

Western Aleutian Islands Management

Current inseason management actions

1. Open directed fishing – full retention allowed
2. Close directed fishing – retention up to the maximum retainable amount (MRA).
In the Western Aleutian Islands (WAI), these are the primary basis species used to calculate rockfish MRAs and the rockfish MRAs
 - a. Atka mackerel – 5 percent aggregate rockfish
 - b. Pacific cod – 5 percent aggregate rockfish
 - c. Pacific ocean perch (POP) – 15 percent aggregate rockfish
3. Prohibit retention when TAC has or will be reached
4. Approach OFL – may prohibit directed fishing for species in the area or part thereof, or may limit time, area, or gear types

Current Western AI ABC and TAC

1. Blackspotted/rougheye (BS/RE) ABC and TAC allocated to BS/Eastern AI and Central AI/WAI.
2. WAI BS/RE catch is incidental to directed fishing for:
 - a. Pacific ocean perch – WAI ABC and TAC
 - b. Atka mackerel – WAI ABC and TAC
 - c. Pacific cod – WAI catch limit is based on the amount of the AI Pacific cod abundance in the WAI as determined in the stock assessment (2019 is 15.7% or 2,232 mt)
 - d. Halibut and Sablefish – BS/RE catch is < 2 mt each year

Maximum Subarea Species Catch (MSSC) Management Alternative

1. MSSC Amount – The SSC recommended estimation of an MSSC amount to guide the public regarding the level of catch needed to alleviate the concern regarding the BS/RE total catch.
 - a. Through the stock assessment and harvest specification process the MSSC is determined.
 - b. The SSC includes the amount in their December meeting minutes.
 - c. NMFS closes directed fishing for BS/RE in the harvest specifications.
 - d. NMFS issues an Information Bulletin regarding MSSC in January. It is posted on the Alaska Region website and emailed.
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/noaa-reminds-vessel-owners-operators-and-managers-2019-bsai-rockfish-maximum-subarea>
 - e. NMFS posts catch report on the Alaska Region website.
https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/car112_roughey_e_rockfish_catch2019.html
 - f. The industry avoids BS/RE and allowed retention up to the MRA.

- Allocate TAC by gear type. Since BS/RE is not open for directed fishing and most of the catch is by trawl gear this would not be effective in reducing catch. The 2015 through 2017 average catch for hook-and-line gear is 5 mt and for trawl gear is 41 mt.

History of blackspotted/rougheye catch and MSSC by fishing year

2014 One Amendment 80 (A80) cooperative asked assessment author for an amount to avoid reaching.

2015 1st year MSSC, two A80 cooperatives notified, MSSC weekly catch report created, new SSL measures for Atka mackerel and Pacific cod

2016 2nd year MSSC, all sectors notified, 2nd year of weekly catch report

2017 3rd year MSSC, all sectors notified, 3rd year of weekly catch report

2018 4th year MSSC, all sectors notified, 4rd year of weekly catch report

2019 5th year MSSC, all sectors notified, 5rd year of weekly catch report

In Table 1, the negative MSSC amounts remaining approximate the amount discarded if retention was prohibited when the MSSC was reached.

Table 1. Blackspotted/Rougheye (BS/RE) Rockfish Maximum Subarea Species Catch (MSSC) amount, Total Catch in the Western Aleutian Islands (WAI), MSSC Amount Remaining, BS/RE Percent of Total Groundfish Catch, WAI management changes

Year	MSSC Amount	BS/RE Catch	MSSC Amount Remaining	Total Groundfish Catch	BS/RE Percent Total Catch	WAI Management changes
2008	n/a	58	n/a	33,316	0.17%	A80 starts
2009	n/a	67	n/a	33,203	0.20%	
2010	n/a	85	n/a	36,589	0.23%	
2011	n/a	46	n/a	9,422	0.49%	No Atka/Pcod retention
2012	n/a	65	n/a	9,609	0.68%	No Atka/Pcod retention
2013	n/a	84	n/a	11,822	0.71%	No Atka/Pcod retention
2014	n/a (?)	57	n/a	10,530	0.54%	No Atka/Pcod retention
2015	46	67	(21)	26,518	0.25%	
2016	58	38	20	24,298	0.16%	
2017	29	34	(5)	27,576	0.12%	
2018	35	66	(31)	28,289	0.23%	
2019 (9/11/2019)	37	101	(64)	37,019	0.23%	
12 year average ¹	41	64	(20)	24,016	0.27%	
3 year average ²	34	67	(33)	30,961	0.21%	

¹2008-2019 average, except MSSC is 2015-2019 average.

²2017-2019 average.

In 2011 through 2014, all BS/RE catch was in the Pacific ocean perch target (> 2 mt in halibut and sablefish targets), since Steller sea lion protection measure prohibited retention of Atka mackerel and Pacific cod in the WAI.

Table 2 shows that in most years a high percentage of BS/RE is retained, and the 2008 – 2018 average retained is 86 percent. In 2019, only 66 percent of BS/RE has been retained. In 2019, the Amendment 80 fleet reported some of the BS/RE were too small to process. Also, NMFS prohibited retention of BS/RE in the Western and Central AI effective August 6, 2019 because the TAC had been reached. Prior to August 6, 2019, 73 percent were retained. From 2008 through 2019, retention has only been prohibited in 2019.

Table 2. Western Aleutian Islands Blackspotted/Rougheye Discard, Retained, Total Catch, and Percent Retained.

Year	BS/RE Discard	BS/RE Retained	BS/RE Total	BS/RE Percent Retained
2008	11	47	58	81%
2009	7	60	67	89%
2010	7	78	85	92%
2011	2	44	46	95%
2012	6	59	65	91%
2013	11	74	84	87%
2014	2	55	57	97%
2015	7	60	67	89%
2016	6	31	38	83%
2017	4	30	34	90%
2018	8	57	66	87%
2019	34	67	101	66%
2008-2018 Average	7	54	61	86%