



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

April 1, 2019

## **Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report**

### **Status of Actions Report Online**

Updated daily at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/reports/amendments.pdf>

### **Progress on Rulemaking**

Highlights on progress since the February 2019 meeting include:

- Final rule implementing regulations to close directed fishing for AFA and CR Program sideboard limits that are not large enough to support a directed fishery in the BSAI or GOA (Small Sideboards). **Published: Feb 8, 2019, Effective: 03/11/19**
- Final rule implementing the final 2019-2020 BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications. **Published: March 14, 2019, Effective: 03/14/19**
- Final rule implementing the final Gulf of Alaska 2019 and 2020 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish. **Published: March 14, 2019, Effective: 03/14/19**
- Final rule implementing the Halibut Annual Management Measures, 2019. **Published: March 14, 2019, Effective: 03/14/19**
- Comment period for the proposed rule on Mixed Guided and Unguided halibut sport fishing closed **February 14, 2019**. The final rule is expected to be published by early summer.
- See **Attachment 1** provides additional detail.

### **Charter Halibut Annual Management Measures**

Along with 2019 halibut catch limits, there were slight changes to the Area 3A charter halibut regulations: for the 2019 season, five Tuesdays from July 16 to August 13 will be closed to halibut retention (compared to the six Tuesday closures in 2018).

### **Update on National Web Site**

The Alaska Region website migration to the National website is scheduled for late April/May. We will be available to provide information on changes at the June meeting.

### **Halibut Deck Sorting EFP and Regulatory Amendment**



In June 2018, NMFS staff presented a draft of the Regulatory Impact Review for this NMFS-led action. This action would allow halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) to be sorted on deck of trawl catcher processors (CPs) and motherships when operating in non-pollock groundfish fisheries off Alaska. Sorting on deck would reduce halibut discard mortality, potentially maximizing harvest of allocated groundfish species before reaching the halibut PSC limit. This action would establish regulatory requirements for catch handling and monitoring equipment necessary to ensure accurate accounting for halibut PSC sorted on deck.

NMFS has collaboratively worked with industry partners on the halibut deck sorting EFP and through that cooperation has developed catch handling and monitoring requirements that will be included in the proposed rule for this action. NMFS anticipates publishing a proposed rule in April 2019 and a final rule with implementation of the regulations planned for the 2020 fishing year.

NMFS is planning to hold an in-person meeting in Seattle, Washington, on April 18, 2019. Meeting topics include a description of the proposed regulations and an opportunity for the public to provide comments and ask questions.

### **Cost Recovery Reports**

Reports on NMFS Cost Recovery are posted under NPFMC agenda item B-2 NMFS Management Report.

### **Proposed Exempted Fishing Permit Annual Application Process**

The Alaska Regional Office is considering establishing an annual application process for EFPs, starting in 2020. Currently, we receive EFPs on an *ad hoc* basis and planning for processing EFPs with other work requirements can be difficult. Other regions and Councils have adopted an annual EFP process to improve planning and processing of EFPs. We are proposing the following schedule. We appreciate any feedback on this approach from the public and the Council.

Application Deadline: May 1, each year.

Presentation to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council: At their October meeting.

Review Process: Applicants should plan on at least 8 to 12 months from the date of application submittal before the EFP is issued. Review time depends on the complexity of the project, the type of NEPA review, and [North Pacific Fishery Management Council's](#) meeting schedule. If you plan to do an experiment, the design must be approved by the [Alaska Fisheries Science Center](#) before a permit may be issued. Applicants should work with the AFSC on the experimental design before submitting an EFP application.

Each EFP undergoes NEPA review. NMFS may be able to issue a categorical exclusion (which takes a minimal amount of time) or may need to write an environmental analysis of the impacts of issuing the EFP (which could take a long time). The application and NEPA document would support the decision-making and inform the public of the EFP project.

The Regional Administrator is also required to consult with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council before issuing an EFP. This usually involves a **Federal Register** notice of the receipt of your application (published by NMFS) and your presentation of the EFP project to the Council at their October meeting.

## Generic EFP Issuance Timeline\*

Dates	w/ EA or ESA Sect 7	w/ Categorical Excl & no ESA Sect 7
May	Initial contact by applicant; initial application submitted; NEPA Analysis / ESA Consultation initiated	Initial contact by applicant; determination on NEPA analysis & ESA consultation
June	Refine application as needed; EA & ESA analyses on-going	Initial Application submitted; Categorical Exclusion drafted
July	Draft NEPA analysis completed; ESA consultation completed; final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested	Final draft application submitted; AFSC review requested
August	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified	AFSC review received; application revised and finalized; Council Consultation requested; ADFG, USCG, IPHC notified
September	FR Notice published	FR Notice published
October	Public comment period on application and EA ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted	Public comment period on application ends; Council Consultation; Permit drafted
November	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review	Regional review, GCAK /GC-ENF /OLE review
December	Permit Issued	Permit Issued
January	EFP fishing can begin	EFP fishing can begin

\* Timing depends on project complexity & desired fishing start date



### Staff Changes

Susan (Suja) Hall has been selected as the Supervisory Program Analyst position in the Restricted Access Management (RAM) Program.

Suja has been with the Alaska Region since 2004 and started out in the Records Office as a Management Support Assistant and later joined RAM as a Permit Assistant. She was currently a Program Manager in the Sustainable Fisheries Division and serves as the eLandings Coordinator for the Interagency Electronic Reporting System. Through her work in the Alaska Region, Suja has established close working relationships with the fishing industry in addition to building professional partnerships with ADFG field staff, IPHC, NOAA OLE, and the Observer Program. Before joining the NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region, Suja was Supervisor of Customer Service with the U.S. Postal Service here in Juneau.

Suja brings a strong background in program management, electronic technologies, and supervision to the RAM Program office and is looking forward to implementing a reorganization

plan that combines RAM permit functions and eLandings into a new Program Office that will provide staff with valuable technical skills, career growth opportunities, and enhance their valuable contribution to our mission in managing sustainable fisheries.

## Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory Actions

Changes since February 2019 are noted in **Bold Red** EOC = End of Comment Period

Action Status	Lead Council, SF, and GCAK Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Notice of Availability (FMP) Published in Federal Register	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in Federal Register
<b>FMP Amendments</b>								
Amendment 118 Halibut Retention in BSAI IFQ Pot Gear	Cleaver Warpinski M. Watson	October 2018						
<b>Regulatory Amendments</b>								
Close directed fishing for AFA and CR Program sideboard limits that are not large enough to support a directed fishery in the BSAI or GOA. (Small Sideboards)	McCracken Davis Smoker	February 2018	PR: 05/02/18 FR: 10/27/18	PR: 05/07/18 FR: 11/01/18	PR: 07/26/18 FR: 12/13/2018	N/A	Aug 16, 2018 83 FR 40733 EOC: 09/17/18	<b>Feb 8, 2019</b> <b>84 FR 2723</b> <b>Effective: 03/11/19</b>
Halibut Deck Sorting on NonPollock Trawl Catcher/Processors and Motherships	N/A Krieger Meyer	N/A	PR: 12/16/18	PR: 02/05/19	<b>PR: 03/18/19</b>	N/A		
Charter Halibut Permit annual renewal requirement	Marrinan Iverson Lepore	April 2018	<b>PR: 3/12/2019</b>	<b>PR: 3/14/19</b>		N/A		
Halibut annual management measures, 2019	MacLean Iverson Lepore	December 2018	<b>FR: 02/19/19</b>	<b>FR: 02/19/19</b>	<b>FR: 03/01/2019</b>	N/A	N/A	<b>Mar 14, 2019</b> <b>84 FR 9243</b> <b>Effective: 03/14/19</b>
Mixing of halibut from guided and unguided fishing; regulation change	McCracken Iverson Lepore	April 2018	PR: 08/27/18	PR: 09/05/18	PR: 11/20/18	N/A	<b>Feb 12, 2019</b> <b>84 PR 3403</b> <b>EOC: 3/14/19</b>	
2019-2020 BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications	Stram Whitney M. Watson	December 2018	PR: 10/22/18 FR: 12/18/18	PR: 10/24/18 FR: 12/20/18	PR: 11/13/18 <b>FR: 2/21/2019</b>	N/A	Dec 6, 2018 83 FR 62815 EOC: 01/07/19	<b>March 14, 2019</b> <b>84 FR 9000</b> <b>Effective: 03/14/19</b>
Gulf of Alaska 2019 and 2020 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish	Armstrong Davis M. Watson	December 2018	PR: 10/17/18 FR: 12/20/18	PR: 10/17/18 FR: 12/21/18	PR: 11/09/18 <b>FR: 2/22/2019</b>	N/A	Dec 6, 2018 83 FR 62794 EOC: 01/07/19	<b>March 14, 2019</b> <b>84 FR 9416</b> <b>Effective: 03/14/19</b>
BSAI Amendment 113 revision Aleutian Islands Pacific cod	McCracken Davis Fortenbery	December 2018						

## Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2019 is through March 23, 2019 and is compared to catch during 2018 through March 24, 2018. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information from daily catch reports and information bulletins are available at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries-catch-landings>.

### Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

#### Bering Sea Pollock

The 2019 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,397,000 mt compared to 1,364,341 mt in 2018. NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to CDQ pollock TAC in the Bering Sea.

Bering Sea	2019 A season allocation	2019 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	272,425	209,072	77%
C/P	217,940	202,338	93%
Mothership	54,485	53,631	98%
CDQ	63,729	62,458	98%
Total	608,579	527,499	87%

#### Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

In 2019 relative to 2018, salmon PSC and rates are higher.

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2019		2018		2019		2018	
Year	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>
CDQ	1,641	3.3%	42	1.0%	906	2.9%	54	1.9%
Non-CDQ	12,628	3.4%	1,049	0.1%	6,055	2.0%	252	0.0%
Total	14,269	3.3%	1,091	0.1%	6,961	2.1%	306	0.0%

<sup>1</sup>Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

#### Aleutian Islands (AI) Pacific cod

The 5,000 mt AI shoreplant set-aside was in place for 2019. NMFS reported by information bulletin that the AI shoreplant landing requirement of 1,000 mt was reached by February 28, 2019. On March 15, 2019, NMFS reported that the 2019 AI set-aside had not reached 5,000 mt. The 2019 AI non-CDQ Pacific cod catch is at 5,639 mt or 56% of the 12,693 mt total allowable catch.

## BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

BSAI Sector	2019				2018			
	A Season allocation	Catch Mar 23	A season closed <sup>2</sup>	# of vessels Mar 23	A Season allocation	Catch Mar 24	A season closed <sup>2</sup>	# of vessels Mar 24
CDQ	11,702	9,080	n/a	30	13,086	9,724	n/a	29
Hook-and-line C/P	39,912	28,814	n/a	20	45,045	34,383	n/a	24
Pot C/P	1,229	1,295	Jan 20	4	1,387	1,407	Jan 20	5
Pot CV >= 60 ft	6,884	6,373	Jan 15	34	7,770	7,709	Jan 19	31
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	4,414	3,357	Jan 19	33	5,027	4,951	Jan 23	23
Jig	155	0	n/a	0	129	0	n/a	0
Trawl CV	26,388	25,313	Feb 1, Mar 16	91	29,768	28,945	Feb 11, Mar 4	95
AFA C/P	2,783	2,382	n/a	15	3,140	2,572	n/a	16
Amendment 80 C/P	16,216	6,585	n/a	20	18,293	5,904	n/a	19
Total	109,683	83,199		247	123,645	95,595		242

NMFS reallocated 1,200 mt in 2019 and in 1,400 mt in 2018 of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot CVs less than 60 ft annual allocation.

<sup>2</sup>Trawl CV A season closures show the Bering Sea Limitation closure and BSAI A season closure.

### Pacific cod target - trawl catcher vessels

In 2019 for the BSAI A season Pacific cod target, 58 trawl CVs reported 22,626 mt relative to 61 trawl CVs reporting 27,747 mt in 2018. Of those amounts, in 2019, 14 CVs delivered 5,793 mt (26%) to seven motherships, and 47 CVs delivered 16,833 mt (74%) to nine shoreside/stationary floating processors. In 2018, 11 CVs delivered 4,433 mt (16%) to eight motherships, and 53 CVs delivered 23,314 mt (84%) to 10 shoreside/stationary floating processors.

The 2019 BSAI B season for trawl CVs opens for 24 hours at noon, April 1, 2019.

### Pacific cod for < 60 ft hook-and-line and pot catcher vessels

In 2019, five hook-and-line CVs continue directed fishing for Pacific cod inside 3 miles after the federal closure. The five CVs have reported 624 mt or 18% of the total catch. In 2018, three CVs reported 16% of the total catch after the federal closure.

**BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)**

In 2019 relative to 2018, overall BSAI flatfish catch is 32% higher. Most of the increase is from higher yellowfin sole catch.

Species	2019			2018		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC <sup>1</sup>	% Taken
Alaska plaice	5,312	18,000	30%	4,270	16,100	27%
Arrowtooth flounder	170	8,000	2%	366	13,621	3%
Flathead sole	2,908	14,500	20%	1,985	14,500	14%
Greenland turbot	5	5,294	0%	10	5,125	0%
Kamchatka flounder	30	5,000	1%	46	5,000	1%
Other flatfish	349	6,500	5%	325	4,000	8%
Rock sole	8,306	47,100	18%	9,972	47,100	21%
Yellowfin sole	43,714	154,000	28%	28,401	154,000	18%
Total	60,794	258,394	24%	45,375	259,446	17%

**BSAI Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)**

Over the same time period, the 2018 total catch is higher relative to 2019.

Species	2019			2018		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	170	57,951	0%	19,695	65,000	30%
Pacific ocean perch	144	44,069	0%	814	17,000	5%

**Gulf of Alaska**

**Pot gear for IFQ sablefish fishery in the GOA**

Currently for 2019, 20 vessels have registered for 8,185 pot tags. No IFQ sablefish catch by pot gear has been reported for 2019.



### Pacific cod - Western GOA

All sectors are closed for the A season.

Sector	2019				2018			
	A season allocation	Catch Mar 23	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 23	A season allocation	Catch Mar 24	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 24
Hook-and-line C/P	568	548	Mar 18	<3	607	591	Mar 16	<3
Hook-and-line CV	36	2	Jan 1	<3	39	0	Jan 1	0
Jig	80	76	Mar 13	7	51	19	n/a	4
Pot CV/CP	1,031	981	Mar 23	14	1,103	1,208	Feb 1	13
Trawl CV	1,443	1,371	Feb 25	15	1,543	1,347	Feb 23	10
Trawl C/P	47	0	Jan 20	0	50	0	Jan 20	0
Total	3,206	2,978		36	3,395	3,165		27

### Pacific cod - Central GOA

All sectors are closed for the A season.

Sector	2019				2018			
	A season allocation	Catch Mar 23	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 23	A season allocation	Catch Mar 24	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 24
Hook-and-line C/P	234	203	Mar 5	<3	248	265	Mar 6	<3
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	530	628	Feb 7	28	562	512	Mar 2	17
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	319	85	Feb 27	5	338	294	Mar 14	8
Jig	35	30	Mar 12	13	37	0	Jan 1	0
Pot CV/CP	1,015	863	Mar 24	12	1,075	1,161	Feb 14	14
Trawl CV	1,203	428	Jan 20	42	1,274	107	Jan 20	43
Trawl C/P	114	10	Jan 20	<1	121	6	Jan 20	<3
Total	3,450	2,247		100	3,653	2,345		82

### Pollock

All areas are closed for the A and B seasons.

2019 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	848	23,236	7,593	5,748 (annual)
A season catch	805	23,801	5,340	6,424
A season closure	March 6	February 8	February 10	February 26
B season allocation	848	27,306	3,522	
B season catch	not report yet	26,064	3,424	

B season closure	March 26-28	March 21	March 11
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### Chinook Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

In 2019 relative to 2018, Chinook salmon PSC is 977 salmon lower for fisheries with PSC limits.

Chinook Salmon	2019 Limit	2019 PSC (Rate)	2018 PSC (Rate)
Total	n/a	4,737 (7%)	5,714 (7%)
Western GOA pollock	6,684	189 (25%)	177 (6%)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	3,859 (7%)	5,152 (7%)
Western/Central trawl CV <sup>1</sup>	3,060	689 (7%)	384 (8%)
Western/Central trawl CP <sup>1</sup>	4,080	0	0

<sup>1</sup>Includes incentive buffers for 2018 and 2019 Western/Central trawl CV limit (360 Chinook), and Western/Central trawl CP limit (480 Chinook).

### Non-Chinook Salmon PSC

Non-Chinook Salmon	2019 PSC (Rate)	2018 PSC (Rate)
Total	409 (0.5%)	66 (0.1%)

### Halibut Mortality Data

In 2019 relative to the same time in 2018, the total halibut mortality is 280 mt higher in the BSAI and 40 mt higher in the GOA.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2019			2018		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	957	750,761	0.13%	677	718,606	0.09%
Amendment 80	397	115,439	0.34%	269	96,222	0.28%
BSAI trawl limited access	496	521,566	0.10%	326	499,501	0.07%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	30	35,845	0.08%	46	43,096	0.11%
Non-trawl Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDQ	34	77,828	0.04%	36	79,387	0.05%
GOA Total	168	82,036	0.20%	128	85,875	0.15%
Trawl, Deep-water	125	8,256	1.52%	81	3,348	2.41%
Trawl, Shallow-water	18	71,323	0.02%	13	80,404	0.02%
Hook-and-line CP/CV	25	2,456	1.01%	34	2,123	1.61%