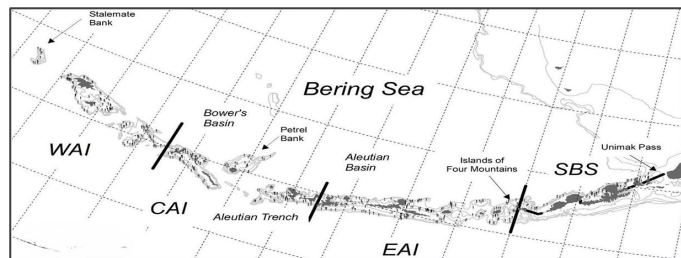
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Issue of Veterans day and Thanksgiving week and proximity of Council meeting in 2025

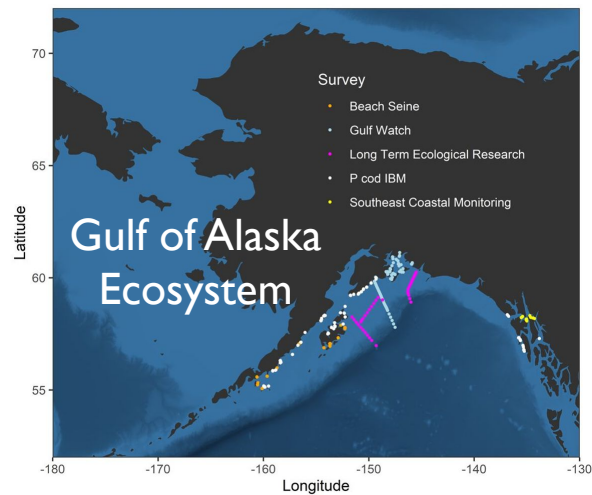
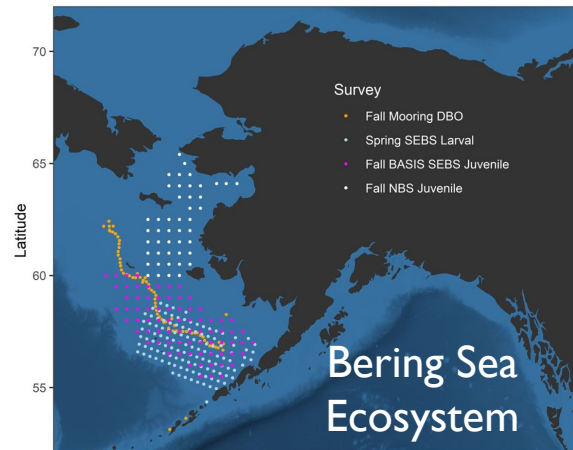
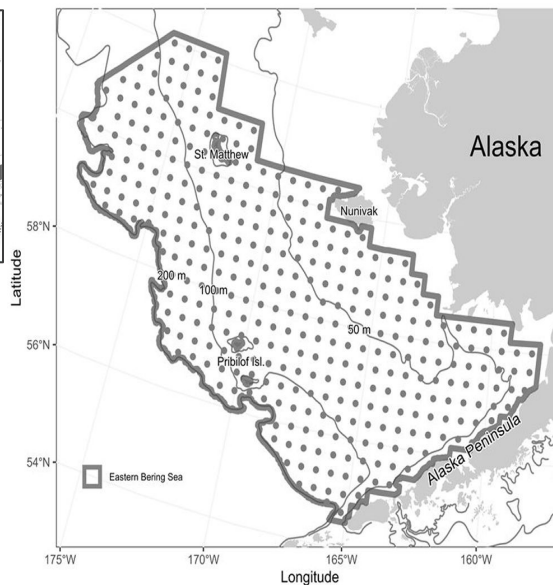


2024 survey previews

AI Bottom Trawl



EBS Bottom Trawl

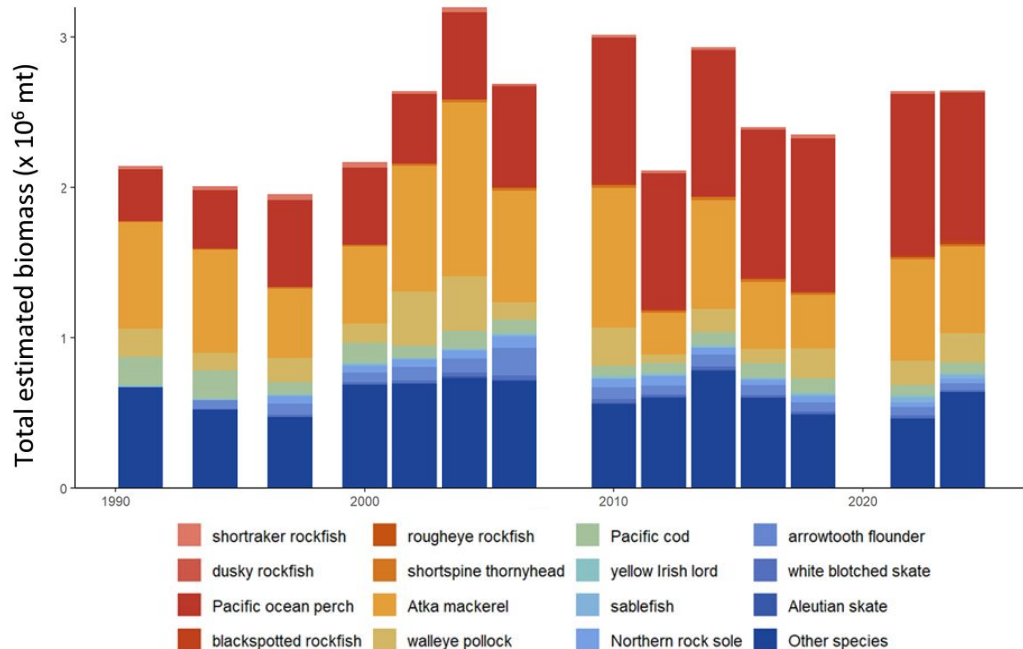


Aleutian Islands Trawl Survey

- 20% reduction in stations, variance in deep strata might have increased
- >76,000 lengths, >6,500 otoliths
- Bottom temp average, surface below average
- Larger changes in biomass in deep water rockfish

Thanks to Susanne McDermott

Catch composition



Eastern Bering Sea Trawl Survey

- 26 corner stations omitted
- 125,265 lengths, 6,070 otoliths, 4,917 stomachs collected
- Bottom temp average, surface temp below average, cold pool area near average
- Biomass increased for most species (pollock and flatfish)

Thanks to Duane Stevenson

EBS			
Common name	Year	Biomass (mt)	Population (x1,000)
walleye pollock	2023	3,154,668	5,685,500
	2024	5,476,067 (74%)	10,307,932 (81%)
Pacific cod	2023	663,075	555,739
	2024	635,840 (-4%)	436,530 (-21%)
yellowfin sole	2023	1,393,379	5,567,596
	2024	1,503,618 (8%)	5,643,105 (1%)
northern rock sole	2023	1,380,684	6,657,558
	2024	1,439,739 (4%)	7,417,950 (11%)
flathead sole	2023	594,851	2,039,623
	2024	723,996 (22%)	2,311,092 (13%)
Bering flounder	2023	6,813	33,736
	2024	10,370 (52%)	48,918 (45%)
Alaska plaice	2023	358,845	617,849
	2024	349,579 (-3%)	634,036 (3%)
arrowtooth flounder	2023	462,575	861,345
	2024	582,469 (26%)	926,415 (8%)
Kamchatka flounder	2023	24,875	40,128
	2024	28,362 (14%)	69,129 (72%)
Pacific halibut	2023	170,238	95,321
	2024	125,145 (-26%)	65,136 (-32%)
Alaska skate	2023	418,483	98,290
	2024	407,133 (-3%)	102,931 (5%)
Greenland turbot	2023	5,857	3,743
	2024	4,959 (-15%)	1,595 (-57%)

Ecosystem Surveys

- Bering Sea Summary (southeastern and northern, SEBS / NBS)
 - Cooler than heatwave years, lower large copepods and avg small copepods in SEBS but increase in NBS, large fall bloom phytoplankton, age-0 pollock high in spring, low in surface in fall, low body condition in SEBS
- Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Summary
 - Western GOA cooler, nearshore eastern GOA warmer, high lipid content in zooplankton, avg age-0 Pcod but above avg age-0 pollock in nearshore, age-0 sablefish avg growth rates
- Highlighted Projects
 - Larval size-at-date sensitivity, earlier spawning / faster growth in warm years

Thanks to Ellen Yasumiishi



Overviews

- ESR Climate Update (one for each region)
 - Overall cooler conditions in EBS and AI, moderate El Nino in GOA
- NMFS Inseason Management
 - First presentation of this kind to Plan Team, flags important fishery changes and Plan Team would like to see in future (*note errata in JPT report)
- ESP and Socioeconomic Sablefish Indicators
 - Teams requested clarification from SSC on how socioeconomic information fits into risk tables, ABC/OFL, and TAC decisions and to standardize definitions on size grade and pricing

Thanks to B. Ferriss, I. Ortiz, E. Siddon, A. Jahn, S. Whitney, R. Dame, K. Shotwell



Other Topics

- Data Limited Methods (DLM) Working Group
 - Requested another DLM progress report at Joint PT in 2025
- Age and Growth Update
 - Recommended that maturity analyses be a priority in near future
- Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMRs)
 - Recommended adopting 2025-2026 DMRs from Halibut DMR group
- REMA Diagnostics
 - Encouraged authors to explore new diagnostics at their discretion

Thanks to Cindy Tribuzio, Derek Chamberlin, Michael Fey, Jane Sullivan



Halibut DMR Workgroup

Marine Mammals Feeding on Halibut Discards



Marine Mammals Feeding on Halibut Discards

- Informational report only
- Outlines 3 ways in which DMRs are calculated
 - Biennially specified DMR through DMR workgroup
 - Real-time haul based DMR for deck sorted halibut
 - Fixed rate (100% for pelagic trawl)
- MM feeding on discards is
 - not accounted for in any method
 - Deck sorted hauls with MM feeding on discards moved to U - Unknown and the average deck sorted rate is used
 - Specified rate used in all cases including when MM feeding on discards
 - not a statistical sample with a defined sampling frame

Marine Mammals Feeding on Halibut Discards

- Fixed DMRs could be established on all hauls with MM feeding on discards
 - Policy decision
 - Outboard cameras could support exploration of methods to incorporate MM feeding on discards into DMR calculations

Table 1 Hauls with Marine Mammals Feeding on Discards by Sector

Sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BSAI Nonpelagic Trawl CPs	95	181	295	204	66	33
BSAI Hook and Line CPs	8	5	5	5	8	5
BSAI Pot CPs	24	0	1	0	2	3
BSAI Nonpelagic Trawl CVs	0	0	0	9	1	0
Other	5	1	2	2	2	8

Source: NMFS AFSC Observer Program, data compiled by AKFIN in Comprehensive_NORPAC

Table 1 Kilograms of Halibut on Hauls with Marine Mammals Feeding on Discards by Sector, inclusive of halibut sorted from the deck and factory on non-pelagic trawl CPs

Sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BSAI Nonpelagic Trawl CPs	14,163	49,592	98,280	66,758	21,054	8,926
BSAI Hook and Line CPs	3,376	660	285	480	2,395	2,361
Other	2,463	128	250	3,700	724	1,275

Source: NMFS AFSC Observer Program, data compiled by AKFIN in Comprehensive_NORPAC

A photograph of a harbor at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. Several fishing boats are docked at a pier on the left side of the frame. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds.

Thank You!

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C3 Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Groundfish September Plan Team Report

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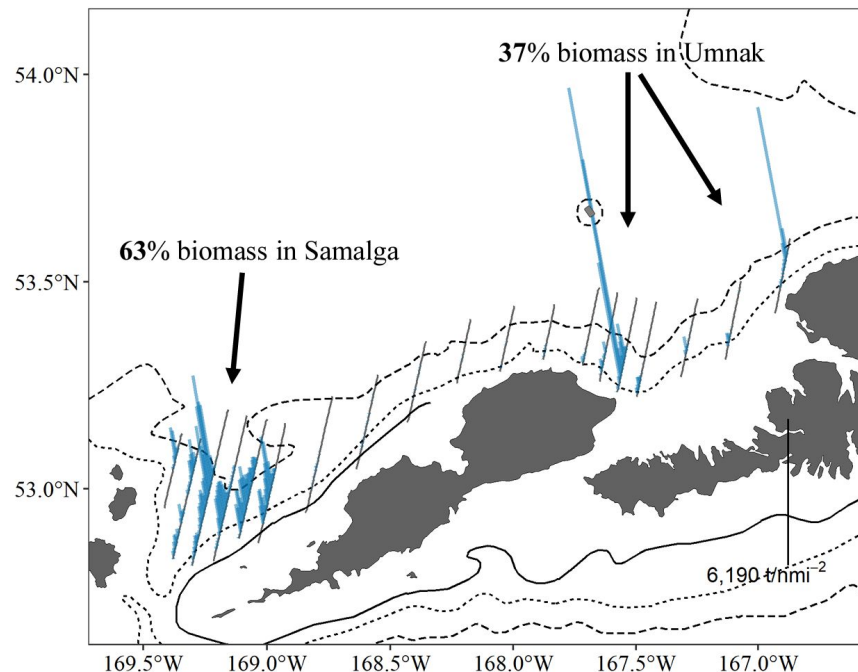
BSAI Presentation Summary

Topic	Presenter	Type	Recommendations
Bogoslof Winter Acoustic Survey	Nathan Lauffenburger	Survey Update	No
EBS Acoustic Survey & AVO Index	Abigail McCarthy, Nathan Lauffenburger	Survey Update	No
EBS Pollock	Jim Ianelli	Full Model	Yes, tier change
EBS Pacific Cod	Steve Barbeaux	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
AI Pacific Cod	Ingrid Spies	Full Model	Yes, 5 models
Alaska Plaice	Lee Cronin-Fine	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Northern Rock Sole	Carey McGilliard	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Greenland Turbot	Meaghan Bryan	Full Model	Yes, 3 models
Pacific Ocean Perch	Paul Spencer	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Rougheye/Blackspotted Rockfish	Paul Spencer	Update Model	Yes, 1 model
Harvest Projections	Melissa Haltuch	Final Models	Yes, biomass trends
Proposed Specifications	Steve Whitney		

Bogoslof Winter Acoustic Survey

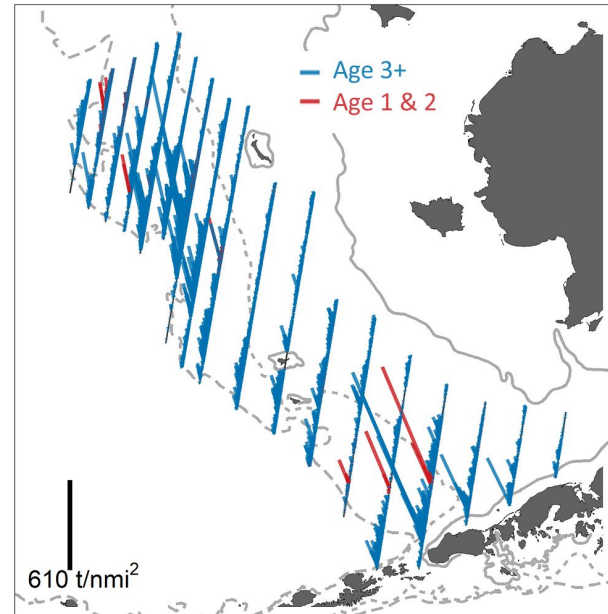
- Preliminary results:
 - Weather reduced survey from 4 to 2 days, 19 transects combo spacing
 - Most female were pre-spawning so survey timing was good, surface temp average
 - 2024 pollock estimate is 31% decrease from 2020, next survey 2026

Thanks to Nathan Lauffenburger



Summer Acoustic Survey & AVO Index

- Preliminary results:
 - Wider transect spacing and reduced trawling effort likely increased uncertainty
 - Total biomass pollock decreased 25% from 2022 survey
 - More age 1-2 in EBS than in recent years, age 4+ fish still dominate
 - Acoustic vessel of opportunity (AVO) index is on the way



Thanks to Abigail McCarthy and Nathan Lauffenburger

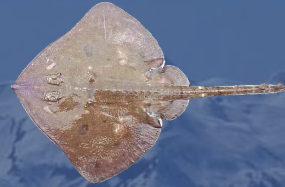


BSAI models reviewed for November assessments

Stock	Type	Recommendations
EBS Pollock	Full Model	Yes, tier change
EBS Pacific Cod	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
AI Pacific Cod	Full Model	Yes, 5 models
Alaska Plaice	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Northern Rock Sole	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Greenland Turbot	Full Model	Yes, 3 models
Pacific Ocean Perch	Full Model	Yes, 2 models
Rougheye/Blackspotted Rockfish	Update Model	Yes, 1 model
*Harvest Projections	Final Models	Yes, biomass trends

*harvest projections are finalized at this meeting and not reviewed in November

Harvest Projections

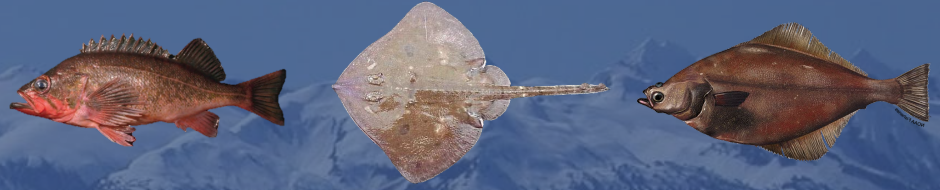


- **New!** Reviewed in September instead of November
- Stocks Evaluated (lead author):
 - Northern Rockfish (Paul Spencer), high catch in 2023, expected to be smaller in 2024, next full assessment 2025
 - Alaska Skate (Cindy Tribuzio), catch decreased in 2024 for both Alaska skate and other skates, next full assessment 2025
 - Arrowtooth Flounder (Kalei Shotwell), BS catch lowest in time series, AI low but increased from 2023, next full assessment 2026

Thanks to Melissa Haltuch, Kalei Shotwell, Paul Spencer, Cindy Tribuzio



Harvest Projections



- Discussion & Recommendations:
 - Discussed lack of current survey information due to change in schedule and recommended coordination with survey presentations to include HP stocks
 - Team supported potential AFSC evaluation of sensitivity to earlier catch dates and subsequent catch advice
 - Discussed red-flag potential, although unlikely for these stocks, no formal process to revisit in November, adjustment could be made
 - Team agreed with the authors' OFL and ABC recommendations



Proposed Specifications Team recommended (1 of 2)

Table 1. Plan Team Proposed recommended OFL, ABC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2024-2025

9/16/2024

Species	Area	2023			Catch as of 12/31/2023	2024			Catch as of 9/16/2024	Plan Team Proposed 2025/2026		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	3,381,000	1,910,000	1,300,000	1,310,591	3,162,000	2,313,000	1,300,000	1,229,404	3,449,000	2,401,000	1,325,000
	AI	52,383	43,413	19,000	3,744	51,516	42,654	19,000	4,431	53,030	43,863	19,000
	Bogoslof	115,146	86,360	300	125	115,146	86,360	250	23	115,146	86,360	250
Pacific cod	BS	172,495	144,834	127,409	126,458	200,995	167,952	147,753	104,170	180,798	150,876	131,262
	AI	18,416	13,812	8,425	3,398	18,416	12,431	8,080	3,570	18,416	12,431	8,080
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	47,390	40,502	n/a		55,084	47,146	n/a		55,317	47,350	n/a
	BS	n/a	8,417	7,996	5,418	n/a	11,450	7,996	3,579	n/a	11,499	9,500
	AI	n/a	8,884	8,440	2,463	n/a	13,100	8,440	1,262	n/a	13,156	8,440
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	404,882	378,499	230,000	112,889	305,298	265,913	195,000	56,775	317,932	276,917	195,000
Greenland turbot	BSAI	4,645	3,960	3,960	1,276	3,705	3,188	3,188	736	3,185	2,740	2,740
	BS	n/a	3,338	3,338	795	n/a	2,687	2,687	436	n/a	2,310	2,310
	AI	n/a	622	622	481	n/a	501	501	300	n/a	430	430
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	98,787	83,852	15,000	7,276	103,280	87,690	14,000	8,030	104,270	88,548	14,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	8,946	7,579	7,579	6,949	8,850	7,498	7,498	4,748	8,687	7,360	7,360
Northern rock sole	BSAI	166,034	121,719	66,000	27,212	197,828	122,091	66,000	25,411	264,789	122,535	66,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	79,256	65,344	35,500	8,991	81,605	67,289	35,500	10,764	82,699	68,203	35,500
Alaska plaice	BSAI	40,823	33,946	17,500	15,252	42,695	35,494	21,752	8,293	45,182	37,560	20,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	22,919	17,189	4,500	3,020	22,919	17,189	4,500	2,855	22,919	17,189	4,500

Sources: 2023 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs and 2024 OFLs and ABCs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2022 and December 2023 respectively; 2023 catches through December 31, and 2023 catches through September 16, 2024 from AKR Catch Accounting.

Proposed Specifications Team recommended (2 of 2)

Table 1. Plan Team Proposed recommended OFL, ABC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2024-2025

9/16/2024

Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	50,133	42,038	37,703	35,951	49,010	41,096	37,626	23,647	48,139	40,366	37,181
	BS	n/a	11,903	11,903	10,892	n/a	11,636	11,636	6,678	n/a	11,430	11,430
	EAI	n/a	8,152	8,152	7,791	n/a	7,969	7,969	6,723	n/a	7,828	7,828
	CAI	n/a	5,648	5,648	5,461	n/a	5,521	5,521	3,497	n/a	5,423	5,423
	WAI	n/a	16,335	12,000	11,807	n/a	15,970	12,500	6,749	n/a	15,685	12,500
Northern rockfish	BSAI	22,776	18,687	11,000	10,433	23,556	19,274	16,752	7,647	22,838	18,685	15,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	703	525	525	607	761	569	569	414	813	607	607
	EBS/EAI	n/a	359	359	291	n/a	388	388	167	n/a	412	412
	CAI/WAI	n/a	166	166	316	n/a	181	181	248	n/a	195	195
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	706	530	530	243	706	530	530	102	706	530	530
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,220	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,101	1,680	1,260	1,260
	BS	n/a	880	880	652	n/a	880	880	693	n/a	880	880
	AI	n/a	380	380	568	n/a	380	380	408	n/a	380	380
Atka mackerel	BSAI	118,787	98,588	69,282	66,613	111,684	95,358	72,987	59,475	99,723	84,676	66,165
	EAI/BS	n/a	43,281	27,260	24,862	n/a	41,723	32,260	27,247	n/a	37,049	30,000
	CAI	n/a	17,351	17,351	17,210	n/a	16,754	16,754	13,901	n/a	14,877	14,877
	WAI	n/a	37,956	24,671	24,541	n/a	36,882	23,973	18,326	n/a	32,750	21,288
Skates	BSAI	46,220	38,605	27,441	25,866	45,574	37,808	30,519	21,451	44,203	36,625	30,361
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	250	325	689	450	400	159	689	450	400
Octopuses	BSAI	4,769	3,576	400	148	6,080	4,560	400	163	6,080	4,560	400
Total	BSAI	4,859,585	3,132,067	2,000,000	1,776,469	4,609,077	3,476,801	2,000,000	1,578,210	4,946,241	3,550,691	1,998,536

Sources: 2023 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs and 2024 OFLs and ABCs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2022 and December 2023 respectively; 2023 catches through December 31, and 2023 catches through September 16, 2024 from AKR Catch Accounting.

BSAI Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMRs)

Table 12–Proposed 2024 and 2025 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	86
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	67
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Pot	All	21

Thanks to Michael Fey (AKFIN) and other Halibut DMR Working Group members: Jen Cahalan (PSMFC), Jennifer Ferdinand (NMFS AFSC), Krista Melani (NMFS AKRO), Jason Gasper (NMFS AKRO), Ian Stewart (IPHC)



Assessment Type	BSAI Stocks for 2024	
Operational Full	EBS pollock EBS Pacific cod AI Pacific cod Alaska plaice	Northern rock sole Greenland turbot Pacific ocean perch
Operational Update	Aleutian Islands pollock Bogoslof pollock Kamchatka flounder Yellowfin sole Blackspotted rougheye rockfish	Flathead sole Other flatfish Sablefish (AK-wide) Atka mackerel Other rockfish Shortraker rockfish
Harvest Projections (review in Sept (PT)/Oct (SSC))	Northern rockfish Arrowtooth flounder	Skates (Alaska skates)
Catch Reports	Octopus	Sharks
Other-Ecosystem Reports	BSAI and GOA Forage fish (including squid)	BSAI and GOA Grenadiers





Thank You!

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