

C1 BSAI Groundfish Specs

The AP has reviewed the 2024 Ecosystem Report for the EBS and AI. The AP greatly appreciates the work put into this detailed report each year.

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2024 BSAI Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The AP recommends the Council approve the final 2025 and 2026 BSAI groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod TACs have been adjusted for the State Water cod fisheries.

The AP recommends the Council approve no reduction from max ABC for the 2025 and 2026 ABC Flatfish Reserves. (NO TABLE Associated)

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2025 and 2026 PSC limits and apportionments as assigned to their respective target fisheries as provided in Tables 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 (attached).

The AP recommends the Council approve the halibut discard mortality rates for 2025 and 2026 as shown in Table 20 (attached).

Motion passed: 18/2

Rationale in Favor of Motion

- *The collaboration among analysts, authors, contributors, and especially industry members is key to this process for the Bering Sea.*
- *These recommended TAC levels take into account changes from stock assessment updates, plan team recommendations and the SSC's recommended OFLs and ABCs . The proposed TACs take into account deductions for state water fisheries (BSAI cod), statutory minimums (AI pollock), and any adjustments necessary for sea lion protection.*
- *The sum of the BSAI TACs cannot exceed 2 million mt and the proposed TAC sheet balances to that number.*
- *The Bering sea pollock TAC of 1.375 million metric tons reflects the suggestion from multiple industry representatives and CDQ groups. It's a scientifically sound and 6% increase from 2024. This increase is still over 1 million metric tons lower than the robust, scientifically based, and more conservative ABC recommendation from Plan Team and SSC.*
- *The Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Pacific Cod TACs are set equal to ABC after accommodating for the State GHL fisheries, of which the DH GHL fishery saw another increase in P.Cod allocation. P.cod is harvested by various fishery sectors with a range of gear types, therefore providing the maximum harvest opportunity. Overall the BSAI TAC has decreased from 2024 by about 9%.*

- *The 2025 and 2026 BSAI sablefish ABC was reduced by 5% to reflect the SSC's recommendation, but is still a slight increase from the 2024 ABC. Overall the BSAI sablefish TAC is not increased from 2024. It is however apportioned in relation to the subarea ABC changes. So, relative to 2024, the BS TAC is increased and the AI TAC is reduced. This also reflects more utilization by both sectors in the Bering Sea versus the Aleutian Islands.*
- *There is a decrease in the Yellowfin sole TAC supported by both the Amendment 80 fleet and the YFS TLAS participants to accommodate for the increase in pollock TAC and balance the BSAI TAC sheet.*
- *There have been slight adjustments to some flatfish TACs to either be more proportionate to recent 2024 catch or to accommodate potential catch amounts or allocation needs in 2025. The flatfish/non-pollock TACs reflect the recommendations by industry representatives in both the pollock and non-pollock sectors.*
- *The PSC allocations have been maintained except for adjustments to Herring, Halibut, and Crab, which reflect changes established by regulations. The AP heard from staff and the public about some of these changes like the State Of Alaska's herring estimate, ABM halibut, and PCTC halibut.*
- *There was concern expressed by an AP member about increasing sablefish TAC in the Bering Sea due to the decrease in the 2023 Longline survey, lack of a 2024 longline survey, and an overall decrease in the 2023 bottom trawl survey. The biomass in the Bering Sea is still primarily composed of immature fish and increased fishing pressure on these fish could have long term negative impacts to this long lived species.*

Rationale in Opposition to motion:

- *None provided*

Table 1.SSC recommended OFL, ABC Groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2025-2026

Species	Area	2024			Catch as of 11/23/2024	2025			2026		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	BS	3,162,000	2,313,000	1,300,000	1,309,114	2,957,000	2,417,000	1,375,000	2,496,000	2,036,000	1,375,000
	AI	51,516	42,654	19,000	4,981	55,728	46,051	19,000	56,231	46,437	19,000
	Bogoslof	115,146	86,360	250	23	77,354	58,015	250	77,354	58,015	250
Pacific cod	BS	200,995	167,952	147,753	120,040	183,509	153,617	133,602	169,243	141,520	123,077
	AI	18,416	12,431	8,080	3,853	16,782	13,376	8,694	16,273	12,973	8,432
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	55,084	47,146	n/a		58,532	47,605	n/a	57,797	47,008	n/a
	BS	n/a	11,450	7,996	4,720	n/a	13,203	8,996	n/a	13,037	8,996
	AI	n/a	13,100	8,440	1,414	n/a	11,566	7,440	n/a	11,421	7,440
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	305,298	265,913	195,000	85,373	299,247	262,557	135,000	305,039	267,639	145,000
Greenland turbot	BSAI	3,705	3,188	3,188	769	2,598	2,013	2,013	2,059	1,594	1,594
	BS	n/a	2,687	2,687	464	n/a	1,697	1,697	n/a	1,344	1,344
	AI	n/a	501	501	305	n/a	316	316	n/a	250	250
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	103,280	87,690	14,000	10,215	104,428	88,683	14,000	102,472	87,035	14,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	8,850	7,498	7,498	5,115	8,019	6,800	6,800	7,790	6,606	6,606
Northern rock sole	BSAI	197,828	122,091	66,000	29,359	165,444	157,487	75,000	166,220	158,225	75,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	81,605	67,289	35,500	12,707	101,621	83,807	36,000	106,283	87,700	36,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	42,695	35,494	21,752	10,241	34,576	28,745	15,568	33,965	28,230	15,934
Other flatfish	BSAI	22,919	17,189	4,500	3,093	26,083	19,562	4,500	26,083	19,562	4,500
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	49,010	41,096	37,626	36,040	44,594	37,375	33,458	43,084	36,578	33,490
	BS	n/a	11,636	11,636	10,702	n/a	10,121	10,121	n/a	9,905	9,905
	EAI	n/a	7,969	7,969	7,780	n/a	6,278	6,278	n/a	6,144	6,144
	CAI	n/a	5,521	5,521	5,250	n/a	5,559	5,559	n/a	5,441	5,441
	WAI	n/a	15,970	12,500	12,308	n/a	15,417	11,500	n/a	16,058	12,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	23,556	19,274	16,752	8,785	22,848	18,694	12,000	22,284	18,232	12,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	761	569	569	618	838	706	706	902	766	766
	BS/EAI	n/a	388	388	179	n/a	408	408	n/a	441	441
	CAI/WAI	n/a	181	181	439	n/a	298	298	n/a	325	325
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	706	530	530	151	631	473	473	631	473	473
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,351	1,406	1,054	1,054	1,406	1,054	1,054
	BS	n/a	880	880	783	n/a	639	639	n/a	639	639
	AI	n/a	380	380	568	n/a	415	415	n/a	415	415
Atka mackerel	BSAI	111,684	95,358	72,987	72,176	122,622	103,247	82,000	107,889	92,361	82,941
	BS/EAI	n/a	41,723	32,260	31,769	n/a	46,650	39,000	n/a	41,731	41,731
	CAI	n/a	16,754	16,754	16,654	n/a	26,511	24,443	n/a	23,716	23,716
	WAI	n/a	36,882	23,973	23,753	n/a	30,087	18,557	n/a	26,914	17,494
Skates	BSAI	45,574	37,808	30,519	25,900	44,086	36,523	27,646	43,285	35,833	27,646
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	400	174	689	450	400	689	450	400
Octopuses	BSAI	6,080	4,560	400	240	6,080	4,560	400	6,080	4,560	400
Total	BSAI	4,609,077	3,476,801	2,000,000	1,746,452	4,334,715	3,588,401	2,000,000	3,849,059	3,189,821	2,000,000

Sources: 2024 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from

Table 15—Final 2025 and 2026 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, Community Development Quota (CDQ) ABC Rese in the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole

[Amounts are in metric tons]

Sector	2025 Flathead sole	2025 Rock sole	2025 Yellowfin sole	2026 ¹ Flathead sole
ABC	83,807	157,487	262,557	87,700
TAC	36,000	75,000	135,000	36,000
ABC surplus	47,807	82,487	127,557	51,700
ABC reserve	47,807	82,487	127,557	51,700
CDQ ABC reserve	5,115	8,826	13,649	5,532
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	42,692	73,661	113,908	46,168

¹ The 2026 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not participate in the program by November 1, 2025.

Table 16—Final 2025 and 2026 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 and zone 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 ⁴	BSAI PSC limits not allocated to Amendment 80 ³
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,079	710	315	n/a	1,309	745	n/a
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,651	n/a	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	16,839
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	12,850,000	n/a	1,374,950	11,475,050	5,639,987	3,688,081	2,146,982
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	980,000	n/a	104,860	875,140	368,521	411,228	95,390
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,970,000	n/a	317,790	2,652,210	627,778	1,241,500	782,932

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

² The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

³ Amendment 123 sets the BSAI halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector annually based on the most recent halibut abundance estimates from the IPHC setline survey index and the NMFS AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index (88 FR 82740, November 24, 2023). 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.

The Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (PCTC) reduced the Pacific cod PCTC PSC limit for halibut by 12.5 percent in 2024 and 25 percent in 2025 (679.131(c)(1)(iii)(A and B)). The PCTC Program reduced the Pacific cod PCTC PSC limit for crab by 35 percent each year (679.131(c)(1)(iii)).

Table 17–Final 2025 and 2026 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	153	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish ¹	77	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	8	n/a
Rockfish	8	n/a
Pacific cod	14	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,359	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ^{2,3}	31	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ⁴	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,651	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

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

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

⁴In December 2024, the Council recommended and NMFS approves 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 18—Final 2025 and 2026 Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors and Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program

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	250	23,337	3,521,726	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ²	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish, April 15-December 31	5	-	2,971	-	1,000
Total Pacific cod ³	315	2,955	148,531	60,000	50,000
AFA CP Pacific cod	6	278	13,962	5,640	4,700
PCTC Program Pacific cod, A and B season	220	1,653	83,096	33,567	27,973
Trawl CV Pacific cod, C season	15	134	6,728	2,718	2,265
PCTC Program unallocated reduction	73	890	44,744	18,075	15,062
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ⁴	175	197	14,854	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	3,688,082	411,228	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

² “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, Amendment 122 established the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative (PCTC) Program that further apportioned the BSAI trawl limited access sector Pacific cod PSC limits between AFA CPs, PCTC A and B-season, and open access C-season (§ 679.131(c)(1)(i) and (ii)). In 2024, NMFS will apply a 12.5 percent reduction to the A and B season trawl CV sector halibut PSC apportionment after the Council recommends and NMFS approves the BSAI trawl limited access sector’s PSC limit apportionments to fishery categories. In 2025 and every year thereafter, NMFS will apply a 25 percent reduction to the A and B season trawl CV sector halibut PSC apportionment. The crab PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV PSC limit by 35 percent each year to determine the overall PCTC Program (§ 679.131(d)(1)(iii)). Any amount of the PCTC Program PSC limit remaining after the B season may be reapportioned to the trawl CV limited access fishery in the C season. Because the annual halibut PSC limit for the PCTC Program is not a fixed amount established in regulation and, instead, is determined annually through the harvest specification process, NMFS must apply the reduction to the A and B season apportionment of the trawl CV sector apportionment to implement the overall PSC reductions under the PCTC Program.

⁴ “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

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

Table 19—Final 2025 And 2026 Halibut Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI				
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Total Pacific cod	648	13	661
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 13	162	2	n/a
	August 13-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	/10

Note: Seasonal or sector allowances may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 20–2025 and 2026 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/processor	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Pot	All	21