



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

June 7, 2020

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report Online

Updated daily at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/amendments.pdf>

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the January/February 2020 meeting include:

- 2020 and 2021 Final BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications published on March 9, 2020. Effective date: **March 9, 2020**.
- 2020 and 2021 Final GOA Groundfish Harvest Specifications published on March 10, 2020. Effective date: **March 10, 2020**.
- 2020 Annual Halibut Management Measures published on March 13, 2020. Effective date: **March 13, 2020**.
- Final Rule to implement IFQ Beneficiary and Medical Transfer Provisions published on February 14, 2019. Effective date: **March 16, 2020**.
- Final Rule to implement Amendment 119 (BSAI) and Amendment 107 (GOA) to require retention of rockfish by catcher vessels using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska fisheries published on February 20, 2020. Effective date: **March 23, 2020**.
- Comment period for the proposed rule to implement Amendment 109 (GOA) Modifications to GOA Pollock and Pacific Cod Seasonal Allocation ended on **March 30, 2020**.
- Comment period for the proposed rule to adjust the observer fee ended on **April 8, 2020**.
- Comment period for the proposed rule to implement a fish up provision for CQE's in area 3A ended on **May 14, 2020**.
- Comment period for the proposed rule to implement Amendment 121 (BSAI) and Amendment 110 (GOA) Sculpin to the Ecosystem Component ended on **May 26, 2020**.
- **Attachment 1** provides additional detail.

Emergency Rulemaking Recommended on May 15, 2020

Revised 2020 Charter Halibut Management Measures – On May 20, 2020, the IPHC held an intersessional meeting to address stakeholder proposals, including a proposal from U.S. Commissioners regarding the Area 2A sablefish fishery, and a recommendation by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to revise guided sport (charter) halibut



management measures for Areas 2C and 3A. On May 28, 2020, NMFS Alaska Region transmitted the rule package to NMFS Headquarters for review, acceptance by the Secretary of State, and publication in the Federal Register. The revised management measures will be effective upon acceptance by the Secretary of State.

IFQ Temporary Transfer Emergency Rule – On May 15, 2020 the NPFMC recommended an emergency rule to modify the temporary transfer provision of the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program for the fixed-gear commercial Pacific halibut and sablefish fisheries for the 2020 IFQ fishing year. On June 1, 2020 NMFS Alaska Region transmitted the emergency rule package to NMFS Headquarters for review, and publication in the Federal Register. If approved, this emergency rule will be effective on the date of publication for 180 days.

Halibut IFQ Vessel Use Caps in Areas 4B, C, and D Emergency Rule – On May 15, 2020 the NPFMC recommended an emergency rule to modify Halibut IFQ Vessel Use Caps in Areas 4B, C, and D. This action is currently under development.

Small C/P Partial Coverage Request Deadline

The deadline for small catcher processors that wish to be placed in the partial coverage category for the 2021 fishing year is **July 1, 2020**. This application is available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program>. Please contact Maggie Chan (maggie.chan@noaa.gov) with any questions.

Seabird Updates

Seabird Mortality Events of ESA-listed Species

NMFS reports two mortality events resulting in the deaths of two species of seabird that are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In October of 2019, 22 spectacled eider (*Somateria fischeri*) fatally collided with a fishing vessel in the hook-and-line groundfish fishery of the BSAI. This vessel strike was reported by the onboard observer to NMFS. Then, in March of 2020, a single Steller's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) considered to be from the threatened Alaska-breeding population fatally collided with a fishing vessel in the trawl groundfish fishery of the BSAI. The vessel strike was recorded on the vessel's electronic monitoring system and the mortality was reported by the vessel captain to USFWS using the Threatened and Endangered Bird Species Encounter and Reporting Form (found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-avoidance-gear-and-methods>).

The spectacled eider and the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eider are listed as "threatened" under the ESA. There are three distinct populations of Steller's eider worldwide. Two distinct Russian populations and the Alaska-breeding population. The Alaska-breeding population is the only population of Steller's eider listed as threatened under the ESA. This is the first recorded take of spectacled eider and Steller's eider from the Alaska-breeding population by any fisheries operating in the BSAI or GOA.

The NMFS Alaska Regional Office, NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, and USFWS are actively coordinating efforts and communicating with each other in response to these mortality events and are complying to the fullest extent with ESA requirements to protect these species.

NMFS has reinitiated formal consultation under section 7 of the ESA with USFWS to ensure that the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the either eider or adversely modify their designated critical habitat.

Seabird Report to the Council

The Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group (Working Group) held its 2020 annual meeting in Juneau from March 11th – 12th. The Working Group meets annually to discuss seabird bycatch trends and research and to develop recommendations for the Council on how to address seabird bycatch in the fisheries off Alaska. NMFS submitted a written report from the Working Group which summarized seabird bycatch trends in the fisheries off Alaska in 2019. This report also provided a summary of seabird population trends and mortality events, a summary of topics discussed during the Working Group meeting, and recommendations for topics of future consideration for the Working Group. Please contact Dr. Joe Krieger if you have any questions (Joseph.Krieger@noaa.gov).

Seabird Reporting to USFWS

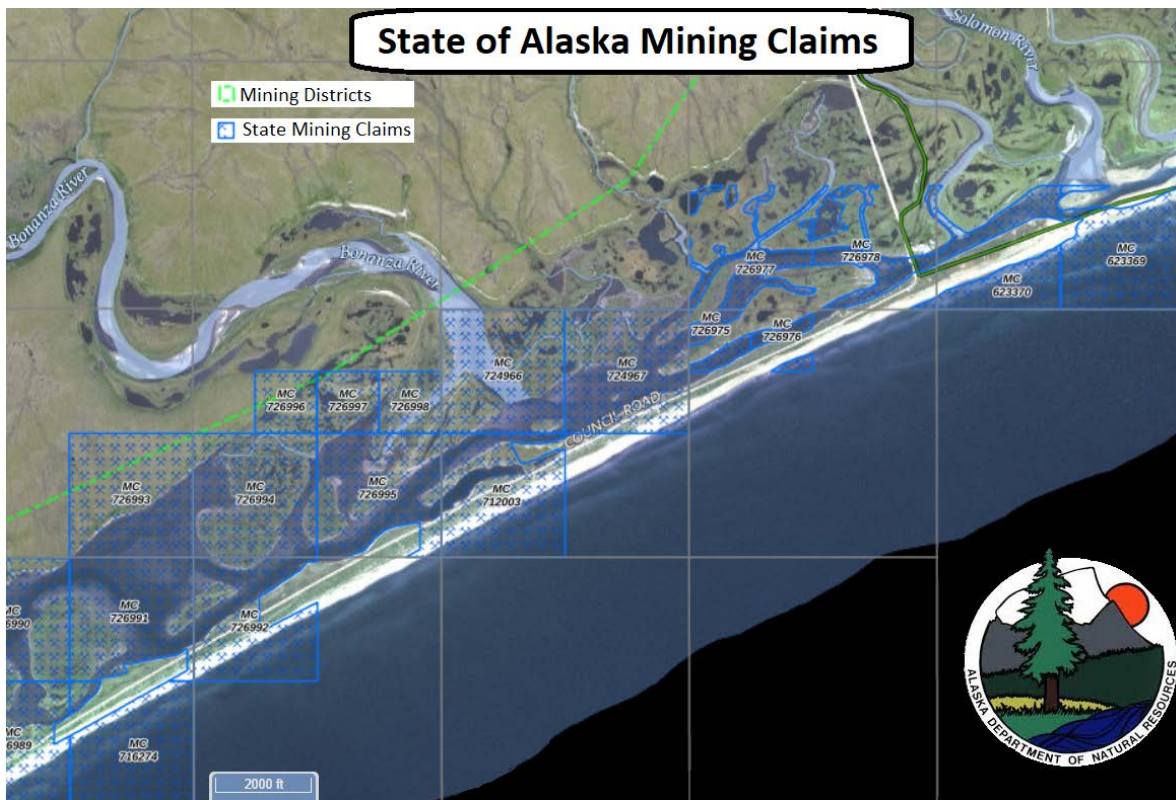
To fulfill requirements of the 2015 groundfish biological opinion and the 2018 halibut biological opinion, NMFS submitted a letter to USFWS reporting no short-tailed albatross bycatch in 2019. This report is due by June 1st each year.

2019 seabird bycatch information for all species will also be submitted this summer for publication as a NMFS Alaska Region Technical Memorandum. Prior technical memorandums can be found here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-bycatch-alaska>.

Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Update

NMFS Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) is starting the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation process with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for a proposed project to mine the Bonanza Channel and Tidal Lagoon, near Nome, using a suction dredge that is

specifically designed for shallow water estuary dredging and gold recovery. HCD provided comments to USACE in 2018 and 2019 on exploration activities.



IPOP, the mining company, announced on May 15, 2020 that they hope to begin full-scale dredging on June 1, 2020, and propose to dredge and discharge 5 million cubic yards of spoils from 173 acres of estuarine and stream habitat over the next 5 years. We have not received an EFH Assessment on the proposed mining project, however, we are reviewing IPOP’s Narrative and working with the USACE and other resources agencies on understanding the potential impacts to fish and fish habitat. The project has the potential to impact the marine tidal estuary, including eelgrass beds and transition zones that are important for EFH for Council managed species. EFH in and adjacent to the action area includes all five species of Pacific salmon; however, EFH for red king crab, Tanner crab, and many groundfish species has been designated outside the lagoon in Norton Sound. We expect more discussion to follow and we will keep the Council informed.

Staff Changes

SF is pleased to announce seven staff changes the Sustainable Fisheries Division.

Sally Bibb retired in May after serving 27 years in the SF division. In May 2020, Sally was recognized for earning the NOAA Distinguished Career Award in Management and Supervision for continued, outstanding contributions to the conservation and management of living marine

resources over 26 years of service to NOAA. Sally came on board with NOAA Fisheries in 1992. During her career she led a team that pioneered a challenging, groundbreaking and innovative multispecies Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program, providing 65 remote western Alaska villages the opportunity to participate and invest in valuable fisheries. The program generated hundreds of millions of dollars in local wages, education, training, and other economic development for some of the most impoverished regions, and over \$1 billion to the Alaska Native CDQ groups and partners. Sally has been AKR's lead on Tribal Relations, personally leading teams on over 20 site visits to rural villages to guarantee regular communication with Tribal and rural leaders. Her demonstrated skill in leading successful teams has been crucial to the development of comprehensive reporting and recordkeeping, catch monitoring, and the North Pacific fishery observer program. Sally is on the forefront of leading change. Her strategic thinking and external awareness have been instrumental in the significant contributions of developing successful inter- and intra-agency collaboration and partnerships, including working with the Council family on the development and implementation of amendments and regulations that significantly reduced Chinook salmon bycatch by about 70% while allowing the industry to reach optimal yield for targeted pollock. Sally served as an inspirational mentor, teacher, and supervisor to over 100 employees, going beyond her regular duties to create trainings and tools to support staff development and grow the next generation of employees.

Dr. Anne Marie Eich has been selected as the new Deputy SF ARA. Anne Marie will remain the supervisor of the Ecosystem Branch. Anne Marie came to SF in 2014 from the Southeast Region and in her time with us, Anne Marie honed her technical skills on a wide range of analytic and regulatory projects, and has demonstrated great skill in leading others. Anne Marie has a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Josh Keaton and **Jennifer Watson** are moving into supervisory roles. Josh Keaton will lead our newly established Monitoring Branch and Jennifer Watson will lead our Operations Branch -- the branch previously led by Sally Bibb. Josh and Jennifer started their positions on May 11, 2020.

Josh came to SF in 2001 after working as groundfish observer and has demonstrated great ingenuity and dedication in his various roles with NOAA. He has extensive knowledge of Alaska fisheries and has greatly enhanced our work products and relationships with our stakeholders. In his time with us, Josh has developed his skills obtaining a master's degree in Geographic Information Systems and has pursued leadership experiences including an executive leadership program, acting supervisor role within NOAA, and leadership roles outside of NOAA. In the past year, Josh has worked on the development and implementation of the Electronic Monitoring Exempted Fishing Permit.

Jennifer has a degree in fisheries from Texas A&M and she began her career as an observer in Texas and Alaska before working for the observer program in Dutch Harbor. She started working in SF in 2004 and her dedication, creativity, and problem-solving skills have been integral to the development and implementation of our innovative monitoring programs. Jennifer has a passion for fostering employee engagement and building collaborative teams. In 2018, she graduated from the Federal Coaching Program and is an Associated Certified Coach. For the past year, Jennifer has been on detail to the Performance and Culture Learning

Branch at NOAA where she led a team to implement a Coaching Network for NOAA and developed a business plan for an internal coaching program.

Their passion, expertise, and commitment to our mission and our people will continue to be a great asset to all of us.

Amy Hadfield has been added to the SF team as a permanent Administrative Assistant. After working as a contractor for a year, Amy started as Federal employee on May 26. She has done an outstanding job for us in SF taking care of our time and attendance, travel, assisting on Paperwork Reduction Act projects, and more recently starting to work on 508 compliance for our public documents. Amy has provided critical support to all of us in SF. Amy has a B.S. in Environmental Science from Sheldon Jackson College. Before working for the Alaska Region, she worked in Sitka for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Seafood Producers Cooperative. Amy grew up commercial fishing with her family so she brings a lifetime of knowledge about Alaska commercial fisheries to her work in the Alaska Region.

Abby Jahn and **Kelly Cates** will be joining the SF team on July 6.

Abby will be joining the Catch Shares Branch led by Alicia Miller. Abby worked as an intern with the Bering Sea Crabbers in Seattle and will complete her Masters at the University of Washington with the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs in June, She earned her BS in Environmental Science from Loyola. In 2019 she was a NOAA Pathways Intern with the California Central Valley office and for 2 years she worked as an environmental consultant in Alaska.

Kelly will be joining the Ecosystem Branch led by Anne Marie Eich. Kelly is in the process of completing her PhD in Fisheries at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She earned her BS in Marine Biology from Western Washington University. For both degrees, she has worked with wild marine mammals. Additionally, she was a NOAA Sea Grant Knauss Fellow in 2017 where she worked with the NOAA HQ Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. In 2016, she was a research assistant to Dr. DeMaster at ABL, researching the current scope of ship strikes with large whales.

Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory Actions

Changes since December 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
FMP Amendments								
Amendment 109 (GOA) Modifications to GOA Pollock and Pacific Cod Seasonal Allocation Approved: May 5, 2020	Cunningham Krieger	June 2019	PR: 10/29/19 FR: 4/13/20	PR: 11/12/19 FR: 4/14/20	PR: 01/31/20 FR: 4/30/20	Feb 6, 2020 85 FR 6890 EOC: 04/06/20	Feb 28, 2020 85 FR 11939 EOC: 03/30/20	
Amendment 111 (GOA) Rockfish Program Reauthorization	McCracken Warpinski	January 2020	PR: 06/07/20					
Amendments 119 (BSAI) and 107 (GOA) -- Require retention of rockfish by catcher vessels using hook-and-line, pot, or jig gear Approved: November 19, 2019	McCracken Keaton Fortenbery	April 2019	PR: 07/08/19 FR: 12/12/19	PR: 07/11/19 FR: 12/12/19	PR: 08/16/19 FR: 1/07/20	Aug 22, 2019 84 FR 43783 EOC: 10/21/19	Oct 2, 2019 84 FR 52442 EOC: 11/1/19	Feb 20, 2020 85 FR 9687 Effective: 03/23/20
Amendment 121 (BSAI) and Amendment 110 (GOA) Sculpins to Ecosystem Component Decision date: June 22, 2020	MacLean Mackey	October 2019	PR: 01/30/20 FR: 06/05/20	PR: 02/11/20	PR: 3/11/20	Mar 23, 2020 85 FR 16310 EOC: 05/22/20	Apr 23, 2020 85 FR 22703 EOC: 05/26/20	

Regulatory Amendments								
IFQ Beneficiary and Medical Transfer Provisions	Cunningham Warpinski Meyer	April 2019	PR: 7/24/19 FR: 12/15/19	PR: 8/06/19 FR: 12/19/19	PR: 9/20/19 FR: 1/15/2020	N/A	Oct 24, 2019 84 FR 56991 EOC: 11/25/19	Feb 14, 2020 85 FR 8477 Effective: 03/16/20
CQE Fish-up in Area 3A	Cleaver Duncan	June 2019	PR:12/20/19 FR: 5/21/20	PR: 1/13/20 FR: 6/2/20	PR: 03/06/20	N/A	Apr 14, 2020 85 FR 20657 EOC: 05/14/20	
Adjust the Partial Coverage Observer Fee	Evans A Miller	October 2019	PR: 12/30/19 FR: 04/28/20	PR: 1/02/20 FR: 05/04/20	PR: 02/12/20 FR: 5/19/20	N/A	Mar 9, 2020 85 FR 13618 EOC: 04/08/20	
2020 and 2021 BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications	MacLean Whitney	December 2019	PR: 10/17/19 FR: 12/20/19	PR: 10/17/19 FR: 12/20/19	PR: 11/04/19 FR: 02/05/20	N/A	Dec 3, 2019 84 FR 66129 EOC: 1/02/20	Mar 9, 2020 85 FR 13553 Effective: 03/09/20
Gulf of Alaska 2020 and 2021 Harvest Specifications	Cleaver Davis	December 2019	PR: 10/16/19 FR: 12/18/19	PR: 10/17/19 FR: 12/18/19	PR: 11/05/19 FR: 01/29/20	N/A	Dec 3, 2019 84 FR 66109 EOC: 01/02/20	Mar 10, 2020 85 FR 13802 Effective: 03/10/20
2020 Annual Halibut Management Measures	McClellan Iverson	January 2020	FR: 02/20/20	FR: 02/20/20	FR: 02/26/20	N/A	N/A	Mar 13, 2020 85 FR 14586 Effective: 03/13/20
Crab Partial Offloads	Cunningham Mackey	December 2019	PR: 03/29/20	PR: 04/07/20		N/A		
Emergency Rule; Allow temporary transfers of IFQ in 2020	Warpinski	May 2020	FR: 5/27/20	FR: 5/27/20	FR: 6/1/20	N/A	N/A	
Revised 2020 Charter Halibut Management Measures (Halibut Act – IPHC Recommendation)	Iverson	May 2020	FR: 5/26/20	FR: 5/27/20	FR: 5/28/20	N/A	N/A	
Interim Final Rule to revise halibut IFQ vessel use caps in Areas 4B and 4CD. (Halibut Act – Council Recommendation)	Henry Merrill	May 2020				N/A	N/A	

Attachment 2 -- Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2020 is through May 23, 2020 and is compared to catch during 2019 through May 25, 2019. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information is available from [daily catch reports and information bulletins](#).

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

The 2020 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,425,000 mt compared to 1,397,000 mt in 2019. For 2020, NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ and 10,000 mt of non-CDQ pollock TAC from the Aleutian Islands to the Bering Sea CDQ and AFA TACs. For the Aleutian Islands non-CDQ allocation, the 2nd year of the experimental fishing permit (EFP) to provide information on methods to reduce bycatch of Pacific ocean perch in the pollock directed fishery reported 720 mt of pollock.

Bering Sea	2020 A season allocation	2020 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	280,136	272,929	97%
C/P	224,109	223,283	100%
Mothership	56,027	55,475	99%
CDQ ¹	64,980	64,867	100%
Total ¹	625,252	616,554	99%

¹Includes reallocation of 1,900 mt of CDQ and 10,000 mt of non-CDQ from the Aleutian Islands allocations.

Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

In 2020 relative to 2019, total Chinook salmon PSC and rates are higher, and total Non-Chinook salmon PSC and rates are lower.

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2020		2019		2020		2019	
Year	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	1,692	2.59%	1,661	2.60%	55	0.02%	47	0.02%
Non-CDQ	16,524	2.95%	14,077	2.62%	476	0.02%	1,164	0.05%
Total	18,216	2.91%	15,738	2.61%	531	0.02%	1,211	0.05%

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

The 2020 Pacific cod TAC is 141,799 mt in the Bering Sea and 13,796 mt in the Aleutian Islands compared to the 2019 Bering Sea TAC of 166,475 mt and Aleutian Islands TAC of 14,214 mt.

BSAI Sector	2020				2019			
	A season allocation	Catch May 23	A season closed	# of vessels May 23	A season allocation	Catch May 25	A season closed ²	# of vessels May 25
CDQ	11,654	9,051	n/a	32	11,702	10,905	n/a	37
Hook-and-line C/P	34,347	33,311	n/a	17	39,912	39,704	n/a	21
Pot C/P	1,058	950	Jan 12	5	1,229	1,295	Jan 15	4
Pot CV >= 60 ft	5,924	5,272	Jan 15	38	6,884	6,373	Jan 15	34
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	3,433	3,761	Jan 19	42	3,214	3,588	Jan 12	34
Jig	500	5	n/a	<3	1,355	0	n/a	0
Trawl CV	26,101	27,704	Apr 1	93	26,388	29,680	Apr 2	96
AFA C/P ²	3,196	3,370	Mar 10	15	2,783	2,835	n/a	15
Amendment 80 C/P	18,619	9,470	n/a	19	16,216	11,749	n/a	20
Total	104,832	92,894		261	109,683	106,130		261

¹In 2020, NMFS reallocated 667 mt, and in 2019 NMFS reallocated 1,200 mt of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 ft length annual allocation.

²NMFS prohibited retention of Pacific cod by AFA C/Ps in the BSAI May 4, 2020

Pacific cod directed fishing - trawl CVs

On January 22, 2020 the trawl CV fleet reported a voluntary stand down for BSAI trawl CV Pacific cod directed fishing. This was in response to low Pacific cod and high halibut catch rates reported by the CVs during the first two days of the fishery. The fleet restarted targeting Pacific cod February 9, 2020, and NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season February 16, 2020 on reaching the A season Pacific allocation.

NMFS prohibited directed fishing for Pacific cod by trawl CVs for the B season April 1, 2020 because the B season allocation is necessary to support incidental catch in other fisheries. Currently, the 2020 incidental catch of Pacific cod is higher than in previous year since 2012 incidental catch, mostly in the pollock and yellowfin sole targets.

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

In 2020, 7 hook-and-line CVs continue directed fishing for Pacific cod inside 3 miles after the federal closure reporting 655 mt or 17% of the total catch.

BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)

In 2020 relative to 2019, overall BSAI flatfish catch is similar. The incidental catch of Alaska plaice in the yellowfin sole fishery is higher in 2020 than 2019. Also, in 2020 more effort in the arrowtooth flounder and Kamchatka flounder fisheries occurred in May relative to 2019.

NMFS closed directed fishing May 15, 2020, for the BSAI trawl limited access sector yellowfin sole allocation to prevent exceeding the sector's yellowfin sole allocation of the TAC. The 10 vessels participating caught 100% of the 17,172 mt yellowfin sole allocation, and total halibut PSC was 123 mt of the 150 mt limit for yellowfin sole.

Species	2020			2019		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Alaska plaice	16,823	17,000	98%	11,725	18,000	63%
Arrowtooth flounder	3,769	10,000	36%	1,626	8,000	12%
Flathead sole	3,601	19,500	18%	4,751	14,500	32%
Greenland turbot	310	5,294	5%	188	5,294	1%
Kamchatka flounder	1,764	5,300	30%	1,031	5,000	9%
Other flatfish	2,940	4,000	59%	2,519	6,500	34%
Rock sole	18,647	47,100	39%	22,650	47,100	45%
Yellowfin sole	81,688	150,700	50%	84,247	154,000	52%
Total	129,542	258,894	50%	128,737	258,394	50%

BSAI Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)

The 2020 total catch is higher relative to 2019.

Species	2020			2019		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	24,791	59,305	42%	21,589	57,951	37%
Pacific ocean perch	3,260	40,750	8%	1,364	44,069	3%

Gulf of Alaska

For all sectors, NMFS prohibited directed fishing for GOA Pacific cod on January 1, 2020. This is necessary because a biological assessment of stock condition for GOA Pacific cod projects that the spawning biomass will be below 20 percent of the projected unfished spawning biomass in 2020 and is issued pursuant to 50 CFR 679.20(d)(4). This harvest control regulation was implemented by a final rule for Steller sea lion protection measures (see 68 FR 203, 01/02/2003).

In 2020, the sector allocations still apply. NMFS will monitor incidental catch by sector. If the incidental catch reaches a sector allocation, NMFS will either reallocate projected unused Pacific cod from other sectors or prohibit retention of Pacific cod for that sector.

Pacific cod - Western GOA

Sector	2020				2019			
	A season Allocation	Catch May 23	A season closed	# of vessels May 23	A season allocation	Catch May 25	A season closed	# of vessels May 25
Hook-and-line C/P	218	0	Jan 20	0	568	548	Mar 18	<3
Hook-and-line CV	14	11	Jan 20	7	37	28	Jan 1	18
Jig	44	0	Jan 20	0	81	76	Mar 13	9
Pot CV/CP	397	0	Jan 20	0	1,031	991	Jan 26	14
Trawl CV	555	14	Jan 20	5	1,443	1,414	Feb 25	17
Trawl C/P	18	0	Jan 20	0	47	0	Jan 20	0
Total	1,246	25		12	3,206	3,057		58

Pacific cod - Central GOA

Sector	2020				2019			
	A season allocation	Catch May 23	A season closed	# of vessels May 23	A season allocation	Catch May 25	A season closed	# of vessels May 25
Hook-and-line C/P	155	0	Jan 20	0	234	203	Mar 5	3
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	351	31	Jan 20	18	530	647	Feb 7	62
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	211	103	Jan 20	39	319	352	Feb 27	64
Jig	23	0	Jan 20	0	35	30	Mar 12	13
Pot CV/CP	672	0	Jan 20	0	1,015	865	Jan 27	13
Trawl CV	796	1,056	Jan 20	38	1,203	1,010	Jan 20	42
Trawl C/P	75	121	Jan 20	3	114	78	Jan 20	<3
Total	2,283	1,311		98	3,450	3,185		197

For 2020, NMFS plans to reallocate Pacific cod from other sectors to the trawl CV and C/P sectors.

Pollock

In area 610, 517 mt was available for the A season. NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season January 20, 2020 because the TAC did not support directed fishing. NMFS reopened the A season on March 9 and the B season opened on March 10, 2020 with an additional 517 mt. NMFS prohibited directed fishing for B season pollock in Area 610 March 14, 2020.

On January 23, 2020, in response to high Chinook salmon rates reported by CVs during the first two days of the fishery in areas 620 and 630, the fleet reported that all CVs directed fishing for pollock agreed to a voluntary stand down until February 2, 2020.

In area 620, NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season February 19, 2020. Thirty-four CVs in the pollock target reported 20,663 mt out of the 18,757 mt A season TAC. The B season opened March 10 with an additional 22,222 mt. NMFS prohibited directed fishing for B season March 18, 2020.

In Area 630, NMFS closed directed fishing for the A season February 23, 2020. Thirty CVs in the pollock target reported 4,123 mt of the 5,783 mt A season TAC. NMFS reopened the A season on March 9 and the B season opened on March 10, 2020. NMFS prohibited directed fishing for B season pollock March 11, 2020.

2020 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	517	18,757	5,783	5,554 (annual)
A season catch	239	21,539	4,769	5,174
A season closure	January 20	February 19	February 23	March 13
B season allocation	517	22,222	2,318	March 24 - 28
B season catch	322	20,931	352	
B season closure	March 14	March 18	March 11	

Chinook Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

Total 2020 Chinook salmon PSC is higher relative to 2019.

Chinook Salmon	2020 Limit	2020 PSC (Rate ¹)	2019 PSC (Rate ¹)
Total	n/a	7,583	6,664
Western GOA pollock	6,684	612 (1.06)	251 (0.18)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	6,740 (0.14)	3,962 (0.07)
Western/Central trawl CV	2,700	1 (0%)	2,271 (0.11)
Central Rockfish Program CV	1,200	0	180 (0.03)
Western/Central trawl C/P ²	4,080	230 (0.05)	0

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

²Includes incentive buffer for 2020 Western/Central trawl C/P limit (480 Chinook).

Non-Chinook Salmon PSC in the GOA

Non-Chinook Salmon	2020 PSC (Rate)	2019 PSC (Rate)
Total All Sectors	103 (0.1)	649 (0.7)

Halibut Mortality Data (BSAI and GOA)

In 2020 relative to 2019, the total halibut mortality and rates are lower in the BSAI and higher in the GOA.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2020			2019		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	893	974,189	0.09%	1,468	1,011,678	0.15%
Amendment 80	518	218,581	0.24%	794	251,258	0.32%
BSAI trawl limited access	327	616,234	0.05%	575	620,706	0.09%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	18	43,187	0.04%	36	49,625	0.07%
Non-trawl Other	0	0	0	0	0	0%
CDQ	30	96,187	0.03%	63	90,089	0.07%
GOA Total	452	81,037	0.56%	419	104,006	0.40%
Trawl, Deep-water	377	19,720	1.91%	324	19,404	1.67%
Trawl, Shallow-water	55	51,353	0.11%	40	73,023	0.06%
Rockfish Program	16	9,414	0.17%	7	8,979	0.07%
Hook-and-line	4	550	0.82%	48	2,600	1.85%

IFQ Halibut and Sablefish Fisheries

IFQ Sablefish:

Number of trips: 20% fewer trips relative to the most recent 4-year average (2016-2019), and 25% fewer trips relative to 2019.

Catch: 11% less catch relative to recent 4 -year average, and 14% less relative to 2019.

Four year average: 708 trips, 4,060 mt catch

2019: 752 trips, 4,180 mt

2020: 567 trips, 3,607 mt

IFQ Halibut:

Number of trips: 46% fewer trips relative to the recent 4-year average, and 43% fewer trips relative to 2019.

Catch: 48% less catch relative to recent 4-year average, and 47% less relative to 2019.

Four year average: 1,091 trips, 3,820 mt catch

2019: 1,034 trips, 3,775 mt

2020: 587 trips, 1,990 mt

Inseason Adjustment Authority and Herring Savings Areas Closures

Herring bycatch in the BSAI pollock directed fishery is higher in 2020, relative to recent years. This increased bycatch resulted in the pollock directed fishery exceeding its annual limit of herring prohibited species catch established in the final 2020/2021 harvest specifications. On June 4, 2020, NMFS issued Information Bulletin (IB-20-42) to prohibit directed fishing for pollock in the Herring Savings Areas of the BSAI, effective 12 noon, Alaska local time, June 15, 2020. This action includes prohibiting directed fishing for pollock by all vessels directed fishing for pollock, including vessels participating in the Community Development Program.

- Summer Herring Savings Area 1 is that part of the Bering Sea subarea that is south of 57° North latitude and between 162° W longitude and 164° W longitude, and is closed from 1200 hours, A.l.t., June 15 through 1200 hours A.l.t., July 1, 2020.
- Summer Herring Savings Area 2 is that part of the Bering Sea subarea that is south of 56°30" North latitude and between 164° W longitude and 167° W longitude from 1200 hours, A.l.t., and is closed from July 1 through 1200 hours A.l.t., August 15, 2020.
- Winter Herring Savings Area is that part of the Bering Sea subarea that is between of 58° and 60° North latitude and between 172° W longitude and 175° W longitude, and is closed from 1200 hours, A.l.t., September 1 through 1200 hours A.l.t., March 1, 2021.

This is the first closure of all three Herring Savings Areas to the pollock directed fishery since these frameworked closure areas were implemented 29 years ago under Amendment 16A to the BSAI groundfish FMP (56 FR 32984, July 18, 1991). Under the provisions of Amendment 16A, specific areas are closed to specific fisheries, but overall herring bycatch is not limited, and fisheries are not closed to directed fishing if bycatch exceeds 1 percent of the estimated biomass.

Since the implementation of Amendment 16A, there have been substantial changes to the pollock directed fishery (e.g., the complete Americanization of the fishery, implementation of the American Fisheries Act [AFA], increased monitoring provisions). In addition, Chinook and chum salmon bycatch limits have been strengthened under Amendments 91 and 110 to the FMP. If Chinook salmon bycatch limits are reached, the sector, or Inshore AFA Cooperative that reaches that limit are prohibited from directed fishing unless it receives a transfer from another cooperative. Based on a review of recent catch and bycatch data, Chinook salmon bycatch is typically higher in areas outside of Herring Savings Area 2 (HSA 2).

Given these factors, NMFS has explored whether it can use its inseason management authority under 50 C.F.R § 679.25 to provide for a targeted opening of HSA 2 for the AFA Inshore, Mothership, and CDQ Sectors.

NMFS conferred with the State of Alaska (State) to understand the potential implications of a targeted opening of HSA 2 on the herring stock. The State indicated that if HSA 2 were opened it recommended that NMFS monitor herring bycatch within HSA 2 relative to herring bycatch outside of HSA 2, and consider additional inseason action to close HSA 2 if herring bycatch were substantially higher. NMFS can monitor herring bycatch throughout the fishing season

inside and outside of HSA 2. NMFS could consider additional inseason action to close HSA 2 if herring bycatch increases.

NMFS has reviewed whether a limited opening of HSA 2 would be appropriate and consistent given: (1) the high historical prohibited species bycatch rates for Chinook and chum salmon observed in the pollock fishery in areas outside of HSA 2 and the potential for the closure of HSA 2 to result in additional fishing later in the year when Chinook salmon bycatch rates can increase substantially, (2) the current catch of pollock in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI, (3) the harvest capacity and stated intent on future harvesting patterns of vessels in participating in this fishery and the potential that lengthening the season would result in the underharvest of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC), and (4) potential economic loss to these fisheries. The AFA catcher/processor sector would continue to be prohibited from fishing in HSA 2 unless fishing for CDQ pollock (the AFA catcher/processor sector is already precluded from fishing in HSA 2 under other regulations).

As with all inseason management actions, NOAA General Counsel has reviewed this potential use of inseason management authority for consistency with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. In addition, as with all inseason management actions, NMFS notes that inseason actions are published in the Federal Register, and that if an adjustment is made without affording a prior opportunity for public comment, public comments can be submitted on the necessity for, and extent of, the adjustment for a period of 15 days after the effective date of notification (50 C.F.R. § 679.25(c)).

NMFS appreciates the opportunity to confer with the Council on this use of inseason management authority to balance the potential implications for Chinook salmon bycatch, herring biomass, and the harvest of pollock.