



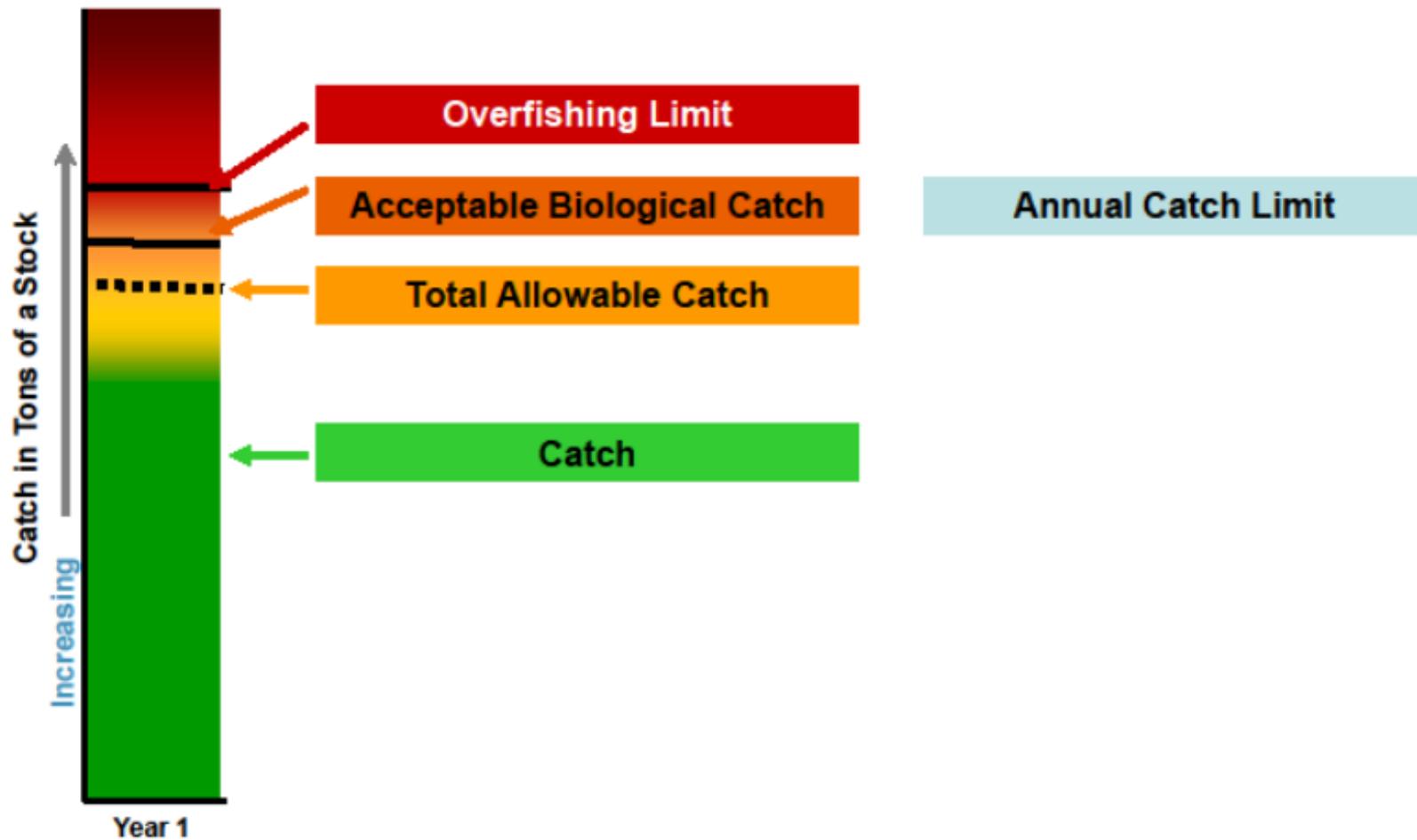
NOAA
FISHERIES

- Alaska
Region

Management of the Federal Groundfish Fisheries off Alaska

Biological Benchmarks

OFL \geq ABC \geq ACL \geq TAC



Groundfish Annual Catch Limits

- **Average 2004 - 2021 Overfishing Level**

BSAI – 4.2 million mt, GOA – 706,000 mt

- **Average 2004 - 2021 Acceptable Biological Catch**

BSAI – 2.9 million mt, GOA – 564,000 mt

- **TAC Optimum Yield (OY) range**

BSAI – 1.4 to 2 million mt, GOA – 116,000 to 800,000 mt

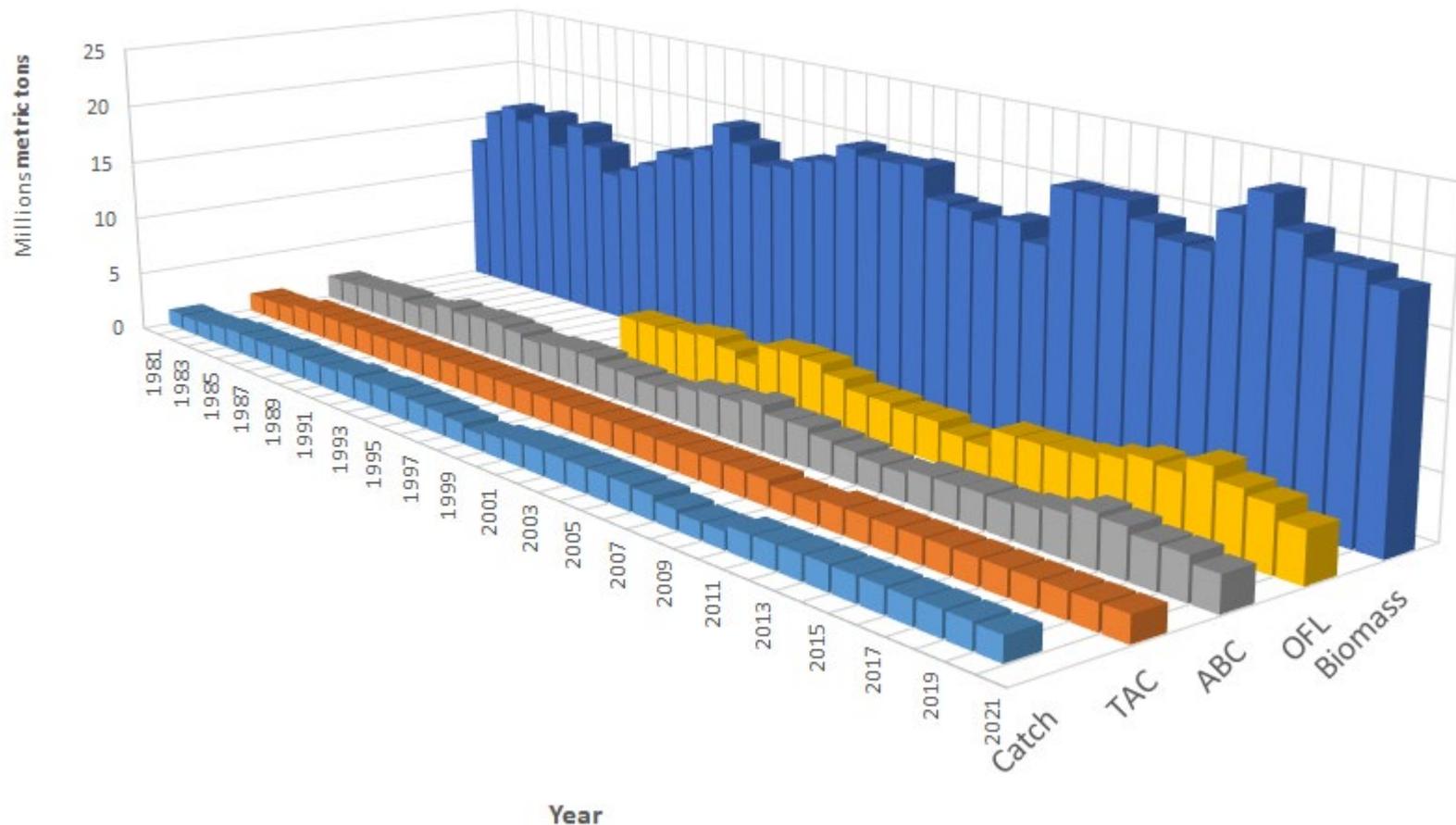
- **Average 2004 – 2021 Total Allowable Catch (TAC)**

BSAI - 1,960,997 mt

GOA average is 385,000 mt

TAC is set so $TAC + \text{State GHL} \leq ABC$

BSAI – groundfish catch, total allowable catch (TAC), acceptable biological catch (ABC), overfishing level (OFL), and total biomass of groundfish



Annual Catch Limit Management in FMP

- Groundfish FMPs describes ACL management in Section 3.2.3.3.2.
- ACL is equivalent to ABC.
- TAC is set either at ABC or below, so managing the fisheries to not exceed TAC is equivalent, or more conservative in some cases, than managing to the ACL.
- Target fishery is usually closed before reaching the TAC, allowing for bycatch in other fisheries up to the TAC for a species.
- Directed fishery closure limits retention of a species to a portion of other species TACs open to directed fishing. That portion is called the maximum retainable amount (MRA). The MRA is expressed as a percentage of an alternate target fishery. The percentage relates to the expected rate of catch and may be used as a tool to harvest a species that is low in volume but high in value.
- All retention is prohibited if the total TAC is caught before the end of the year. Prohibiting retention removes any incentive to increase incidental catch as a portion of other fisheries.
- If the ABC is taken and the trajectory of catch indicates the OFL may be approached, additional closures are imposed. To prevent overfishing, specific fisheries identified by gear and area that incur the greatest incidental catch are closed. Closures expand to other fisheries if the rate of take is not sufficiently slowed

Inseason Management

- Accountability measures to avoid exceeding TAC and ABC
 - prohibit directed fishing - 50 CFR 679.20(d)
 - prohibit retention - 50 CFR 679.20(d)(2)
- Does TAC support directed fishing after considering incidental catch?
- If yes, then open directed fishing and allow full retention

Inseason Actions Continued

- If no, prohibit directed fishing, retention up to the maximum retainable amounts (MRAs) at 50 CFR part 679 Tables 10 and 11, except non-trawl CVs have rockfish full retention, Rockfish Program Table 30
- Approach TAC then set directed fishing allowance (DFA) and incidental catch allowance (ICA)
- Reach DFA then prohibit directed fishing
- Reach TAC then prohibit retention
- Approach OFL then OFL closure - 50 CFR 679.20(d)(3)
- Prohibited species catch limit closures

TAC Setting in December

It is difficult to predict which groundfish species are likely to be harvested when the Council recommends the TACs in December.

Each year conditions may or may not favor certain target species and incidental catch may be variable.

Various regulations allow some TACs to change during the fishing year as long as the TAC does not exceed the ABC.

TAC Changes During the Fishing Year

- BSAI nonspecified reserve reallocation - 14 BSAI species contribute between 4.3 and 15% of their TAC to the nonspecified reserves. The nonspecified reserve may be used to increase the non-CDQ TAC during the fishing year. The nonspecified reserve is not designated by species or species group. Any amount of the nonspecified reserve may be apportioned to the non-CDQ TAC for species that contributed to the nonspecified reserve.
- Reallocate Aleutian Island pollock to Bering Sea pollock if Bering Sea ABC is not exceeded
- Western/Central GOA pollock reallocated between areas

TAC Changes During the Fishing Year

- Flatfish Exchanges – CDQ and Amendment 80 cooperatives may exchange allocations of flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole so that TAC does not exceed ABC
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-groundfish-harvest-specifications>
- NMFS may reallocate projected unused allocations
 - BSAI Pacific cod sectors
 - GOA Pacific cod sectors
- CDQ groups and some catch share programs allow transfers between groups or cooperatives

Explanation of some overages on catch reports

- In some years BSAI nonspecified reserves were not fully reallocated to TACs with overages
- Sector reallocations were not done
- An allocation of the TAC is exceeded, and total TAC is not exceeded
- Incidental catch account is exceeded, and other allocations are not exceeded, or visa versa
- One area is exceeded, and BSAI wide or GOA wide is not exceeded. Sablefish is managed Alaska wide.

BSAI Catch by Gear Type – Average 2004 to 2021

BSAI	Hook-and-line	Pot	Trawl
Greenland turbot	45%	1%	55%
Octopus	10%	85%	6%
Pacific cod	51%	16%	33%
Blackspotted/ rougeye	15%	0%	85%
Other rockfish	24%	1%	75%
Sablefish	34%	31%	35%
Shortraker rockfish	27%	0%	73%
Skates	80%	0%	20%
Sharks	27%	0%	73%

GOA Catch by Gear Type – Average 2004 to 2021

GOA	Hook-and-line	Pot	Trawl
Big skate	44%	0%	56%
Longnose skate	65%	0%	35%
Octopus	8%	85%	7%
Pacific cod	20%	50%	30%
Rougheye/ blackspotted	40%	0%	60%
Other rockfish	24%	0%	76%
Sablefish	82%	7%	10%
Shortraker rockfish	51%	0%	49%
Thornyhead rockfish	60%	0%	40%
Other skates	80%	0%	20%
Sharks	77%	0%	23%