

# **Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2012**



**Division of Subsistence  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

**Presentation to the  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council**

**Anchorage, AK  
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**Project funded through a grant from the  
National Marine Fisheries Service:  
No. NA11NMF4370059**

**For the full study findings, see:**

Fall, James A. and David Koster. 2014. Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2012. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 388. Juneau.

# Project Background

- New subsistence regulations in effect May 2003
- 118 communities and 123 tribes eligible, plus residents of designated rural areas
- Registration requirement (SHARC)
- Regulations have provision for collecting harvest data
- This report covers the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the harvest assessment program (harvests in 2012)
- Due to funding constraints, the project will not continue for 2013 harvests

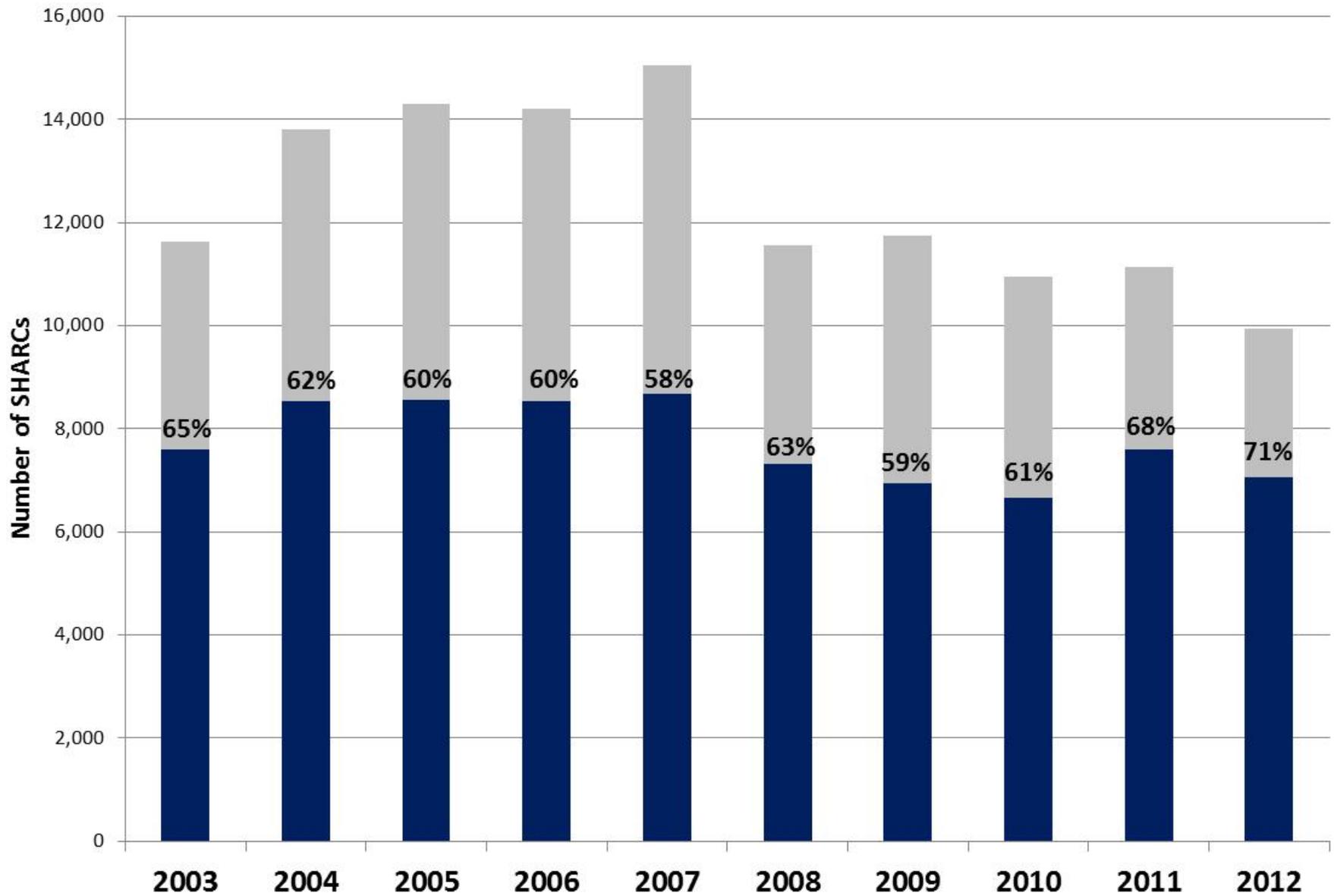
# Methods

- Mailed household survey is primary data collection method; response voluntary
- Mailed to all persons holding SHARCs during 2012: 9,944
- Three rounds of mailings
- Supplemented by household contacts and interviews in 5 Southeast Alaska communities (Area 2C)

# **Sample Achievement for 2012**

- **7,054 surveys returned**, of 9,944 valid SHARCs
- **Sampling fraction of 71%**
- **High rates of return** achieved in most larger communities with the most SHARCs issued

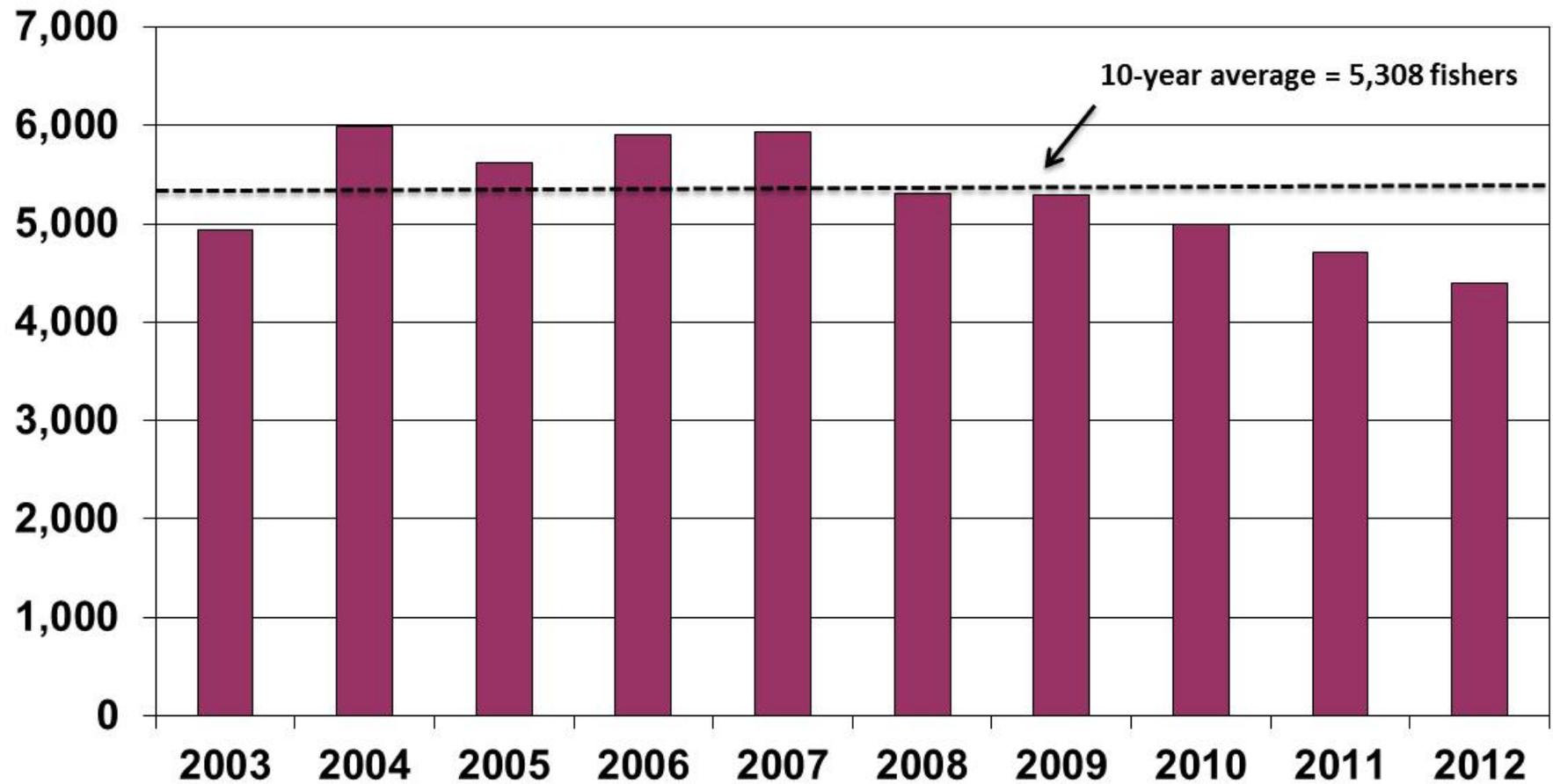
## SHARC Survey Achievement, 2003 - 2012



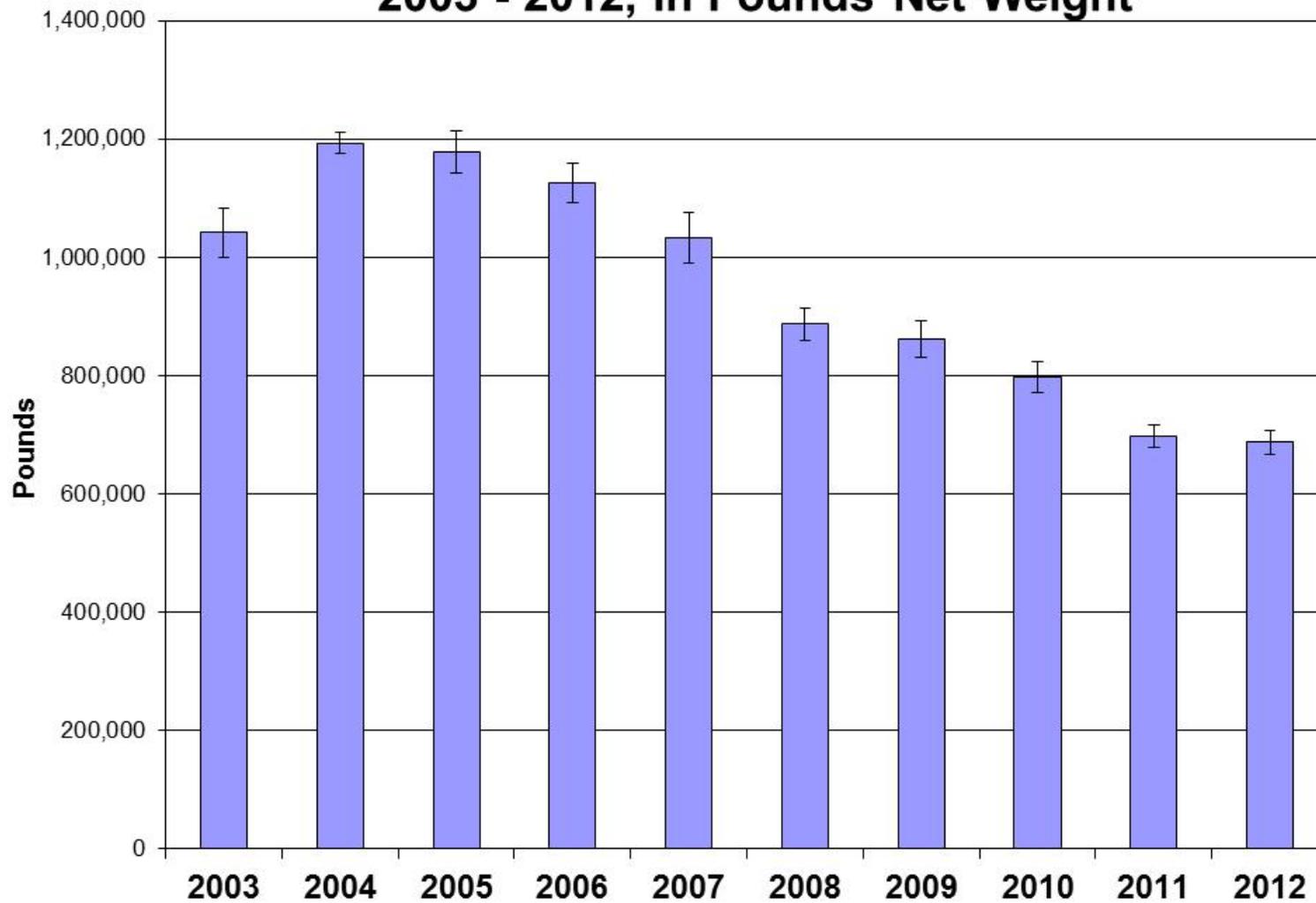
# Study Findings: Halibut 2012

- Estimated number of **subsistence fishers = 4,394**
- Estimated subsistence harvest = **37,093 halibut**
- Estimated subsistence harvest = **686,991 lbs** net weight (= 75% of round weight) (18.5 lbs/fish)
- **58% of harvest occurred in Area 2C** (SE Alaska) & 37% in Area 3A (SC Alaska)
- 78% of harvest taken with setline gear; 22% with hand-operated gear

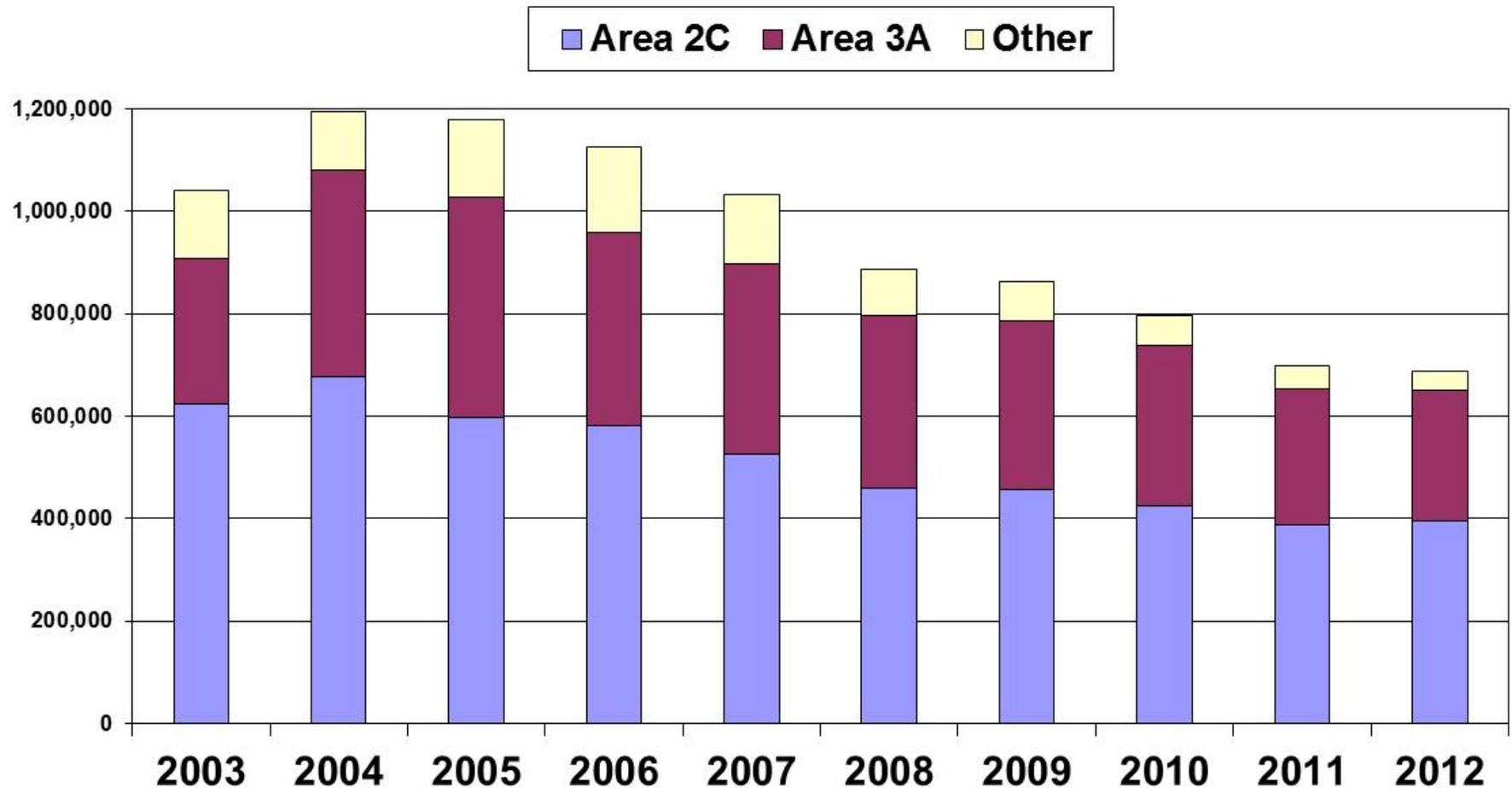
## Estimated Number of Individuals Subsistence Fishing for Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012



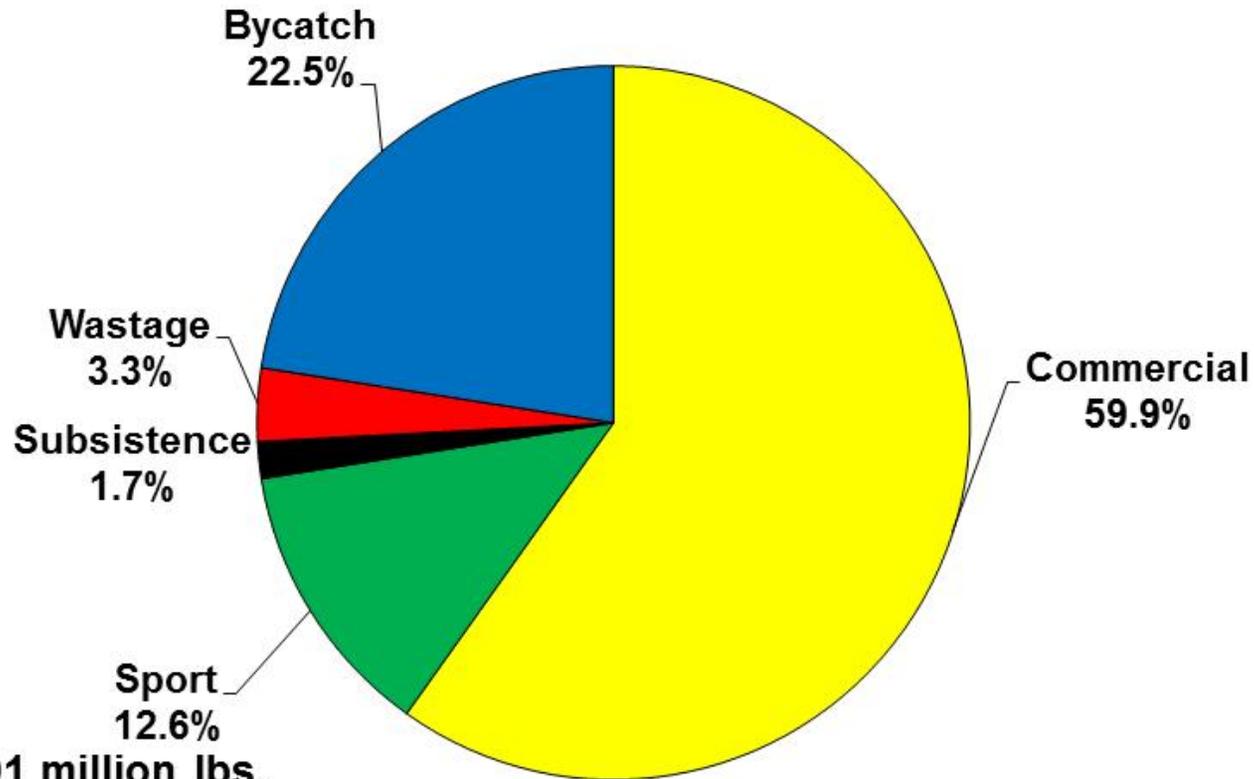
## Estimated Subsistence Harvests of Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012, in Pounds Net Weight



## Estimated Subsistence Harvests of Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012 (lbs net weight), by Area



## Halibut Removals, Alaska, 2012



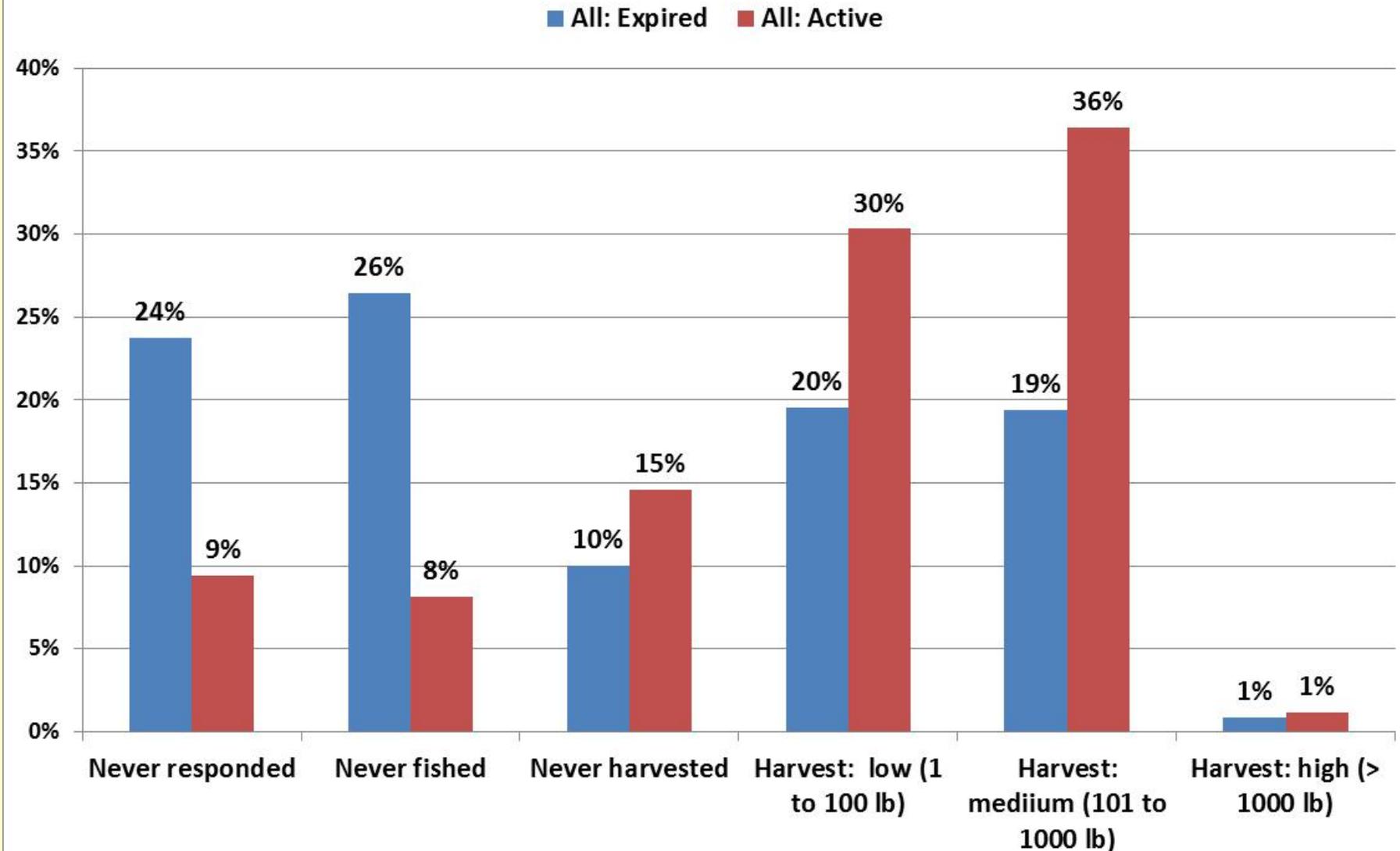
**N = 42.491 million lbs,  
net weight**

- Subsistence harvests by area ranged from 8.6% in Area 2C to 0.2% in Area 3B

# Analysis of SHARC renewal patterns

- Rural SHARCs: renew every 2 years
- Tribal SHARCs: renew every 4 years
- 21,835 individual SHARC holders, 2003 – 2012
- **54% did not renew, including 42% of those known to have fished**
- **Non-renewals more likely than active SHARCs to have not responded to the survey, not fished, and have lower harvests**

## Expired SHARCs and Active SHARCs Compared by Survey Response Type (based on Figure 36)



# Conclusions: Harvest Survey, Year 10

- Overall, Year 10 of the harvest survey was a success: good response rates and overall reliable harvest estimates
- Can discern some general patterns in the fishery since the new regulations came into effect
- Reasons for overall decline in harvests likely complex and require further investigation
- Concerns about nonrenewal of SHARCs, especially in certain regulatory areas

# Recommendations

- Conduct formal analysis of survey responses (77,363 over 10 years) for patterns and trends
- Conduct ethnographic research in selected communities to investigate fishing patterns, effects of regulatory changes, SHARC renewal patterns
- Consider in-season harvest monitoring in selected communities
- Continue and expand outreach to encourage obtaining and renewing SHARCs
- Based on results, resume harvest monitoring in the future

# For More Information

- Division of Subsistence Website:  
[www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us) and go to publications for draft final report
- Or: call us at 907-465-4147, or 465-3617, or 267-2353
- Or write: ADF&G, Division of Subsistence, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK, 99518
- Or contact NMFS at: 1-800-304-4846 (option 2) or [www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm)