



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

April 17, 1998

The State of Alaska is delegated the authority to manage fisheries in federal waters for crab, scallops, troll salmon, and demersal shelf rockfish in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska. Fisheries for lingcod and state waters Pacific Cod are managed by the state. This report summarizes fishery management of these species for the period September 16, to December 1, 1997.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES

The Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery west of 174° west longitude remains open. The GHL was set at 2.7 million lbs. Harvest in the area is confidential due to the limited number of landings.

The 1998 Bering Sea snow crab fishery had a GHL of 234.2 million pounds. This year, 3.5% of the GHL was set aside for Community Development Quotas. As a result, the GHL available to the open access fishery was adjusted down to 226 million pounds. The fishery opened at 12:00 noon on January 15, 1998. A total of 228 vessels, including 12 catcher processors participated. Eleven floating processors also operated on the grounds during the fishery. The fishery closed March 20 and the fleet and industry were given an 11 day advanced notice of the closure. The preliminary harvest based on inseason processor catch reports is 240 million pounds from 1,747 deliveries. While most vessels delivered to processors on the grounds, or shore processors in the Pribilof Islands or Dutch Harbor, vessels also checked out to processors in King Cove and Kodiak. Based on an estimated overall exvessel price of \$.56 per pound, the 1998 snow crab fishery value is \$134.4 million. Weather and sea ice conditions did not have a significant impact on the 1998 season.

STATEWIDE SCALLOP FISHERY

Fishing seasons for scallops in Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Adak, Dutch Harbor, and the Bering Sea open July 1. The fishing season in the Kamishak District of Cook Inlet opens August 15. All other districts in Cook Inlet open January 1 by permit only. No permits have been applied for in 1998.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY

The 1997/1998 winter troll fishery opened on October 11. The harvest from December 1 through March 31 was 14,000 fish.

SE ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH AND LINGCOD FISHERIES

The winter directed DSR fishery opened January 1 and closed prior to March 15 in the CSEO, SSEO and NSEI management areas. The directed DSR fishery closed in CSEO area on January 8 after 119.8 t were landed. The SSEO DSR fishery landed 39.4 t before closing January 21. A total of 18.1 t of DSR were landed in the NSEI directed fishery before it was closed February 24. The EYKT and SSEI remained open until March 15 with landings of 38.7 t and 7.8 t respectively. The NSEO area remained closed to directed DSR fishing for the entire winter season. Since the first of January, only three landings have been made in the directed lingcod fishery. All three landings were in the CSEO management area. The total number of pounds landed is confidential due to the limited number of landings. The directed lingcod fishery continues to be closed in the waters of Alaska and the Fairweather Grounds in the EYKT management area until May 1. The total number of lingcod landed since January 1 on all gears by management area is: 10.4 t in EYKT, 23.1 t in CSEO, 1.1 t in NSEI, 2.6 t in SSEO, 0.4 t in SSEI and 0 t in NSEO. The majority of the lingcod were landed as bycatch in the DSR directed longline fishery.

STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD FISHERY

The Pacific cod fishery in Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Kodiak opened at noon on March 17, seven days after the federal closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska. The Chignik area opened by regulation on April 1. The South Alaska Peninsula area opened on March 10, seven days after the closure of the Western Gulf of Alaska. Cook Inlet pot gear closed by regulation on April 7 and will re-open on June 15. Stormy weather throughout the Gulf in late March and early April has definitely slowed the progress of the fishery. The following catch numbers are through April 16, 1998.

Prince William Sound Pacific Cod

One pot vessel and one jig vessel have made a total of three landings to date. The catch remains confidential. The GHL this year is 516,000 pounds for pot gear, and 344,000 pounds for jig gear.

Cook Inlet Pacific Cod

The Cook Inlet cod guideline for 1998 is 2,435,000 pounds, split equally between pot and jig gear. Two jig vessels have made a total of two landings and 5 pot vessels have made a total of 43 landings for a combined catch of 105,000 pounds.

Kodiak Pacific Cod

The Kodiak Area cod guideline is 8.1 million pounds split equally between pot and jig gear. Twelve jig vessels have made landings for 100,000 pounds, while 31 pot vessels have made 70 landings for 1.38 million pounds. The Kodiak fishery is progressing weather dependent. Kodiak pot gear fishery is expected to close near the end of April.

Chignik Pacific Cod

In Chignik, 26 pot and 2 jig vessels have made landings totaling 2.6 million pounds. Chignik cod are being delivered to a floating processor in the area, to a Sand Point processor, and by tenders to a processor in Kodiak and King Cove. The guideline harvest level is 5.7 million pounds.

South Alaska Peninsula Pacific Cod

The Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod guideline was 9.0 million pounds with 15% being reserved for jig gear. Three jig vessels have made 7 landings for a total of 8,948 pounds. Forty-eight pot vessels have made 246 landings for a total of 6.9 million pounds. The Alaska Peninsula pot fishery closed April 16.