

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chair
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc>

APPROVED: 

DATE: February 12, 2013

MINUTES

December 2012
211th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK

Contents

C-1 Groundfish Specifications.....	5
C-1 (a) Exempted Fishing Permit to test a salmon excluder in the GOA pollock fishery	5
C-1 (b) Final GOA Groundfish SAFE Report and Specifications for 2013/2014	6
C-1 (c) BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and 2013/2014 harvest specifications	8
C-2 (b) Initial Review of BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch.....	10
C-2 (c) Initial review on GOA Chinook bycatch for non-pollock trawl fisheries	12
C-3 (a) Council recommendations to IPHC on management measures for Area 2C for 2013	15
C-3 (b) Discussion paper on CQE small block restrictions	17
C-3 (c) Retention of Area 4A halibut in sablefish pots.....	19
C-4 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation	20
D-1 (a) Progress report on PSEIS SIR.....	23
D-1 (b) VMS use and requirements.	23
D-2 Staff Tasking.....	25

1. Public Attendance Register
2. Time Log
3. AP Minutes
4. SSC Minutes
5. GOA Groundfish Specifications
6. BSAI Groundfish Specifications

7. Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures
8. Charter Management Implementation Committee Minutes
9. Enforcement Committee Minutes
10. Newsletter

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Anchorage, Alaska in December 2012. The following Council, SSC and AP members, and NPFMC staff attended the meetings.

Council Members

Eric Olson, Chair
John Henderschedt, Vice Chair
Jim Balsiger
Cora Campbell/Nicole Kimball
Sam Cotten
Craig Cross
Duncan Fields

Dave Hanson
Roy Hyder
Dan Hull
Doug McBride
Bill Tweit
RADM Tom Ostebo/LT Tony Kenne

NPFMC Staff

Gail Bendixen
Sam Cunningham
Jane DiCosimo
Diana Evans
Mark Fina
Peggy Kircher

Steve MacLean
Jon McCracken
Chris Oliver
Maria Shawback
Diana Stram
David Witherell

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from December 3-5 at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage AK.

Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Robert Clark, Vice Chair
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Henry Cheng
Wash. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Alison Dauble
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Sherri Dressel
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kathy Kuletz
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Jim Murphy
University of Alaska Anchorage

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kate Reedy-Maschner
Idaho State University Pocatello

Farron Wallace
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Ray Webster
International Pacific Halibut Commission

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Advisory Panel

The AP met from December 3-6, at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska.

Kurt Cochran	Jan Jacobs	Theresa Peterson
John Crowley	Alexus Kwachka	Ed Poulsen
Jerry Downing	Craig Lowenberg	Neil Rodriguez
Tom Enlow	Brian Lynch	Lori Swanson
Tim Evers	Andy Mezirow	Anne Vanderhoeven
Jeff Farvour	Matt Moir	Ernie Weiss
Becca Robbins Gisclair	Joel Peterson	

Appendix I contains the public sign in register and a time log of Council proceedings, including those providing reports and public comment during the meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at approximately 8:06 am on Wednesday, December 5, 2012.

Mr. Bill Tweit participated in the entire meeting in place of Phil Anderson, WDF Director.

AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the change of taking the NOAA Enforcement report directly after the ED report.

B. REPORTS

The Council received the following reports: Executive Director's Report (B-1); NMFS Management Report (B-2); ADF&G Report (B-3); NOAA Enforcement Report (B-4); USCG Report (B-5); USFWS report (B-6); and Protected Species Report (B-7).

Executive Director's Report:

Chris Oliver reviewed his written report and introduced members of the audience that were visiting from other agencies and programs. He reviewed recent plan team nominations and noted that they would be finalizing the nominations, along with AP and SSC nominations, in executive session later in the week. He reviewed upcoming meetings, and recognized retiring members of NMFS staff, including Jesse Gharrett, Sherri Meyers, and Ken Hansen, who was awarded the Bob Mace distinguished service award.

NMFS Management Report

Glenn Merrill briefed the Council on the status of FMP amendments and clarified status of reviews with Council members. Briefly Mr. Merrill updated the Council on rural subsistence halibut and defining "immediate family members." Martin Loefflad reviewed the observer deployment plan with Council, and answered questions along with Ken Hansen, who addressed possible violations within the observer program. Cindy Hartmann and Jeannie Hansen from NMFS Habitat Conservation Division gave an update on EFH consultation on non-fishing actions and answered questions from the Council. Mary Furuness reviewed the catch reports, and gave the update on the NOAA Habitat Blueprint.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

ADF&G Report

Jim Fall, with the Division of Subsistence from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game gave the Council an update on the subsistence halibut harvest findings. He noted a draft annual report is available and has been distributed to the Council. Karla Bush (ADF&G) provided the Council with a review of the State fisheries of interest to the Council and answered general questions from the Council Members. Bob Clark gave an update from the recent 2012 Chinook Symposium that was held in Anchorage in October.

NOAA Enforcement Report

Bruce Bucksman introduced himself as the new Director of NOAA Office of Law Enforcement. He reviewed the priorities for his office and noted the close partnership with the USCG and the states' enforcement agencies. Sherrie Meyers gave an update of current activities in the Alaska OLE office and answered questions from the Council. She noted it was her last time reporting to the Council as she is retiring at the end of the year. The Chairman presented her with a plaque and thanked her for her service.

USCG Report

RADM Ostebo introduced Lt. Tony Keene who reported on USCG activities from over October and November, 2012 and provided a written report.

USF&W Report

Doug McBride, the new representative of USF&W Service reviewed his written report noting that the Short-tailed albatross chick transplant location has been successful. He briefly discussed federal subsistence Chinook closures that took place around the state. Mr. McBride also noted a grounding and an oil spill that have occurred but that USFW worked with USCG for cleanup and samples, and both incidents have been resolved.

IPHC Report

Gregg Williams reported on the International Pacific Halibut Commission's interim meeting, at which the IPHC discussed many items that will be covered in its annual meeting. He noted most of the meeting was webcast, and the meeting materials are available on the website. Mr. Williams noted that there was an advisory board that met before to discuss management approaches for the halibut fishery, and the Commission is working on a 5 year research plan which the public can comment on at the annual meeting. He also reviewed the status of the stock and discussed trends in the resource. Mr. Williams answered questions from the Council.

Protected Species Report

Steve MacLean noted that any discussion regarding Steller sea lions would be discussed under C-4 on the agenda. He also reviewed issues involving the Endangered Species Act, including Ice seals and the Iliamna population of Harbor seals. NMFS is responding to public comment on de-listing of the eastern population of Steller sea lions and will be publishing a final review soon.

Public comment was taken on all B items.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit suggested the Ecosystem Committee could examine the information on Norton Sound mining operations and brief the Council. It was generally agreed to discuss this issue at staff tasking.

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the value of a summary settlement table or matrix and the Council should request progress on updating to accommodate new amendments. He noted that the Council should ask for support from the NOAA HQ to get an updated schedule in the region. Chairman Olson requested that a letter be composed before the end of the meeting and Council members can review the draft.

Mr. Hull noted that the Council should use the 2013 review process for the observer deployment plan, and would like to have a discussion under staff tasking to decide how to address this topic at the April meeting. Mr. Fields concurred and it was generally agreed the Council would discuss this under staff tasking.

C-1 Groundfish Specifications

C-1 (a) Exempted Fishing Permit to test a salmon excluder in the GOA pollock fishery

BACKGROUND

An exempted fishing permit (EFP) application has been received by NMFS to test a salmon excluder device in the GOA pollock fishery in 2013 and 2014. A salmon excluder has been developed and tested for avoiding Chinook salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. This EFP proposes to adapt the device for use in the GOA pelagic trawl fishery. The goal of the EFP is to refine the excluder device to better reduce Chinook salmon bycatch without significantly lowering pollock catch rates in the GOA. Development and testing of the device would occur from January 2013 through December 2014 for several weeks in the pollock A through D seasons. Testing during two or more seasons in each year would allow the excluder device to be assessed during pollock roe and non-roe bearing seasons and a variety of salmon abundance and weather conditions. Exemptions from regulations that are necessary for this EFP for from the Central GOA Chinook salmon PSC limits, halibut PSC limits, retention requirements and trip limits for pollock, selected observer requirements, closures for the pollock directed fishery, and specified total allowable catch (TACs) for pollock.

John Gauvin gave a report on his request to test a salmon excluder in the GOA pollock fishery.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Henderschedt moved the Council approve the EFP for testing the salmon excluder in the GOA pollock fishery, including an exemption from any MRAs that might negatively impact the full retention aspect of this experimental design. The motion was seconded. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion noting that much can be accomplished, and the EFP is testing a tool individual vessels can use to reduce bycatch, and if successful, will accomplish goals the Council has set. There was brief discussion regarding the exemption for MRAs, and it was agreed additional exemptions for forage fish could be included. Discussion continued regarding the SSCs recommendation to include genetic sampling, and Mr. Henderschedt noted that it wasn't included in the motion because he was unsure where the responsibility was for the sampling. Mr. Gauvin reported that a requirement of the permit is to collect the samples and coded wire tags.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Mr. Tweit noted that this EFP is a chance to test the salmon excluder on different nets and a different boat environment, and provides information to the fleet should they adopt this.

Motion passed with no objection.

C-1 (b) Final GOA Groundfish SAFE Report and Specifications for 2013/2014

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council makes final recommendations on groundfish and bycatch specifications as listed above to manage the 2013 and 2014 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries.

GOA SAFE Document

The groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle November 13-16, 2012 to prepare the final SAFE reports and to review the status of groundfish stocks. The GOA SAFE report forms the basis for the recommended GOA groundfish specifications for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years. Note that there are three volumes to the SAFE report: a stock assessment volume, a fishery evaluation volume ("economic SAFE"), and an ecosystems considerations volume. The introduction to the GOA SAFE report was mailed to the Council and Advisory Panel November 20th. The full GOA SAFE report, the economic SAFE report and the ecosystem considerations volume were mailed to the SSC. The GOA Plan Team minutes are attached as Item C-1(b) (1). The Joint Plan Team minutes are included with the BSAI Plan Team minutes under Item C-1(c) (3). An overview of the GOA SAFE report and ecosystem considerations volume will be provided to you at the meeting.

Two year OFL and ABC Determinations

Amendment 48/48 to the GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs, implemented in 2005, removed the requirement for annual assessments of rockfishes, flatfish, and Atka mackerel since new survey data were unavailable in alternating years. This was an off-year for the GOA survey thus executive summaries are provided for most assessments this year. Full assessments will be provided in 2013 to coincide with the survey year for the GOA.

This amendment also requires proposed and final specifications for a minimum of two years thus ABC and OFL levels are provided for 2013 and 2014. In the case of stocks managed under Tier 3, 2012 and 2013 ABC and OFL projections are typically based on the output for Scenarios 1 or 2 from the standard projection model using assumed (best estimates) of actual catch levels. For stocks managed under Tiers 4 and 5 the latest survey data (2011) was used. Tier 6 stocks may have alternatives based on updated catch information.

The 2014 ABC and OFL values recommended in next year's SAFE report are likely to differ from this year's projections for 2014 because data from 2013 surveys are anticipated and a re-evaluation on the status of stocks will improve on the current available information for recommendations.

ABCs, TACs, and Apportionments

At this meeting, the Council will establish final catch specifications for the 2013 and 2014 fisheries. The SSC and AP recommendations will be provided to the Council during the meeting. Item C-1(b)(2) provides a summary of the current status of the groundfish stocks, including catch statistics, ABCs, and TACs for 2012, and recommendations for ABCs and overfishing levels (OFLs) for 2013 and 2014.

Jim Ianelli and Diana Stram gave an overview of the SAFE report, and answered questions from the Council. The SSC gave its report, and the AP gave its report. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded, to approve the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish SAFE report, as well as the Ecosystem and Economic SAFEs, and adopt final Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for 2013-2014 OFL, ABC and TAC as shown in the AP minutes (ATTACHMENT 5).

Additionally, the motion includes that the TAC Pacific cod be reduced to allow for the State water fishery according the table on page 3 of the action memo, and adopt the GOA halibut PSC apportionments annually and seasonally for 2013-2014 as shown on pages 4-5 of the action memo, as well as adopt halibut discard mortality rates for GOA for 2013-15 as shown on page 6 of action memo. Additionally, The Council recommends that both shark and octopus be put on bycatch only status and that NMFS agency consider allowing directed fishing for sculpins.

Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion, noting that he is recommending bycatch status of sharks and octopus, and to consider directed fishing for sculpins, later after research, and NMFS may be able to make a recommendation at a later date. He is not recommending directed fishing for skates, and encourages those who are interested in a skate fishery to ask the AP to review this issue in the future. There was general discussion regarding a possible skate or sculpin fishery.

Mr. Fields stated that skates, while having a part as incidental catch in the trawl fleet, are an under-utilized resource in the Eastern GOA. **He moved to amend that NMFS consider allowing directed fishing for sculpins and EGOA skates. The amendment was seconded by Mr. Cotten.**

Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that there is not a lot of fishing pressure in EGOA, no gear conflicts and opportunities should be captured when available. He underscored discretion on NMFS to make the decision. Ms. Furuness of NMFS noted that there is good potential skates could be opened to directed fishing. There was discussion regarding retention of IFQ halibut in a skate fishery, and halibut bycatch in a directed skate fishery.

Commissioner Campbell noted her concern about halibut bycatch in State of Alaska skate fisheries. Mr. Henderschedt noted that he is not opposed to a skate fishery, but opposed to creating a new fishery in this manner without public comment and answers to questions (how many vessels, baseline data, CPUE, etc.). Mr. Dersham stated his agreement and that he does have skate fishing experience, and that halibut bycatch would be a concern.

Mr. Hull notes this fishery is worth pursuing, but not in this manner. Chairman Olson encouraged the proposer to pursue this further after more information is gathered.

A vote on the amendment failed 10/1, with Mr. Fields voting in favor.

A vote on the main motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded by Mr. Tweit, to ask the Council staff to develop a proposed agenda and scheduling options for a stock structure public workshop that would provide education to the Council family on the development and use of stock structure templates, and would parse scientific and policy issues related to stock structure. Additionally, it would inform the Council on identifying next steps, including how the Council should engage on policy issues related to stock structure, and how Plan Teams would best be informed on management and policy issues.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, noting that he would leave it up to staff in consultation with the Plan Teams leadership and those involved at the science center to develop objectives and options for when a workshop will be held. He noted that a strawman should be developed for review, taking into consideration budget and resources. Further, he stated policy issues as well as practicability in developing stock structure templates could be addressed, and the workshop could ensure a transparent, informed process in which appropriate context can be maintained for stock structure decision making.

Mr. Oliver noted that he would work with staff and PT chairs to bring back agenda.

The motion passed without objection.

Mr. Hull moved the Council send a letter to the IPHC to consider participating in development of the ecosystem chapter of the SAFE documents in order to inform Council on actions of halibut management. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Hull spoke to his motion, stating that how the IPHC participates is flexible. Mr. Tweit noted his support, and supports halibut as an important part of all ecosystem management. **The motion passed unanimously.**

C-1 (c) BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and 2013/2014 harvest specifications

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council will adopt the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report and final recommendations on groundfish harvest specifications and PSC limits to manage the 2013 and 2014 BSAI groundfish fisheries. Upon publication in the Federal Register, the 2013/2014 final harvest specifications will replace harvest specifications adopted last year for the start of the 2013 fisheries.

BSAI SAFE Report The BSAI Groundfish Plan Team met in Seattle on November 13-16, 2012 to prepare the BSAI Groundfish SAFE report. The SAFE report forms the basis for BSAI groundfish harvest specifications for the next two fishing years. The introduction to the BSAI SAFE report was mailed to the Council and Advisory Panel on November 20, 2012; it summarizes the Plan Team recommendations for each stock/complex. The full report, including the Economic SAFE report and Ecosystems Considerations chapter, was distributed to the SSC and is available on the Council website. The Council will review and adopt the full report at this meeting.

The Plan Team's recommendations for final harvest specifications for 2013 and 2014 are attached as Item C-1(c)(1). In October, the Council adopted proposed harvest specifications of OFL and ABC that were based on last year's stock assessments (Item C-1(c)(2)). In this SAFE report, the Plan Team has revised those projections due to the development of new models; collection of new catch, survey, age composition, or size composition data; or use of new methodology for recommending OFLs and ABCs.

Jane DiCosimo gave the staff report on this issue. Mike Sigler gave a report on the Ecosystem Considerations, and Jim Ianelli gave a staff report on the pollock chapter. The SSC gave its report and Lori Swanson gave the AP report and answered questions from the Council. Public comment was heard .

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Mr. Cross moved, which was seconded, that the Council approve the BSAI SAFE report and the final BSAI groundfish harvest specifications for 2013 and 2014, as recommended by the SSC, and that it adopt the TACs as presented (ATTACHMENT 6) in the motion, and the PSC catch limits and seasonal apportionments of halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, and Opilio crab and herring to target fishery categories as shown in the PSC tables 7-9 in the AP motion, and tables 10 and 11, including halibut apportionment for non-trawl gear in the action memo. Also, the Council adopted the halibut discard mortality rates for CDQ and non-CDQ as shown in table 8 of the action memo.

Mr. Cross spoke to his motion, noting specifically where his motion differed from the AP's recommendations, and by how much the difference was. He pointed out that all TACs are at or below the SSC recommended ABCs and the TACs for all non-target species are set at or above the anticipated catches for these species in 2012. He also noted that the EBS pollock ABC results from a high quality stock assessment process, and that although there has been some debate about the ABC, the Plan Team and the SSC have recommended the 1.375 million ton ABC, and both have commended the assessment author on the effort he and others on the AFSC have put into the pollock assessment. For all of the assessments, the work of the Plan Teams and the SSC provide a solid foundation on which to base the management of our marine resources. Mr. Cross continued, stating that the fisheries in the BSAI are managed conservatively, and that it is his belief that his motion provides the best opportunity to achieve OY while avoiding overfishing and remaining under the 2.0 million ton OY cap. Mr. Cross discussed the PSC tables, noting changes where necessary.

Dr. Balsiger noted that while the Advisory Panel is cross section of user groups, the Council motion proposes many changes. Mr. Cross responded that TACs have room for growth, and that all fisheries need to be examined. Mr. Fields had questions of clarifications regarding the PSCs and Mary Furuness from NMFS clarified that formulas in regulations set the PSCs in the Amendment 80 sector. He noted reducing the octopus TAC is still not constraining the catch.

Mr. Tweit noted that while the AP is a good cross section of the fishing population and he is most comfortable with a vote when industry has reached a consensus, but this is not the case.

Mr. Henderschedt noted that while he generally agrees with the AP, he does not agree with the belief that TAC recommendations represent or signal a change in the fishery that would drive or increase in Chinook salmon bycatch. He also noted there is a 50% reduction in the Atka mackerel TAC which is not distributed equally among the Amendment 80 sectors. He thanked Mr. Cross for the motion. Mr. Dersham noted he is supporting the motion, and noted that all tables presented from industry and the AP do not exceed ABC and are below OFL, and the Council is making allocative decisions.

Mr. Hyder noted his support of the AP's motion because that is the Council's industry group, and on allocative decisions, they are the experts. He stated his concern that the Council is negotiating TACs in the absence of the industry coming to a consensus. He will oppose the motion and support the AP's recommendations.

Mr. Fields noted his support of the motion, but appreciates Mr. Hyder's comments relative to the AP, and noted that when considering the dynamics of the AP, the vote may not be representative of the diverging views. There was brief discussion regarding Council's responsibility to "fine tune" the recommendations from the AP and other user groups.

Mr. Olson noted his agreement with Mr. Dersham, and regardless of what agreements may be made in the industry or the Advisory Panel, it is up to Council to decide what is important.

The motion passed by a roll call vote 10/1 with Mr. Hyder in opposition.

C-2 (b) Initial Review of BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch

BACKGROUND

At this meeting the Council will take initial review of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA for Bering Sea chum salmon PSC management measures. The draft analysis was mailed to you on November 13th. The analysis examines four alternatives to reduce chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. The Council last reviewed this analysis in April 2012. At that time the Council made revisions to the alternatives and requested additional analyses.

Supplemental documents attached include the following: Per Council request in April 2012, a paper by Wolfe et al, 2011 entitled "Salmon Harvests to the Year 2050: A Predictive Model for the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Norton Sound Drainages in Alaska" was to be included in the revised analysis. An overview of the costs associated with fleet operation under the status quo rolling hot spot (RHS) system (Alternative 1) will be included also. Additional analyses to supplement the EA discussion of Alternative 4 with regards to rate differences (salmon / t pollock) inside and outside of proposed area closures as well as the overlap of existing RHS closures with those proposed under Alternative 4 are included in the Council notebooks.

At this meeting the Council will take initial review of the analysis. In doing so, the Council may wish to revise the suite of alternative management measures under consideration, request further data and/or analysis, and/or select a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA). The Council is not required to select a PPA and may wait until final action to indicate their preferred alternative. Any modifications recommended by the Council at this meeting will be analyzed in the next draft analysis, prior to it being released for public review. The Council has tentatively scheduled this action for final action in April 2013, but may modify that schedule at this meeting.

Diana Stram and Jim Ianelli provided an overview of the Environmental Assessment and Impact Analysis. Alan Haynie gave an overview of the analysis of impacts under the proposed revisions to the Chum rolling hotspot program. (Alternative 3) Scott Miller updated the Council on the Regulatory Impact Review and Jeff Hartmann reviewed regulatory considerations. The SSC had given their report earlier, the AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Merrill moved, which was seconded, the following: The Council is concerned that the current suite of alternatives does not provide a solution to the competing objectives outlined in the problem statement and purpose and need, recognizing the overall objective to minimize salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery to the extent practicable, while providing for the ability to achieve optimum yield in the pollock fishery. It is clear from the analysis thus far that measures considered to reduce bycatch of Alaska origin chum have a high likelihood of undermining the Council's previous actions to protect Chinook salmon.

The Council requests that each sector provide a proposal that would detail how they would incorporate a western Alaska chum salmon avoidance program, with vessel level accountability, within their existing Chinook IPA for Council review. Upon review and public input, the Council

would determine whether to further pursue this potential approach to best meet the multiple objectives outlined in the problem statement.

Mr. Merrill spoke to his motion, noting that he is looking for a way forward and how to address tools from other programs that may aid in reducing Chinook bycatch. There have been discussions on ways to improve alternative 3, and he stated that his motion attempts to capitalize on the ongoing efforts of the industry and ways MRAs could be improved. He noted there have been very good ideas heard in public testimony on improvements the industry can make. He noted that he is not trying to modify alternatives, but to reconsider ways to modify the rolling hot spot program, have an opportunity for public review and further analysis. There were questions for clarification on the motion from the Council members.

Mr. Henderschedt requested further discussion around industry review of programs including the rolling hot spot program. He noted that staff and industry may have additional suggestions as to how the changes could be incorporated into the IPAs and what trade-offs that may occur.

Mr. Merrill noted that the analysis may be substantially revised to strengthen the existing approaches under the rolling hotspot program, and how that can be integrated with the existing Chinook salmon bycatch measures. There was discussion regarding timing, and it was generally agreed that the Council would revisit this issue at staff tasking. Mr. Fields had questions regarding incentives to the industry to reduce bycatch, and Mr. Cross had questions regarding the ATLAS system being included in the IPA.

Mr. Fields moved to amend the motion. He stated that the motion may be aggressive, and suggested to the following language change: in the 1st sentence of the motion change "does" to "may," and add "optimum" in front of "solution to the competing objectives." And in the last full sentence, delete "high" from "high likelihood." The motion was seconded by Mr. Cotten. He spoke to his motion saying that these changes more accurately describe the action the Council is taking.

Mr. Tweit noted he will oppose the amendment, saying the original language is clear. Mr. Dersham also stated he will be opposing the motion, and taking out the word "High" minimizes the priority.

The amendment failed by roll call vote 5/6 with Merrill, Campbell, Cotten, Fields, and Olson voting in favor.

Mr. Fields spoke to the main motion saying he will be voting against the motion, even though he agrees with the idea, but by going back it prejudices the initial package. Ms. Campbell noted that supporting the motion does not prohibit them from going back to original alternatives, and the Council can further modify the alternatives to suit the needs, and acknowledged work that needs to be done to make it a viable package.

Mr. Henderschedt noted his agreement with the Commissioner. He acknowledged some changes may be appropriate, some not. He thanked Mr. Merrill, and noted that this creates a great opportunity for stakeholders and Council as well as Chum salmon holders in Western Alaska to participate and comment, and encourages a direct approach to find that solution is effective and meets objectives. He also noted that the existing RHS program has proven effective and cautioned the Council to manage their expectations.

Mr. Olson spoke that all options that can be back on the table for discussion, and he stated that he sees the need for a back stop cap in the RHS program to adjust some of the high years.

Mr. Tweit noted his support for the motion. He noted this is an opportunity for industry to implement new program, but is still not giving up on the Council working toward a full set of bycatch tools. He noted that a set of measures alone don't constitute a bycatch management program, and wants to be able to measure performance and urges the Council to be thinking about other ways to do this that don't have outcomes that are counter-productive or meaningless.

Mr. Fields noted that bycatch that has any impact in Western Alaska is not ok.

The main motion passed with Mr. Fields objecting.

There was general discussion on timing, and it was agreed to discuss it further during staff tasking.

C-2 (c) Initial review on GOA Chinook bycatch for non-pollock trawl fisheries

BACKGROUND

This analysis evaluates management measures to address Chinook salmon bycatch or prohibited species catch (PSC) in the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries. The alternatives included in the initial review document are specific to the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries occurring in the Western and Central GOA, and include setting Chinook salmon PSC limits for these fisheries, and requiring full retention of all salmon species. The document analyzes four potential PSC limits, ranging from a maximum of 5,000 to 12,500 Chinook salmon per year. The Council may choose to apply a Chinook salmon PSC limit to the Western and Central GOA as a whole, or to apportion the selected PSC limit either by regulatory area, by operational type (catcher vessels and catcher/processor), or by operational type within each regulatory area. Attaining the PSC limit would result in a groundfish fishery closure for the remainder of the year, for that portion of the GOA non-pollock trawl fishery to which the limit applies.

Diana Evans and Sam Cunningham gave the staff report on this agenda item and answered questions from the Council members. The AP gave its report, and the SSC report on this agenda item was heard earlier. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Commissioner Campbell made the following motion, which was seconded:

Problem statement:

Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards require balancing achieving optimum yield with minimizing bycatch, while minimizing adverse impacts on fishing dependent communities. Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) taken incidentally in GOA trawl fisheries is a concern, and incidental take is limited in the Biological Opinion for ESA-listed Chinook salmon stocks. The Council recently adopted a PSC limit of 25,000 Chinook salmon for the Western and Central GOA pollock trawl fisheries, while also indicating intent to evaluate Chinook salmon bycatch in the non-pollock GOA trawl fisheries, which currently do not have a Chinook salmon bycatch control measure.

The following alternatives apply to non-pollock trawl fisheries in the Central and Western GOA.

Alternative 1: Status quo.

Alternative 2: 5,000, 7,500, 10,000, or 12,500 Chinook salmon PSC limit (hard cap).

Option 1: Apportion limit between Central and Western GOA.

Option 2: Apportion limit by directed fishery operational type (CV vs. CP).

Applies to both options 1 and 2: Apportion proportional to historic average bycatch of Chinook salmon (5- or 10-year average).

Option 3: No more than 50% or 66% of the annual hard cap limit can be taken before June 1.

Option 4: Separate Chinook salmon PSC limit (hard cap) to the CGOA rockfish program:

- a) 1,500
- b) 2,500
- c) 3,500

Suboption 1: Divide by sector (CV and CP) based on actual Chinook salmon PSC usage by sector for the rockfish catch share program years of 2007 – 2012.

Each LLP holder within sector will receive an allocation of Chinook salmon PSC equivalent to the license's proportion of the sector's target rockfish catch history from the program's initial allocations. Member LLP allocations will be allocated to their respective cooperative.

Suboption 2: On October 1st, rollover all but 200, 300, or 400 remaining Chinook salmon to support other fall non-pollock trawl fisheries.

Suboptions 1 and/or 2 can be selected for Option 4.

Alternative 3: Full retention of salmon.

Vessels will retain all salmon bycatch until the number of salmon has been determined by the vessel or plant observer and the observer's collection of any scientific data or biological samples from the salmon has been completed.

Note, both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 could be selected by the Council in their preferred alternative. Likewise, under Alternative 2, both Option 1 and Option 2, or Option 2 and Option 3, could be selected by the Council; Option 4 can be selected with any of the other options.

She noted the motion retains the original problem statement, and makes some changes as recommended by the advisory panel, and that the document is ready for public review. She noted her interest in an expanded discussion of what needs to be done to allow for a full census approach and collection of information that determines stock of origin for the salmon that are being taken as bycatch. The new option for seasonal allocations will help protect fall fisheries, as well as a separate allocation for the GOA rockfish program. The analysis should include how the coops can incorporate salmon avoidance in their agreements. She continued, saying that hard caps are not an ideal tool, but there are better solutions that will follow, and that it would be irresponsible to not start the process, especially in fisheries that have high potential for Chinook mortality. Ms. Campbell answered questions of clarification from the Council members, and clarified that EM and VMS as tools could be considered to support full retention.

Ms. Campbell clarified that as the analysis proceeds, the purpose and needs statement will also develop. She stated that stocks of salmon are highly valuable, the fisheries have high mortality of stocks, and the Council has requirement to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable, and to minimize impacts on fishing communities. That is the problem the Council is trying to address with this action.

With respect to suboption 2, it was noted that the first decision point is deciding if a rollover is appropriate; should rollovers be allowed, then the Council would decide the appropriate amount that should be held back for the rockfish program.

There was general discussion regarding using different options for different sectors, and that the Council should signal to the public that the Council can retain the ability to use different approaches.

Mr. Fields moved to amend, which was seconded, to insert under Alternative 2, after option 2, and it would apply to option 1 and 2. The amendment would add:

A. apportion proportional to historic average bycatch of Chinook salmon

B. apportion proportional to historic average harvest of non-pollock groundfish total harvest on (5or 10 year average).

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that the result of this amendment is to give the Council a wide range of alternatives, and to provide additional information on rates of bycatch. He noted the apportionment range is relatively narrow for the CGOA and WGOA, and wants to look at larger range to account for bycatch rate.

He also stated that there is a clear difference between the 5 year average and the 10 year average in the WGOA and CGOA, and it makes it more difficult at final action to have only one choice. Using the 10 year range expands the years for consideration by about 10%, and would be background tables included in the analysis to evaluate the range for decision.

Mr. Tweit commented that an additional analysis is not needed to point out that different groundfish fisheries have different bycatch needs. While he understands that the Council is not trying to reward bycatch, it is also not practical to award bycatch amounts to those fisheries that need it least (due to the nature of different target fisheries). He would like to keep the analysis streamlined in order to keep action moving.

Mr. Henderschedt suggested asking analysts do a 2 tier consideration of data and look at performance of CV and CP fleet by target to compare performance. There was discussion regarding target fishery comparison and analysis, breaking out by operation type, and if the analysis currently contains data necessary to make an “apples to apples” decision in allocations.

Mr. Cotten noted that there have been concerns expressed in public comment that there are fisheries that have a very low rate of Chinook salmon bycatch, and based on their history they’d be awarded a very low allowance, therefore any anomaly would cause a problem. He will support the amendment because of the increased options available to unique situations.

There were questions to staff about the implication of this amendment on the next iteration of the document, and staff noted that it could be included. Ms. Campbell noted that the current range of options is exceedingly narrow. With more information back, the Council can evaluate sectors and can adjust sector allocations. She supports the amendment because the current options are so limited.

Mr. Fields stated that staff is likely to be more inclusive rather than less inclusive, but doesn’t want to direct staff.

Mr. Olson noted he will be supporting the amendment because it will give them a broader range to choose from when they decide to take final action.

The vote on the amendment passed 7/4 with Merrill, Cross, Henderschedt, and Tweit in opposition.

Mr. Merrill moved to amend the opening sentence in the motion to revise the first sentence to read: “The Council forwards the analysis for initial review with changes to the alternatives and options described below.” The amendment was seconded.

Mr. Merrill spoke to the motion, citing extensive changes and the need for the agency to go back and look at monitoring and enforcement. Additionally, he noted the amendment will provide an opportunity for the public see document again. Ms. Campbell noted that the public has been able to review options, and reaffirmed the urgency to protect Chinook salmon, and the preference would be to stay with the language in the original motion.

The amendment failed 4/7, with Merrill, Hyder, Henderschedt, and Cross in favor.

Mr. Tweit spoke to the main motion stating that he believes the tools that are available here are blunt tools and not optimal, and that there will be significant challenges, particularly in monitoring and enforcement. However, there are urgent needs facing the management of Chinook. He stated that the Council members should have bycatch controls in any fishery that catches Chinook. The larger catch share package is the long term solution. That will allow the Council to truly control bycatch. This current motion is an emergency package for an emergency need.

Mr. Henderschedt noted that despite amendments made, he will still support the motion and associates with Mr. Tweit's remarks, that there is an urgency needed to move forward and develop catch share tools. He noted that the Council heard excellent testimony and input from stakeholders. Going forward, he noted the Council should make every effort to not be hobbled by the lowest common denominator in terms of enforcement, and at the same time be fair and equitable to use whatever tools are available to reduce the likelihood and severity of a high bycatch time. The approach needs to be careful and managed in looking for a cap for all non-pollock fisheries.

Mr. Hyder stated his support for the motion, but disagrees that this will solve an emergency. He stated that this package, by capping bycatch in the manner that it does, will prevent an exceedingly high bycatch, but doesn't give those involved the tools to prevent bycatch.

Mr. Cross noted his support of the motion, and agreed with Commissioner about needing to protect Chinook and is hopeful that it doesn't become allocative, or based on different sectors. Mr. Cotten hoped work will continue on the overall package, and is confident the staff will get there, especially with Mr. Field's amendment.

Mr. Merrill noted the agency will continue to find ways to address management and enforcement concerns raised, but if they can't be resolved, then the agency may not support final action.

The amended main motion passed without objection.

C-3 (a) Council recommendations to IPHC on management measures for Area 2C for 2013

BACKGROUND

Past Beginning in 2012, the Council adopted a new approach to manage the charter halibut fisheries under the Guideline Harvest Level Program. Based on recommendations from its committee, Advisory Panel, and public, along with an ADF&G staff analysis of a range of alternatives, the Council recommended one fish ≤ 45 inches or ≥ 68 inches ("U45O68") for Area 2C in 2012. This management measure accounted for an increased GHL from 788,000 lb in 2011 to 931,000 lb in 2012. This "reverse slot limit" would allow the retention of halibut approximately ≤ 32 lb and ≥ 123 lb (dressed weight). For Area 3A the Council recommended status quo (2 fish of any size) based on a decreased GHL from 3.651 Mlb in 2011 to 3.103 Mlb in 2012. The IPHC adopted the Council recommendations at its January 2012 meeting in Anchorage. NMFS implemented the IPHC action as part of the annual management measures on March 22, 2012 (77 FR 16740).

The preliminary 2012 halibut harvest projection for Area 2C is 0.645 M lb for the charter sector. The average weight is 14.6 lb for the charter halibut sector. Both metrics were up from 2011, likely due to

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

relaxation of size limits from the 37-inch maximum size limit in 2011 to the U45O68 reverse slot limit in 2012. The projected halibut harvest in Area 3A is 2.375 M lb, with an average weight 13.3 lb for the charter halibut sector in 2012. These are the lowest estimated average weights for Area 3A since ADF&G began monitoring charter harvests in the early 1990s.

Present *The Charter Management Implementation Committee met on October 19, 2012 to recommend a range of potential management measures for Area 2C in 2013 for the ADF&G analysis. For Area 2C, the range of alternatives under consideration continues to be constrained by the 1-fish bag limit, which is implemented under NMFS regulations.*

- 1. Analyze reverse slot limits over a wider range of lower limits.*
- 2. Consult with NMFS to see if annual limits are even a possibility for Area 2C. If so, analyze a 1-fish annual exemption from a maximum size limit.*

Final committee recommendations will be provided in the minutes from its December 4 meeting. The minutes and ADF&G analysis will be distributed during the Council meeting.

Future *ADF&G staff plans to revise the preliminary analysis prior to the committee's December 4 meeting, based on the outcome of the IPHC's Interim Meeting on November 28 – 29, 2012 (Item B-7 supplemental). As reported under Agenda B-7, the IPHC is revising its process for providing staff recommendations on halibut fishery catch limits (Item B-7 supplemental). This new process, which is still under development, likely, will complicate this annual process of determining annual management measures for the charter sector. It may be necessary for ADF&G to revise its analysis based on final catch limits adopted by the IPHC at its January Annual Meeting, after which the Council would adopt its final recommendation in February. This may necessitate follow-up action by IPHC to consider the Council recommendation and adopt final management measures for the charter sector in Area 2C and Area 3A. The IPHC report under Agenda B-7 and the IPHC informational meeting on the evening of December 6 may clarify some of the IPHC process, as a result of additional discussions by the IPHC.*

Jane DiCosimo and Scott Meyer gave the staff report on this agenda item. The SSC did not address this issue, and Lori Swanson gave the AP report. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Dersham moved, which was seconded:

If the IPHC at its 2013 annual meeting chooses total CEYs that result in GHLS of 788,000 lbs for Area 2C charter harvest and 2,373,000 lbs for area 3A charter harvest (the blue line), the Council recommends 2012 status quo management measures for Areas 2C and 3A charter fisheries (1 fish daily bag limit and reverse slot limit of U45-O68 for areas 2C and 2 fish of any size daily bag limit for area 3A).

If the IPHC chooses a total CEY for either or both areas that results in a higher GHLS, the Council recommends the same 2012 status quo management measures for both areas.

Mr. Dersham spoke to his motion, stating the recommendation of status quo for Area 2C will keep the charter fleet below its GHLS. The anticipated number of anglers in the time series forecast is much closer to what would actually happen, than the recent rate of change. More anglers had interest in more than just one fish. In addition, Area 2C average weight is a more realistic expectation than the one from the model.

He continued, stating under 2 harvest scenarios, if the average weight jumped up 2lbs, harvest for 2013 would still fall under GHLS. He stated it is a conservative estimate of what would happen. In addition to

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

benefits to the charter industry, static regulations for 2 years in a row are a good thing for a management and for the businesses to be stable. Numbers are conservative in Area 3A, with the projection of lower number of anglers and a similar or smaller size of fish. Status quo will work in Area 3A to keep harvest within the GHL.

Mr. Hull spoke to management measures and noted that the motion is silent on what IPHC would do if they looked at lower CEY levels. Mr. Dersham responded that it is highly unlikely that the IPHC would choose lower numbers of total CEY for either Area 3A or Area 2C that would result in stair step down for Area 3A.

Mr. Tweit thanked staffs of the agencies for support through this process, and commends them on logbook procedures and tracking performance.

Ms. Kimball noted that she can support the motion for reasons Mr. Dersham mentioned. She noted the SSC requested methodologies and have been used in the analysis which allows the Council to look objectively at the recommendations.

Mr. Dersham thanked the members of Charter Implementation Committee for its work in staying engaged, and the Council has benefitted as part of the process. He also thanked the commercial IFQ industry for its support this year, and lauded their cooperation.

Dr. Balsiger thanked those involved for the cooperative effort.

The motion passed unanimously.

C-3 (b) Discussion paper on CQE small block restrictions

BACKGROUND

In 2004, the halibut and sablefish IFQ program was revised to allow a distinct set of 42 remote, coastal communities with few economic alternatives to purchase and hold catcher vessel quota share (QS) in Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B, in order to help ensure access to and sustain participation in the commercial halibut and sablefish fisheries. Eligible communities can form non-profit corporations called Community Quota Entities (CQEs) to purchase catcher vessel QS, and the annual IFQ resulting from the QS can only be leased to community residents. CQE communities are subject to QS purchase and use caps.

In June 2012, the Council heard testimony that a resident of a community that had established a Community Quota Entity (CQE) to purchase and lease halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) to community residents had attempted to sell his halibut IFQ to the community's CQE. The CQE was unable, however, to purchase the IFQ, because it was a block of quota share, and the CQE discovered it was limited by a minimum size restriction on its ability to purchase blocks. As a result, the Council requested a discussion paper to evaluate removing restrictions on CQE communities buying small blocks of IFQ, at least and especially from CQE residents.

Ms. Evans gave the staff report on this issue. Lori Swanson gave the AP report, and public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Fields moved the following:

The Council initiate an amendment package that allows CQE communities (including the Gulf and Adak) to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share, but that the CQE communities still be limited to 10 blocks of halibut quota share and 5 blocks of sablefish quota share.

The Council recommends the analysis examine 2 alternatives in addition to the status quo:

- 1. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share.**
- 2. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share only from residents of any CQE community.**

In addition, the Council approves the following problem statement:

Problem Statement:

Responsive to National Standard 8, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council established the Community Quota Entity (CQE) program to encourage sustained participation in the Halibut and Sablefish Quota Share Program by residents of smaller Gulf of Alaska fishery dependent communities. CQEs were prohibited from purchasing smaller “sweep up” blocks of quota shares because of concerns that CQE quota purchases could negatively impact quota share price and availability. Concerns about CQE purchase and market impacts on price and availability have not been realized. Moreover, purchase prohibitions on small “sweep up “ blocks prevent CQEs from buying much of the quota available in CQE communities, and thereby thwart the goals of sustained participation by CQE community residents in the Halibut and Sablefish Quota Share Program. This amendment will further the sustained participation goals of the CQE program by allowing CQE communities to purchase small “sweep up” blocks of quota shares.

Mr. Fields spoke to his motion noting that this motion will immediately address the problem of Ouzinkie, but will also examine reasons why small block restrictions exist especially since the overall impact on market is unlikely. He noted he is not offering the 3rd recommendation from the AP, because it is too narrow a scope for the problem the Council is trying to solve. Mr. Fields noted the program has not been successful so far, and any small tweaks the Council can do for it to be successful will be worthwhile.

Mr. Henderschedt moved to amend to put the 3rd recommendation back in to state:

- 3. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share only from residents of their CQE community.**

Mr. Tweit seconded the amendment. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to the motion, noting that it is important to review the contrast between having anyone purchase quota versus members of the community. Ms. Kimball noted it is not a viable option, but will support the motion. **The amendment passed without objection.**

Mr. Hull noted that this is an appropriate motion for the Council and the main reason the full impacts of the CQE program have not been realized is not just the availability of quota share, but the ability of CQEs to borrow money to make the purchases. He expects to see this discussion in the analysis.

Amended main motion passes without objection.

C-3 (c) Retention of Area 4A halibut in sablefish pots

BACKGROUND

In 2008, a regulatory proposal was submitted to the International Pacific Halibut Commission to allow fishermen with commercial IFQs for both halibut and sablefish to retain halibut in Area 4A that were caught in sablefish pot. The IPHC would have to define pots (of specified dimensions) to be legal gear for retaining halibut. While the IPHC could have taken unilateral action, it referred the proposal to the Council for its consideration and guidance to the IPHC.

The Council reviewed the proposal under its 2009 call for IFQ proposals. In February 2010, based on an IFQ Implementation Committee recommendation, the Council requested a discussion paper on the potential effects of the proposed action. The Council affirmed that the premise of the paper would be that sablefish pot tunnel regulations would not change in the BS/AI regulatory area. The Council's review of the paper is timed so that the IPHC may consider Council recommendations on the proposal during its January 2013 Annual Meeting. The paper will be distributed at the Council meeting.

Jane DiCosimo gave an overview of the proposal and a review of the discussion paper. The AP gave its report, and the SSC did not address this issue. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Mr. Hull moved, with a seconded, that staff further refine the discussion paper on the retention of 4A halibut in sablefish pots to address the following issues:

- 1. Determine whether there is overlap in the spatial and/or temporal distribution of halibut longlining and sablefish potfishing in the portion of Area 4A to which this proposal would apply.**
- 2. Discuss the potential need for the following regulations:**
 - a. Requiring the removal of sablefish pots from the fishing grounds upon completion of the harvest of the vessel's sablefish IFQ, and at the end of the season.**
 - b. Requiring radar reflectors or other gear markers at both ends of a longline pot string.**
 - c. Prohibiting "pot sharing" while pots are in the water.**
 - d. Prohibiting the modification of sablefish pot tunnels.**
- 3. Discuss the physical and market condition of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots.**
- 4. Provide a discussion of the experiences and lessons learned by the industry and managers in Areas 2A and 2B from allowing the retention of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots, including retention caps.**

Additionally, the Council should send a letter to the IPHC to describe the Council's interest in further review of the proposal.

Mr. Hull spoke to his motion, noting that this proposal has been reviewed twice by the IFQ Implementation Committee and most recently was recommended for development into a discussion paper for conservation reasons. The main purpose of the proposal is to allow the retention of halibut caught

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

incidentally in sablefish pots, noting the increase in predation of halibut by killer whales that occur in the halibut longline fishery. Thus this proposal could also serve to minimize bycatch of halibut.

Mr. Hull stated that if it is the Council's intent that should this proceed to a regulatory amendment, it would be to require the retention of legal-sized halibut in sablefish pots in regulatory Area 4A by vessels holding 4A halibut IFQ.

He continued, stating that this discussion paper may also inform the Council regarding a separate proposal to allow sablefish pots in the Gulf of Alaska and a revised discussion paper can serve multiple objectives. Lastly, he stated from review of the discussion paper and public testimony that there are questions whether this proposal truly serves a conservation objective, or not, and further analysis is warranted.

There were brief questions of clarification from the Council, and Mr. Hull clarified that a letter to the IPHC is only to inform it of the Council's intent, which would give the IPHC time to determine action. Dr. Balsiger confirmed.

The motion passed without objection.

C-4 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation

BACKGROUND

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) has been meeting regularly since May to develop alternatives for consideration in the 2012 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS. At this meeting, the Council will receive recommended alternatives from the SSLMC and may choose to forward recommended alternatives, modify alternatives, or develop different alternatives for NMFS to evaluate in the EIS. The SSLMC recommend alternatives will be distributed during the meeting.

The scoping period for the SSL Mitigation Measures EIS ended on October 15, 2012. A scoping report was submitted to the Council on November 19, 2012. At this meeting, Ms. Melanie Brown (NMFS SF) will present the scoping report to the Council and is available to answer any questions about the scoping report and progress made to date on the EIS.

NMFS PR is also developing methods to evaluate a proposed action that results from the 2012 SSL Mitigation Measures EIS. NMFS plans to present the methods to the Council and the SSC in April, and may be able to provide a preliminary indication of whether the alternative would result in a jeopardy or adverse modification (JAM) determination. At this meeting, Ms. Brandee Gerke (NMFS PR) is available to discuss the planned evaluation methods and timeline for providing preliminary advice to the Council.

Melanie Brown reviewed the scoping report. Steve MacLean and Larry Cotter gave an update from the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee, reviewing the recommended alternatives. The SSC did not address this issue, and Lori Swanson gave the AP report. Public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Henderschedt:

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

1. **The council expects NFS to produce the EIS consistent with the court order and timelines approved therein, fully incorporating the findings of both independent reviews, and provide full analysis of all controversial issues,**
2. **The Council expects the EIS to state how alternatives considered and decisions based on it will or will not achieve the requirements of other environmental laws.**
3. **The Council expects the EIS process will result in reconsultation on a package of fishery measures that, when compared to the 2010 BiOp, better balance the need to protect Steller sea lion populations in the central and western AI, the needs of the groundfish fisheries and fishery dependent communities, using the best scientific information as a foundation, including the results of the peer-review process.**
4. **The Council forwards the two alternatives developed by the SSLMC for analysis in the EIS, with the following modifications: (the two alternatives and modifications attached as ATTACHMENT 7)**
 - a. **In Alternative 1, Pacific cod, area 542/541 strike language beginning with “Option 1: Limit...” and ending with “Option 2: Include Mothership participation”.**
 - b. **In Alternative 2, Pacific cod, area 543 strike language beginning with “Option 1: Limit...” and ending with “Option 2: Include Mother ship participation”.**
5. **In addition, the Council moves a third alternative which consists of the regulations and RPAs for Atka mackerel and Pacific cod in place prior to adoption of the 2011 Interim Final Rule, adjusted to take into account changes in fishery management that have occurred since 2003 (e.g., Amendment 80, etc.), and for walleye pollock, includes the measures contained in SSLMC Alternative 2 to allow a fishery in areas 543, 542, 541.**

Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion, noting that it is complex and speaks to different issues, and the largest issues are surrounding Alternative 1 and other allocative issues, and the Council will need to do more to respond to those.

He continued, saying this is an opportunity to examine the EIS, and how is science being applied to sea lion management. He reviewed the purpose and needs statement briefly, and noted that the SSLMC provided an in-depth review of the Alternatives and built a good record. He noted the Council needs to restructure the fisheries and make allocations in an expedited fashion in order to accommodate a Pacific cod split in 2014, and to simplify some of the work that needs to happen between now and March. Mr. Tweit answered questions of clarification from the Council.

Mr. Henderschedt remarked that there are many unknowns, and had questions regarding what would be needed to allow a mothership fishery. Mr. Tweit replied that the analysis and discussion around the kind of metrics in 542 and 541 should be informational to the Council to make decisions. The analysis will reflect where there is a scientific consensus.

Mr. MacLean confirmed that the SSLMC discussed allocating the catch in areas, not to exceed the cap. He noted the Committee wasn't asked to take on allocative issues. The Council asked more questions of clarification to the staff. Mr. Tweit pointed out that the Council has tough choices in the future as to how cod fisheries will be conducted and a majority of those decisions can be made outside the EIS process.

Mr. Fields moved to amend by revising the number one to read: The Council acknowledges NMFS efforts to produce an EIS consistent with the court order and timelines approved therein, fully incorporating the findings of both independent reviews, and providing an analysis of all relevant issues. It was seconded. Mr. Fields remarked that this is a less harsh statement, and the Council is

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

interested in all issues, not just the controversial ones. Mr. Tweit noted that he had included “controversial” because it was included in the list from the SSLMC. **The motion passed without objection.**

Mr. Fields also moved to amend that the Council encourage the EIS authors to thoroughly review how alternatives were selected and considered and to clearly outline how decisions based on EIS analysis conform to the requirements of environmental law. Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, stating he is just trying to capture the intent. Mr. Tweit noted that he took the language verbatim from NMFS NEPA regulations. **Mr. Fields withdrew motion, with concurrence of the second.**

Mr. Henderschedt noted on Page 4, under pollock 542 and 541, and page 8 under pollock, 1st bullet point, he moved to amend that in each instance language be modified as follows:

**Strike TAC and replace with ABC between 541 and 542, (and on page 8, 541, 542 and 543)
“Based on the best estimate of total Aleutian Islands biomass ratio using the same methods as applied to Atka mackerel ABC, while allowing while allowing TAC to be harvested in any ratio within the limitations of the area specific ABCs.”**

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, noting that his intent is to allow for maximum flexibility for achieving TAC while ensuring the area specific ABC would not be exceeded. Mr. Henderschedt gave specific examples, and answered questions of clarification from the Council. **The amendment passed without objection.**

Mr. Fields spoke to the main motion and noted his support of the work of the SSLMC and the Council, and requests future work that encompasses public testimony.

Ms. Campbell noted her agreement with the maker of the motion that a cod split is imminent, and that the SSL EIS is not an appropriate place to take on allocative issues. She requested to the extent possible, that in the next version, the Council needs information from the agency about the metric they will use to evaluate removals, and can design fisheries management options that are responsive to that information. She noted that as the analysis will bring out information and it is important to notice the public and be open to input from the public and industry. She continued, stating that the Council will need to address this in staff tasking about the work the Council needs to do outside EIS process to address implications of pending TAC split to address in our normal TAC process.

Chairman Olson noted his agreement, and stated that stakeholders need to be involved, and urged those in the audience to come back at staff tasking part of the agenda when the Council will consider the next steps.

Mr. Henderschedt expressed support for the motion, and hopes to provide opportunities for all sectors in the long term. Mr. Tweit commended the SSLMC for its diligence and interaction with NMFS, and that resources were made available. The SSLMC was pivotal in providing the Council with up to date information. Mr. Tweit would like as much collaborative insight as how the agency is relating to NEPA issues, and will not replicate the rugged experiences from the last EIS, but as chair of mitigation committee, it is his hope be able to return to the relationship and atmosphere that provided us with an earlier EIS.

The main motion passed without objection.

Mr. Olson noted that the Council may come back to the cod split issue in in staff tasking.

D-1 (a) Progress report on PSEIS SIR

BACKGROUND

In June 2012, the Council considered whether the time is right to revisit the 2004 Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS). To determine if a revision or supplement to the PSEIS is necessary at this time, the Council and NMFS decided first to conduct a “non-NEPA” evaluation of the PSEIS. This evaluation would result in a supplementary information report (SIR); similar to the SIR NMFS prepares annually for the groundfish harvest specifications. A SIR is a tool to evaluate the need to prepare a new EIS to supplement a previous EIS. NEPA requires agencies to prepare a supplemental EIS to either draft or final EISs if the agency (1) makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or (2) there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts (40 CFR 1502.9(c)).

At the June 2012 meeting, staff provided some general ideas for what a programmatic SIR might include, and what useful function it might serve (in addition to its primary purpose of evaluating whether NEPA obligations are continuing to be met). It was suggested that staff bring back to the Council a more specific outline of the SIR content, and the process for developing that content, for Council approval.

Diana Evans and Gretchen Harrington gave the staff report on this agenda item. Lori Swanson gave the AP report on this agenda item. The SSC did not take up this issue, and there was no public comment.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit noted that the process outlined in the consistent with the Council’s discussion and that there is no need for a motion. He did note that it may be helpful to use the Council’s sub-committee to assist with the development of this item as appropriate.

D-1 (b) VMS use and requirements.

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, the Council initiated a discussion paper to review the use of (and requirements for) vessel monitoring systems (VMS) in the North Pacific fisheries and other regions. At the April 2012 meeting, the Council reviewed the discussion paper, and requested that it be expanded to identify the needs for management, enforcement, compliance, and safety in the fisheries and what is the appropriate technology for meeting those needs. The Council also requested that the expanded discussion paper include: 1) a description of advanced features of VMS like geo-fencing, increasing poll rates, and declarations of species, gear and area; 2) expanded discussion of VMS alternatives to include electronic monitoring; and 3) expanded discussion on VMS requirements in other regions to include the purpose and need for VMS coverage in those regions and whether VMS has been successful in meeting those needs.

At the October meeting, the Council postponed review of the discussion paper due to time constraints. However, the Council recommended the discussion paper be expanded to include the Enforcement Committee recommendations, which include an evaluation of previous search and rescue cases, and further refinement of the characterization of vessels that are not required to carry VMS.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Jon McCracken gave the staff report on this agenda item, and Ken Hansen of NOAA Enforcement gave a brief overview of regulations currently in place. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded by Mr. Fields, that the Council take no further action on the issue of new Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements until such time that the Alaska Fisheries Science Center provides information and results from its 2013 deployment of electronic monitoring included in the new Observer Program, and the Council reviews the Strategic Plan for EM.

Mr. Hull spoke to his motion and thanked the analysts for their work on this paper and all those involved who have worked to explain VMS and how it works in the fisheries. He continued, stating the discussion paper noted that enforcement and in-season management will be the primary users of VMS, but ongoing work in the new observer program will evaluate EM systems and technologies as a means to provide fishing information. He noted it is the Council's duty to evaluate other tools that exist to address this issue, and not just enforcement and management, but scientific information and the ability to validate observer data. He is concerned if the Council limits selection to only VMS without first evaluating other tools, the Council may have to create exemptions, rather than waiting for information from the pilot project to determine which technologies are appropriate for which objectives.

There was discussion regarding the expectations of a report, and what it can provide. Mr. Hull noted his expectations as cost, reliability of using technology on a vessel, what it takes to review data, chain of custody of data, validation, etc., and how agencies would use the kind of information gathered for either science, management, or enforcement. There were questions of clarification regarding the motion, and questions of staff. Mr. Loefflad noted that much of the infrastructure to use VMS exists today, and the new proposals for new electronic monitoring are categorized under research and development. There was general discussion regarding the difference between EM and VMS, and Mr. Loefflad defined VMS as an EM system.

There was continued discussion regarding the draft strategic plan of EM, and staff is planning to come back in June 2013 with a draft strategic plan with further development of these tools. Ms. Campbell noted that the Council will be better served to wait for the discussion of all types of electronic monitoring tools, and further development of those tools. She stated her belief that the Council has begun development of a package that allows for this discussion in a comprehensive way which outlines needs, objectives, and ways to meet those objectives.

Mr. Tweit noted his disappointment with the motion, stating the Council has had enforcement experts identify ways to reduce costs and increase efficiency by using VMS. He stated that the Council doesn't need new tools to meet enforcement needs when the infrastructure exists for VMS and is already an acceptable enforcement tool.

Mr. Henderschedt moved to make a substitute motion, which would be to move the discussion paper forward, with the addition of the data logger technology. Mr. Cross seconded the motion and Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, noting that while he agrees with the Commissioner's remarks and likes the idea of the motion, it is not matching up with the objectives of the observer program. He noted that there is potential utility in the fleet, and at a much lower cost. Mr. Fields noted he will not be supporting the substitute motion, and is concerned that this program would require the fleet to make an initial investment at 1M dollars, and he states the appropriate place for VMS is within the observer

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

program. Mr. Cross noted his agreement with the Commissioner, and is sensitive to fleet costs. However, there is a cost to the loss of information that would happen should they wait.

Ms. Campbell pointed out the Council has asked several times for expanded discussion on alternatives to VMS, and this motion would not have any new information. Mr. Olson noted he would oppose the substitute motion, and that “electronic monitoring” needs to be defined.

The vote on the substitute motion failed 7/4, with Henderschedt, Tweit, Cross and Hyder in favor.

Mr. Tweit spoke to the main motion, stating he would like an analysis and not wait several more years, and would like options in the paper. Mr. Henderschedt remarked he cannot support a motion that does not correctly state what will be feasibly or economically in place by 2013.

The motion passed with a roll call vote passed 7/4, with Cross, Henderschedt, Hyder and Tweit in opposition.

Mr. Tweit noted that the motion was not intended to address all parts of the action, and it is the Council’s decision to decide if they want to make use of the advanced features of electronic monitoring.

D-2 Staff Tasking

Jane DiCosimo gave an update on the status of discussion papers for current IFQ proposals. Steve MacLean gave an update on a request for a Round Island transit corridor. Chris Oliver reviewed various items the Council has requested for discussion during this agenda item, and other Council members listed items to be discussed. Chris Oliver reviewed the three meeting outlook. The AP gave its report, and public comment was taken.

Mr. Fields moved, which was seconded, to approve minutes with minor corrections.

Ecosystem Committee and EFH

Mr. Tweit moved to request the Ecosystem Committee meet in advance of February meeting, and in addition to what is already on agenda, ask them to get a briefing from NMFS on Norton Sound mining operations and EFH issues, and also ask them to assess ecosystem tools that are available and scope out a path for the Committee and Council so they can, over the next years, consider the changes and advances in ecosystem management and consider how to incorporate that into Council management frameworks and processes. He spoke to his motion, stating that this would allow the Council to think more broadly about use of tools. Mr. Olson noted that the motion was not necessarily a motion but direction to the Committee. Ms. Campbell noted that ADF&G has spent time with the Department of Natural Resources on the EFH issue, and suggested coordination with the Committee. Mr. Henderschedt noted that the discussion of ecosystem tools should include modeling, and model development. It was generally agreed all the involved agencies would be considered.

Enforcement Committee and VMS

Mr. Tweit recommended the Enforcement Committee assess the utility of advanced VMS features such as geofencing, increased polling rates, and declarations of species, gear and area for improving enforcement efforts and efficiency for fisheries already subject to VMS requirements, and provide implementation recommendations to the Council. He noted they could be in the form of agency regulations, Council actions, and some may not be worth implementing. It was generally agreed this would be on the next Committee agenda.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Amendment 91

Mr. Henderschedt noted that summary settlements are a very useful tool, and since Amendment 91 has been implemented after the last settlement table, he recommends the Council send a letter to NOAA GC and the enforcement, pointing out there have been changes to the regulatory system since the last schedule has been approved and the Council would appreciate an updated schedule implemented promptly. **The motion was seconded by Mr. Fields, and it passed without objection.**

Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee

Mr. Tweit heard updates from staff and that a Committee meeting will be held prior to the April meeting. He noted that a preliminary review of the EIS and work with agency staff. Mr. Olson noted he will be scheduling with the Chairman and Agency.

Chum Salmon Bycatch and Timing

Mr. Henderschedt acknowledged the importance of this issue, and after checking with those involved as far as scheduling to work on this assignment, the Council should request a later date than April for proposed IPA program changes in order to have a thorough plan from those involved. Mr. Fields noted that while a thorough plan is preferable, he is concerned about a timeline that is too far out, and requested a status update in April. There was discussion regarding what a status update would include, and Mr. Fields noted that it would include analysis of the rolling hot spot program. Mr. Hyder noted April may be too soon. Mr. Olson mentioned it could be an update in the B reports, and he will be discussing scheduling with the industry to see if an update would be reasonable.

BPAI Pacific Cod Split

Commissioner Campbell remarked that the Council has had significant discussion regarding this issue, and the Council will have things to review when TAC split occurs. She requested staff revisit papers that have been drafted in the past. There have been discussion papers with useful information, such as management approaches, different sectors' harvests; and if the papers can be updated it will help the Council with information on AI processing sideboards, what the TAC levels would be, and impact on different sectors and communities.

Mr. Oliver noted the Council would be able to do this, and a timeline was discussed. Ms. Campbell noted that this is an issue of urgency. Mr. Oliver noted that there may not be end of the year data available to have an update for February. Mr. Henderschedt noted that as part of a previous paper review, an update would examine whether the alternatives in the EIS either work with or complicate the issues in the paper. Some issues may limit sector allocation. Mr. Olson will evaluate scheduling with the ED.

Observer Program

Mr. Hull made the following motion: The Council reiterates its support for the restructured Observer Program, and the 2013 Annual Deployment Plan, including the deployment of observers on vessels in the trip selection and vessel selection pools. The Council also reiterates its support for the 2013 EM pilot project for vessels in the vessel selected pool, and the development of a strategic plan for EM.

The Council also requests the agency to bring back to us under B Reports in April an outline or framework for the different analyses or reviews that the Council requested in October. Specifically these are:

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

1. **A review of the trip selected and vessel selected pools in consideration of whether vessels should have an option to choose either one, or whether the deployment plan should place every vessel in the partial coverage category in the trip selection pool.**
2. **An evaluation of the difference between observer coverage in the vessel and trip selection pools (a review of the sampling method).**
3. **An evaluation of ways to insert cost effective measures into the deployment plan.**
4. **An evaluation of detailed programmatic costs.**
5. **Identification of alternative approaches to achieving the Council's stated EM objectives.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Tweit. Mr. Hull spoke to his motion. He noted this program comes with many changes, costs, and challenges. The Council has an obligation to work with the public and the agency in this first year of the restructured program to ensure that issues raised by stakeholders are addressed regarding review and development. Mr. Hull is recommending a pro-active way to engage with the agency. He noted that this kind of cooperation has minimized challenges.

He noted that there were two specific requests for regulatory changes: fee collection in the IFQ fleet, and an annual selection of CP vs CV operation. Both issues would require a regulatory amendment to change. A review as part of the annual review of these issues would be appropriate.

Dr. Balsiger noted that the letter the Council received from the legislator is very useful, and pointed out that the observer program is getting national attention. Mr. Henderschedt noted that this is good notification to let the stakeholders know the Council will be looking for comment on the analytical approach and data in April rather than the merits of the issues.

Mr. Cotten was concerned about the expectation of a 5 year delay, and would like feedback on alternative approaches. Mr. Hull noted that the Council could be presented with several ideas which will achieve objectives, and the public would be able to comment and the Council could determine if the approaches were worth pursuit. Mr. Hull also noted that vessel owners with boats under 40'LOA can voluntarily participate in the vessel selected pool, in 2013.

The motion passed without objection.

Mr. Fields thanked Mr. Hull for the motion, but noted they may have to look for other observer models. He made the following motion: **The Council staff develop a discussion paper that would explore cost savings and efficiencies that may be obtained by use of a third party entity, for example the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, to solicit and contract with observer providers and/or EM providers, and to interface with the industry and the agency in the management of the Council's Observer Program. Mr. Cotten seconded the motion.**

Mr. Fields stated that this is an opportunity to have staff evaluate cost savings. He noted that PSMFC is working on EM programs and may have valuable input. He is not looking for a detailed analysis, just an alternative construct. There was discussion regarding having PSMFC being a 3rd party entity. Mr. Henderschedt noted his opposition to the motion, stating the Council has approached this before, and the greatest cost in this program is the uncertainty, and addressing cost savings is not practical if it is not known where the savings are.

Mr. Hanson noted that the PSMFC has a lot of experience in this area, and this motion is not out of the scope of its work.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Ms. Campbell has a strong interest in ways to reduce costs. Mr. Balsiger noted that it is incumbent on the Council to explore other options, but the timing is off, because the Council does not know how much the program initially will cost. Mr. Hull noted his agreement with Mr. Balsiger.

Mr. Fields noted it is not his intent to direct staff tasking, but is concerned that issue may be forgotten and would like to have information brought back as we explore economic efficiencies.

Motion passed 6/5 by roll call vote with Cross, Dersham, Henderschedt, Tweit, and Balsiger in opposition.

GOA Non-Pollock Chinook Bycatch Timing

Mr. Cotten noted that the Council had the agenda item scheduled for discussion at the April Council meeting, but was concerned that there may not be resources available to keep that schedule, and urged the Council to keep the April timing if at all possible. There was discussion regarding prioritization and scheduling of other issues. Mr. Olson noted that the Council will keep it on the agenda for April to the extent practicable, and will get an update in February.

Mr. Henderschedt noted that many of the things that this issue is competing with are things that will help improve ability to collect data and implement GOA Chinook cap.

Hagemeister Strait

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, to adopt the following purpose and needs statement:

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to evaluate transit corridors through walrus protection area closures for federally-permitted vessels. Currently, federally-permitted vessels that operate as tenders during the Togiak herring and salmon fisheries cannot transit through the Round Island Walrus Protection Area. This effectively prohibits vessels with FFPs from tendering the Togiak herring and salmon fisheries. Federally-permitted vessels that tender for the herring fishery at Cape Peirce and Security Cove travel through state waters to avoid the EEZ closures, moving vessels closer to walrus haulouts in these areas. Salmon tender vessels may be similarly affected. Additionally, vessels fishing yellowfin sole in the Northern Bristol Bay Trawl Area, that deliver to processors or trampers in the roadsteads located in Hagemeister Strait or Togiak Bay, must travel south of the Round Island Walrus Protection Area, which may increase interactions with walrus at Hagemeister Island haulout and walrus moving from Round Island to their feeding grounds in Bristol Bay. Transit corridors are necessary to alleviate these unintended consequences from the walrus protection area closures that potentially increase the fishery interactions with walruses.

Alternative 1 – Status quo

Alternative 2 – Transit corridor in the EEZ open from April 1 – August 15, north of Round Island.

Alternative 3 – Transit corridor in the EEZ open from April 1 – August 15, south of Cape Newenham and Cape Peirce.

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, noting that the AP recommended a similar action, and that there is a fleet of herring tenders that have had to surrender their permits to transit the Round Island protection area. Allowing for transit by the yellowfin sole fleet would provide a conservation benefit by avoiding populated walrus haulouts to the South of Round Island.

There was discussion on various vessel activities taking place, and monitoring that can be accomplished.

Ms. Campbell moved, which was seconded, to add text that states: "...moving vessel traffic closer to haulouts in those areas, "after the text "EEZ closures" in the 4th sentence. Ms. Campbell spoke to her motion, noting that there is no reason to speculate in the purpose and needs statement about impacts. **The amendment passed without objection.**

Halibut/Sablefish IFQ proposal tasking

Mr. Hull noted that the primary priority for tasking remains with Council actions that have been taken that remain at the regulatory process, and following those, are issues that are currently being worked on at a staff level. And following that, at a lesser priority, is the discussion paper on retention of Area 4A halibut on BSAI pots, and CQE small block restriction. He recommended taking no action on a halibut subsistence proposal based on information from the Enforcement Committee, as well as the unharvested halibut in Area 4C proposal. He noted that proposals from the IPHC will be placed on hold until the IFQ Implementation Committee can review them at its next proposal cycle. Mr. Hull requested a performance report from the RAM division at the February meeting which discusses the issue of leasing permits. Mr. Fields noted his agreement with the prioritization outlined by Mr. Hull.

Greenland Turbot Allocations in the BSAI

Mr. Henderschedt noted that a smaller ABC will affect access to the fishery for both sectors and at some point the Council may have to take action, but at this time he recommends leaving it as an unallocated fishery between two gear groups. Mr. Olson agreed.

Sablefish IFQ/non-IFQ in BSAI

Mr. Fields noted there could be a significant savings when defining IFQ and non-IFQ sablefish. **He moved, which was seconded, to initiate discussion paper identify issues associated with separating BS IFQ and non-IFQ sablefish categories for specification setting purposes.** Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, stating he hoped that by 2014 the issue could be on the Council agenda. Mr. Henderschedt does not oppose the motion, but cautioned it would not interfere with flatfish flexibility. **The motion passed without objection.**

WGOA Trawl Control Date

Mr. Cotten requested to explore interest by the Western GOA Pollock trawlers who are advocating for a control date, and noted there may be speculative effort in the Central GOA. There was general discussion, and Mr. Olson noted that the group of proposers of the control date should craft their proposal to outline the purpose and reason for a control date. Mr. Oliver noted that the Council could place it on any agenda. Mr. Tweit noted that the WGOA group can be ready by February. Ms. Campbell noted at the February meeting when the Council considers goals and objectives for CGOA, the Council may hear from WGOA stakeholders also.

EGOA Skate Fishery

Mr. Fields moved to initiate a discussion paper of issues and concerns that would happen with EGOA skate fishery. The motion was seconded. Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that the group asking for a skate fishery will address the Council's concerns and the Council will have identified additional concerns from information in the discussion paper. **Motion passed without objection.**

Halibut Issues

Mr. Cotten had questions regarding reductions in halibut quotas in the Bering Sea, and it was noted the Council will receive IPHC reports on stock assessments in February 2013. Mr. Hull noted the Council will have a better understanding on what the stock assessment scientists have done and what implications for any of the halibut issues that the Council covers.

MINUTES
NPFMC MEETING
December 2012

Council Appointments

Mr. Olson read the appointments for 2013: reappointments for three-year terms to the Advisory Panel: Joel Peterson, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Anne Vanderhoeven, Craig Lowenberg and Andy Mezirow. Tim Evers was appointed for a one year term to address charter halibut issues. Additionally, the AP welcomes two new members: John Gruver, of United Catcher Boats and Mitch Kilborn of International Seafoods of Alaska, in Kodiak. The AP membership also includes Kurt Cochran, John Crowley, Jerry Downing, Tom Enlow, Jeff Farvour, Alexis Kwachka, Bryan Lynch, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Ed Poulsen, Neil Rodriguez, Ernie Weiss, and Lori Swanson. Many thanks to Jan Jacobs and Matt Moir, retiring members of the AP, for their service.

The Council also re-appointed the SSC members for another year term. SSC membership includes Dr. Jennifer Burns, Dr. Henry Cheng, Bob Clark, Alison Dauble, Sherri Dressel, Dr. Anne Hollowed, Dr. George Hunt, Dr. Gordon Kruse, Dr. Kathy Kuletz, Pat Livingston, Dr. Seth Macinko, Dr. Steve Martell, Dr. Franz Mueter, Dr. Jim Murphy, Lew Queirolo, Dr. Terry Quinn, Dr. Kate Reedy-Maschner, and Farron Wallace.

Additionally, the Council appointed Dr. Ian Stewart to replace Dr. Steven Hare on the GOA Groundfish Plan Team, and made two appointments to the Crab Plan Team: Dr. Buck Stockhausen, who replaced Lou Rugalo, and Dr. Martin Dorn.

Mr. Olson thanked everyone for their time, wished everyone a happy holiday, and the meeting adjourned at 2:33pm on December 11, 2012.

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET
December, 2012 **N.P.F.M.C. MEETING**

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
GLORIA REED	PSPA
Jeane Hanson	NMFS
Daniel Cornelius	
PAUL Mac GREGOR	AT-SEA PROCESSORS ASSN.
Phanda Hubbard	Krusal Fisheries
STEPHEN GRABACKI	GRAY STAR
Michael LAICO	Alaskan Observers, Inc.
JAMES MUZE	Phoenix Processor L.P.
BRENT PAINE	UCB
Simone Suetzof JR	City of ST. PAUL
Dave Benson	Trident Seafoods
Todd Loomis	Ocean Peak, Inc.
Elizabeth Wiley	WESTWARD FISHING
Jeff Stephan	UFMA
Susan Robinson	Fishermen's Finest
TIM SMITH	NOME FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
Tim Gervais	Ruby AC Western Interior AC
Matt Upton	US Seafoods

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET

December, 2012 N.P.F.M.C. MEETING

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
Kris Norosz	Icele Seafoods, Inc
Sarah Melton	Franklin ³ ASH LLC
CRATG CROSS	ASF
STOIAN IANKOV	F/v Michelle Renee
TIM SMITH	NOME FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
Donna Parker	Arctic Storm
Beth Stewart	Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition
NINCE O'SHEA	PSPA, Juneau, AK
Dick Tremaine	Siu Alaska Corp
Heather McCarty	McCarty & Associates, Juneau
Heath Hayward	SEA60
JOE PLESNA	TRIDENT
Frank Kelly	CITY OF UWA Alaska
BRUCE GABRYS	COMMERCIAL FISHER
ARW THOMPSON	Alaska Crab Coalition
Dwain A. Foster SR.	FISHERMAN
Jon Warendwe	Ocean

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET

Dec. 11, 2012 **N.P.F.M.C. MEETING**

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
Michael Wicks	A01

Tape Log

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 5, 2012

0:00:00		Call to order
0:00:00	8:05:05	Start Recording [8:05:05 AM]
0:00:34	8:05:55	Eric Olson, Agenda change
0:01:00	8:06:09	Minor adjustments
0:01:20	8:06:37	Approval of minutes, moved to staff tasking
0:06:45	8:12:05	Dr. Tara Jones, Steve Grabecki
0:20:26	8:26:09	Chris Oliver, recognizing Sherri Meyers, Ken Hanson, and Jessie Gharret
0:27:06	8:32:30	Glenn Merrill, B-2
0:43:26	8:48:53	Martin Loefflad Observer Program Restructuring
2:27:08	10:32:04	Ken Hansen
2:48:27	10:53:35	Mary Furuness
3:10:58	11:15:40	Cindy Hartmann and Jeannie Hansen
4:03:14	13:04:01	RADM Ostebo
4:03:20	13:04:07	Tony Kenne
4:09:30	13:10:19	Jim Fall, ADFG Subsistence report
4:22:18	13:22:57	Mary Furuness
4:37:05	13:37:41	Karla Bush, ADF&G report
4:48:43	13:49:23	Bob Clark, ADF&G Chinook Symposium
4:56:20	13:56:53	Bruce Buckman, Sherrie Meyers NOAA enforcement report
5:31:53	14:32:13	Doug McBride, USF&W report
5:34:03	14:34:16	Gregg Williams, IPHC report
5:54:24	14:54:29	Steve MacLean PR Report
5:58:36	15:21:16	Public Comment, Dan Falvey
6:14:35	15:37:09	Brent Paine, UCB
6:21:14	15:43:46	Rhonda Hubbard
6:36:36	15:59:07	Beth Steward and Kiley Thompson
6:36:50	15:59:13	David Polushkin
6:40:11	16:02:33	Jim Hubbard
7:32:35	16:54:44	John Gauvin
7:32:39	16:54:46	Jeff Hartman
7:32:45	16:54:54	Pat Livingston, SSC
7:32:50	16:55:03	C-1 GOA Pollock EFP
7:37:01	16:59:10	Lori Swanson, AP report
7:37:09	16:59:17	Bob Kruger, Public Comment
7:50:33	17:12:32	Recess for the day

December 6, 2012

0:00:00	8:03:49	Call to order
0:01:11	8:05:17	Jane DiCosimo and Mike Sigler C-1 (c)
0:01:30	8:05:24	BSAI Groundfish Specs
0:38:19	8:42:14	Jim Ianelli - Review EBS pollock

1:32:32	9:35:56	Pat Livingston, SSC report
1:52:01	9:55:18	Lori Swanson, AP report
2:03:16	10:20:28	Questions of staff for Specs
2:08:12	10:25:20	Public Comment
2:08:16	10:25:59	Jackie Dragon
2:10:48	10:28:13	Susan Robinson
2:25:19	10:45:38	Mike Hyde
2:28:48	10:45:46	Bill Orr
2:35:43	10:52:49	Todd Loomis
2:40:58	10:57:53	Stephanie Madsen
2:46:43	11:03:38	Dave Little, Chad See
2:57:05	11:13:52	Brent Paine
3:02:33	11:19:18	Glenn Reed
3:06:07	11:22:51	Cross Motion
3:34:39	13:23:48	Stram, Ianelli
3:34:45	13:23:55	C-1 (B) GOA specs
5:14:59	15:25:42	SSC report, C-1 B
5:32:12	15:42:45	AP report
5:32:15	15:42:52	Public Comment, C-1 (b)
5:39:39	15:50:10	Merrick Burden
5:42:56	15:53:25	Julie Bonney
5:46:23	15:56:54	Ilia Kuzmin
5:51:45	16:02:10	Tweit motion
6:22:54	16:33:14	Pat Livingston, SSC minutes
6:40:41	16:50:47	Recess for day

December 7, 2012

0:00:00	8:06:07	Call to order
0:00:25	8:06:41	Diana Stram, C-2 B Chum Salmon Bycatch
0:42:27	8:48:35	Alan Haynie, Chum Rolling Hotspot Program Analysis
1:59:29	10:18:42	Jim Ianelli
2:42:26	11:01:28	Scott Miller review on the RIR, followed by Jeff Hartmann
3:39:57	14:11:31	Myron Naanig Sr.
3:40:08	14:11:36	Public Testimony out of order
3:48:54	14:20:19	Jim Ianelli, Diana Stram
4:35:33	15:06:42	Becca Robbins Gisclair, AP report
4:35:42	15:06:48	Roy Hyder, Enforcement Committee
4:45:21	15:34:52	Harry Wilde
4:45:33	15:34:58	George Hutchings
4:55:29	15:44:49	Karl Haflinger
5:07:50	15:57:04	John Gruever
5:30:24	16:19:28	Tim Smith
5:35:29	16:24:32	Donna Parker
5:39:22	16:28:25	James Mize
5:42:17	16:31:17	Paul Peyton
5:49:45	16:38:41	Glenn Reed
5:54:47	16:43:46	Charlie Lean

5:59:36	16:48:31	Roy Ashenfelter
6:02:20	16:51:13	Stephanie Madsen
6:21:23	17:10:08	Recess for the day

December 8, 2012

0:00:00	8:35:24	Call to order [8:35:24 AM]
0:01:23	8:36:54	Brent Paine, UCB
0:01:40	8:37:18	Public Testimony on C-2 b
0:12:58	8:48:22	Becca Robbins Gisclair
0:26:16	9:01:31	Art Nelson
0:35:32	9:10:49	Julie Bonney, Kurt Cochran
0:44:08	9:30:20	Chum motion
1:26:12	10:24:52	C-2 (c) Diana Evans and Sam Cunningham
4:01:42	14:27:03	Roy Hyder, Enforcement Committee Report
4:12:29	14:37:41	Lori Swanson, AP report
4:42:09	15:17:36	Public Comment, C-2(c)
4:42:20	15:17:42	David Dahl
4:42:24	15:17:47	Hermann Squartsoff
4:45:34	15:20:55	George Hutchings
4:55:46	15:31:04	Beth Stewart
5:02:10	15:37:23	Tom Evich
5:05:20	15:40:30	Jody Cook
5:07:34	15:42:46	Mike Alfieri
5:12:09	15:47:19	Theresa Petersen
5:22:18	15:57:27	Bob Kruger
5:42:46	16:17:40	Recess for the day [4:17:40 PM]

December 9, 2012

	9:05	Call to order
--	------	---------------

The following people testified from 9 o'clock to 10:17

- C-2 (c) GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch public comment
- John Gauvin
- Sarah Melton
- Mike Szymanski
- Julie Bonney
- Pete Wedin

0:12:54	10:30:48	Campbell motion
1:06:29	11:23:59	Stop Recording [11:23:59 AM]
1:06:29	13:05:36	Start Recording [1:05:36 PM]
1:06:52	13:09:39	C-3 (a) Scott Meyer, Jane DiCosimo
1:56:09	13:55:04	Lori Swanson, AP report
1:57:05	13:55:54	Public Comment
1:57:08	13:55:57	Linda Behnken
1:57:12	13:56:25	Greg Kern
1:57:42	13:57:54	Bob Stumpff
1:59:10	14:01:36	Richard Yamada

2:02:52	14:01:41	Mel Grove
2:12:50	14:11:32	Gary Ault
2:15:35	14:14:17	Heath Hilyard
2:39:30	14:38:20	C-3 (b) CQE Block Restrictions
2:39:52	14:38:24	Diana Evans
2:53:58	14:52:25	AP report, Lori Swanson
2:57:33	14:56:06	Public Comment, CQE small block restriction
2:57:45	14:56:12	Hermann Squartsoff
3:01:19	14:59:44	James Skonberg
3:02:50	15:01:13	Gene Anderson
3:04:56	15:03:17	Dave Fraser
3:06:48	15:05:10	Klemm Tillion
3:06:53	15:05:15	Linda Behnken
3:24:04	15:37:48	Jane DiCosimo C-3 (c)
4:22:09	16:35:26	Greg Williams, IPHC
4:22:14	16:35:33	Roy Hyder, Enforcement Report
4:26:10	16:39:24	AP report
4:30:03	16:43:17	Bob Alverson, public comment
4:37:47	16:50:56	Linda Behnken
4:38:32	16:51:38	Recess [4:51:38 PM]

December 10, 2012

0:00:00	8:20:37	Call to order [8:20:37 AM]
0:00:15	8:23:19	Melanie Brown, C-4
0:16:03	8:39:00	Steve MacLean, Larry Cotter
1:26:57	9:49:24	Lori Swanson, AP report
1:33:51	9:56:16	Questions for NMFS staff
1:38:57	10:01:17	Public comment
1:39:00	10:01:21	Dave Wood
1:44:59	10:08:53	Linda Larsen and Lori Swanson
1:53:19	10:15:40	Dave Fraser
2:07:41	10:29:48	Chad Jee
2:16:53	10:39:01	Frank Kelty
2:20:15	10:42:18	John Gauvin
2:31:19	10:53:21	Todd Loomis
2:36:52	10:58:48	Glenn Reed
2:38:39	11:00:35	Stephanie Madsen
2:45:22	11:07:14	Clem Tillion
2:51:56	11:13:52	John Warrenchuk and Michael Vine
3:25:29	13:16:54	Twit motion – C-4
4:38:09	14:29:12	D-1 (a) Diana Evans and Gretchen Harrington
4:54:13	14:45:05	Jon McCracken D-1 (b)
4:54:20	14:45:06	VMS
5:17:29	15:08:11	Ken Hansen
5:50:56	15:41:28	Roy Hyder, Enforcement Committee Report
5:53:02	15:43:32	Lori Swanson, AP report
5:56:07	15:46:35	Public Comment, Paul MacGregor

6:06:05	15:56:24	Sarah Melton
6:09:24	15:59:46	Linda Behnken
7:39:29	17:29:08	Recess [5:29:08 PM]

December 11, 2012

0:00:00	8:34:14	Start Recording [8:34:14 AM]
0:00:01	8:34:19	Call to order
0:01:36	8:35:56	Jane Dicosimo Halibut Sablefish Proposals
0:29:31	9:03:45	Roy Hyder enforcement report on IFQ proposals
0:30:02	9:04:16	Round Island Transit, Steve MacLean
0:42:02	9:16:09	Roy Hyder, Enforcement report on Round Island
0:42:12	9:16:14	Chris Oliver, Staff Tasking.
1:02:38	9:36:36	Lori Swanson, D-2 AP report
1:23:38	9:57:27	Public Comment, D-2
1:23:47	9:57:32	Anne Vanderhoeven
1:26:42	10:00:24	Jason Anderson
1:31:31	10:05:10	Jody Cook
1:40:06	10:13:42	Jim Hubbard
1:43:06	10:16:42	Linda Behnken
1:50:13	10:23:45	Rhonda Hubbard
1:53:23	10:26:56	George Hutchings
2:01:07	10:34:35	Theresa Peterson
2:01:12	10:34:39	Ernie Weiss
2:10:38	10:44:24	Simeon Swetzoff
2:18:18	10:51:40	Becca Robbins Gisclair
2:21:07	10:54:26	Jeff Stephan
2:34:01	11:07:18	Lori Swanson, Todd Loomis
2:38:00	11:11:14	Sarah Melton
2:41:00	11:14:11	Heather McCarty
2:44:22	12:51:22	Staff Tasking Discussion [0:51:22 PM]
4:27:17	14:33:36	Adjourn [2:33:36 PM]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc>

FINAL ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES North Pacific Fishery Management Council December 4-7, 2012 Anchorage, Alaska

The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (members absent are ~~stricken~~):

Kurt Cochran	Jan Jacobs	Joel Peterson
John Crowley	Alexus Kwachka	Theresa Peterson
Jerry Downing	Craig Lowenberg	Ed Poulsen
Tom Enlow	Brian Lynch	Neil Rodriguez
Tim Evers	Chuck McCallum	Lori Swanson
Jeff Farvour	Andy Mezirow	Anne Vanderhoeven
Becca Robbins Gisclair	Matt Moir	Ernie Weiss

Minutes of the October 2012 meeting were approved.

C-1(a) GOA Pollock EFP

The AP recommends that the Council approve the EFP Alternative 2, and recommends that an exemption from the forage fish MRA be included. *Motion passed 20/0.*

Rationale:

- * *This is important work to further develop tools for the Central GOA pollock fleet to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch.*
- * *This EFP provides an opportunity to create solutions to salmon bycatch problems and we need an opportunity to work on some of these tools outside of normal fishery management.*
- * *There is a big difference in horse power and size of boat boats in the CGOA compared to the Bering Sea, so additional work is needed to adapt excluders to the Gulf of Alaska.*
- * *While this EFP requires additional Chinook PSC, it should help us reduce Chinook PSC overall in the future.*
- * *An exemption from the forage fish MRA will ensure that the EFP can take place without being restricted by this limitation.*

C-1(b) GOA Groundfish SAFE and Specifications

The AP recommends that the Council adopt final Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for 2013-2014 OFL, ABC and TAC as shown in the attached table (**Attachment 1**). The AP recommends Pacific cod be reduced to allow for the State water fishery according to the table on page 3 of the action memo. Additionally, the AP recommends that both shark and octopus be put on bycatch only status and that NMFS consider allowing directed fishing for sculpins. *Motion passed 20/0.*

Rationale:

- * *This recommendation adopts plan team and SSC recommendations for OFLs and ABCs and industry recommendations for TACs.*
- * *Sculpin are caught now but cannot be fully utilized because they are restricted by MRAs. Allowing directed fishing will allow increased utilization of this catch and will allow fishers to take advantage of developing markets for sculpin. Existing PSC limits will ensure that opening a directed sculpin fishery will not result in additional PSC.*

The AP recommends that the Council adopt GOA halibut PSC apportionments annually and seasonally for 2013-2014 as shown on pages 4-5 of the action memo. *Motion passed 20/0.*

The AP recommends that the Council approve the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish SAFE report. *Motion passed 20/0.*

The AP recommends that the Council adopt halibut discard mortality rates for GOA for 2013-2015 as shown on page 6 of action memo. *Motion passed 20/0.*

C-1(c) BSAI Groundfish SAFE and Specifications

The AP recommends that the Council approve the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish SAFE report. *Motion passed 18/0.*

The AP recommends the Council adopt final specifications for 2013-2014 OFLs, ABCs and TACs as shown in the attached table (**Attachment 2**) which includes the SSC's revision to Blackspotted rockfish and an increase in Octopus TAC from 200 mt to 880 mt; with the difference being subtracted from the Pacific cod TAC. *Motion passed 11-8.*

Rationale:

- *These numbers allow an increase in the pollock TAC with adjustments to flatfish TACs considering the likely shift in effort from Atka mackerel to flatfish and continued participation by AFA vessels in the yellowfin sole fishery.*
- *This represents a reasonable compromise between sectors primarily focused on pollock and those primarily focused on flatfish*
- *There has been some retention of octopus in the pot fisheries, which should be accommodated at this TAC level*
- *There are concerns about potential Chinook salmon bycatch impacts with setting the pollock quota high.*
- *As a multi-species fishery operating under multiple hard caps, Am 80 sector needs sufficient flatfish to fund its fisheries.*

Minority Report on C-1(c) BSAI Groundfish Specifications: The minority members do not support the above substitute motion on BSAI TACs. The original motion (see attached) provided for a larger pollock TAC while balancing the needs of the flatfish fisheries based on this year's catch. The pollock TAC experienced a decrease several years ago and is now rebounding while at the same time the flatfish fleet has not achieved the goals of Amendment 80 of maximizing the cooperative structure to provide the movement of species among its members. We do not believe the pollock TAC should be held down to continue to provide "buffers" for the flatfish fleet when there may be as much as 100,000 tons of flatfish left unharvested this year. It should be noted that the A80 fleet also harvests 25,000-30,000 tons of pollock as bycatch annually, and at least one company in this sector competes with AFA vessels for yellowfin sole in the TLAS sector. Further, halibut PSC apportionments to the

pollock fishery are a much more efficient use of halibut than PSC apportionments to the A80 sector: four times as much fish are caught with just a fraction of the amount of halibut PSC. Additionally, we disagree that Chinook salmon bycatch should be a consideration in setting the pollock TAC. Amendment 91 required the IPAs to provide incentives at all abundance levels of pollock and Chinook salmon. To further penalize the pollock fleet, already subject to a cap and IPA, by reducing the TAC is unfair.

Signed by: Jerry Downing, Jan Jacobs, Anne Vanderhoeven, Neil Rodriguez, Tom Enlow, Matt Moir, Ernie Weiss and Joel Peterson

The AP recommends the Council adopt the revised halibut, crab and herring PSCs and sector allowances for 2013-2014 as shown in attached Tables 7-9 (**Attachment 3**) which reflect new information compared with the proposed harvest specification PSC tables in the action memo. Further, the AP recommends the Council adopt Tables 10-11 as presented in the action memo, agenda item C-1(c)(4).

Motion passed 19/0.

The AP recommends the Council adopt the Halibut Discard Mortality Rates for 2013-2015 CDQ and non-CDQ as shown in Table 8 on page 14 of action memo, agenda item C-1(c)(7).

Motion passed 19/0.

C-2(b) BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch Measures

The AP recommends to the Council that the BSAI Chum Salmon PSC Management Measures document not be released for public review at this time.

The AP recommends the following modifications to the document:

1. Correct the assumption made of fleet behavior used in determining impacts of Alternatives 2 and 4, option A. The assumption should be that the fleet will take action to avoid chum salmon before closures or caps are triggered causing pollock harvests to slow down and pushing fishing later into B season. The impacts of the correction should be included in all tables, text and models used in the analysis.
2. Provide complete and clear description of the modified Rolling Hotspot Closure program in Alternative 3. Specifically, highlight impacts on Western Alaska chum instead of all chum salmon.
3. Describe in analysis of Alternative 4 the inherent weaknesses of using a triggered closure based on historical data. This approach assumes that chum salmon, Chinook salmon and Pollock will return to the same grounds at the same time every year. Such an approach may cause closure of areas of low bycatch and force the fleet into area of high bycatch such as happened under the old Salmon Savings Area closures.
4. Streamline the document including a more narrowed focus on the three priorities identified in the problem statement, impacts on Western Alaskan chum salmon, Chinook and the pollock fishery.
5. Modify the trade-off table found on page xix of executive Summary and elsewhere in document so that it includes all four alternatives, corrected assumptions and elimination of colors.
6. Review and correct inconsistencies in tables, texts, and models.
7. Provide a more efficient option for the small boat fleet (<125') to comply with reporting requirements as an alternative to ATLAS.

Motion passed 15/4.

Rationale:

- *Given the list of changes necessary, including recommendations for changes from the SSC and overwhelming testimony about the need for revisions, this document is not ready to release for public review.*
- *It's important to make sure we get this action right and do not create additional impacts on Chinook salmon, therefore it is worth bringing the document back again.*
- *As is, the document presents misleading information to the public and this needs to be corrected before release to avoid confusion about the impacts of the alternatives.*

Minority Report on C-2(b) BSAI chum salmon bycatch measures: A minority of the AP supported the substitute motion below. The minority felt that the document could be released with these changes, and it was important to keep this process moving forward and not delay further. If Alternative 3 is going to be a viable alternative the RHS program needs to be strong. Since the analysis shows that the current proposed modifications in the RHS will not significantly reduce chum salmon bycatch, additional modifications are necessary to make this a viable option.

The AP recommends that the Council release the EA/RIR/IRFA for public review with the following changes:

1. *Include reporting requirements as elements under alternatives to any RHS program (Alts. 3 and 4) as detailed in Tables 2-12 and 2-13.*
2. *Include analysis of specific modifications to the RHS program in addition to those currently proposed. Industry and analysts should work together to develop a substantial qualitative discussion of the impacts of each proposed modification (both those currently proposed and these additional modifications). Additional modifications to analyze include:*
 - *Shortening time period over which rolling average for base rate is calculated;*
 - *The Chinook salmon threshold must be met for either two sequential weeks in order to trigger removal of the chum salmon closures or, alternatively, modify the program such that it must be met in more than one ADF&G stat area;*
 - *Adjust tier system such that larger and/or more numerous closures apply to those with worst bycatch performance;*
 - *Adjust base rate structure after August such that tier 3 is defined as those vessels with a bycatch rate greater than 100% of the base rate;*
 - *Increase chum salmon protection measures during June/July:*
 - *Adjust base rates to require lower base rates in June and July;*
 - *Initiate "Western Alaska chum core closure areas." These areas would trigger during abnormally high encounters of chums believed to be returning to Western Alaska river systems, i.e. late June/early July.*
 - *Continue the current vessel performance list and at least one Western Alaska group as a third party member and require that all chum bycatch notices be made available to interested members of the public when they are distributed to the fleet (as under the status quo RHS program).*
3. *Explore alternate methods for ensuring that fine amounts are set at a minimum level (as under status quo) if specific fines cannot be set in regulation.*

Signed by: Becca Robbins Gisclair, Alexis Kwachka, Theresa Peterson, and Jeff Favour

C-2(c) GOA Chinook Bycatch Measures for Trawl Fisheries

The AP recommends the following revised alternatives, options, and suboptions be analyzed for initial review.

All Non-pollock trawl alternatives:

Alternative 1: Status quo.

Alternative 2: 5,000, 7,500, 10,000, or 12,500 Chinook salmon PSC limit (hard cap).

Option 1: Apportion limit between Central and Western GOA.

Option 2: Apportion limit by operational type (CV vs. CP).

Option 3: No more than 50% or 66% of the annual hard cap limit can be taken before June 1.

Option 4: Apportion off the top a Chinook salmon PSC limit to the Gulf Rockfish Program:

- a) 1,500
- b) 2,500
- c) 3,500

Chinook salmon avoidance plans would be required in the cooperative contractual agreements and would include hotspot reporting and avoidance, testing gear innovations, and methods for monitoring individual vessel bycatch performance.

The Chinook salmon avoidance plan would balance multiple management, economic and conservation objectives for the program. These objectives could include halibut bycatch avoidance, stabilizing the residential processor work force in Kodiak, avoiding conflicts with salmon processing for Kodiak processors, fish markets and accommodating vessel fishing plans for bycatch avoidance in other fisheries such as AFA and Am. 80 while controlling Chinook salmon bycatch within the CGOA rockfish program.

Annual cooperative reports to the Council would include the contractual agreements and successes and failures for Chinook salmon bycatch controls.

Suboption 1: Divide by sector (CV and CP) based on actual Chinook salmon PSC usage by sector for the rockfish catch share program years of 2007–2012.

Each LLP holder within sector will receive an allocation of Chinook salmon PSC equivalent to the license's proportion of the sector's target rockfish catch history from the program's initial allocations. Member LLP allocations will be allocated to their respective cooperative.

Suboption 2: On September 1st rollover all but 200, 300 or 400 remaining Chinook salmon to support other fall non-pollock trawl fisheries.

Suboption 3: Chinook salmon PSC estimation and data collection for Stock of Origin.

Vessels will retain all salmon bycatch until the number of salmon has been determined by the vessel observer or CMCP shorebased processor monitor and the collection of any scientific data or biological samples from the salmon has been completed.

- Full census counts will be used for Chinook salmon PSC accounting.

Suboptions 1, 2 and/or 3 can be selected for Option 4.

Applies to Options 1 and 2: Apportion proportional to historic average bycatch of Chinook salmon (5- or 10-year average).

Alternative 3: Full retention of salmon.

Vessels will retain all salmon bycatch until the number of salmon has been determined by the vessel or plant observer and the observer's collection of any scientific data or biological samples from the salmon has been completed.

Note, both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 could be selected by the Council in their preferred alternative. Likewise, under alternative 2, both Option 1 and Option 2 or Option 2 and Option 3 could be selected by the Council; option 4 can be selected with any option.

The AP requests the following additions to the analysis--

The AP requests that NMFS:

- Assess how the different fisheries and sectors could be segregated based on present monitoring infrastructure to collect as much Stock of Origin information as practicable.
- Investigate other genetic sampling methodology besides the Pella and Geiger protocol as discussed in the October 2009 SSC minutes.
- Explain what monitoring would be required to develop full census accounting by sector and fishery for salmon PSC estimates for management purposes.

The AP requests that Council staff:

- Develop scatter plot (or frequency table) that displays the extrapolated number of salmon per haul for all observed hauls by fishery and sector by year (or groupings of years) for the years covered in the data for this analysis. Display same for bycatch rates per haul for the fisheries/sectors/years or groups of years as above.
- Clarify how these basket salmon amounts are extrapolated to represent catch at the vessel haul level and the vessel trip level.
- Add discussion of the status of Chinook salmon runs for British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California – recent trends versus historic.
- Status of Chinook survival for hatchery runs for British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California – recent trends versus historic.
- Investigate whether the scientific literature can build some type of perspective of natural mortality for the 5 to 9 lb. average Chinook caught as bycatch in the non-pollock fisheries.
- Describe the fishery performance for the new Chinook salmon hard cap in the GOA pollock fisheries and qualitatively address successes and failures of the new regulation in comparison Council objectives, the cost to the pollock industry, and benefits to Chinook salmon stocks.
- Section 4.4.7 utilization of the TAC, expand this discussion to evaluate the ability of the fleet to expand TACs to more closely meet available ABCs especially with regards to flatfishes.
- Report residency of the GOA trawl vessel permit holders (i.e. operators).

The AP requests that the Council consider modifying the problem statement to include:

- The problem of limited Stock of Origin information from by-caught Chinook salmon in the GOA non-pollock fisheries.
- The problem of relatively imprecise estimates of Chinook salmon bycatch at the vessel level due to present sampling protocols.
- Desired outcome of the action to resolve these two issues at least in some of the non-pollock fisheries.

The AP recommends to the Council that the GOA Chinook Salmon non-pollock PSC management measures document not be released for public review so that the new options, alternatives and additional requested information can be added to the analysis.

Motion passed 13/6.

Minority report on Option 4, Suboption 2: A minority of the AP supported an amendment to delete Alternative 2, Option 4, Suboption 2. The minority felt given the state of crisis for Chinook salmon in the state of Alaska, that if bycatch can be reduced and any salmon saved they should be left in the water. Including a rollover provision is not responsive to the need to reduce salmon bycatch in this time of Chinook salmon shortages. Motion failed 8-11.

Signed by: Tim Evers, Jeff Farvour, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Alexis Kwachka, Joel Peterson, Theresa Peterson, and Ernie Weiss

Minority report on C-2(c) GOA Chinook Bycatch: A minority of the AP did not support this motion. While the minority felt that there were many good points in the motion, overall it is not responsive to the state of Chinook salmon in the state of Alaska. Chinook salmon runs throughout the Gulf are in trouble, and commercial and recreational fisheries were closed to protect Chinook salmon. The state and federal government are spending millions of dollars on disaster relief and research. This amendment package needs to move forward quickly as a stopgap measure to establish a limit on the last remaining trawl fishery in the Gulf that catches salmon as bycatch that has not been addressed. Additional reductions, and more complex management measures, can be addressed in the future in the Gulf catch share program. It's critical that we move forward with this action now and the document should be released for public review.

Signed by: Tim Evers, Jeff Farvour, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Alexis Kwachka, Joel Peterson and Theresa Peterson

C-3(b) Discussion Paper on CQE Small Block Restrictions

The AP recommends that the Council initiate an amendment package that allows CQE communities (including the Gulf and Adak) to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share, but that the CQE communities still be limited to 10 blocks of halibut quota share and 5 blocks of sablefish quota share.

The AP recommends the analysis examine 3 alternatives in addition to the status quo:

1. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share.
2. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share only from residents of any CQE community.
3. Allow CQE communities to purchase any size block of halibut and sablefish quota share only from residents of their CQE community.

Motion passed unanimously.

C-3(c) Discussion paper on Retention of 4A Halibut in Sablefish Pots

The AP recommends that the Council recommend that the IPHC move forward with defining legal gear to include pots for halibut. The purpose of this change in regulation is to allow the retention of incidentally caught halibut while prosecuting sablefish in the pot fishery. If the IPHC defines pots as legal gear then

the AP recommends that the Council require the mandatory retention of legal-sized Pacific halibut in sablefish pots in regulatory area 4A.

The AP recommends the Council consider the following potential issues:

1. Minimize gear conflicts; the pots shall be removed from fishing grounds upon the completion of the harvest of the vessel's sablefish IFQ.
 - radar reflectors added to both ends of longline pot string
2. No modification of pot tunnels.
3. No pot "sharing" while pots are in the water.
4. Analyzing an overall halibut retention cap.

Motion passed 18/1.

C-3(a) Recommendations for 2013 Charter Halibut Management Measures

The AP recommends that the Council approve the management measure of "Status Quo" as proposed by the Charter Halibut Implementation Committee for the guided halibut sector in Areas 2C and 3A for 2013. *Motion passed 20/0.*

C-4 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee Alternatives for EIS

The AP received reports from staff and the chairman of the SSL committee on progress with the SSL EIS including scoping as well as the alternatives developed by the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee. The AP wants to acknowledge all the work being done by staff on the EIS. However, the AP remains concerned that the analysis in the EIS may not include the analytical approaches, tools, and performance standards used to evaluate the Alternatives and avoid potential JAM determinations. The AP strongly recommends that the EIS include the full analysis of the effects of fisheries on SSL that will be used in the ESA re-consultation. The EIS analysis also needs to fully incorporate the findings and recommendations of the CIE reviewers as well as the Independent Scientific Review convened by the States of Alaska and Washington.

The AP also wants to acknowledge the extensive work of the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee to develop EIS alternatives. The alternatives developed by the SSLMC are comprehensive and detailed. However, the AP is concerned that some aspects of these alternatives are highly allocative and are predicated on future actions that may or may not occur, including a split of BSAI P-cod into separate Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands stocks.

The AP recommends that these allocative provisions not be included in the Alternatives for the SSL EIS, in particular those provisions specific to P-cod that anticipate a future stock separation. The AP recognizes that the SSC has indicated a desire to initiate a stock separation in the future. However, this is a speculative action at this time, and deserves careful attention if and when the decision is made to proceed. The subject of a stock separation for BSAI P-cod will be controversial, will have a broad range of allocative effects, and should be considered as a stand-alone action through the normal MSA based Council process.

Motion passed 17/2.

D-1(a) Progress report on PSEIS/SIR

The AP received a report from staff and no action was taken.

D-1(b) Discussion Paper on VMS use and requirements

The AP received a report from staff and recommends the Council continue to move this forward for analysis.

D-2(b) Review halibut and sablefish issues for priority tasking

The AP recommends that the Council request staff to prepare a discussion paper that would explore possible mechanisms for reducing or eliminating non-transferable charter permits.

Motion passed 19/0.

D-2(c) Round Island Transit analysis scope, purpose and need

The AP recommends that the Council initiate an analysis to allow a legal option for all fishing and tendering vessels with FFPs to transit the Round Island Walrus Protection area in order to reach offload points or to tender herring and salmon to local processors.

One alternative would include a transit corridor along a route developed in cooperation with USFWS and ADF&G, and could be limited temporally to include the April 1-August 15 period.

The analysis should consider whether a single corridor is appropriate for the yellowfin sole fleet, local halibut fleet, and herring and salmon tenders, or if different corridors would be needed.

Additionally, the analysis should consider a corridor in the Cape Newenham/Cape Pierce area.

Motion passed 20/0.

Attachment 1 - AP Minutes, December 2012

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013-2014 and Council's adopted specifications for 2012.

Stock/ Assemblage	2012				2013			2014			
	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch ^{1/}	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	30,270	30,270	30,270	27,893		28,072	28,072		25,648	25,648
	C (62)	45,808	45,808	45,808	45,050		51,443	51,443		47,004	47,004
	C (63)	26,348	26,348	26,348	25,589		27,372	27,372		25,011	25,011
	WYAK	3,244	3,244	3,244	2,380		3,385	3,385		3,093	3,093
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	100,912	150,817	110,272	110,272	138,610	100,756	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774		14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	100,912	165,183	121,046	121,046	152,976	111,530	111,530
Pacific Cod	W	28,032	21,024	21,024	17,703		28,280	21,210		29,470	22,103
	C	56,940	42,705	42,705	34,901		49,288	36,966		51,362	38,522
	E	2,628	1,971	1,971	338		3,232	2,424		3,368	2,526
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	52,942	97,200	80,800	60,600	101,100	84,200	63,150
Sablefish	W	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,390		1,750	1,750		1,641	1,641
	C	5,760	5,760	5,760	5,248		5,540	5,540		5,195	5,195
	WYAK	2,247	2,247	2,247	2,028		2,030	2,030		1,902	1,902
	SEO	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,188		3,190	3,190		2,993	2,993
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	11,854	14,780	12,510	12,510	13,871	11,731	11,731
Shallow-water Flatfish	W	21,994	13,250	13,250	153		19,489	13,250		18,033	13,250
	C	22,910	18,000	18,000	3,322		20,168	18,000		18,660	18,000
	WYAK	4,307	4,307	4,307			4,647	4,647		4,299	4,647
	EYAK/SEO	1,472	1,472	1,472			1,180	1,180		1,092	1,180
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	3,475	55,680	45,484	37,077	51,580	42,084	37,077
Deep-water Flatfish	W	176	176	176	8		176	176		176	176
	C	2,308	2,308	2,308	246		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK	1,581	1,581	1,581	5		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	EYAK/SEO	1,061	1,061	1,061	3		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	262	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex Sole	W	1,307	1,307	1,307	215		1,300	1,300		1,287	1,287
	C	6,412	6,412	6,412	1,972		6,376	6,376		6,310	6,310
	WYAK	836	836	836			832	832		823	1,041
	EYAK/SEO	1,057	1,057	1,057			1,052	1,052		1,040	822
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	2,187	12,492	9,560	9,560	12,362	9,460	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	27,495	14,500	14,500	1,331		27,181	14,500		26,970	14,500
	C	143,162	75,000	75,000	18,213		141,527	75,000		140,424	75,000
	WYAK	21,159	6,900	6,900	53		20,917	6,900		20,754	6,900
	EYAK/SEO	21,066	6,900	6,900	140		20,826	6,900		20,663	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	19,737	247,196	210,451	103,300	245,262	208,811	103,300
Flathead Sole	W	15,300	8,650	8,650	277		15,729	8,650		16,063	8,650
	C	25,838	15,400	15,400	1,613		26,563	15,400		27,126	15,400
	WYAK	4,558	4,558	4,558			4,686	4,686		4,785	4,785
	EYAK/SEO	1,711	1,711	1,711			1,760	1,760		1,797	1,797
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	1,890	61,036	48,738	30,496	62,296	49,771	30,632

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

(GOA Groundfish Specifications table continued)

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,452		2,040	2,040		2,005	2,005
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	10,741		10,926	10,926		10,740	10,740
	WYAK		1,692	1,692	1,682		1,641	1,641		1,613	1,613
	W/C/WYAK					16,838			16,555		
	SEO	4,095	1,861	1,861		2,081	1,805	1,805	2,046	1,775	1,775
Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	14,875	18,919	16,412	16,412	18,601	16,133	16,133	
Northern Rockfish	W		2,156	2,156	1,817		2,008	2,008		1,899	1,899
	C		3,351	3,351	3,210		3,122	3,122		2,951	2,951
	E										
Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	5,027	6,124	5,130	5,130	5,791	4,850	4,850	
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104	104	110		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452	361		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525	402		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	873	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Dusky Rockfish	W		409	409	435		377	377		354	354
	C		3,849	3,849	3,558		3,533	3,533		3,317	3,317
	WYAK		542	542	2		495	495		465	465
	EYAK/SEO		318	318	6		295	295		277	277
	Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	4,001	5,746	4,700	4,700	5,395	4,413	4,413
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W		80	80	39		81	81		83	83
	C		850	850	389		856	856		871	871
	E		293	293	236		295	295		300	300
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	664	1,482	1,232	1,232	1,508	1,254	1,254
Demersal Rockfish	Total	467	293	293	178	487	303	303	487	303	303
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150	150	186		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766	340		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749	217		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	743	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Other Rockfish	W		44	44	255		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606	724		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230	37		230	230		230	230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165	200	24		3,165	200		3,165	200
Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	1,040	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080	
Atka Mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,187	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big Skate	W		469	469	60		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793	1,596		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505	38		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	1,694	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70	70	28		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879	656		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676	78		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	762	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other Skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,030	1,110	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	5,731	802	7,614	5,884	5,884	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	6,028	595	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,148	18	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,455	368	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Total	Total	747,780	606,048	438,157	227,196	738,676	595,920	436,255	723,580	584,094	427,722

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

Attachment 2 - AP Minutes December 2012

SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs and ADVISORY PANEL recommended TACs (mt) for 2013 and 2014

Species	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,474,000	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,202,560	2,550,000	1,375,000	1,234,000	2,730,000	1,430,000	1,236,000
	AI	39,600	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	19,000	48,600	39,800	19,000
	Bogoslof	22,000	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	100	13,400	10,100	100
Pacific cod	BSAI	369,000	314,000	261,000	223,939	359,000	307,000	260,270	379,000	323,000	260,270
Sablefish	BS	2,640	2,230	2,230	717	1,870	1,580	1,580	1,760	1,480	1,480
	AI	2,430	2,050	2,050	1,180	2,530	2,140	2,140	2,370	2,010	2,010
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	222,000	203,000	202,000	137,716	220,000	206,000	202,000	219,000	206,000	202,000
Greenland turbot	<i>Total</i>	11,700	9,660	8,660	4,401	2,540	2,060	2,060	3,270	2,650	2,650
	EBS	n/a	7,230	6,230	2,744	n/a	1,610	1,610	n/a	2,070	2,070
	AI	n/a	2,430	2,430	1,657	n/a	450	450	n/a	580	580
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	181,000	150,000	25,000	22,227	186,000	152,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	24,800	18,600	17,700	9,558	16,300	12,200	11,000	16,300	12,200	11,000
Northern rock sole	BSAI	231,000	208,000	87,000	75,806	241,000	214,000	95,000	229,000	204,000	95,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	84,500	70,400	34,134	11,011	81,500	67,900	25,000	80,100	66,700	25,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	64,600	53,400	24,000	16,124	67,000	55,200	22,429	60,200	55,800	20,773
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,100	12,700	3,200	3,452	17,800	13,300	3,500	17,800	13,300	4,000
Pacific ocean perch	<i>Total</i>	35,000	24,700	24,700	21,837	41,900	35,100	35,100	39,500	33,100	33,100
	EBS	n/a	5,710	5,710	3,280	n/a	8,130	8,130	n/a	7,680	7,680
	EAI	n/a	5,620	5,620	5,519	n/a	9,790	9,790	n/a	9,240	9,240
	CAI	n/a	4,990	4,990	4,800	n/a	6,980	6,980	n/a	6,590	6,590
	WAI	n/a	8,380	8,380	8,238	n/a	10,200	10,200	n/a	9,590	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,500	8,610	4,700	2,474	12,200	9,850	3,000	12,000	9,320	3,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfishes	<i>Total</i>	576	475	475	204	462	378	378	524	429	429
	EBS/EAI	n/a	231	231	74	n/a	169	169	n/a	189	189
	CAI/WAI	n/a	244	244	130	n/a	209	209	n/a	240	240
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	305	493	370	370	493	370	370
Other rockfish	<i>Total</i>	1,700	1,280	1,070	924	1,540	1,160	873	1,540	1,160	1,160
	EBS	n/a	710	500	191	n/a	686	400	n/a	686	686
	AI	n/a	570	570	733	n/a	473	473	n/a	473	473
Atka mackerel	<i>Total</i>	96,500	81,400	50,763	47,755	57,700	50,000	25,920	56,500	48,900	25,379
	EAI/BS	n/a	38,500	38,500	37,237	n/a	16,900	16,900	n/a	16,500	16,500
	CAI	n/a	22,900	10,763	10,323	n/a	16,000	7,520	n/a	15,700	7,379
	WAI	n/a	20,000	1,500	195	n/a	17,100	1,500	n/a	16,700	1,500
Skate	BSAI	39,100	32,600	24,700	22,338	45,800	38,800	24,000	44,100	37,300	25,000
Sculpin	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	5,469	56,400	42,300	5,600	56,400	42,300	5,600
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	200	81	1,360	1,020	100	1,360	1,020	100
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	678	2,620	1,970	700	2,620	1,970	700
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	900	132	3,450	2,590	880	3,450	2,590	880
Total	BSAI	3,996,000	2,511,778	2,000,000	1,811,939	4,028,465	2,639,317	2,000,000	4,205,287	2,697,498	2,000,000

Final 2012 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs from 2012-2013 final harvest specifications; total catch updated through November 3, 2012.

Italics indicate where the Team differed from the author's recommendation.

Attachment 3 – AP Minutes December 2012

TABLE 7-FINAL 2013 AND 2014 APPORTIONMENT OF PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES TO NON-TRAWL GEAR, THE CDQ PROGRAM, AMENDMENT 80, AND THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTORS

PSC species	Total non-trawl PSC	Non-trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ ¹	Total trawl PSC	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ ¹	CDQ PSQ reserve ¹	Amendment 80 sector ²	BSAI trawl limited access fishery
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	900	832	3,675	3,349	393	2,325	875
Herring (mt) BSAI	n/a	n/a	2,648	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1 ¹	n/a	n/a	97,000	86,621	10,379	43,293	26,489
C. <i>opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ ²	n/a	n/a	10,501,333	9,377,690	1,123,643	4,609,135	3,013,990
C. <i>bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1 ²	n/a	n/a	980,000	875,140	104,860	368,521	411,228
C. <i>bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	n/a	n/a	2,970,000	2,652,210	317,790	627,778	1,241,500

¹Section 679.21(e)(3)(i)(A)(2) allocates 326 mt of the trawl halibut mortality limit and § 679.21(e)(4)(i)(A) allocates 7.5 percent, or 67 mt, of the non-trawl halibut mortality limit as the PSQ reserve for use by the groundfish CDQ program. The PSQ

² The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits by 150 mt for halibut mortality and 20 percent for crab. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

³ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of zones.

⁴Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 8-FINAL 2013 AND 2014 HERRING AND RED KING CRAB SAVINGS SUBAREA PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES FOR ALL TRAWL SECTORS

Fishery Categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	180	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ¹	30	n/a
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ²	20	n/a
Rockfish	13	n/a
Pacific cod	40	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,165	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ^{3,4}	200	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ⁵	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,648	97,000

¹“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

²“Arrowtooth flounder” for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

³Pollock other than pelagic trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.

⁴“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes sculpins, sharks, skates, and octopuses.

⁵In December 2011 the Council recommended that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 9-FINAL 2013 AND 2014 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTOR

BSAI trawl limited access fisheries	Prohibited species and area ¹				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	167	23,338	2,840,175	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ²	0	0	0	0	0
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ³	0	0	0	0	0
Rockfish April 15 - December 31	5	0	4,828	0	1,000
Pacific cod	453	2,954	120,705	60,000	50,000
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ⁴	250	197	48,282	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access PSC	875	26,489	3,013,990	411,228	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

² “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, Kamchatka flounder, and arrowtooth flounder.

³ Arrowtooth flounder for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

⁴“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes sculpins, sharks, skates, and octopuses.

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

Attachment to AP Minority Report on C-1(c)

BSAI 2013 and 2104 TAC Recommendations — UCB, APA, PSPA, FLLC

Species	Area	2012			2013			2014		
		ABC	TAC	Catch 11/24/12	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,204,554	2,550,000	1,375,000	1,275,000	2,730,000	1,430,000	1,275,000
	AI	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	19,000	48,600	39,800	19,000
	Bogoslof	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	90	13,400	10,100	90
Pacific cod	BSAI	314,000	261,000	231,682	359,000	307,000	260,320	379,000	323,000	260,320
Sablefish	BSAI	4,280	4,280	1,940	4,400	3,720	3,720	4,130	3,490	3,490
	BS	2,230	2,230	738	1,870	1,580	1,580	1,760	1,480	1,480
	AI	2,050	2,050	1,202	2,530	2,140	2,140	2,370	2,010	2,010
Atka mackerel	Total	81,400	50,763	47,832	57,700	50,000	25,920	56,500	48,900	25,379
	EAI/BS	38,500	38,500	37,314		16,900	16,900		16,500	16,500
	CAI	22,900	10,763	10,323		16,000	7,520		15,700	7,379
	WAI	20,000	1,500	195		17,100	1,500		16,700	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	203,000	202,000	144,253	219,000	206,000	186,980	219,000	206,000	189,350
Rock sole	BSAI	208,000	87,000	75,896	241,000	214,000	80,000	229,000	204,000	80,000
Greenland turbot	Total	9,660	8,660	4,662	2,540	2,060	2,060	3,270	2,650	2,650
	BS	7,230	6,230	3,005		1,610	1,610		2,070	2,070
	AI	2,430	2,430	1,657		450	450		580	580
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	150,000	25,000	22,535	186,000	152,000	24,000	186,000	152,000	24,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	18,600	17,700	9,629	16,300	12,200	12,200	16,300	12,200	12,200
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,400	34,134	11,281	81,500	67,900	17,000	80,100	66,700	17,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	53,400	24,000	16,445	67,000	55,200	19,000	60,200	55,800	19,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	12,700	3,200	3,517	17,800	13,300	4,000	17,800	13,300	4,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	24,700	24,700	24,147	41,900	35,100	35,100	39,500	33,100	33,100
	BS	5,710	5,710	5,590		8,130	8,130		7,680	7,680
	EAI	5,620	5,620	5,519		9,790	9,790		9,240	9,240
	CAI	4,990	4,990	4,798		6,980	6,980		6,590	6,590
	WAI	8,380	8,380	8,240		10,200	10,200		9,590	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	8,610	4,700	2,478	12,200	9,850	3,000	12,000	9,320	3,000
Blackspotted/Rough	BSAI	576	475	208	462	378	250	524	429	250
	EBS/EAI		231	77		169	100		189	100
	CAI/WAI		244	131		209	150		240	150
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	393	393	342	493	370	370	493	370	370
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,280	1,070	942	1,540	1,160	698	1,540	1,160	698
	BS	710	500	208		686	225		686	225
	AI	570	570	734		473	473		473	473
Squid	BSAI	1,970	425	691	2,620	1,970	700	2,620	1,970	500
Other species:										
Skate	BSAI	32,600	24,700	23,291	45,800	38,800	24,000	44,100	37,300	24,000
Shark	BSAI	1,020	200	91	1,360	1,020	112	1,360	1,020	123
Octopus	BSAI	2,590	900	133	3,450	2,590	880	3,450	2,590	880
Sculpin	BSAI	43,700	5,200	5,585	56,400	42,300	5,600	56,400	42,300	5,600
Total		2,511,303	2,000,000	1,833,185	4,027,465	2,639,317	2,000,000	4,205,287	2,697,498	2,000,000

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc>

Certified: *Alan Bendys*
Date: *1/7/12*

**REPORT
of the
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE
to the
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 3rd – December 5th, 2012**

The SSC met from December 3rd through December 5th at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage AK.

Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Robert Clark, Vice Chair
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Henry Cheng
Wash. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Alison Dauble
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Steve Martell
International Pacific Halibut Commission

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Jim Murphy
University of Alaska Anchorage

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kate Reedy-Maschner
Idaho State University Pocatello

Farron Wallace
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Members absent were:

Sherri Dressel
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Kathy Kuletz
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Miscellaneous issues addressed

A brief presentation was provided to the SSC by Tara Jones and Stephen Grabacki from the Alaska Sea Life Center on their programs, research perspectives, and the Alaska Ocean Leadership Award.

B-1(c) Plan Team nominations

The SSC reviewed the Plan Team nominations of Ian Stewart to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team, and Martin Dorn and William “Buck” Stockhausen to the Crab Plan Team. The SSC finds all three individuals to be well qualified, with appropriate expertise that will assist each of the Plan Teams. The SSC recommends that the Council approve these nominations.

C-1 (a) GOA pollock (salmon excluder) EA and EFP

Diana Stram (NPFMC) presented the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for issuing an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for testing a salmon excluder device in the Central Gulf of Alaska. John Gauvin

(Gauvin and Associates, LLC) and Katy McGauley (Alaska Groundfish Data Bank) gave an overview of the planned testing and current development stage of a salmon excluder device. Julie Bonney (Alaska Groundfish Data Bank) gave public testimony.

The purpose of the project is to adapt the salmon excluder device developed in the Bering Sea to the Gulf of Alaska pelagic trawl groundfish fishery. This gear engineering work is needed due to the smaller size and horsepower of trawl vessels in the Gulf of Alaska and differences in habitats trawled from those experienced in the Bering Sea where excluder devices have been employed for some time. The experiment would be conducted during the A, B, and D seasons of 2013 and 2014 in the Central Gulf. The proposed experiment is not expected to have any significant negative environmental impacts. The SSC commends the investigators for their efforts to test and develop gear modifications that have the potential to significantly reduce PSC rates in the GOA pollock fishery. The EA appears to be reasonably complete and the application is well-written. **The SSC recommends that the Council approve the EFP application.** The SSC suggests that, to the extent possible, captured Chinook salmon be sampled for genetic tissues and scanned for coded-wire tags to gain additional information on stock-of-origin. As the experiment proceeds, we would anticipate that sample size considerations for precisely estimating the proportions of Chinook salmon and pollock excluded will become clearer. The SSC recognizes that the number of experimental tows may possibly need to be modified to address these considerations.

C-1 (b, c) GOA and BSAI specifications and SAFE report

The SSC received a presentation by Mike Sigler (NMFS-AFSC) on Plan Team recommendations for BSAI groundfish OFL and ABC. Jim Ianelli (NMFS-AFSC) presented the BSAI pollock stock assessment. Gulf of Alaska Plan Team recommendations were summarized by Diana Stram (NPFMC) and Jim Ianelli.

Stock Structure Template

The SSC was asked by the Plan Team to comment on how to proceed with the stock structure template and its implementation in the Council process. The SSC recommended that additional members be added to the stock structure workgroup, comprising members with more management and implementation expertise. The enhanced workgroup would work to provide further enhancements to the template that might provide additional indicators relating to management and implementation issues. In addition, the SSC would look forward to the development of a more detailed proposal by the workgroup of the proposed timeline and process for using the expanded template. This could then be reviewed and discussed by the Plan Teams and SSC.

General SAFE Comments

The SSC reviewed the SAFE chapters and 2011 OFLs with respect to status determinations for BSAI and GOA groundfish. **The SSC accepts the status determination therein, which indicated that, with the exception of BSAI Octopus, no stocks were subject to overfishing in 2011. Also, in reviewing the status of stocks with reliable biomass reference points (all Tier 3 and above stocks and rex sole), the SSC concurs that these stocks are not overfished or approaching an overfished condition.**

The SSC recommends that the authors consider whether it is possible to estimate M with at least two significant digits in all future stock assessments to increase validity of the estimated OFL. The SSC encourages assessment authors of stocks managed in Tier 5 to consider the recommendations found in the draft survey averaging workgroup report.

Table 1. SSC recommendations for Gulf of Alaska groundfish OFLs and ABCs for 2013 and 2014, shown with 2012 OFL, ABC, TAC, and catch amounts in metric tons (2012 catches through November 3rd, 2012 from AKR catch accounting system). None of the SSC recommendations differed from the GOA Plan Team recommendations.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	W (61)		30,270	30,270	27,893		28,072		25,648
	C (62)		45,808	45,808	45,050		51,443		47,004
	C (63)		26,348	26,348	25,589		27,372		25,011
	WYAK		3,244	3,244	2,380		3,385		3,093
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	100,912	150,817	110,272	138,610	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774		14,366	10,774	14,366	10,774
Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	100,912	165,183	121,046	152,976	111,530	
Pacific Cod	W		28,032	21,024	17,703		28,280		29,470
	C		56,940	42,705	34,901		49,288		51,362
	E		2,628	1,971	338		3,232		3,368
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	52,942	97,200	80,800	101,100	84,200
Sablefish	W		1,780	1,780	1,390		1,750		1,641
	C		5,760	5,760	5,248		5,540		5,195
	WYAK		2,247	2,247	2,028		2,030		1,902
	SEO		3,176	3,176	3,188		3,190		2,993
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	11,854	14,780	12,510	13,871	11,731
Shallow-water flatfish	W		21,994	13,250	153		19,489		18,033
	C		22,910	18,000	3,322		20,168		18,660
	WYAK		4,307	4,307			4,647		4,299
	EYAK/SEO		1,472	1,472			1,180		1,092
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	3,475	55,680	45,484	51,580	42,084
Deep-water Flatfish	W		176	176	8		176		176
	C		2,308	2,308	246		2,308		2,308
	WYAK		1,581	1,581	5		1,581		1,581
	EYAK/SEO		1,061	1,061	3		1,061		1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	262	6,834	5,126	6,834	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307	1,307	215		1,300		1,287
	C		6,412	6,412	1,972		6,376		6,310
	WYAK		836	836			832		823
	EYAK/SEO		1,057	1,057			1,052		1,040
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	2,187	12,492	9,560	12,362	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W		27,495	14,500	1,331		27,181		26,970
	C		143,162	75,000	18,213		141,527		140,424
	WYAK		21,159	6,900	53		20,917		20,754
	EYAK/SEO		21,066	6,900	140		20,826		20,663
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	19,737	247,196	210,451	245,262	208,811
Flathead Sole	W		15,300	8,650	277		15,729		16,063
	C		25,838	15,400	1,613		26,563		27,126
	WYAK		4,558	4,558			4,686		4,785
	EYAK/SEO		1,711	1,711			1,760		1,797
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	1,890	61,036	48,738	62,296	49,771

Table 1. continued.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific ocean perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,452		2,040		2,005
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	10,741		10,926		10,740
	WYAK		1,692	1,692	1,682		1,641		1,613
	W/C/WYAK					16,838		16,555	
	SEO		1,861	1,861		2,081	1,805	2,046	1,775
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	14,875	18,919	16,412	18,601	16,133
Northern Rockfish ¹	W		2,156	2,156	1,817		2,008		1,899
	C		3,351	3,351	3,210		3,122		2,951
	E								
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	5,027	6,124	5,130	5,791	4,850
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104	104	110		104		104
	C		452	452	361		452		452
	E		525	525	402		525		525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	873	1,441	1,081	1,441	1,081
Dusky rockfish	W		409	409	435		377		354
	C		3,849	3,849	3,558		3,533		3,317
	WYAK		542	542	2		495		465
	EYAK/SEO		318	318	6		295		277
	Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	4,001	5,746	4,700	5,395	4,413
Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish	W		80	80	39		81		83
	C		850	850	389		856		871
	E		293	293	236		295		300
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	664	1,482	1,232	1,508	1,254
Demersal rockfish	Total	467	293	293	178	487	303	487	303
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150	150	186		150		150
	C		766	766	340		766		766
	E		749	749	217		749		749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	743	2,220	1,665	2,220	1,665
Other Rockfish	W		44	44	255		44		44
	C		606	606	724		606		606
	WYAK		230	230	37		230		230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165	200	24		3,165		3,165
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	1,040	5,305	4,045	5,305	4,045
Atka mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,187	6,200	4,700	6,200	4,700
Big Skate	W		469	469	60		469		469
	C		1,793	1,793	1,596		1,793		1,793
	E		1,505	1,505	38		1,505		1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	1,694	5,023	3,767	5,023	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70	70	28		70		70
	C		1,879	1,879	656		1,879		1,879
	E		676	676	78		676		676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	762	3,500	2,625	3,500	2,625
Other Skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,030	1,110	2,706	2,030	2,706	2,030
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	5,731	802	7,614	5,884	7,614	5,884
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	6,028	595	8,037	6,028	8,037	6,028
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,146	18	1,530	1,148	1,530	1,148
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,455	368	1,941	1,455	1,941	1,455
Total	Total	747,780	606,048	438,159	227,196	738,676	595,920	723,580	584,094

¹ Note that for management purposes the ABC for Northern rockfish in the Eastern GOA is combined with Other Rockfish

Table 2. SSC recommendations for BSAI Groundfish OFLs and ABCs for 2013 and 2014 are shown with the 2012 OFL, ABC, TAC, and Catch amounts in metric tons (2012 catches through November 3 from AKR Catch Accounting include CDQ). Recommendations are marked in **bold** where SSC recommendations differ from those of the BSAI Plan Team.

Species	Area	2012				2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	EBS	2,474,000	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,202,560	<i>2,550,000</i>	<i>1,375,000</i>	<i>2,730,000</i>	<i>1,430,000</i>
	AI	39,600	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	48,600	39,800
	Bogoslof	22,000	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	13,400	10,100
Pacific cod	BSAI	369,000	314,000	261,000	223,939	359,000	307,000	379,000	323,000
Sablefish	BS	2,640	2,230	2,230	717	1,870	1,580	1,760	1,480
	AI	2,430	2,050	2,050	1,180	2,530	2,140	2,370	2,010
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	222,000	203,000	202,000	137,716	220,000	206,000	219,000	206,000
Greenland turbot	<i>Total</i>	11,700	9,660	8,660	4,401	2,540	2,060	3,270	2,650
	EBS	n/a	7,230	6,230	2,744	n/a	1,610	n/a	2,070
	AI	n/a	2,430	2,430	1,657	n/a	450	n/a	580
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	181,000	150,000	25,000	22,227	<i>186,000</i>	<i>152,000</i>	<i>186,000</i>	<i>152,000</i>
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	24,800	18,600	17,700	9,558	16,300	12,200	16,300	12,200
Northern rock sole	BSAI	231,000	208,000	87,000	75,806	241,000	214,000	229,000	204,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	84,500	70,400	34,134	11,011	81,500	67,900	80,100	66,700
Alaska plaice	BSAI	64,600	53,400	24,000	16,124	67,000	55,200	60,200	55,800
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,100	12,700	3,200	3,452	17,800	13,300	17,800	13,300
Pacific ocean perch	<i>Total</i>	35,000	24,700	24,700	21,837	41,900	35,100	39,500	33,100
	EBS	n/a	5,710	5,710	3,280	n/a	8,130	n/a	7,680
	EAI	n/a	5,620	5,620	5,519	n/a	9,790	n/a	9,240
	CAI	n/a	4,990	4,990	4,800	n/a	6,980	n/a	6,590
	WAI	n/a	8,380	8,380	8,238	n/a	10,200	n/a	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,500	8,610	4,700	2,474	12,200	9,850	12,000	9,320
Blackspotted/Rougheye	<i>Total</i>	576	475	475	204	462	378	524	429
	EBS/EAI	n/a	231	231	74	n/a	169	n/a	189
	CAI/WAI	n/a	244	244	130	n/a	209	n/a	240
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	305	493	370	493	370
Other rockfish	<i>Total</i>	1,700	1,280	1,070	924	1,540	1,160	1,540	1,160
	EBS	n/a	710	500	191	n/a	686	n/a	686
	AI	n/a	570	570	733	n/a	473	n/a	473
Atka mackerel	<i>Total</i>	96,500	81,400	50,763	47,755	57,700	50,000	56,500	48,900
	EAI/BS	n/a	38,500	38,500	37,237	n/a	16,900	n/a	16,500
	CAI	n/a	22,900	10,763	10,323	n/a	16,000	n/a	15,700
	WAI	n/a	20,000	1,500	195	n/a	17,100	n/a	16,700
Skate	BSAI	39,100	32,600	24,700	22,338	45,800	38,800	44,100	37,300
Sculpin	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	5,469	56,400	42,300	56,400	42,300
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	200	81	1,360	1,020	1,360	1,020
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	678	2,620	1,970	2,620	1,970
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	900	132	3,450	2,590	3,450	2,590
Total	BSAI	3,996,000	2,511,778	2,000,000	1,811,939	4,028,465	2,639,317	4,205,287	2,697,498

Final 2012 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs from 2012-2013 final harvest specifications; total catch updated through November 3, 2012.

Italics indicate where the Team differed from the author's recommendation.

BSAI Pacific cod

Public testimony was provided by Dave Fraser on behalf of Adak Development Corporation. He reiterated their long-standing support for an area split for Pacific cod, but questioned model assumptions with respect to survey catchability in the Aleutians. Based on his fishing experience there are times (particularly under low-density conditions) when a low-opening net is most efficient, while at other times, a high-opening trawl is more efficient to target off-bottom concentrations. He recommended that the effectiveness of the survey trawl in the Aleutians under different conditions be closely examined.

Following review of the preliminary assessment by the Plan Team in September and SSC in October, four models were selected for this year's final assessment. Model 1 is last year's accepted model, updated with new information (catch data, fishery and survey size compositions, survey abundances, survey age compositions, and fishery CPUE data); Model 2 is identical to model 1 but estimates the survey catchability coefficient as a free parameter; Model 3 is identical to model 1, but does not include age composition data in the likelihood function; Model 4 is an exploratory model that incorporates a number of author-suggested changes.

The authors, as always, have been very responsive to Plan Team and SSC recommendations and the models brought forward in the final assessment were selected based on Plan Team and SSC recommendations. There was insufficient time to consider some other recommended modifications such as time varying survey catchability (SSC, Oct-12) or selectivity parameters estimated by time block, gear, and season (Plan Team, Sep-12). A retrospective analysis was included as requested by the Plan Team and SSC and 'other' removals were included in an appendix but not incorporated in the assessment.

The authors and Plan Team recommend Model 1, which is last year's accepted model. **The SSC concurs with the choice of Model 1 for stock status determinations in 2013** in spite of a good fit for Model 4, which incorporates some desirable features but has not been fully vetted. The data and models suggest a relatively high and increasing biomass in recent years, putting the stock in Tier 3a. The SSC agrees with the current expansion of the biomass estimated for the EBS to the BSAI area based on the updated Kalman filter estimates for biomass distribution between the two areas (93% EBS and 7% AI). In spite of concerns over the status of the stock in the Aleutians as noted below, **the SSC agrees with the Plan Team that there is no compelling reason to reduce the ABC from the maximum permissible value under Tier 3a as summarized below in metric tons. The SSC supports the following ABCs and OFLs for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific cod	BSAI	359,000	307,000	379,000	323,000

The SSC re-iterates continuing concerns over the best value for the catchability coefficient, which by long-standing practice is either tuned to experimental results or fixed at a previously tuned value to keep it close to the experimental results (currently fixed at 0.77 in Model 1). Based on exploratory models estimating q, catchability may be much higher. The SSC expects to receive a report prior to next year's assessment about a comparison of the standard EBS trawl with a high-opening trawl conducted during the 2012 field season. Very preliminary results suggest that catchability is higher than the currently used value because catch rates in both trawls were not substantially different.

A second concern is the strong retrospective pattern that suggests consistent over-estimation of biomass in the most-recent year, relative to the current assessment. The SSC would like to see a similar analysis of retrospective patterns for a model with an alternative estimate for q (internally estimated or updated value from field experiment) in next year's assessment.

In combination, the above concerns suggest the possibility that biomass may be substantially lower than the current model suggests. However, biomass has increased in recent years in large part to above-average year classes in 2006, 2008, and 2010 and the possibility of another strong year class in 2011 (based on limited 2012 survey data).

The results for Model 4 suggest that several of the new features represent an improvement over the current base model and the SSC recommends bringing forward a similar model next year that retains at least some of these promising features such as the Richards growth curve, newly parameterized seasonal changes in weight-at-length, selectivity modeled as a function of length, and estimating log-scale standard

deviations for recruitment internally rather than fixing them. The appropriate treatment of selectivity remains to be determined but the simplifications introduced in Model 4 (i.e. combining gear types), in combination with the other changes, appears to provide a very reasonable fit to the age composition data and other data components.

Aleutian Islands:

The author continued to explore an age-structured model for the Aleutian Islands but did not bring forward a full assessment. Model 1 for the AI is similar to Model 1 for EBS Pacific cod, except that it assumes a single season and fishery per year, does not include age data, and the catchability coefficient is tuned to a higher value (because of the difference in survey net configurations between the two areas, Nichol et al. 2007). Model 2 is similar to Model 1, except that it allows temporal variability in two of the growth parameters. Model 3 is identical to Model 1, except that all input sample sizes for length composition data are multiplied by 1/3 in response to a Plan Team request to use a smaller average sample size. Model 4 differs from Model 1 in that it: 1) excludes US-Japanese joint survey data from before 1990 because of concerns over their reliability, 2) allows survey catchability to vary randomly among surveys, 3) forces selectivity to be asymptotic for the survey but not for the fishery, 4) estimates input sample sizes for length composition data iteratively, 5) allows several selectivity parameters to vary randomly, and 6) estimates the standard deviation for log-recruitment internally.

All models except Model 4 overestimate survey abundances substantially and result in relatively poor fits to the fishery size composition data, particularly in early years when sample sizes were low. All of the models achieved a reasonable fit to the survey size composition data. Recruitment deviations differed considerably for Model 4 and, as the authors noted, the recruitment deviations are very different from those in the eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska models, while recruitment in the latter two regions is highly synchronous. It is unclear whether that reflects a true difference in recruitment dynamics or suggests a problem with the exploratory AI assessment models.

A number of issues and data gaps were identified by the author that may need to be resolved before the present model can be adopted for stock status determinations for AI Pacific cod. In particular, the authors question whether the data to support an age-structured assessment for AI Pacific cod are adequate given large survey CVs and small sample sizes for length composition data. The SSC encourages further model development but had no specific suggestions beyond those identified in plan team discussions and the possibility of obtaining additional age composition data from archived otoliths.

While these models are still exploratory, the range of models examined appears to provide strong evidence for a substantial decline in biomass in the Aleutian Islands since the early 1990s. This decline, unlike in the Eastern Bering Sea, has continued in recent years and is consistent with observed declines in fishery CPUE in the AI for both longline and trawl fisheries (Fig. 2.3b of the assessment). The model estimates of maxABC ranged from 2,990 to 8,690 for the four exploratory models fit to the AI data and were substantially below the actual catches taken in recent years (29,000 t in 2010, 10,862 t in 2011, and 12,991 t through Nov 3). Therefore the current approach of setting a single ABC for the entire BSAI area raises potentially serious conservation concerns for Pacific cod in the AI. As noted in the SAFE introduction, the SSC has put the Council on notice for some time that it expects to adopt an area-specific ABC and OFL for the Aleutians. Given the heightened conservation concern, the SSC intends to set separate ABC/OFL for EBS Pacific cod and AI Pacific cod for the 2014 fishing season based on the best available information at that time, regardless of whether the age-structured model is adequate for stock status determinations. **Therefore, the Council should initiate preparation of any background supporting documents such as a supplemental NEPA document that may be required for specification of separate ABCs/OFLs in 2014.**

GOA Pacific cod

Public testimony was provided by Julie Bonney (Alaska Groundfish Data Bank) expressing concerns about the significant drop in ABC/OFL due to model changes and about implementing a change in area apportionments prior to adopting the new Kalman filter approach across stocks.

For this assessment cycle the 2011 model (with and without "tail compression") was updated with new data, including catch for 2011, preliminary catch for 2012, catch-at-length for 2011, seasonal and gear-specific catch for 1991-2012, and age composition and mean size-at-age for the 2011 NMFS bottom trawl survey data. In addition, five new models (Models 1-5) were explored to examine the effects of different combinations of the survey '27 cm – plus' and 'sub-27 cm' length groups on model fit. The sub-27 survey data are highly variable and there is considerable uncertainty in the catchability and selectivity of sub-27 cm fish in the trawl survey. In addition, variants of three of the models fixed catchability at 1.04 (2011 value) instead of 1.00.

The SSC agrees with the author's and Plan Team recommendation to use Model 2 for the purposes of specification. This model excludes all of the sub-27cm data, yet estimated a length at age-1 that was more consistent with the observed value than estimates from other models. The biomass estimates were similar to other model configurations. The plan team noted, and the SSC concurs, that Model 4 had much better fits to other data components and encourages the authors to further explore a model that omits or down-weights the mean-length at age data for the 27cm-plus group.

The Pacific cod stock in the Gulf of Alaska has benefitted from relatively strong recruitment from 2005 to 2009, hence stock abundance is expected to be stable or increase in the short term. The projected spawning stock biomass based on Model 2 is 110,000 t in 2013, which is well above the $B_{40\%}$ reference point of 93,900 t and puts the stock in Tier 3a. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team that there is no reason to reduce the ABC from maximum permissible and the standard control rule results in the OFL and ABC estimates for the total GOA shown in the table below.**

The Plan Team discussed two options for area apportionments using either the established approach or a new Kalman filter approach that has been recommended by a recent working group on the issue. The SSC agrees with using the recommended new approach, resulting in apportionments of 35% in the Western GOA, 61% in the Central GOA, and 4% in the Eastern GOA and the ABC splits shown below (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific Cod	W		28,280		29,470
	C		49,288		51,362
	E		3,232		3,368
	Total	97,200	80,800	101,100	84,200

With respect to further development of the model, the SSC has the following concerns and recommendations:

- Omitting mean size-at-age data for the 27+ group (Models 3 & 4) had a large effect on biomass estimates (estimating substantially higher biomass levels in the 1980s) and a strong impact on model fits. The Plan Team recommended, and the SSC concurs, to consider down-weighting rather than omitting the mean size-at-age data to more appropriately reflect the effective sample sizes associated with the data. It would also be informative to explore how the exclusion of the size-at-age data in models 3 & 4 interacts with other features of the model to result in these apparently inflated biomass estimates.

- The estimated fishery selectivities-at-length are extremely peaked for most fisheries and the resulting low selectivities for larger size classes imply high abundances of “cryptic” large Pacific cod. While similar patterns are seen in the EBS and Aleutians there is continuing large uncertainty about how to appropriately parameterize selectivity. We encourage the authors to carefully evaluate the impact of the chosen form for selectivity curves on model results and to examine how changes in selectivity interact with the treatment of growth and inclusion of mean size-at-age data.
- Of particular concern is the time varying pattern of dome-shaped selectivity with age in the survey based on very little data prior to the 1990s (Fig. 2.11). It is doubtful that age-based selectivity for the early time period can be reliably estimated if only age data from 1990-2011 was used in the model (as indicated in Table 2.7, where data from 1987 were omitted). It was not clear from the documentation if there were any composition data to inform the first time-block of selectivity for the trawl survey. The SSC encourages the author to develop a model with length-based survey selectivity to take advantage of available length data from all survey years.
- While there are legitimate concerns about the high variability of the sub-27 group, omitting the data may not be consistent with using the best available information. However, using time varying catchability with an index that primarily reflects variability due to incoming year classes is clearly not appropriate.
- To improve fits to the size data, the author may also want to consider using the Richards growth curve to parameterize growth as in Model 4 in the EBS Pcod assessment.

GOA – BSAI Sablefish

This year the authors provided a routine update of the stock assessment model that incorporated relative abundance and length data from the 2012 longline survey, relative abundance and length data from the 2011 longline and trawl fisheries, age data from the 2011 longline survey and 2011 fixed gear fishery, and updated 2011 catch and projected 2012 catch.

Results of the revised stock assessment show that the stock is expected to decline slightly in 2013 and 2014. The 1997 and 2000 year classes are entering into the spawning population.

Projected female spawning biomass for 2013 was 97,193 t, which is 37% of $B_{100\%}$. The stock is slightly below the estimate of $B_{40\%}$ (106,506 t), placing this stock in Tier 3b. The authors’ recommended ABC and OFL are set at the maximum permissible levels under the NPFMC harvest strategy. **The SSC agrees that this stock falls in Tier 3b and accepts the Plan Team recommendations for a combined BSAI-GOA ABC and OFL in 2013. The SSC also accepted the author and Plan Teams’ projected ABC and OFL for 2014 in the table below (in metric tons).** The GOA and BSAI Plan Teams accepted the author’s recommendation for 2013 area apportionments based on a 5-year exponential weighting of the survey and fishery abundance indices. This area apportionment includes the adjustment for the 95:5 hook-and-line:trawl split in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska.

The authors responded to the SSC’s request to examine the degree of overlap between the Catch Accounting System (CAS) and Halibut Fishery Incidental Catch Estimate (HFICE). They determined that evaluating this overlap is not possible with the available data. The SSC accepts this conclusion and agrees that, after the Observer Program restructuring is implemented, data may become available that will allow evaluation of this overlap.

The authors reported that fishery CPUE (from observer data) shows a steep drop in 2012, and the average depth fished in the fishery was deeper than previous years. The SSC encourages the authors to investigate whether these changes are due to changes in the fishing behavior (e.g., targeting larger fish) or shifts in the spatial distribution or abundance of the stock. **The SSC supports the following ABCs and OFLs for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):**

Sablefish GOA

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sablefish	W		1,750		1,641
	C		5,540		5,195
	WYAK		2,030		1,902
	SEO		3,190		2,993
	Total	14,780	12,510	13,871	11,731

Sablefish BSAI

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sablefish	BS	1,870	1,580	1,760	1,480
	AI	2,530	2,140	2,370	2,010
	Total	4,400	3,720	4,130	3,490

As requested, the authors showed retrospective plots based on the Plan Team retrospective working group recommended format. These plots of female spawning stock biomass and relative retrospective change show the model may be slow to respond to changes in biomass. In the upcoming year, the SSC encourages the authors to continue to explore model changes that may address this issue. Specifically, with recent shifts to deeper water to catch larger, more valuable (per pound) fish, a penalized random walk in selectivity may be more appropriate to model changes in selectivity over time.

The authors reported that they are hoping to formalize a process that would encourage the incorporation of new knowledge of recruitment processes and ecosystem influences (e.g., environmental variables and the Gulf of Alaska Project) in the Ecosystem Considerations section of the species specific SAFE chapters. The SSC looks forward to receiving updates on the progress of this effort. In particular, the SSC encourages the authors to develop a capability to project future year-class strength. These projections can be compared against realized recruitment to evaluate the forecast skill of proposed mechanistic linkages between environmental forcing and recruitment. For example, the new paper by Shotwell *et al.* (2012) appears to hold promise as a projection framework for sablefish.

The authors reported on their efforts to update and evaluate tagging data, and to revise the movement model for BSAI/GOA sablefish. The authors plan to submit a manuscript for publication of the updated movement model and tagging results. In response to questions during the November Plan Team meeting, the authors reported that additional collections of biological samples may be required to support a movement model. The SSC continues to encourage the development of a spatial assessment model for research purposes and supports the additional collection and analysis of biological samples needed to support a movement model.

GOA SAFE and Harvest Specifications for 2013/14

GOA Walleye Pollock

This assessment included changes recommended by the July 2012 CIE review. The authors addressed recommendations that would not require major methodological changes: (1) age 1 data added, (2) a change to how initial abundance-at-age is treated in the first year, (3) a change to the survey biomass likelihoods, (4) removal of pre-1984 data, (5) setting up 6 selectivity blocks according to fishery epochs to reduce the number of estimated selectivity parameters, (6) a change in the weightings for fishery age composition data, and (7) a change in the starting year from 1961 to 1964. In addition, new data from 2011 and 2012 were included. The acoustic biomass index went down, while the ADF&G survey went up in 2012.

Three models were brought forward, including the base model (Model BASE) described in the previous paragraph. Model LY is a model with last year's configuration updated with the new data. For contrast, Model BQ estimates bottom trawl catchability with a Bayesian prior. This maximum likelihood estimate turned out to be 0.72, which is lower than the median prior of 0.85.

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and authors that Model BASE should be used for specifications. Model BASE results were similar to Model LY but the results were more informative (lower variance). Model BQ simply scaled the biomass estimates upward by 30% but did not change the trend in abundance or the magnitude of stock productivity. Model BQ did not fit the data better than Model BASE.

Results from Model BASE were somewhat more optimistic than in the past. Biomass is near $B_{35\%}$ and the probability of dropping below the $B_{20\%}$ threshold is 0 in each of the next five years. Projections of biomass are generally flat, and there are no major retrospective patterns in biomass.

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and authors that the stock remains in Tier 3b, because biomass is less than $B_{40\%}$. **For the last decade, ABC has been reduced from the maximum permissible by a constant buffer (see page 72 of the SAFE). The SSC continues to recommend this approach.** After deductions for the Prince William Sound fishery and an expected pollock catch from an experimental fishing permit, ABCs for 2013 and 2014 and the corresponding OFLs are as summarized in the table below. Apportionments to management areas follow a detailed seasonal and regional approach described in Appendix C.

The Southeast Alaska pollock component is recommended to be in Tier 5, with harvest specifications calculated from the 2011 bottom trawl survey and natural mortality, resulting in the values summarized below (in metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	W (61)		28,072		25,648
	C (62)		51,443		47,004
	C (63)		27,372		25,011
	WYAK		3,385		3,093
	Subtotal	150,817	110,272	138,610	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	14,366	10,774
Total	165,183	121,046	152,976	111,530	

The SSC appreciates the thorough and thoughtful expositions about ecosystem considerations (starting at page 75) and stock structure (Appendix E).

Research recommendations

1. The SSC agrees with the Plan Team to continue to explore temporal variation in fishery selectivity. In particular, the author should explore whether there is a tradeoff between parsimony and introduction of retrospective error when using time blocks versus a penalized random walk for time varying selectivity.
2. The SSC also agrees with the Plan Team that the authors should investigate splitting off one year-olds in the survey, as is done in the Bering Sea. The rationale is that a large pulse of age 1 fish can dominate the likelihood.
3. The authors should explore if there are variations in female relative abundance that may explain variations in spatial distributions by management areas.

GOA Atka Mackerel

This is an off-year for the GOA Atka mackerel assessment and therefore only an executive summary was prepared. **The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and the stock assessment authors that GOA Atka mackerel harvest specifications should remain in Tier 6, with OFL and ABC for both 2013 and 2014 as shown in the table below (in metric tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Atka mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	6,200	4,700

GOA Flatfish

Shallow-water Flatfish Complex

The shallow-water complex includes yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, sand sole and Alaskan plaice (all Tier 5 stocks). This complex also includes northern and southern rock sole; an independent assessment for northern and southern rock sole was conducted and listed as a Tier 3a.

There is no change in the assessment methodology for the Tier 5 stocks and biomass estimates are rolled over for the 2011 survey. Catch for this complex continues to be below the ABC values.

There were several changes to this year's assessment model for northern and southern rock sole, and 8 alternative model configurations were presented. Estimated trends in abundance for southern rock sole were relatively insensitive to alternative model configurations. Trends in the early time period of the northern rock sole differed considerably from the southern rock sole. Model 3 was arbitrarily chosen as it presented an intermediate estimate of biomass during the mid-1970's to mid-1980s for the northern rock sole. The SSC recommends that more formal criteria for model selection be developed and used for northern and southern rock sole.

The SSC supports the author and Plan Team recommendations for ABC and OFL in 2013 and 2014 and area apportionments using combined Tier 3 and Tier 5 calculations for this stock complex (see table at end of flatfish section).

Deepwater Flatfish Complex

The deepwater complex is comprised of Dover sole, Greenland turbot, and deepsea sole. There were no changes to the assessment methodology. The assessment authors used the survey abundance estimate from 2011 rather than a survey averaging approach to determine biomass; next year a survey averaging approach will be used. This stock complex is assessed as Tier 5 (Dover sole) and Tier 6 (other species). The Dover sole was a Tier 3a assessment, but was moved to Tier 5 in 2011.

In September 2012, the assessment author presented progress on the development of a new Dover sole model that is planned to be implemented in the coming year. The SSC looks forward to seeing the results of this new model.

The SSC supports the author and Plan Team recommended 2013 and 2014 ABC and OFLs and area apportionments (see table at the end of the flatfish section).

Rex Sole

The Plan Team adopted a Tier 5 approach using a model estimated biomass for rex sole as would be done for Tier 3 stocks. This is an off-year for the rex sole assessment and only an executive summary was presented for this stock. There were no changes to the assessment model.

The SSC supports the author and plan team recommended ABC and OFLs for 2013 and 2014 (see table at the end of the flatfish section).

Arrowtooth Flounder

New data for arrowtooth flounder only includes updated catch for 2011 and estimated 2012 catch. There were no new survey data for arrowtooth flounder. Therefore, the assessment model was not re-run and ABC recommendations are based on parameter estimates from last year’s assessment. The single-species projection model was re-run using only new catch data, with no other underlying changes to the model from the previous year. Arrowtooth flounder is a Tier 3a stock.

Recent trends in estimated age 3+ arrowtooth biomass have stabilized since 2006 and the stock is currently estimated to be just over 2 million t. **The SSC supports the Plan Team and author recommended ABC and OFLs and area apportionments for 2013 and 2014 (see table at the end of the flatfish section).**

Flathead Sole

Flathead sole are a Tier 3a stock that is assessed on a biennial basis and this year is an off-year. Catch for the 2012 fishery was 1,890 t, which is less than the ABC for 2012.

The SSC supported the author and Plan Team’s OFL and ABC and area apportionment recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (see table below in metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shallow- Water Flatfish	W		19,489		18,033
	C		20,168		18,660
	WYAK		4,647		4,299
	EYAK/SEO		1,180		1,092
	Total	55,680	45,484	51,580	42,084
Deep- Water Flatfish	W		176		176
	C		2,308		2,308
	WYAK		1,581		1,581
	EYAK/SEO		1,061		1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	6,834	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,300		1,287
	C		6,376		6,310
	WYAK		832		823
	EYAK/SEO		1,052		1,040
	Total	12,492	9,560	12,362	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W		27,181		26,970
	C		141,527		140,424
	WYAK		20,917		20,754
	EYAK/SEO		20,826		20,663
	Total	247,196	210,451	245,262	208,811
Flathead Sole	W		15,729		16,063
	C		26,563		27,126
	WYAK		4,686		4,785
	EYAK/SEO		1,760		1,797
	Total	61,036	48,738	62,296	49,771

GOA Rockfish

Pacific ocean perch

The author presented an off-year POP executive summary and 2013-2014 projection models. An updated catch for 2011-2012 was included in the projection model. The 2012 catch was estimated by expanding the October 1, 2012 official catch by a factor of 1.05. Julie Bonney (AGDB) gave public testimony in support of the Plan Team recommendation on the new apportionment of W, C and WYAK areas. **The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and the assessment authors' recommendation that it is a Tier 3a stock. The SSC also accepts the Plan Team's recommended apportionment of ABCs among Western, Central, West Yakutat, and SEO areas in 2013-2014 with revised OFLs for the fished (W/C/WYAK) and lightly fished (SEO) areas (see table below in metric tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific Ocean Perch	W		2,040		2,005
	C		10,926		10,740
	WYAK		1,641		1,613
	W/C/WYAK	16,838		16,555	
	SEO	2,081	1,805	2,046	1,775
	Total	18,919	16,412	18,601	16,133

POP are long lived, as are most rockfish species. Once overfished, long lived fish species may take decades to rebuild or recover. In Figure 9A1 in the SAFE, there is an increasing trend of catch from 1995 to 2011, but the survey biomass trend from 1995 to 2011 is level as shown in Figure 9A2. The SSC is concerned with these two trends. The SSC recommends that close attention be paid in the coming years to whether overages are occurring in the ABCs. If these are occurring, this may warrant revisiting the apportionment scheme in coming years because genetic studies of POP indicate there is an isolation by distance.

Northern Rockfish

The authors provided an updated chapter and executive summary. **The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and the authors' recommendation that it is a Tier 3a stock and the estimated OFL and ABC and apportionments to west, central, and east GOA as shown in the below table (in metric tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rockfish	W		2,008		1,899
	C		3,122		2,951
	E				
	Total	6,124	5,130	5,791	4,850

Shortraker

The SSC reviewed the off-year assessment of the shortraker rockfish. **The SSC accepts the author's and Plan Team's recommended 2013 Tier 5 designation, ABC and OFL for GOA shortraker rockfish as well as the area apportionments for this stock complex. The SSC also accepts the author's and Plan Team's projected 2014 ABC and OFL (in metric tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	2013			2014	
	Area	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shortraker	W		104		104
	C		452		452
	E		525		525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,441	1,081

Other rockfish (Combination of Slope rockfish and Pelagic shelf complex species)

The SSC reviewed the off-year assessment of the other rockfish. **The SSC accepts the author's and Plan Team's recommended 2013 Tier designation (Tier 4 for sharpchin and Tier 5 for all others), ABC and OFL for GOA other rockfish as well as the area apportionments for this stock complex. The SSC also accepts the author's and Plan Team's projected 2014 ABC and OFL (see table below in metric tons).** The authors noted that the ABCs for Other Rockfish in the western and central GOA were substantially exceeded in 2012, and the 2012 catch of harlequin rockfish in the central GOA was 38% larger than the average over recent years. The SSC concurs with the GOA Plan Team recommendation to examine the fishery catch records in more detail to determine which areas, species, and target fisheries are contributing to the higher catch levels.

Assemblage /Stock	2013			2014	
	Area	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other Rockfish	W		44		44
	C		606		606
	WYAK		230		230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165		3,165
	Total	5,305	4,045	5,305	4,045

Dusky rockfish

The SSC reviewed the dusky rockfish update and projections provided in this off-year assessment. The authors updated the catch in the projection model. **The SSC accepts the author's and Plan Team's recommended 2013 Tier designation (Tier 3a), ABC and OFL for GOA dusky rockfish, as well as the area apportionments for this stock. The SSC also accepts the author's and Plan Team's projected 2014 ABC and OFL (see table below in metric tons).** The authors noted that if area specific OFLs were in place they would have been exceeded in the western GOA. The SSC encourages the authors to continue to track this in future years.

Assemblage /Stock	2013			2014	
	Area	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Dusky rockfish	W		377		354
	C		3,533		3,317
	WYAK		495		465
	EYAK/SEO		295		277
	Total	5,746	4,700	5,395	4,413

Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish

The SSC reviewed the rougheye and blackspotted update and projections provided in this off-year assessment. The authors updated the projection model with observed and projected catch of rougheye and blackspotted rockfish. **The SSC accepts the author's and Plan Team's recommended 2013 Tier designation (Tier 3a), ABC and OFL for GOA rougheye and blackspotted rockfish as well as the area apportionments of ABC for this group of stocks. The SSC also accepts the author's and Plan Team's recommended 2014 projected ABC and OFL for this group of stocks (see table below in metric tons).**

Assemblage /Stock	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Rougheye/ Blackspotted Rockfish	W		81		83
	C		856		871
	E		295		300
	Total	1,482	1,232	1,508	1,254

Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)

Demersal shelf rockfish biomass is estimated from a habitat-based stock assessment focused on yelloweye rockfish densities estimated from visual line transects conducted from submersibles. A submersible survey has not been conducted since 2009. New information for the biomass projections are average weights and catches from all management areas. Exploitable biomass for 2013 (14,588 t) increased slightly from 2012 (14,307 t).

As in previous assessments, the SSC agrees with the authors and Plan Team to apply precautionary measures in establishing allowable harvests, including: 1) using the 90% lower confidence bound, and 2) using a harvest rate lower than maximum under Tier 4 by applying $F=M=0.02$ to survey biomass. The SSC agrees with the resulting OFL and ABC for 2013 and 2014, expressed in metric tons in the table below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Demersal rockfish	Total	487	303	487	303

Due to problems with availability of the submersible, a pilot ROV survey was conducted in 2012 with the hope that the ROV survey could supplant the submersible surveys for biomass estimation. The submersible was not available for comparison with the pilot ROV survey, hampering a straightforward transition from the submersible to the ROV for surveys. We look forward to a full analysis of the pilot ROV survey data and a revised survey design applicable to this assessment as soon as practical during the next assessment cycle. We also look forward to seeing a report on the age structured model for this stock that has been under development for some time. The SSC requests the authors provide a summary of all sources of yelloweye mortality in the GOA including a rationale for which source of mortality may be included in the assessment. We continue to encourage the investigation into alternative surveys (e.g., IPHC longline survey) in the assessment.

Thornyhead Rockfish

The SSC supports the rollover of last year's Tier 5 calculations for thornyheads in the Gulf of Alaska, using the most recent trawl survey biomass estimate from 2011. The SSC agrees with the Plan Team's recommendation for the Gulf-wide OFL and ABC for 2013 and 2014, and the area apportionments of the ABC for both years, expressed in metric tons in the table below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150		150
	C		766		766
	E		749		749
	Total	2,220	1,665	2,220	1,665

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team recommendation that trawl surveys extend to 500 m in order to more completely cover available thornyhead habitat and that a Kalman filter approach to estimating biomass be used in the next assessment.

Sharks

The SSC reviewed the off-year assessment of the GOA sharks. **The SSC accepts the author’s and Plan Team’s recommended 2013 Tier designations, ABC and OFL for GOA sharks. The SSC also accepts the author’s and Plan Team’s recommendations for 2014 ABC and OFL for this complex (see table below in metric tons).**

As in previous years, biological reference points for GOA sharks are calculated as the sum of estimates from a Tier 5-like calculation that has been accepted as an alternative Tier 6 assessment approach used for spiny dogfish and a traditional Tier 6 approach for Pacific sleeper shark, salmon shark, and other/unidentified sharks. The authors indicated that they plan to develop length-based and surplus production models for the 2013 assessment. The SSC supports this development and will review the results at its October 2013 meeting.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	8,037	6,028

GOA Skates

The GOA skate complex is managed as three stock groups. Big skates (*Raja binoculata*) and longnose skates (*Raja rhina*) each have separate harvest specifications, with ABCs specified for each GOA regulatory area (western, central, and eastern). There is also an “other skates” complex with GOA-wide harvest specifications. The authors presented an executive summary with updated catch data. The SSC encourages the assessment author to explore ways to estimate natural mortality directly from data or life history characteristics, if possible. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and assessment author’s recommendation to continue management of GOA skates as Tier 5, with the 2013-2014 OFL and ABCs, shown in the below table in metric tons.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Big Skate	W		469		469
	C		1,793		1,793
	E		1,505		1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	5,023	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70		70
	C		1,879		1,879
	E		676		676
	Total	3,500	2,625	3,500	2,625
Other skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,706	2,030

GOA Sculpins

The author presented an executive summary on GOA sculpins. The status quo approach to estimating average survey biomass was retained, using the four most recent survey years. The full assessment in 2013 will apply the Kalman filter as recommended by the Joint Plan Team in September 2012. The SSC requests that the author present the results of mean average, weighted average, the Kalman filter approach, and other author recommended methods for estimating biomass used in determination of ABC and OFL for comparison in next years’ stock assessment.

The SSC concurs with the Plan Team and assessment author’s recommendation that GOA sculpins be managed as a Tier 5 stock with $M=0.22$ to be applied to the stock as an aggregate. Under Tier 5, the estimated OFL and ABC in 203 and 2014 are shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,614	5,884	7,614	5,884

GOA Squid

This is an off-year for the GOA squid assessment and therefore only an executive summary was prepared. In 2012, squid catch reported to date is the lowest for which data are available (1990-2012). The author updated catch and retention data with complete 2011 and partial 2012 data.

The SSC agrees with the continuation of an alternative Tier 6 approach for this complex, with OFL set equal to the average catch from 1997-2007 and ABC set equal 75% of OFL, as shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,530	1,148

GOA Octopus

A new methodology was introduced in the Bering Sea in 2011 to estimate octopus biomass based on the consumption of octopus by Pacific cod. The assessment presents the application of this methodology for GOA octopus, in addition to the status quo method, which uses an alternative Tier 6 approach that employs a Tier 5-like calculation of OFL with an average of the three most recent survey biomass estimates. A third approach was presented, another alternative Tier 6 approach that used the maximum historical (1997-2007) catch to set harvest specifications. The authors recommended the alternative Tier 6 approach based on Pacific cod octopus consumption. However, the Plan Team recommended the status quo method that uses the alternative Tier 6 approach that employs a Tier 5-like assessment methodology and the SSC concurs. The SSC noted, as did the Plan Team, that the use of a natural mortality of 0.53 in the assessment was relatively conservative.

The SSC agrees with the GOA Plan Team recommendation and supports the estimate of OFLs and ABCs under Tier 6, as shown in the table below (metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,941	1,455

BSAI SAFE and Harvest Specifications for 2013/14

AI Assessment Author recommendations: The SSC requests that all assessment authors of AI species evaluate AI survey information to ensure that the same standardized survey time series is used.

EBS Walleye Pollock

Ed Richardson (PCC) provided public testimony. He supported the Plan Team’s ABC of 1.375 million t, suggested that having female spawning biomass between 2 to 3 million t usually resulted in acceptable

recruitments, and felt that the decision table in the assessment was not appropriate for a fast-growing species like pollock.

This is a straightforward update of the stock assessment from last year, involving only new data (2011 fishery catch at age and weight at age, and 2012 preliminary catch and catch at age, acoustic trawl survey abundance at age, and bottom trawl survey abundance at age). There were no model changes.

Both the bottom trawl and acoustic trawl surveys showed increases from last year. Age composition data show strong 2006 and 2008 year-classes. This is confirmed by estimates of recruitment, but the 2006 year-class has a lower recruitment estimate (at age 1) than in last year's assessment and the opposite occurs for the 2008 recruitment estimate. Spawning biomass has increased 44% since the recent low point in 2008 and is slightly above B_{MSY} , and projected biomasses in 2013 and 2014 are projected to be about 20% above B_{MSY} .

Items of concern or observations contributing to uncertainty include: (1) about 22% of survey biomass occurred in Russian waters and was subject to their exploitation, (2) one of the largest cold pools on record occurred in 2012 and pollock have tended to avoid the cold pool in the past (but not this year), (3) retrospective patterns that suggest that strong year-classes can be overestimated, (4) the high CV of the 2008 year-class, (5) larger fishing mortalities on older pollock, and (6) a lack of 1 year olds in the acoustic trawl survey.

New in this year's assessment is a decision table comparing seven alternative harvest options with respect to 12 decision metrics related to biomass, harvest rate, population age-composition, fishing effort, and salmon PSC. Both the Plan Team and SSC encourage further work on this approach, but felt it was premature to use this method for specifications. The authors and Plan Team objectives this year focused on considerations of long-term or short-term averages of biomass, fishing mortality and age diversity as desirable management levels (comparable to targets). The SSC prefers standard status determination criteria such as $B_{35\%}$, $F_{35\%}$, $B_{40\%}$, $F_{40\%}$, and $B_{100\%}$.

The SSC continues to place EBS pollock in Tier 1a, due to the wealth of information and the presence of a credible spawner-recruit curve and pdf for F_{MSY} . This results in the maximum permissible ABC in 2013 of 2.31 million t, which is about 0.4 million t higher than any annual catch on record. The authors, Plan Team, and SSC all agree that a reduction from the maximum permissible ABC is warranted, given the concerns listed above, in the stock assessment document, and the Plan Team summary and minutes. The authors came up with a 2013 ABC of 1.2 million t, based on a decision table entry corresponding to a 50% probability of reaching the long-term average female spawning biomass in 5 years. Because this is a new criterion based on a long-term average that may not be meaningful, the Plan Team and SSC recommend staying with the same criterion as last year: constraining fishing mortality to the most recent 5-year average. This is conservative because biomass has been increasing, which would normally produce an increase in fishing mortality. This results in the following specifications (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	EBS	2,550,000	1,375,000	2,730,000	1,430,000

Research consideration

The SSC notes that the adjustment from the maximum permissible of almost 0.9 million t is very large and encourages the authors and the Plan Team seek approaches that help inform the desirable reductions based on the amount of uncertainty.

In the longer term, the SSC encourages the authors to consider explicitly including predation in the assessment model to estimate reference points that better reflect the importance of walleye pollock as a key forage species in the eastern Bering Sea. For example, the approach of Moustahfid et al. (2009) or similar approaches previously pursued by the lead author could be used.

Aleutian Islands Walleye Pollock

The Aleutian Islands pollock assessment is a routine update of the stock assessment model used previously. A new bottom trawl survey was performed this year, so that the information for this assessment should be improving. Spawning biomass has steadily increased since its recent low in 1999 and has reached $B_{34\%}$.

The SSC affirms that this stock belongs in Tier 3b. This results in the following specifications (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
AI Pollock	AI	45,600	37,300	48,600	39,800

Bogoslof Walleye Pollock

The Bogoslof survey resulted in the lowest estimate of biomass (67,100 t) since the survey started in 1988. The SSC affirms that this stock belongs in Tier 5. Specifications (in metric tons) are calculated from survey biomass and natural mortality $M = 0.20$, resulting in:

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Bogoslof Pollock	Bogoslof	13,400	10,100	13,400	10,100

Research consideration

This stock has not been fished for a long enough time that catch curve analysis could be used to estimate recent natural mortality. This would be a useful check on the assumed value.

BSAI Atka Mackerel

A number of changes to the assessment model were implemented in the current assessment. These include: (1) The authors estimated the recruitment variance, which in the past assessment was fixed at a value of 0.6, (2) The prior penalty of the parameter determining the degree of dome-shape for fishery selectivity was fixed at 0.30, while it was fixed at 0.10 in the past, and (3) The current fishery selectivity-at-age vector used for projection differs slightly (higher selectivity for ages 3-6 and lower selectivity after age 7) from the fishery selectivity pattern estimated with last year's model configuration. The projected 2013 female spawning biomass is 103,034 t, which is lower than $B_{40\%}=111,385$ t. The Plan Team and the stock assessment authors recommended changing the harvesting specification from Tier 3a to Tier 3b. The projected age 3+ biomass at the beginning of 2013 is estimated at 288,936 t, down about 29% from last year's estimate for 2012. The assessment authors assume 64% of the BSAI-wide ABC is likely to be taken under the implemented Steller Sea Lion Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (SSL RPAs). This percentage was applied to the 2013 maximum permissible ABC, and that amount was assumed to be caught in order to estimate the 2014 ABCs and OFL values. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team recommendations for ABC and OFLs as well as area apportionments in the table below (in tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Atka Mackerel	EAI/BS		16,900		16,500
	CAI		16,000		15,700
	WAI		17,100		16,700
	Total	57,700	50,000	56,500	48,900

The SSC observes there is a 10-12 year cycle in estimated biomass, but it disappeared in the past 10 years. SSC recommends that the authors:

- i) estimate M and q directly in the model and report the correlation between these two estimates from the variance-covariance matrix of the final model, or
- ii) conduct a sensitivity analysis between various input M s around 0.20-0.40 and estimated q 's.

BSAI Flatfish

Yellowfin Sole

No changes were made to the assessment methodology. Last year, the SSC supported the Plan Team's suggestion of examining simpler or non-parametric alternative growth models. The assessment authors indicated that an alternative growth model designed to smooth the empirical weight at age data should be implemented in next year's assessment. The SSC appreciates these efforts and looks forward to the results of this analysis.

The EBS yellowfin sole stock has been gradually declining for the past 10 years and is currently just below the $B_{40\%}$ level and 1.5 times B_{msy} . **The SSC support the authors' and Team's OFL and ABC recommendations for 2013 and 2014 using Tier 1 (in metric tons).**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	220,000	206,000	219,000	206,000

Greenland Turbot

The SSC received public testimony by John Gauvin (Alaska Seafood Cooperative) and Chad See (Freezer Longline Coalition) expressing concerns about the significant changes in OFLs and ABCs associated with changes implemented in this year's assessment. Concerns were expressed about the effects of occasional extremely large recruitments on the assessment model and estimation of reference points. The use of mean recruitment, versus median recruitment, was questioned as an appropriate measure for calculating SB_{100} for this stock that appears to have episodic recruitment.

The Greenland turbot stock assessment has undergone many changes in the past year. These included changes in the method for parameterizing sex-specific selectivity curves, changes in the prior distributions for survey catchability, a re-examination of the weight-length relationship, a new method to weight annual fishery length compositions, and changes in the way that recruitments were estimated in the early years of the series. There were also a number of changes in the input data, including dropping pre-2002 slope survey biomass estimates and weighting the haul-by-haul fishery length composition data proportional to catch. The SSC received a progress report on these changes at the October 2012 meeting.

There were marked changes in both stock status and biological reference points since last year's assessment. Estimated female spawning biomass dropped 51% from 2012 owing to major revisions in the stock assessment model. Female spawning biomass is projected to increase from 23,500 t in 2013 to 26,500 t in 2014 as two strong year classes begin to recruit to the spawning stock. Estimated biomass reference points are larger, whereas fishing mortality reference points are lower, than those estimated in

last year's assessment. **In addition to changes in the assessment model and data, input errors in the 2009-2011 projection models were discovered that resulted in large underestimates of all biomass reference points.** For instance, last year's projected stock status for 2012 was $B_{88\%}$ whereas this year's estimate of stock status is only $B_{21\%}$. As a result, the stock now falls under Tier 3b instead of Tier 3a.

Four models were considered. Model 1, the reference model fit to new datasets and weight-at-length estimates, was rejected based on unrealistic selectivity curves. The choice between Models 2-4 was more difficult, but the assessment authors and Plan Team considered Model 2 to be the preferred reference model. Model 3 was identical to Model 2, except that recruitment was modeled with an autocorrelation parameter. Model 3 was determined to be the best fitting model, but it was not selected because of the novelty of the autocorrelation approach and the sensitivity of reference points to the assumed autocorrelation parameter. It is notable that the stock would be determined to be in an overfished condition if model 3 was adopted.

The SSC appreciates the significant efforts of the assessment authors to improve this year's assessment of Greenland turbot. The SSC also appreciates the insights by the authors and Plan Team concerning the alternative models.

The SSC agrees with the selection of Model 2 and application of Tier 3b to establish OFLs and ABCs in this year's assessment. The result is a significant reduction in ABC and OFL for this fishery. It was indicated that this reduction would likely prevent the conduct of a directed fishery for Greenland turbot. In response to an SSC question about bycatch of Greenland turbot in the Kamchatka flounder fishery, it was indicated that there are areas of the slope where Kamchatka flounder could be harvested with low Greenland turbot bycatch. Clearly, the bycatch of Greenland turbot will need to be closely monitored.

For next year's assessment, the SSC provides the following recommendations:

1. The SSC requests further exploration of an alternative model structure to try and resolve the extreme 1965 cohort. This may include estimating average recruitment for the initial age-structure and associated deviates, and an average recruitment for subsequent years with average deviates and a shared sigma R value. There is some concern that the estimates of average recruitment (which defines the SB_{100} value) are potentially biased due to confounding between scaling parameters (R_o , q_{shelf}) and selectivity parameters in the survey.
2. Show the parameter correlation between parameters that describe the descending limb of the survey selectivity curve and the catchability coefficient for q_{shelf} . Consider one model alternative in which early years without data are excluded from the model. The SSC noted some similarities with the eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab assessment. The impacts of the foreign catch and the change in the trawl selectivity are very dramatic.
3. Examine the amount of cryptic biomass (i.e., resulting from dome-shaped selectivity) in the survey data. There is a concern that the survey, which samples small fish on the shelf, is more of a noisy recruitment index with large observation errors.
4. Retain Model 3 as an alternative model and undertake additional evaluation of the autocorrelation feature of this model. The authors might consider whether any environmentally driven mechanisms might help justify a selection of this model in future years.

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Greenland turbot	BS		1,610		2,070
	AI		450		580
	Total	2,540	2,060	3,270	2,650

Arrowtooth Flounder

No significant changes were made to assessment methodology, but several input data sets were updated or revised. The most significant change in input data appears to be replacement of Zimmerman’s (1997) female size at maturity data with more recent information from Stark (2008). Because size at 50% maturity is larger in the latter study (46 cm) than the earlier study (42.2 cm), estimates of female spawning biomass are significantly lower in this year’s assessment compared to last year’s assessment. The Plan Team had concerns about switching from one maturity schedule to the other and also had concerns about the statistical method used to estimate maturity parameters in this year’s assessment.

The authors and Plan Team both agreed that the stock should be managed under Tier 3a. The Plan Team did not accept this year’s assessment model because of the aforementioned issues with the maturity schedule. Thus, the Team recommended rolling over last year’s projected ABC and OFL for 2013 for use in this year’s specifications for 2013 and 2014. **Because of the concerns about the use of maturity data in this year’s assessment, the SSC agrees with the Plan Team’s advice to roll over last year’s ABC and OFL specifications.**

In next year’s assessment, the SSC requests more detailed information to be presented about the sampling for arrowtooth flounder maturity by Zimmerman (1997) and Stark (2008). In particular, the samples used to estimate both maturity curves should be considered with respect to location of sampling and possible environmental and density-dependent effects to the extent possible. For instance, changes in size at maturity might be expected under different thermal histories of the cohorts sampled and under large shifts in arrowtooth flounder density over time. This additional detail may be helpful to decisions about how to best combine results to estimate maturity for the stock assessment.

However, as both Zimmerman (1997) and Stark (2008) estimated size at maturity for arrowtooth flounder from the Gulf of Alaska, the most obvious shortcoming is the lack of maturity estimates for arrowtooth flounder from the eastern Bering Sea. Major differences in size at maturity exist for other species (e.g., Pacific herring, red king crab) between the Gulf of Alaska and eastern Bering Sea. **The SSC requests the Plan Team to include collection and analysis of maturity data of arrowtooth flounder from the eastern Bering Sea as a research priority.**

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	186,000	152,000	186,000	152,000

Kamchatka Flounder

Kamchatka flounder have been managed under Tier 5 using an estimate of natural mortality (M) and 7-year averages of trawl survey biomass from the Bering Sea shelf and slope and Aleutian Islands. A provisional sex-specific length-based assessment model under Tier 3 was reviewed by the Plan Team in

September 2012 and the SSC in October 2012. Given the extensiveness of the advice by both the Plan Team and SSC, a revised model will be considered in next year’s assessment cycle.

The current Tier 5 assessment was updated with the latest survey data from the Aleutian Islands and the Bering Sea slope and shelf. Also, natural mortality (M) was re-evaluated using four methods, resulting in a new estimate of 0.13 compared to 0.20 in last year’s assessment. Using the same method as last year, biomass was estimated to be 109,000 t. **The SSC supports the author’s and Plan Team recommendations OFL and ABC recommendations using Tier 5.** The SSC looks forward to next year’s assessment at which time Kamchatka flounder will be reconsidered for Tier 3 status.

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	16,300	12,200	16,300	12,200

Northern Rock Sole

Assessment methodology for northern rock sole was unchanged from last year’s assessment; only input data were updated. In last year’s assessment, alternative models were explored in which survey catchability (q) was set as a function of bottom temperature. Although there was evidence of a relationship, the estimated mean value for q was unrealistically high. The SSC had requested that alternative model formulations be evaluated this year in which q was constrained to realistic values. The assessment authors implemented the SSC’s recommendations from last year and considered Model 1 and six alternatives (Model 7 included a relationship between q and temperature). The assessment author noted that results of Model 7 were very close to those of Model 1, but elected to implement Model 1 for purposes of this year’s assessment noting that further testing was needed for Model 7.

The Plan Team endorsed the use of Model 1 and management of northern rock sole under Tier 1a, as spawning biomass is estimated to be 264% of B_{msy} in 2013. **The SSC supports the author’s and Plan Team’s recommendations for this year and looks forward to further evaluation of the potential effect of temperature on survey q in next year’s assessment. The SSC recommends standardizing bottom temperature to mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.0 (d_t), and model survey q as $q_t = \bar{q} \exp(\lambda * d_t)$, and estimate the correlation coefficient (λ) internally in the model.**

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rock sole	BSAI	241,000	214,000	229,000	204,000

Flathead Sole

There was no change in the assessment model from last year other than updated input survey and fishery data. **The SSC supports management of the flathead sole fishery under Tier 3a for the current assessment, as recommended by the assessment authors and Plan Team. However, for next year’s assessment, the SSC request that the authors prepare an alternative assessment of flathead sole under Tier 1.** The fitted stock-recruit model (Figure 9.29) suggests that Tier 1 status may be appropriate as with yellowfin sole.

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Flathead sole	BSAI	81,500	67,900	80,100	66,700

Alaska Plaice

There were no changes in the assessment methodology from last year’s assessment; only fishery and survey data were updated. **The authors and Plan Team recommend continued management of the Alaska plaice stock under Tier 3a and the SSC agrees with this approach.**

A survey in 2010 found that 38% of the biomass of Alaska plaice resides in the northern Bering Sea. A challenge to this assessment is how to incorporate this information into the assessment. Biomass estimates from the northern Bering Sea survey are not included in the current assessment, because that area has only been surveyed once and there are no current plans to resurvey this northern area. The SSC appreciates this difficulty and cannot offer meaningful advice except to advocate for additional surveys in the northern Bering Sea. The Alaska plaice assessment is also unique in that it incorporates survey information prior to 1982 into the assessment.

The SSC understands that the assessment authors indicated that they will remove the pre-1982 survey data from next year’s assessment. The SSC agrees that this is likely to be prudent, given the reported differences in survey catchability for other groundfish species associated with the switch from the 400 eastern to the 83-112 trawl in 1982. **When this is done, the SSC requests retaining a model fit with full data in next year’s assessment so that the effect of this change can be evaluated.**

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Alaska plaice	BSAI	67,000	55,200	60,200	55,800

Other Flatfish

No changes in assessment methodology were implemented from last year’s assessment. Survey and fishery data were updated with recent estimates. In recent years, starry flounder and rex sole have accounted for most of the “other flatfish” catch. Exploitation rates for these two species have been low (<5% during 1997 to 2012). The exploitation rates of butter sole have exceeded 14% in some years and catches exceeded survey biomass estimates in 2008. However, the assessment authors made the case that such estimates are an artifact of survey sampling. Other species in this group (Dover sole, Sakhalin sole, and English sole) occur at the edge of their distributions in the eastern Bering Sea. **The SSC recommends monitoring of survey biomass estimates (and confidence intervals) of these other flatfish species into the future.**

The assessment authors and Plan Team recommended continued management of Other Flatfish as Tier 5 based on species-specific estimates of M and biomass estimates. **The SSC supports the authors’ and Plan Team’s recommendations below (in metric tons) for OFL and ABC.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,800	13,300	17,800	13,300

BSAI Rockfish

The authors made a significant effort to improve the POP, northern and rougheye stock assessment models. They re-estimated the ageing error matrix and conducted a sensitivity analysis on how the age and length plus groups affect the fit to various model components. The SSC notes that a CIE review of rockfish assessments will be conducted at NMFS-AFSC in Juneau, April 9-11, providing for an independent evaluation of rockfish modeling to aid in future development of these models. The SSC looks forward to receiving the report from this review.

Pacific Ocean Perch (POP)

There were a number of changes to input data in this year's assessment including: 1) updated catch time series, 2) 2012 AI survey biomass estimate and length composition, 3) the 2009 and 2011 fishery age compositions and 2010 fishery length composition, and 4) biased fishery ages from 1977-1980 were removed from the model and replaced with fishery lengths. The model now incorporates a revised maturity curve that is fitted to two sets of new maturity data inside the model. The new curve estimates fish reaching maturity at a younger age than previously thought.

A series of models were run to evaluate how the age plus group affects fits to various model components and to derive the appropriate set of age bins. The author evaluated total likelihood and likelihood for the age compositions, and the standard deviation of normalized residuals for the age and length composition data. Based on this analysis, the plus group was increased from 25 to 40 years, which required updating the age-length conversion matrix and the aging error matrix. These changes improved overall model fit to the data although the model estimate of survey biomass still does not match the high 2010 and 2012 survey biomass estimates very well. Results also indicate that the model does not fit the plus age group very well and greatly under-estimates the 2010 and 2012 survey biomass. Further, based upon the MCMC integration, the posterior distribution for M shows little overlap with the prior distribution, indicating that the prior distribution may constrain the estimate. The available data indicate that the estimate of M would be higher if a larger CV was used for the prior.

The SSC recommends that the author further investigate this result by conducting a sensitivity study in which (1) the prior distribution is not used, and (2) the mean and variance of the prior are varied. In addition, there should be a section in the methods that describes how the prior distributions were chosen.

The survey biomass estimates in the Aleutian Islands and the Bering Sea slope in 2012 and 2010 were the highest since 1980. Estimated age 3+ biomass for 2013 is up substantially from the 2013 estimate projected a year ago and spawning biomass is projected to be 274,000 t in 2013 and to decline slightly to 258,000 t in 2014.

The projected OFL increased significantly since the last assessment as a result of: 1) the upward trend in survey biomass, 2) change in maturity curve, and 3) change in the plus group age. **The SSC endorses Plan Team and authors' recommendations below (in metric tons) for OFLs and area splits using maximum permissible ABC. Pacific ocean perch qualify for management under Tier 3 and spawning biomass for 2013 (274,000 t) is projected to exceed B_{40%}, thereby placing POP in sub-tier "a" of Tier 3.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific ocean perch	EBS		8,130		7,680
	EAI		9,790		9,240
	CAI		6,980		6,590
	WAI		10,200		9,590
BSAI	Total	41,900	35,100	39,500	33,100

The SSC offers the following advice to assessment authors:

- Explore alternative selectivity patterns
- Evaluate alternative selectivity time periods
- Provide model sensitivity to Q and M
- Explore lack of fit to the plus age group
- Fit to the maturity data should be evaluated for potential bias from excess data consisting of 100% and 0% maturity because the logistic model cannot predict 0 and 1.
- Consider use of other parametric and non-parametric estimation of the uncertainties of unknown parameters such as bootstrapping and jackknife. This may result in different variance-covariance matrices although asymptotically the same.

Northern Rockfish

New data in this year’s assessment include: 1) updated catch time series, 2) 2012 AI survey biomass estimate and length composition, and 3) 2008, 2009 and 2011 fishery age compositions and 2010 fishery length composition. The maturity curve was also re-estimated based on recent data from the Aleutian Islands. There are also several changes to model structure that include a revised maturity curve fitted to two sets of new maturity data inside the model. The new curve estimates fish to be reaching 50% maturity at a younger age by nearly 4 years.

A model sensitivity analysis was conducted to evaluate how the age and length plus groups affect the fit to various model components. Based on this analysis, the age and length plus groups were expanded to 40 years and 38cm that represent a tradeoff between model parsimony and improved fits to the age composition data. Given changes in bins for size composition data, the age error matrix was recomputed to better account for aging error within the plus group. These changes greatly improved model performance, especially with respect to the age composition data.

Age 3+ biomass has been on an upward trend since 2002 and spawning biomass has been slowly increasing since 1977. **The SSC endorsed the Plan Team and authors’ recommendations for setting the maximum permissible ABC and OFL for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands combined. This stock qualifies for management under Tier 3. Since female spawning biomass of 84,700 t exceeds $B_{40\%}$, sub-tier “a” is applicable, with maximum permissible $F_{ABC} = F_{40\%}$ and $F_{OFL} = F_{35\%}$.**

The SSC offers the following advice to assessment authors:

- Explore alternative selectivity patterns
- Evaluate alternative selectivity time periods
- Evaluate model sensitivity to Q and M
- Fit to the maturity data should be evaluated for potential bias from excess data consisting of 100% and 0% maturity because the logistic model cannot predict 0 and 1.

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rockfish	BSAI	12,200	9,850	12,000	9,320

Shortraker Rockfish

A simple surplus production model was used to model the shortraker rockfish population and the Kalman filter provided a method of statistically estimating the parameter values. The model is updated with the 2012 survey biomass and shortraker rockfish biomass is an estimated 16,400 t, which is a reduction of 1,100 t from the 2010 estimate.

Reliable estimates of biomass and natural mortality exist for shortraker rockfish, qualifying the species for management under Tier 5. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and author recommendations setting F_{ABC} at the maximum permissible level under Tier 5, which is 75 percent of M . The accepted value of M for this stock is 0.03, resulting in a $\max F_{ABC}$ value of 0.025.** The biomass estimate for 2013 is 16,400 t for shortraker rockfish.

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	493	370	493	370

The AI biomass has been slowly decreasing over the entire time period in this assessment. The SSC requests that authors provide discussion on the potential causes for this trend.

Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish Complex

This assessment includes rougheye rockfish (*Sebastes aleutianus*) and blackspotted rockfish (*Sebastes melanostictus*). Current information on these two species is not sufficient to support species-specific assessments. Since 2008, an age-structured model has been applied to the Aleutian Islands portion of the population whereas the EBS portion of the population are assessed with Tier 5 methods applied to survey biomass estimates.

Changes in input data in this year's assessment includes: 1) updated catch time series, 2) 2012 AI survey biomass estimate, 3) 2009 and 2011 fishery age compositions and 2010 fishery length composition, and 4) the 2010 survey age composition and 2012 survey length composition. A model sensitivity analysis was conducted to evaluate how the age and length plus groups affect the fit to various model components. Based on the analysis, the authors set the age for the plus group at 45 and recomputed the age error matrix to better account for aging error within the plus group.

The general trend in survey biomass is fit by the model indicating a gradual increase since 1999 to 13,751 t in 2010. Over this period, spawning biomass has increased from 5,382 t to 6,488 t in 2012, and the total biomass has increased from 15,109 t to 27,040 t. The increase in population size was seen in both the 2010 and 2012 assessments and is mostly due to the considerable model estimates of the 1998 and 1999 cohorts, which are increasing in age and size. These strong year classes are observed in both the survey data and in the recent harvest of immature fish, which suggests that increased abundance rather than a temporal shift in fishing selectivity is responsible for the increasing population trend. The estimated total biomass of the 1998-1999 cohorts is larger in the 2012 assessment, and currently comprises 34% of the estimated 2013 total biomass. The increase in ABC for 2012 is based largely on the estimated increase in abundance of the 1998-1999 cohorts.

The Plan Team had considerable discussion on whether it was appropriate to include model estimates of these two year classes. The Plan Team recommended that these year classes should be excluded from computation of $B_{40\%}$ because $B_{40\%}$ is based on spawning biomass for an equilibrium stock and the 1998 and 1999 year classes have not reached the age of 50% maturity. The Team believes that it is inappropriate to include them in the spawning biomass reference point when they are not yet part of the spawning biomass.

The SSC does not support Plan Team recommendations to exclude estimated recruitment of the 1998-2009 time period for calculation of OFLs and ABCs. Including the 1998-2009 recruits results

in recalculation of ABC and OFLs. For the Aleutian Islands, this stock qualifies for management under Tier 3b because the projected female spawning biomass of 6,848 t is less than $B_{40\%}$, (10,502 t).

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Blackspotted/ Rougheye	EBS/EAI		169		189
	CAI/WAI		209		240
BSAI	Total	462	378	524	429

The SSC offers the following advice to assessment authors:

- Evaluate priors on survey catchability and natural mortality.
- Explore alternative selectivity patterns
- Evaluate alternative selectivity time periods
- Evaluate/compare mean vs. median recruitment and which time period should be used for estimating fishery bench marks and provide rationale
- A $t_0=-4.7$ may not be realistic and $t_0=0$ should be evaluated; this may improve the validity of other parameters, e.g., K, M and q, because they are highly correlated.

Other Rockfish Complex

This assessment incorporates updated catch and fishery lengths, biomass estimates from the 2012 AI trawl survey and the 2012 EBS slope survey, as well as CPUE and lengths from the 2012 AI trawl survey. There were no changes in the assessment methodology and stock biomass is similar to the 2010 assessment.

The SSC concurs with the Tier 5 approach recommended by the Plan Team and author of setting F_{ABC} at the maximum allowable under Tier 5 ($F_{ABC} = 0.75M$) and for setting OFL. Multiplying these rates by the best biomass estimates of shortspine thornyhead and other rockfish species in the “other rockfish” complex yields 2013 and 2014 ABCs of 686 t in the EBS and 473 t in the AI. This assessment uses a three survey weighted average to estimate biomass using similar methodology used in the Gulf of Alaska rockfish assessments. **The SSC agrees with Plan Team and author recommendation that OFL be set for the entire BSAI area.**

The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other rockfish	EBS		686		686
	AI		473		473
	Total	1,540	1,160	1,540	1,160

BSAI Sharks

The SSC reviewed a full assessment of the BSAI sharks. **The SSC accepts the authors’ and Plan Team’s recommended 2013 Tier designations, ABC and OFL for BSAI sharks. The SSC also accepts the author’s and Plan Team’s projected 2014 ABC and OFL for this complex. The SSC supports the following ABC and OFL recommendations for 2013 and 2014 (in metric tons):**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	1,360	1,020

The SSC continues to encourage authors to pursue studies to collect life history information for sharks and to identify methods for estimating abundance of species that are rarely captured in standard surveys. The SSC remains concerned that the LL RPNs for Pacific sleeper shark stock remain low.

The SSC encourages the authors to explore the possibility of advancing Pacific sleeper shark to a Tier 5 status. To accomplish this, the authors need to understand the absence of mature Pacific sleeper sharks in the surveys and fishery observations.

The authors developed a stock structure template for the BSAI shark complex. This assessment reveals the difficulty of evaluating the need for additional spatial or temporal management when data are limited. The complex includes a mix of species with different life history characteristics. For example, while knowledge of key life history parameters for Pacific sleeper sharks is lacking, the authors expect that this species has a long generation time and is slow growing. However, salmon sharks have a much shorter generation time compared to the other sharks in the complex. Little information is available regarding reproductive behavior, seasonality, and critical habitat (i.e., nursery areas) in the GOA or BSAI. There are no known growth differences among regions in the GOA or BSAI, and data are sparse in the BSAI region. No information is available regarding spawning movements although some seasonal or large-scale movement patterns have been elucidated for salmon sharks and spiny dogfish. Genetic studies have not yet evaluated whether genetic stock structure exists within Alaska.

The authors concluded that, because sharks are a non-target species complex with bycatch-only status, there is no obvious conservation need to apportion catch to areas smaller than the FMP level. The SSC agrees with this conclusion. The SSC places a high priority on continued efforts to address the data limitations revealed by the stock structure evaluation including: efforts to address inadequate catch estimation, unreliable biomass estimates, lack of size frequency collections, and a general lack of life history information for Pacific sleeper sharks throughout Alaska and also for dogfish and salmon sharks in the BSAI region.

BSAI Skates

The SSC concurs with the author and the Plan Team that the Alaska skate stock should be managed as a Tier 3a stock and the other skates complex as a Tier 5 stock. The stock assessment model has been substantially modified with updated data and changes to the growth function, selectivity functions, spawner-recruit function, maximum age, and length bins. Four candidate models were evaluated following Plan Team and SSC suggestions at the September/October meetings. **The SSC agrees with the author and Plan Team that Model 3 is the best model for Alaska skates.** This model uses only the most recent length-at-age data and estimates growth parameters within the model. **The SSC accepts Plan Team recommendations for ABC and OFL (in metric tons):**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Skate	BSAI	45,800	38,800	44,100	37,300

As a research possibility, it might be fruitful to explore other measurement variables for size, e.g., IOW (inter-orbital width), in field data collection. It may be easier to measure and have smaller measurement error, particularly for large skates.

BSAI Sculpins

The author presented a new estimate of OFL and ABC for 2013 and 2014. The assessment incorporated new biomass estimates from the 2011 and 2012 Bering Sea shelf survey, the 2012 Bering Sea slope survey and the 2012 Aleutian Islands survey, in addition to partial 2012 catch and retention data. Catch data from 2003-2012 was updated as a result of changes to the Catch Accounting System. Length compositions from the 2011 and 2012 Bering Sea shelf survey were also added.

The SSC agrees with the BSAI Plan Team recommendations and supports the estimate of OFLs and ABCs for under Tier 5, as shown in the table below (metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sculpin	BSAI	56,400	42,300	56,400	42,300

BSAI Squid

This assessment included updated catch from 2011 and partial 2012 data, and added 2012 EBS slope survey biomass estimates and AI survey estimates. The author also included additional discussion of patterns in length compositions, and additional data and analyses to improve the understanding of squid biology and interaction with fisheries.

The SSC agrees with the continuation of Tier 6 management for this complex, with OFL set equal to the average catch from 1978-1995 and ABC set equal 75% of OFL, as shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Squids	BSAI	2,620	1,970	2,620	1,970

BSAI Octopus

The authors recommended setting harvest specifications using a predation-based estimate of octopus mortality from Pacific cod diet data from the 1984-2008 surveys, as was originally developed for the 2011 BSAI octopus assessment. The Plan Team continued to support the use of this approach for the development of 2013-2014 harvest specifications. The current assessment presented an expanded discussion of the methodology and its associated uncertainty. Survey data has also been updated in this assessment, as well as incidental catch rates.

The SSC agrees with the BSAI Plan Team recommendations and supports the estimate of OFLs and ABCs under an alternative Tier 6 approach, as shown in the table below (metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2013		2014	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	3,450	2,590

The giant Pacific octopus is the most abundant on the Bering Sea shelf survey and commercial catch of at least seven octopus species found in the BSAI. The SSC encourages the exploration of aging techniques for this octopus species, which would help to construct a growth curve. This will help to determine a more reasonable natural mortality, and with the potential for a more reliable population estimate, a Tier 5 assessment could be considered in the future. The SSC notes the difference between the GOA and BSAI octopus stock assessment methodologies and tiers.

Groundfish SAFE Appendices

GOA – BSAI Grenadiers (currently outside the FMP)

Grenadiers are presently considered “nonspecified.” Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC) reported that in 2013 the Council will consider amendments to the BSAI and GOA FMPs to change the management designation (“ecosystem species” or “in the fishery”) of this species group. The authors developed a grenadier assessment as an appendix to the SAFE to provide updated information that could be used in development of the amendment packages.

This year’s update included the following new data available for this assessment: 1) updated catch estimates for 2003-2012; 2) trawl survey results for the eastern Bering Sea (EBS) slope in 2012; 3) a time series of Aleutian Island (AI) biomass and variance estimates using a new estimation method for 1996-2012; 4) NMFS longline survey results for 2011 and 2012; and 5) observer data on giant grenadier length and sex in the commercial fishery for 2011 and 2012.

Given the historical catch and evidence of a potential market for grenadiers in the GOA, the SSC supports the development of an amendment package to consider alternative management of grenadiers. The SSC agrees that if this stock is moved into the fishery, that data is available to manage this stock in Tier 5.

The authors introduced a new method for determining AI biomass and variance estimates. This new method utilizes the ratio of “shallow” biomass estimates from the trawl survey (1-500 m) to “shallow” relative population weights (RPWs) from the AFSC longline survey (1- 500 m) to extrapolate total biomass from longline survey RPWs for 1-1000 m. The SSC cautions that this is an uncertain extrapolation method. The catchability and size selection of longline surveys is known to differ from the trawl survey. This method assumes that the ratio between longline and trawl surveys in shallow water will be the same for the ratio of longline and trawl surveys in deep water. The SSC encourages the authors to verify whether this assumption is valid.

In response to SSC comments, the authors included a Kalman filter model for estimating biomass. The Kalman filter estimates miss the most recent trawl biomass estimate in the GOA resulting in a substantially lower biomass estimate. For future assessments, the SSC encourages continued exploration of the Kalman filter method and we ask the authors to consider the recommendations in the Plan Team survey averaging work group.

GOA – BSAI Forage fish

The SSC would like to commend the author’s efforts to expand the GOA forage species report. The SSC feels that this 2012 report is a significant improvement and is supportive of the new approach being taken to incorporate regular updates to the forage species report into the stock assessment cycle.

The authors have been very responsive to SSC comments from December 2011. However, it appears that many of the SSC suggestions have been put off until a future date. The SSC encourages continued effort towards addressing these comments, including the development of forage fish chapters for the EBS and AI SAFEs.

The forage species included in the GOA report have expanded beyond the forage fish group listed in the GOA FMP, and now include Pacific herring, certain juvenile groundfish species, and salmon, shrimps, and squid. The emphasis of the report has been clarified to focus on development of information to describe the distribution, abundance and availability of the forage base. The report now includes information on bycatch and conservation issues. The SSC supports the Plan Team recommendations regarding the GOA forage species report that were put forward in their minutes.

It would be helpful to include a “data gaps and research priorities” section, similar to those in traditional stock assessments. Currently, this information is scattered throughout the report. For forage fish in each region (EBS, AI, GOA), it would be useful to provide a table or graph depicting the importance of forage species in the diets of their major predators, including fish, marine mammals and seabirds. This information would provide a clear picture of the importance of forage species in each of the managed ecosystems, and would be beneficial for fishery management.

Economic SAFE

The SSC recognizes that preparation of the Economic SAFE is undergoing a transition, with new staff assignments. As such, it appears that there is a learning curve at play, and this is reflected in this year’s draft Economic SAFE. For example, the narrative sections would greatly benefit from a careful proof-read, and use of standard nomenclature (e.g., mixed and confused references to “thousand-million” and “billion” units). The SSC will provide specific editorial recommendations to the Economic SAFE authors.

The document’s introductory text mentions that economic measures are to be interpreted as “gross-level impacts”, but does not label tables and figures as such, which is a deficiency, given the Economic SAFE’s typical use as a historical data reference document (i.e., users may use figures and tables without first thoroughly reading the introductory narrative).

The presenters noted that the Plan Teams incorporate summary statements of the “economic effects and trends” associated with the draft groundfish Biological SAFE. This economic trend summary is not presently, but should be, replicated in the introduction to the Economic SAFE. This would assure internal consistency within these separate elements of the respective-area integrated Groundfish SAFE.

The SSC found the inclusion of new graphic presentations mapping performance (catch, price, value) trends and patterns, by groundfish species, gear, sector, product form, etc., to be a nice addition. The presentation of indices in Chapter 5 should have a list of acronyms.

The document would benefit from a more focused narrative that highlights key changes and trends in each fishery, and to the extent practical, provides insights about the potential causes of these changes. In particular, statements that simply identify the presence of certain tables and figures are unnecessary (e.g., the last two paragraphs on page 8 essentially just note that Tables 20 through 22 exist without any discussion or analysis). In addition, although statements that simply reiterate data contained within the tables may be useful in guiding some readers through the report, it would be more beneficial to include analyses that provide insights about the economic behavior and performance of these fisheries, as well as key factors driving these (e.g., policy changes, exogenous economic shocks or trends, etc.).

The ongoing Research Projects and Data Collection efforts of the AFSC that are listed at the end and the economic and social science publications are very informative. However, it would be useful to know when and how the public may expect incorporation of many of these efforts into the Economic SAFE. There is, for example, a well-developed index-based approach for understanding market changes, and it appears that social indicators are being developed to address community dependency, sociocultural attributes, resilience, and trends. These indicators would strengthen understanding of the human environment and how human communities would be expected to respond to fishery-induced change. The SSC looks forward to the future integration of these indicators into the Economic SAFE.

The changes referenced above cannot, in all likelihood, be anticipated in this iteration of the Economic SAFE, but are recommended for future versions. **That notwithstanding, the present draft must undergo a careful proof-read and edit before public release.**

Ecosystem considerations

While the overall structure of this chapter is maturing, the presentation of this section to the SSC was hindered by the absence of the lead author (editor), and the abbreviated presentation on the status of a select group of indicators. In the future, it would be very helpful if the presentation of the Ecosystem Considerations chapter could emphasize the implications that suites of indicator values have on managed fish stocks, rather than on the status of the indicators themselves. **The SSC requests that the Chapter editor present the significant issues that might affect our determinations of harvest specifications or ecosystem status prior to the review of the individual species assessments and the setting of ABCs and ACLs.** There are several reasons for this request. The SSC realizes that one of the most widely respected aspects of our Council process is our effort to assess the individual species in the context of the marine ecosystems in which they exist. The presentation of the necessary synthesis can best be done by an individual who has a deep understanding of the ecosystem-related issues and who has participated in their synthesis. The editor is in a much better position to answer questions posed by the SSC, and to receive feedback on improvements suggested by the SSC than are Plan Team leaders, who are focused on the assessments and the setting of individual species harvest specifications. Finally, there is value in a separation of presentations on the ecosystem considerations and the presentation of the individual species' assessments. The presence of the Ecosystem Considerations chapter editor is especially essential if there is any evidence of an issue that could or should affect the SSC's deliberations on ABCs and ACLs.

Overview of the Ecosystem Considerations chapter

The SSC appreciates the responsiveness of the authors to the 2011 SSC requests for improving the Ecosystem Considerations chapter. The chapter continues to improve in quality of presentation and relevance of the information presented. The reorganization of the presentations, both the "taxonomic order" and the subjects covered within the individual presentations on Ecosystem Status and Management Indicators, have improved the transfer of information. The inclusion of the Implications section is especially useful, though not all individual authors have done so. The start on the new Arctic section was excellent.

Two possible additional structural changes might be considered. For the reader to get the clearest view of the North Pacific as a whole as well as the four management regions under consideration (Gulf of Alaska, Aleutians, eastern Bering Sea, and Arctic), it might be helpful to separate the individual reports in the Ecosystem Status and Management Indicators section by management area. That would help the reader see the big picture for each area and would assist users in finding the indicator reports of greatest relevance to their needs.

A second structural change that would be helpful would be to develop brief, integrated summaries of indices that are otherwise included in several reports. For example, the four reports on climate (Overland, Lauth, Eisner, and Bond) should be integrated. Similarly, the three reports that address flows into the Bering through the Aleutian Passes should be integrated and disparate findings resolved to reduce confusion. Likewise there are three reports on bottom temperatures on the eastern Bering Sea shelf that have some redundancies and call for a synthesis, as is also true for eastern Bering Sea zooplankton. If the individual report writers are unable to collaborate before turning in their report, perhaps the editor can add a brief synthesis after a group of reports on similar subjects to tie them together.

As the various indices become more established with solid time series behind them, effort should be made to test their skill in predicting recruitment, or forecast ecosystem responses.

Where appropriate and possible, it would be useful to include error measures on all tables and graphs so the reader has a means of assessing the significance of the change being discussed (e.g., Fig. 38, Fig. 50, Table 4, Fig. 53, Fig. 54)

In Table 12, page 199, the total under Overfished, Undefined should be 26, not 16.

Arctic Assessment

Overall, this assessment is very well done, although brief. It will be important to develop additional ecosystem indicators: these could include data such as ice cover over the Chukchi and Beaufort seas shelves, George Divoky's information on black guillemots, a measure of subsistence hunter harvest rates and CPUE, and the condition of polar bear and other harvested species.

Relative to the presentation given, the SSC notes that the unusual mortality event (UME) for marine mammals is more extensive than just walrus. Unusual skin lesions and lethargy have been noted in a variety of arctic marine mammals (seals, walrus, polar bears) and is an area of active investigation. In addition, as ice cover is reduced, many different populations of marine mammals will be impacted (e.g. walrus crowding together on shore, changes in whale abundance and distribution, potential impacts on ice seals). These potential impacts are driving petitions to list several species of ice seals.

Eastern Bering Sea

The section on the EBS is strong, but in several areas could be strengthened by integrating different data streams. For example, in the consideration of top-down effects, it may be time to begin modeling the potential impact of great whales on zooplankton and forage fish stocks, including age-0 and age-1 pollock.

In discussing Bering Sea large zooplankton (page 10), there is no mention of *Themisto libellula*. What is the status of this amphipod, and what are implications of changes in its biomass, if any?

If the non-specified catch increase in the Bering Sea (page 14) is primarily due to increased catches of capelin and eulachon, is this the result of an increase in these species? Please tie in these findings with the forage fish CPUE, page 129, also mentioned on page 11 and 191.

If there is a tie between forage fish abundance and mushy halibut syndrome in the Gulf of Alaska, is there any evidence of a connection between the survival of Chinook salmon in the Bering Sea and the distribution and/or abundance of forage fish there (page 54)? What might be the expected lag between a change in forage fish abundance and returns of Chinook to the Yukon River?

On page 55, there is a suggestion to examine selected indices by domain. This seems like a good idea, if feasible. Given the upcoming synthesis of the Bering Sea Project, which will attempt to work at the level of the BEST/BSIERP areas, it might be good to see whether the scale at which they hope to work might be appropriate.

On the middle of page 56, there is a reference to the need for research on the spatio-temporal distribution of Steller sea lions and their prey. It would be good to include the spatio-temporal distribution of sea lion predators as well.

On page 56, middle, would it be possible to use industry CPUE as an index of fishery performance?

On page 111, the graph indicates very low primary production in the summer/fall of 2007. That year produced a particularly weak year-class of pollock. Can any synthesis be pulled together that would help tie together the events and findings for 2007? (see also page 115, 118, 129, 132).

On page 194, the decrease in HAPC catch is discussed. Is it possible that the decrease is because of prior destruction of the HAPC? Relate to the catch of HAPC in the bottom trawl survey.

Aleutian Islands

In the western Aleutians dusky/rougheye rockfish are being caught in unusually high numbers (western ecoregion, hot topic, page 4). How does this relate to recent stock assessments for these fish in this area?

On page 62, where there is a recap of fish stocks in the Aleutians, it would be good to mention the status of Pacific cod. What is the role of cod in sea lion diets? Many years ago, cod may have been a principal prey.

Page 64: Is there a time series of puffin chick survival or growth available? Prey switching without some independent measure of availability or abundance could mean the increase of prey A rather than the decrease of prey B.

Gulf of Alaska

The SSC looks forward to the development and inclusion of a Report Card section for the Gulf of Alaska.

The SSC expressed concern about the AFSC GOA ichthyoplankton survey going from an annual effort to a biennial effort. Long-term (>25 years) continuous ichthyoplankton surveys are extremely rare, and effort should be made to ensure the survey continues at as frequent intervals as possible. The value of these studies of larval fish would be enhanced if there were some analyses of the relationships between larval abundance (and condition) and subsequent recruitment.

On page 152, there is no mention of how well the index of larval abundance does at predicting recruitment. Ongoing evaluations of how predictions are performing over time are critical to continue.

On page 173, is there any idea why there was a jump in the bycatch of seabirds 2011? Are the birds habituating to the streamers, and beginning to ignore them? Or is this due to increase in TAC? Scaling bycatch to hooks set might be useful.

In the Gulf of Alaska, there has apparently been a decline in forage fish and an increase in mushy halibut syndrome. Forage fish are also prey for Chinook salmon. Can any connections among these three factors be identified? It would also be appropriate to examine how changes in the abundance of humpback whales and zooplankton may be impacting forage fish availability or abundance.

C-2 (b) Initial review BSAI chum salmon PSC management measures

Diana Stram (NPFMC), Jim Ianelli (NMFS-AFSC), Alan Haynie (NMFS-AFSC), and Scott Miller (NMFS-AKR) presented details from the initial review draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) concerning analysis of alternatives and assessment of potential impacts of addressing chum salmon bycatch (PSC) in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. Public testimony was provided by Roy Ashenfelter (self), Donna Parker (Arctic Storm), James Mize (Phoenix Processor), John Gruver (United Catcher Boats), Carl Halflinger (Sea State), Ed Richardson (PCC), and Glenn Reed (Pacific Seafood Processors Association).

In June 2011, the SSC reviewed a prior draft for initial review and recommended that it be released for public review. Because of changes to the suite of alternatives, the SSC has been asked to comment on a revised document. The SSC commends the analysts for their efforts in addressing a complex suite of alternatives with limited information about area-of-origin, industry costs, and impacts to subsistence users. The SSC also acknowledges the thoughtful and constructive participation of the industry in this process. Public comments were extremely helpful in assessing this analysis.

The SSC finds itself in a bit of a quandary. On the one hand, this is the third time this package has come before us for "Initial Review." These three iterations reflect a huge investment in time, resources, and

staff expertise. It is clear that this process needs resolution. On the other-hand, this document remains full of extraneous and distracting information, incomplete and conflicting arguments, ambiguous results, and unnecessary complexity. These should be excised, as previously recommended by the SSC.

Fundamentally, the draft analysis before us appears to provide a small number of key preliminary findings that are at the core of this management action. Stripped of all the extraneous details, one may identify the following (granted preliminary) conclusions, which should become the foci of subsequent revisions:

- Chinook salmon PSC and chum salmon PSC are of real, legitimate, and significant concern to U.S. citizens;
- Reductions of Chum salmon PSC in AFA fisheries that result in increases in Chinook PSC in these fisheries are not desirable;
- Chum PSC savings of the size anticipated from the proposed action, do not appear to have the potential to substantially impact Western Alaska chum catches, either subsistence or commercial (based upon the best available stock identification data);
- In combination, actions to reduce chum and Chinook PSC may cause significant foregone pollock; but the amount is difficult to estimate given the potential changes in fleet behavior.
- As we await critical source-of-origin data for Western Alaska salmon stocks, retention of maximum management flexibility in regulation designed to address chum PSC in the AFA fisheries seems to be a least-cost strategy in the face of uncertainty.

These elements speak directly to the Council's Problem Statement, historical policy, and obligations under the Magnuson Act. We suggest that these should inform efforts to revise this document package.

Additionally, the SSC reiterates its long-standing concerns about the lack of pollock industry cost data that are critical to estimating impacts on industry net performance. The RIR does acknowledge that estimates of potentially foregone gross revenues may have no meaningful relationship to the economic performance, viability, or profitability of these commercial fisheries. The document asserts that the reason for this lack of data is that collection is too expensive even in a best case scenario (page 78). This assertion should be deleted from the document. There are a host of reasons why these data do not exist, and to the extent that costs are a factor, these must be weighed against the potential benefits from collecting these data. The term "expensive" is relative and subjective; given the significance of the pollock fishery and the frequency with which Council actions are related to this fishery, the potential benefits from collecting these data are likely to be large.

It is unclear whether the retrospective analysis accounts for possible interactions with the recently implemented hard cap for Chinook PSC. How would increases in Chinook PSC caused by chum management impact the pollock fleet?

Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the document with respect to impacts on subsistence. On page 22 there is a statement that ADF&G managers assert that the low PSC rates for Western Alaska would have no impact on management considerations. On page 67, however, there is a discussion of how management restrictions would affect subsistence. While it is useful to include a discussion of how subsistence might be impacted if management restrictions were implemented, this should be accompanied by a qualitative discussion of the extent to which these impacts are likely to occur.

With respect to community impacts, the analysts have included the best available information to characterize western Alaskan communities in the descriptions of potentially affected salmon fisheries. These descriptions are clearly not comparable to the pollock industry impact analysis, but the SSC agrees that community impacts cannot be assessed beyond speculation because we cannot know to which streams chum would accrue, how the communities would respond, how actions taken to conserve salmon would affect CDQ revenue, or impact other aspects of the communities. Even with data on salmon

savings and returns to particular systems, impacts and community responses would be difficult to characterize beyond analyzing qualitative, speculative scenarios.

The SSC was specifically asked by the analysts to comment on the Council's motion regarding additional qualitative analysis on the use of AEQ and the potential for differential impacts within the region. In the absence of genetic information about area-of-origin, the SSC recommends that the analysts consider a qualitative discussion about the range of possible outcomes and provide some sense of the likelihood of occurrence. For example, two ends of the spectrum for the possible distribution of chum stocks would be that the different streams of origin are uniformly mixed vs. the assumption that fish from each system are clustered together. If the former, given that any particular system represents a small percent of the total population, the impacts are likely to be small. If the latter, then the potential impacts may be significant, but with a small probability of occurring.

Although the EA/RIR/IFRA is not without deficiencies, the SSC recommends that the document be released for public review after addressing these comments to the extent practical.

C-2 (c) Initial review Chinook salmon PSC in GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries

The SSC received a presentation of the draft EA/RIR from Diana Evans and Sam Cunningham (NPFMC). Public comment was provided by Julie Bonney (AGDB), John Gauvin (ASC), and Jon Warrenchuk (Oceana).

The draft RIR is excellent, especially at this relatively early stage of action development (i.e., no PA, so no RFAA). While there appear to be several substantive matters that need attention, none represents a substantial barrier to release of this draft for public review. The EA/RIR is well designed, executed, and presented, providing information needed to inform the public of the state of this action. **The SSC recommends that the draft, after attention to the items below, be released for public review.** The key concerns of the SSC, for the information of the authors/analysts, include the following:

Chinook PSC does not occur in isolation from other PSC limits (present and future) governing these non-pollock trawl fisheries in the GOA. This is a critically important insight within the EA/RIR. The interplay between Chinook PSC limits and, for example, the already "binding" Pacific halibut PSC caps in the GOA non-pollock groundfish fisheries should be elevated in prominence in this analysis. This could readily be achieved by explicitly addressing this key interaction earlier in the RIR. The synergistic nature of Chinook PSC limits and constraints associated with other prohibited species catch within these management areas has the potential to substantially alter predicted economic, socioeconomic, and operational outcomes of the proposed action. Additionally, the race for fish in the GOA groundfish fisheries continues to exacerbate "rational" management of these fishery resources, both target groundfish and PSC, and should be addressed, even if only qualitatively.

The document lacks an identification of possible end users of Chinook salmon or a discussion of the groups for whom salmon are potentially being saved, or a substantive discussion characterizing the nature of the impacts these users are likely to face. There are a number of supplemental letters from a range of stakeholders and interested parties indicating that many individuals self-identify as being affected.

We concur with public testimony that at least the acknowledgement of how changes in non-pollock fisheries could affect infrastructure, secondary services, and crews should be included. The document should also include a discussion of the likelihood of latent licenses becoming active in the fisheries, and the potential affects this could have on the efficacy of Chinook PSC measures.

Some criticism was leveled that the analysis does not reflect the future changes in fishing behavior in the fleet in response to PSC management, although no alternative approach could be identified that would

resolve this perceived failure. This is an on-going concern with any retrospective analysis, and the SSC recommends that any analysis which uses this approach include clear disclaimers about the assumptions being made, along with a qualitative discussion about how anticipated changes in behavior might affect the quantitative estimates presented.

The statement that "... there is no evidence to indicate that the groundfish fisheries' take of Chinook salmon is causing escapement failures in Alaska rivers" should be revised. While this is technically accurate, it is also somewhat misleading, as it could imply that there is no linkage between PSC and escapement failures. The statement should be revised to make clear that *given the current lack of data* on river of origin, it is impossible to discern whether there are any linkages between GOA Chinook PSC and drainage-specific escapement failures.

We also believe that more emphasis needs to be placed on the description and discussion of Gulf of Alaska, Canadian, and Lower 48 stocks of Chinook salmon and their respective fisheries; and deemphasize the descriptions of western Alaska stocks and fisheries. There is ample genetic and tag recovery evidence that western Alaska stocks spend little to no time in the Gulf of Alaska, and Central Gulf, in particular. There is more recent information on stock status of Lower 48 stocks (Columbia and Sacramento) indicating recent increases in abundance. Similarly, a description of major hatchery programs originating in the Lower 48 and Canada would be valuable in helping the reader understand the potential stocks that could be intercepted in these GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries.

The SSC observes that a suggestion in the EA that "Chinook salmon sampling in the non-pollock fisheries may not continue" is counter-productive and contrary to the Council's objective relative to stock-of-origin science. Some discussion should be devoted to the development of alternative objectives (e.g., simple presence of a stock, rather than relative catch) and sampling designs that might provide valuable genetic and coded-wire tag information that is not aimed at providing quantitative stock of origin proportions in the PSC.

The EA could also benefit from a brief discussion of what a reasonable AEQ natural mortality rate might be for Chinook salmon, as well as some characterization of the relative uncertainty in extrapolating Chinook salmon PSC from basket samples versus those from whole hauls.

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013-2014 and Council's adopted specifications for 2012.

Stock/ Assemblage	2012				2013			2014			
	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch ^{1/}	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	30,270	30,270	30,270	27,893		28,072	28,072		25,648	25,648
	C (62)	45,808	45,808	45,808	45,050		51,443	51,443		47,004	47,004
	C (63)	26,348	26,348	26,348	25,589		27,372	27,372		25,011	25,011
	WYAK	3,244	3,244	3,244	2,380		3,385	3,385		3,093	3,093
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	100,912	150,817	110,272	110,272	138,610	100,756	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774		14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	100,912	165,183	121,046	121,046	152,976	111,530	111,530	
Pacific Cod	W	28,032	21,024	21,024	17,703		28,280	21,210		29,470	22,103
	C	56,940	42,705	42,705	34,901		49,288	36,966		51,362	38,522
	E	2,628	1,971	1,971	338		3,232	2,424		3,368	2,526
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	52,942	97,200	80,800	60,600	101,100	84,200	63,150
Sablefish	W	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,390		1,750	1,750		1,641	1,641
	C	5,760	5,760	5,760	5,248		5,540	5,540		5,195	5,195
	WYAK	2,247	2,247	2,247	2,028		2,030	2,030		1,902	1,902
	SEO	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,188		3,190	3,190		2,993	2,993
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	11,854	14,780	12,510	12,510	13,871	11,731	11,731
Shallow-water Flatfish	W	21,994	13,250	13,250	153		19,489	13,250		18,033	13,250
	C	22,910	18,000	18,000	3,322		20,168	18,000		18,660	18,000
	WYAK	4,307	4,307	4,307			4,647	4,647		4,299	4,647
	EYAK/SEO	1,472	1,472	1,472			1,180	1,180		1,092	1,180
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	3,475	55,680	45,484	37,077	51,580	42,084	37,077
Deep-water Flatfish	W	176	176	176	8		176	176		176	176
	C	2,308	2,308	2,308	246		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK	1,581	1,581	1,581	5		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	EYAK/SEO	1,061	1,061	1,061	3		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	262	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex Sole	W	1,307	1,307	1,307	215		1,300	1,300		1,287	1,287
	C	6,412	6,412	6,412	1,972		6,376	6,376		6,310	6,310
	WYAK	836	836	836			832	832		823	1,041
	EYAK/SEO	1,057	1,057	1,057			1,052	1,052		1,040	822
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	2,187	12,492	9,560	9,560	12,362	9,460	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	27,495	14,500	14,500	1,331		27,181	14,500		26,970	14,500
	C	143,162	75,000	75,000	18,213		141,527	75,000		140,424	75,000
	WYAK	21,159	6,900	6,900	53		20,917	6,900		20,754	6,900
	EYAK/SEO	21,066	6,900	6,900	140		20,826	6,900		20,663	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	19,737	247,196	210,451	103,300	245,262	208,811	103,300
Flathead Sole	W	15,300	8,650	8,650	277		15,729	8,650		16,063	8,650
	C	25,838	15,400	15,400	1,613		26,563	15,400		27,126	15,400
	WYAK	4,558	4,558	4,558			4,686	4,686		4,785	4,785
	EYAK/SEO	1,711	1,711	1,711			1,760	1,760		1,797	1,797
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	1,890	61,036	48,738	30,496	62,296	49,771	30,632

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

(GOA Groundfish Specifications table continued)

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,452		2,040	2,040		2,005	2,005
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	10,741		10,926	10,926		10,740	10,740
	WYAK		1,692	1,692	1,682		1,641	1,641		1,613	1,613
	W/C/WYAK					16,838			16,555		
	SEO	4,095	1,861	1,861		2,081	1,805	1,805	2,046	1,775	1,775
Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	14,875	18,919	16,412	16,412	18,601	16,133	16,133	
Northern Rockfish	W		2,156	2,156	1,817		2,008	2,008		1,899	1,899
	C		3,351	3,351	3,210		3,122	3,122		2,951	2,951
	E										
Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	5,027	6,124	5,130	5,130	5,791	4,850	4,850	
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104	104	110		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452	361		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525	402		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	873	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Dusky Rockfish	W		409	409	435		377	377		354	354
	C		3,849	3,849	3,558		3,533	3,533		3,317	3,317
	WYAK		542	542	2		495	495		465	465
	EYAK/SEO		318	318	6		295	295		277	277
	Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	4,001	5,746	4,700	4,700	5,395	4,413	4,413
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W		80	80	39		81	81		83	83
	C		850	850	389		856	856		871	871
	E		293	293	236		295	295		300	300
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	664	1,482	1,232	1,232	1,508	1,254	1,254
Demersal Rockfish	Total	467	293	293	178	487	303	303	487	303	303
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150	150	186		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766	340		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749	217		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	743	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Other Rockfish	W		44	44	255		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606	724		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230	37		230	230		230	230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165	200	24		3,165	200		3,165	200
Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	1,040	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080	
Atka Mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,187	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big Skate	W		469	469	60		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793	1,596		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505	38		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	1,694	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70	70	28		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879	656		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676	78		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	762	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other Skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,030	1,110	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	5,731	802	7,614	5,884	5,884	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	6,028	595	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,148	18	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,455	368	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Total	Total	747,780	606,048	438,157	227,196	738,676	595,920	436,255	723,580	584,094	427,722

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

NPFMC Council Motion 12/6/12 BSAI Specifications

Species	Area	2012			2013			2014		
		ABC	TAC	Catch 11/24/12	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,204,554	2,550,000	1,375,000	1,247,000	2,730,000	1,430,000	1,247,000
	AI	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	19,000	48,600	39,800	19,000
	Bogoslof	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	100	13,400	10,100	100
Pacific cod	BSAI	314,000	261,000	231,682	359,000	307,000	260,000	379,000	323,000	260,880
Sablefish	BSAI	4,280	4,280	1,940	4,400	3,720	3,720	4,130	3,490	3,490
	BS	2,230	2,230	738	1,870	1,580	1,580	1,760	1,480	1,480
	AI	2,050	2,050	1,202	2,530	2,140	2,140	2,370	2,010	2,010
	Total	81,400	50,763	47,832	57,700	50,000	25,920	56,500	48,900	25,379
Atka mackerel	EAI/BS	38,500	38,500	37,314		16,900	16,900		16,500	16,500
	CAI	22,900	10,763	10,323		16,000	7,520		15,700	7,379
	WAI	20,000	1,500	195		17,100	1,500		16,700	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	203,000	202,000	144,253	220,000	206,000	198,000	219,000	206,000	198,000
Rock sole	BSAI	208,000	87,000	75,896	241,000	214,000	92,380	229,000	204,000	92,000
Greenland turbot	Total	9,660	8,660	4,662	2,540	2,060	2,060	3,270	2,650	2,650
	BS	7,230	6,230	3,005		1,610	1,610		2,070	2,070
	AI	2,430	2,430	1,657		450	450		580	580
	Total	150,000	25,000	22,535	186,000	152,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	18,600	17,700	9,629	16,300	12,200	10,000	16,300	12,200	10,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,400	34,134	11,281	81,500	67,900	22,699	80,100	66,700	22,543
Alaska plaice	BSAI	53,400	24,000	16,445	67,000	55,200	20,000	60,200	55,800	20,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	12,700	3,200	3,517	17,800	13,300	3,500	17,800	13,300	4,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	24,700	24,700	24,147	41,900	35,100	35,100	39,500	33,100	33,100
	BS	5,710	5,710	5,590		8,130	8,130		7,680	7,680
	EAI	5,620	5,620	5,519		9,790	9,790		9,240	9,240
	CAI	4,990	4,990	4,798		6,980	6,980		6,590	6,590
	WAI	8,380	8,380	8,240		10,200	10,200		9,590	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	8,610	4,700	2,478	12,200	9,850	3,000	12,000	9,320	3,000
Blackspotted/Roughy	BSAI	576	475	208	462	378	378	524	429	429
	EBS/EAI		231	77		169	169		189	189
	CAI/WAI		244	131		209	209		240	240
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	393	393	342	493	370	370	493	370	370
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,280	1,070	942	1,540	1,160	873	1,540	1,160	1,159
	BS	710	500	208		686	400		686	686
	AI	570	570	734		473	473		473	473
Squid	BSAI	1,970	425	691	2,620	1,970	700	2,620	1,970	700
Skate	BSAI	32,600	24,700	23,291	45,800	38,800	24,000	44,100	37,300	25,000
Shark	BSAI	1,020	200	91	1,360	1,020	100	1,360	1,020	100
Octopus	BSAI	2,590	900	133	3,450	2,590	500	3,450	2,590	500
Sculpin	BSAI	43,700	5,200	5,585	56,400	42,300	5,600	56,400	42,300	5,600
Total	BSAI	2,511,303	2,000,000	1,833,185	4,028,465	2,639,317	2,000,000	4,205,287	2,697,498	2,000,000

North Pacific Fishery Management Council's alternatives for the 2012 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council forwards the following alternatives, modified from the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) recommended alternatives for evaluation in the 2012 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS.

Alternative 1Atka mackerel

The "platoon" system is replaced by one or more cooperatives.

543

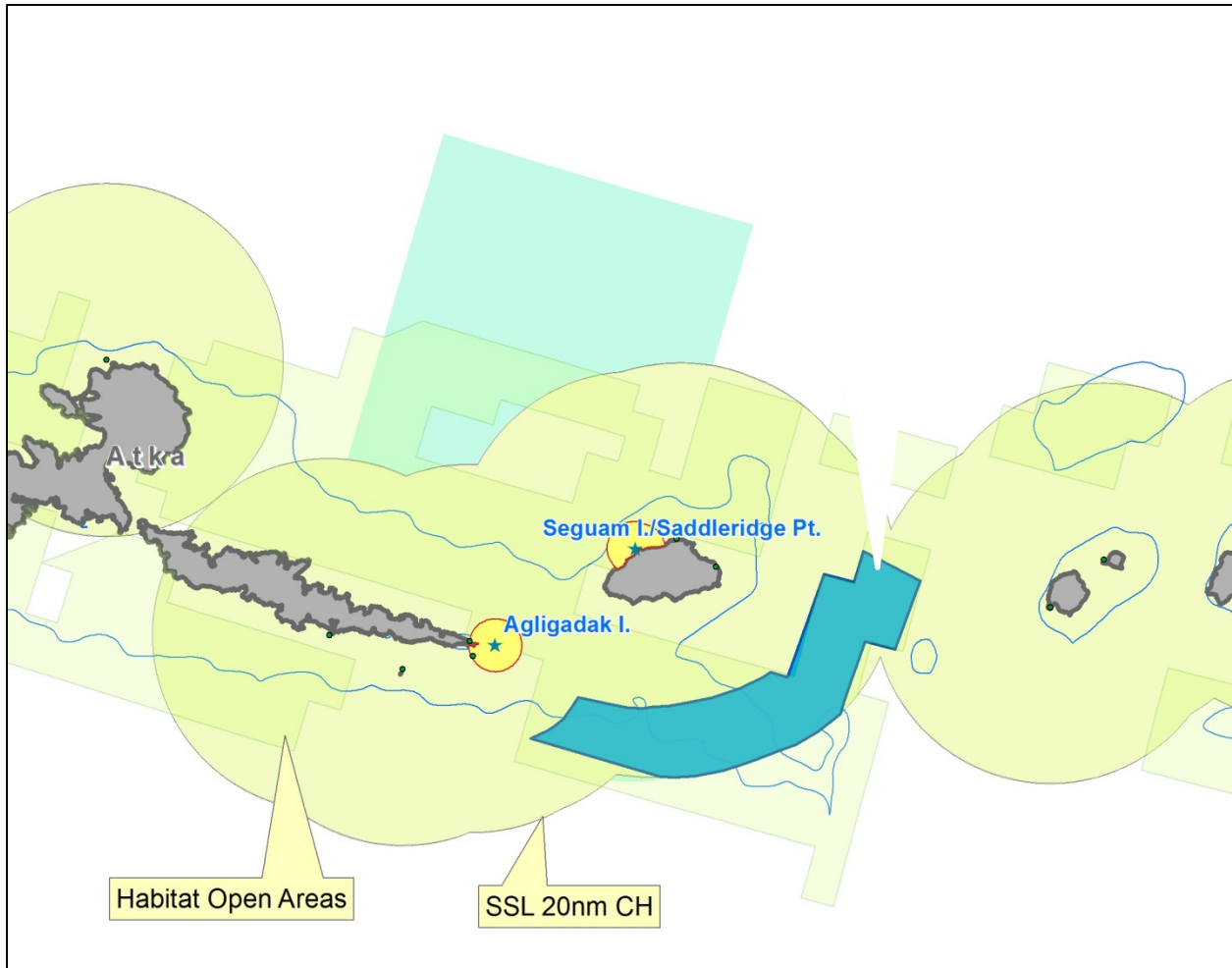
- No fishing inside Critical Habitat
- Open area outside of Critical Habitat east of 174.5° East longitude
- TAC set at 65% of ABC
 - Suboption: TAC set at 50% of ABC
 - Suboption: TAC set at 40% of ABC
- A season : January 20 – June 10
- B season: June 10 – December 31
- Allow rollover between seasons, with no limit on rollover
- Allow MRA when directed fishing for Atka mackerel is closed or in areas where directed fishing for Atka mackerel is prohibited

542

- Apply 2010 SSL closures around rookeries and haulouts (0-10 nm)
- No fishing inside Critical Habitat from 178° East longitude to 180°, and from 178° West longitude to 177° West longitude
 - Alternative: Bering Sea trawl limited access: no fishing inside Critical Habitat
- TAC set at 65% of ABC
- Catch limit inside Critical Habitat established, based on most recent estimates of local biomass (e.g., FIT studies), to maintain harvest \leq 5% of local abundance, but not to exceed 50% of TAC
- A season: January 20 – June 10
- B season June 10 – December 31
- Allow rollover between seasons, all rollover amount to be fished outside CH only
- Limits apply to all sectors

541

- Open a portion of CH area between 12 and 20 nm southeast of Seguam (Map 1-1)
- Bering Sea trawl limited access : no fishing inside CH
- Harvest inside CH limited to \leq 50% of area 541 TAC
- A season: January 20 – June 10
- B season : June 10 – December 31
- Allow rollover between seasons, all rollover amount to be fished outside CH only
- Modify MRA regulations in the Bering Sea portion of 541 to calculate MRA on an offload-to-offload basis, limited to Amendment 80 vessels and CDQ entities



Map 1-1. Seguam Island open area 12-20 nm from Seguam Island SSL site.

Pacific cod

Catch limit in Aleutian Islands is that portion of the Pacific cod stock(s) in the Aleutian Islands, as identified by stock assessment, split between the Aleutian Islands management areas (543, 542, 541) by the 4-survey rolling average of cod occurrence (e.g., for 2013 25% in 543, 75% in 541/542).

543

- Catch limit catch is the AI portion of Pacific cod stock multiplied by the 4-survey biomass proportion for 543

Option 1: Limit to HAL CP and Trawl CP (No Mothership participation)

- Catch limit subdivided between HAL CP and Trawl CP based on ratio of 2006 – 2010 (most recent years before 2011 IFR) catch
- Open CH outside 6 nm from SSL sites for HAL CP
- Open CH outside of 10 nm from 173° East longitude and 174.5° East longitude for Trawl CP
- Seasons
 - HAL: January 1 – November 1
 - Trawl: Jan 20 – April 30
- No more than 2 HAL CP vessels and 2 Trawl CP vessels at one time in the directed fishery

Option 2: Include Mothership participation

- Catch limit subdivided by HAL CP and Trawl CP based on ratio of 2006 – 2010 catch
- Open CH outside of 6 nm for HAL CP
- Open CH outside of 10 nm from 173° East longitude and 174.5° East longitude
- Seasons
 - HAL: January 1 – November 1
 - Trawl: January 20 – April 30
- No more than 2 HAL CP vessels and 2 Trawl CP vessels at one time in the directed fishery

542/541

Catch limit in area 542/541 is limited to the AI portion of the BSAI Pacific cod stock(s), as identified by stock assessment, minus the State waters GHL and minus the limit for area 543.

Catch limit for Fixed Gear CP, Trawl CP, and Mothership (CV delivering to mothership processor) is 2006 – 2010 history expressed as a ratio of the total catch in 541 and 542. Catcher Vessels delivering to shoreside and stationary floating processors subject to area 541/542 limit.

- Open Critical Habitat 0-20 nm at haulouts for fixed gear
- Open Critical Habitat 3-20 nm at rookeries for fixed gear
- Open Critical Habitat east of 178° West longitude to 174° West longitude for trawl gear
 - Outside 3 nm from haulouts
 - Outside 10 nm from rookeries
- Seasons
 - Fixed Gear: January 1 – November 1
 - Trawl CV: January 20 – November 1
 - Trawl CP: January 20 – December 31

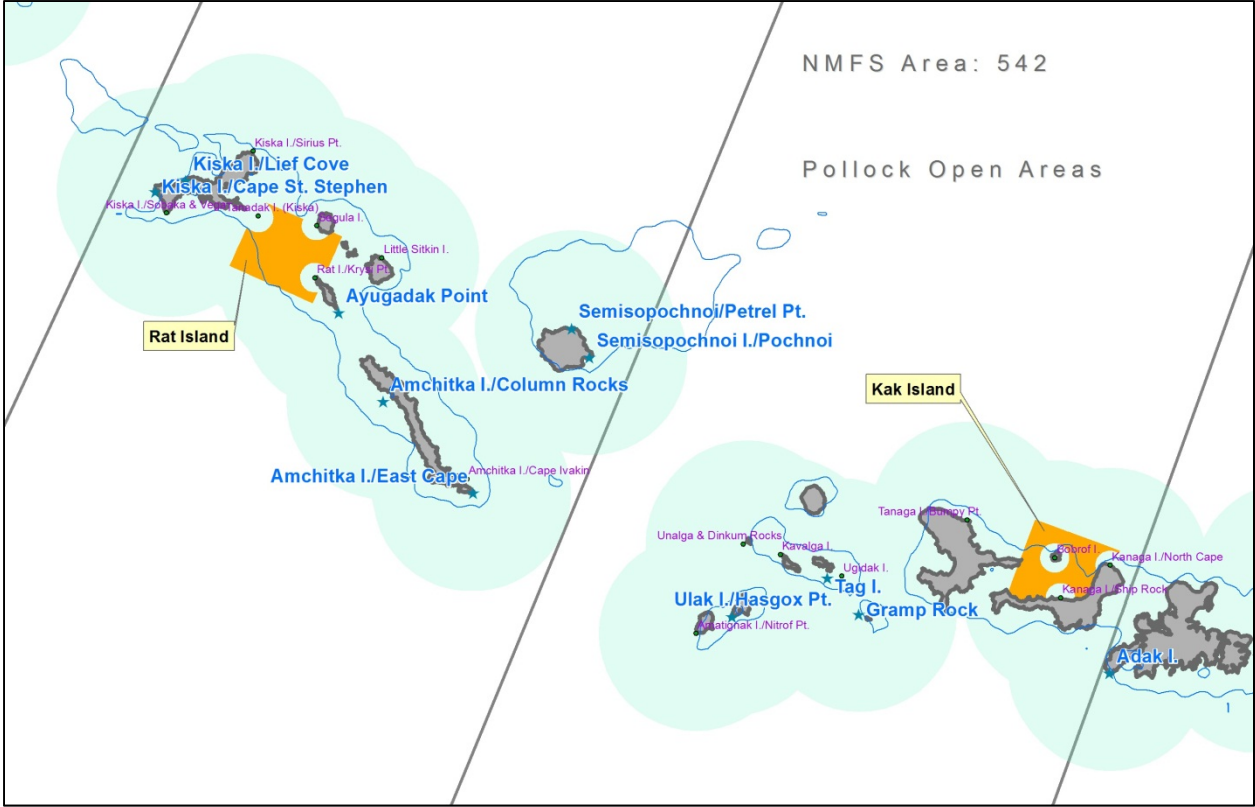
Walleye pollock

543

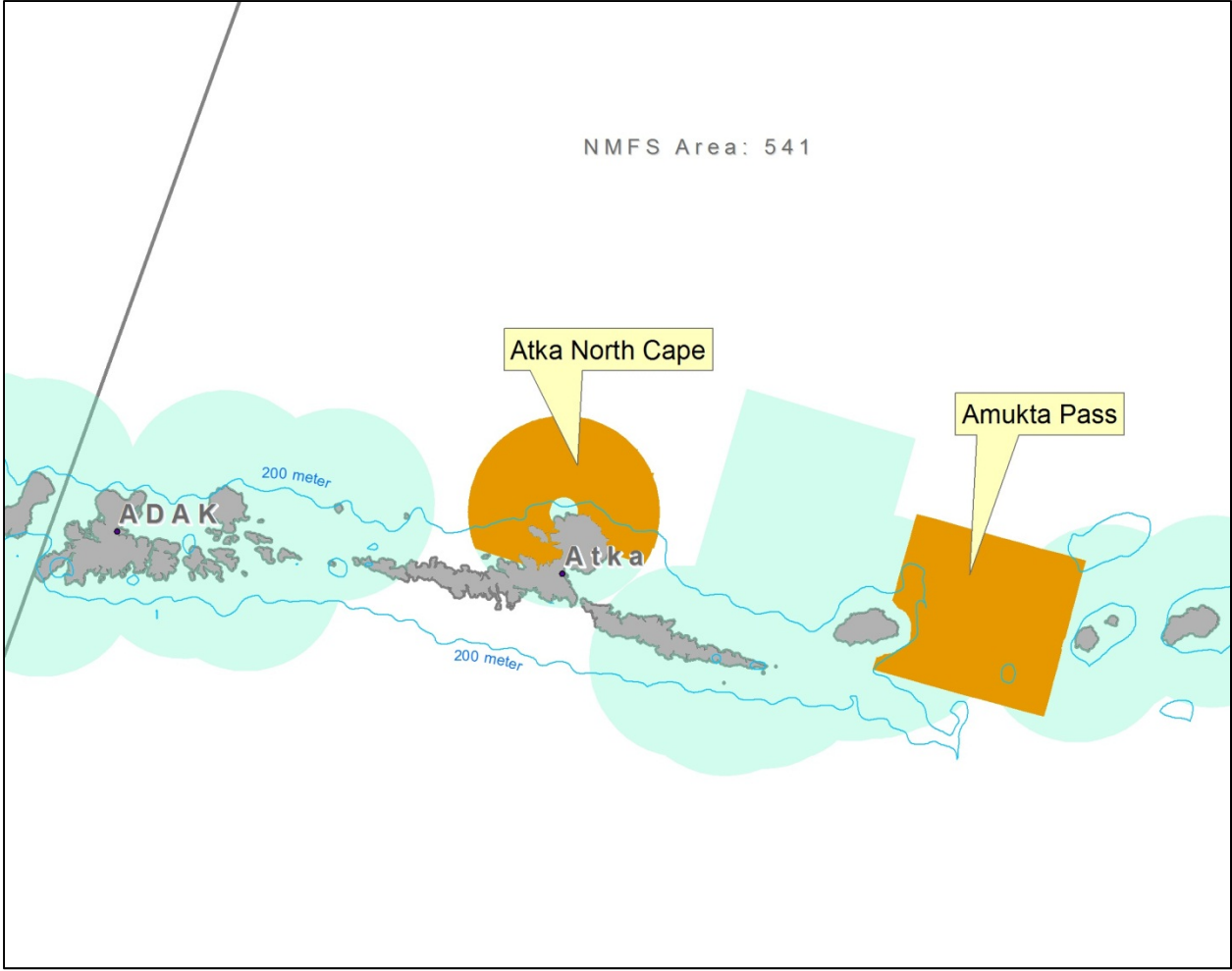
- Prohibit directed fishing for walleye pollock

542/541

- Apportion ABC between 541 and 542 based on the best estimate of total AI biomass ratio using the same methods as applied to Atka mackerel ABC, while allowing TAC to be harvested in any ratio within the limits of each area ABC.
- Retain A-season catch limit of 40% of ABC
- Catch limit in 541 or 542 cannot exceed corresponding ratio of ABC from survey biomass
- Open portion of Critical Habitat west of 178° West longitude to pelagic fishing outside of 3 nm from Krysi Pt. (Hawadax Island), Tanadak, Segula, and outside 10 nm from Little Sitkin and Ayugudak haulouts (Map 1-2)
- Open Kanaga Sound east of 178° West longitude to pelagic fishing outside 3 nm from haulouts
 - Alternative: limit to vessels < 60 feet (Map 1-2)
- Open portion of Critical Habitat to pelagic fishing around a number of haulouts at Atka North Cape, Amutka Pass / Seguam-southside (Map 1-3)



Map 1-2. Area 542 open areas for walleye pollock under Alternative 1.



Map 1-3. Area 541 open areas for walleye pollock under Alternative 1.

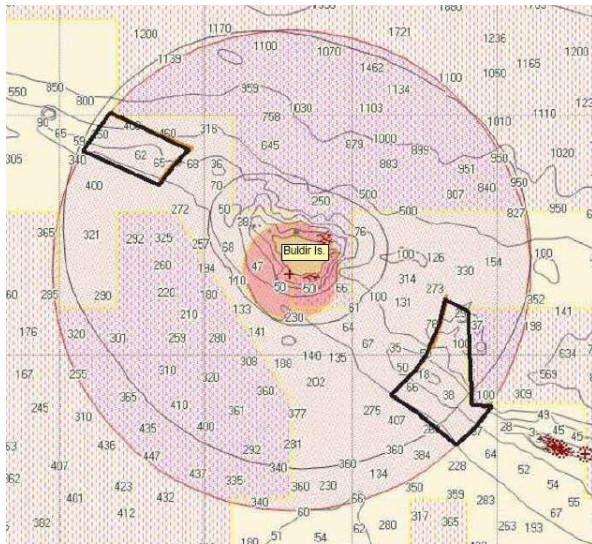
Alternative 2

Atka mackerel

The “platoon” system is replaced by one or more cooperatives.

543

- Open Critical Habitat with the same restrictions that were in place in 2010 during the HLA fishery
 - Alternative: open outside CH
- Open portions of Critical Habitat from 10-15 nm at Buldir Island (Map2-1)
 - Alternative: Close outside CH west of 174.5° E.
- A-season Jan 20 – Jun 10; B-season Jun 10 – Dec 31
 - Alternative: B-season Jun 10 – Nov 1
- Allow rollover between seasons with no limit on rollovers



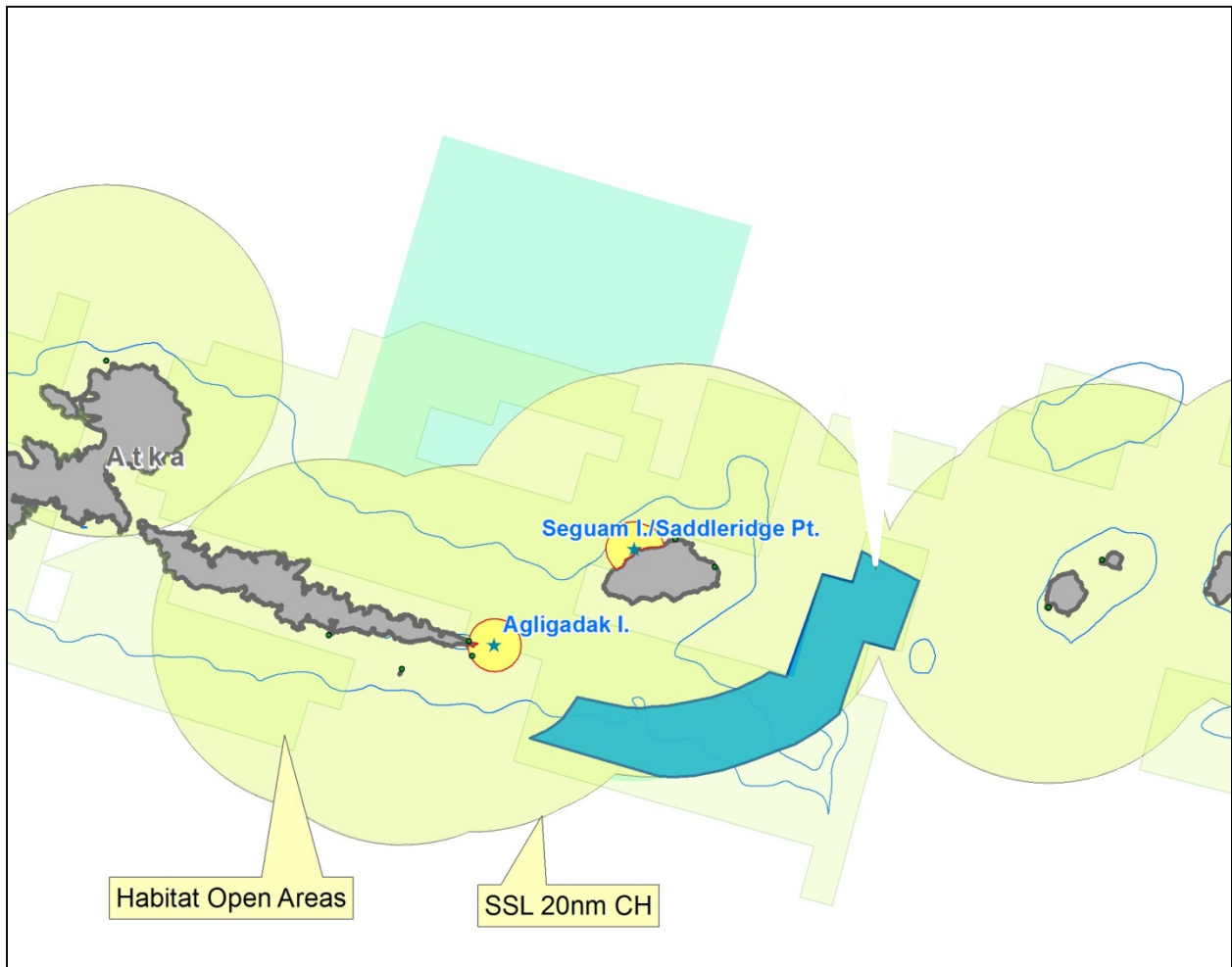
Map 2-1. Buldir Island open areas under Alternative 2.

542

- Open Critical Habitat with the same restrictions as in place in 2010 during the HLA fishery, except maintain closure around Amchitka Island (178°E – 180°)
- A season January 20 – June 10
- B-season June 10 – December 31
 - Alternative: B-season June 10 – November 1
- Allow rollover between seasons with no limit on rollovers

541

- Open a portion of CH 10-20 nm at Seguam (Map 2-2) with no limit to catch inside Critical Habitat
- A season January 20 – June 10
- B season June 10 – December 31
 - Alternative: B-season June 10 – November 1
- Allow rollover between seasons with no limit on rollovers



Map 2-2. Seguan Island open area for Atka mackerel fishing.

Pacific cod

Catch limit in Aleutian Islands is that portion of the Pacific cod stock(s) in the Aleutian Islands, as identified by stock assessment, split between the Aleutian Islands management areas (543, 542, 541) by the 4-survey rolling average of cod occurrence (e.g., for 2013 25% in 543, 75% in 541/542).

543

- Catch limit in area 543 is the AI portion of Pacific cod stock(s), as identified by the stock assessment, multiplied by the 4-survey biomass proportion for 543 (e.g., 25% for 2013)
- Catch limit subdivided by HAL CP and Trawl CP based on ratio of 2006-2010 history expressed as a ratio of the total for both HAL CP, Trawl CP
- Open Critical Habitat with same restrictions as 2010 management for HAL CP (absent the HLA P. cod restrictions)
- Open Critical Habitat with same restrictions as 2010 Management for Trawl CP (absent the HLA P. cod restrictions)
- Seasons
 - HAL CP same as 2010 Management

- Trawl CP same as 2010 Management
- No more than 2 HAL CP vessels and 2 TRW CP vessels at one time in directed fishery

542/541

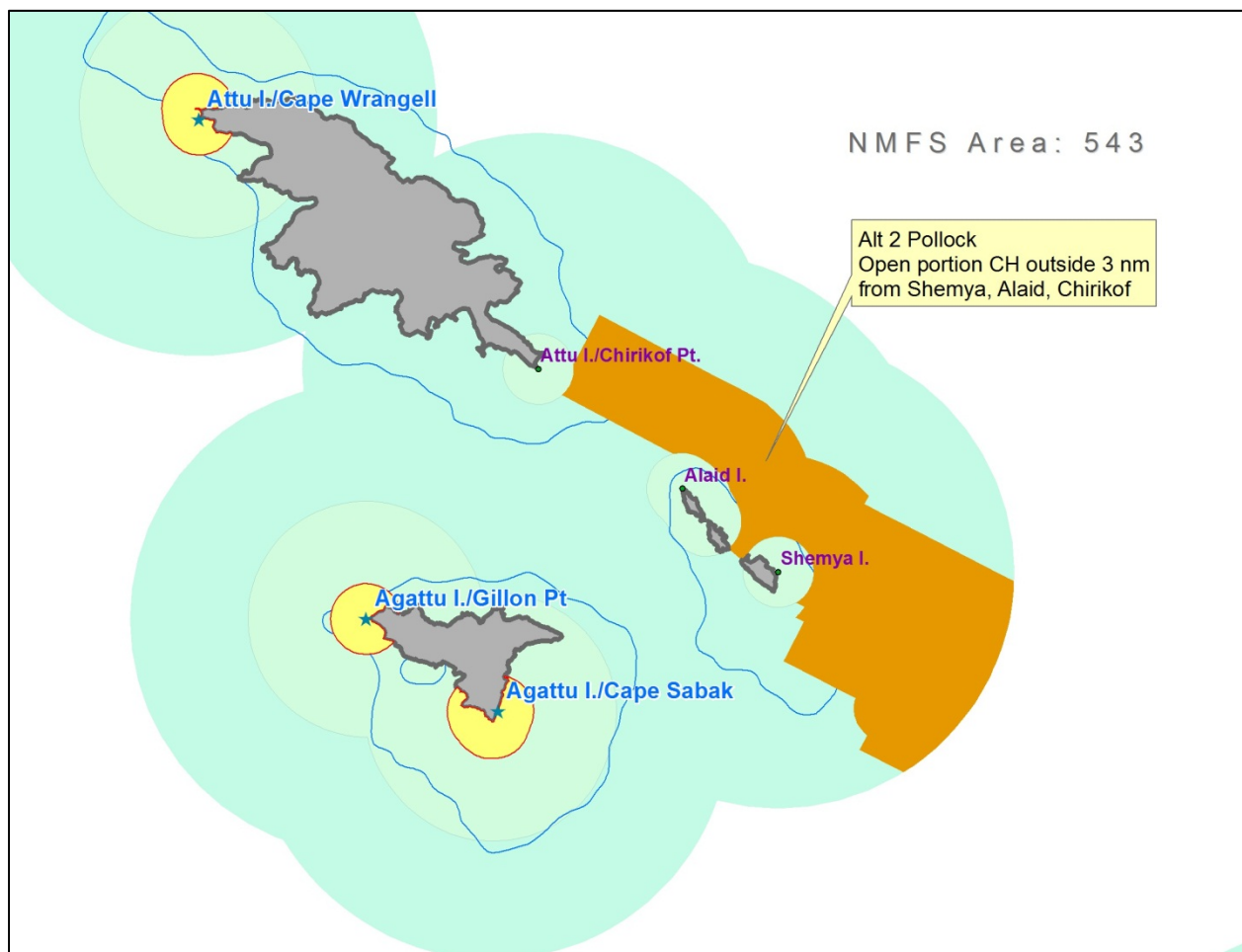
Pacific cod measures under Alternative 2 for areas 542/541 are the same as Alternative 1

Walleye pollock

- Apportion ABC between 543, 541, and 542 based on the best estimate of total AI biomass ratio using the same methods as applied to Atka mackerel ABC, while allowing TAC to be harvested in any ratio within the limits of each area ABC
- Retain catch limit of 40% of ABC harvested in A season

543

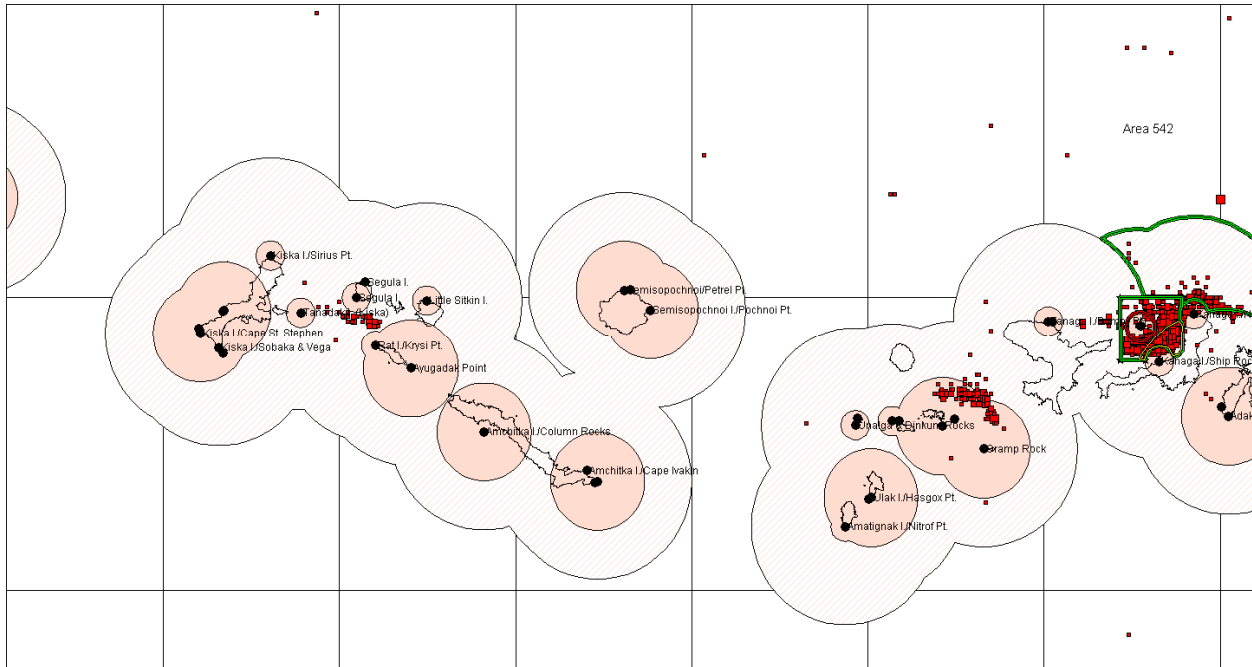
- Open a portion of Critical Habitat outside 3 nm from Shemya, Alaid, and Chirikof haulouts to pelagic trawling (Map 2-3)



Map 2-3. Shemya, Alaid, Chirikof open area.

542

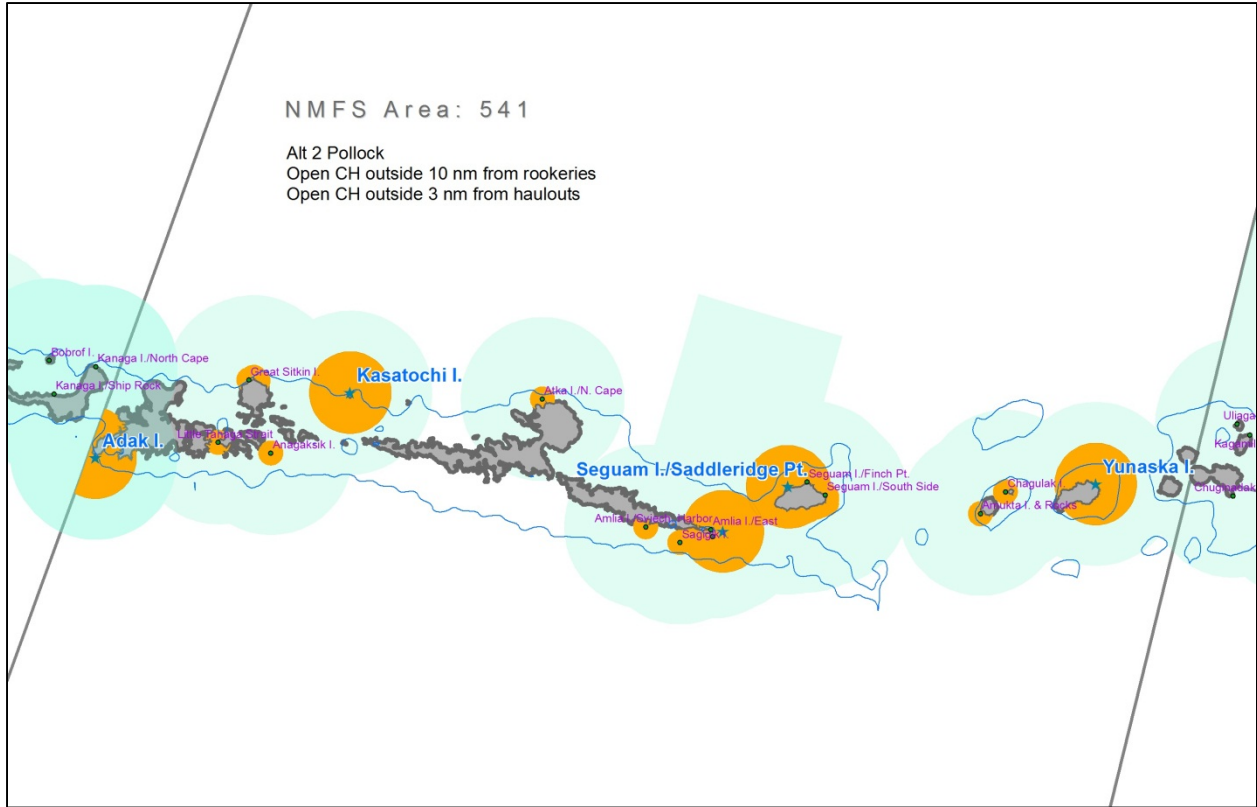
- Open portion of Critical Habitat identified in Alternative 1
- Open Critical Habitat outside of 10 nm of listed haulouts and rookeries west of 178° West longitude (Map 2-4)
- Open Critical Habitat outside of 10 nm from listed rookeries and 3 nm of listed haulouts east of 178° West longitude (Map 2-4)



Map 2-4. Proposed 542 open areas. Three and ten nm closures around haulouts and rookeries are shown in pink, proposed open areas are shown with diagonal hashmarks.

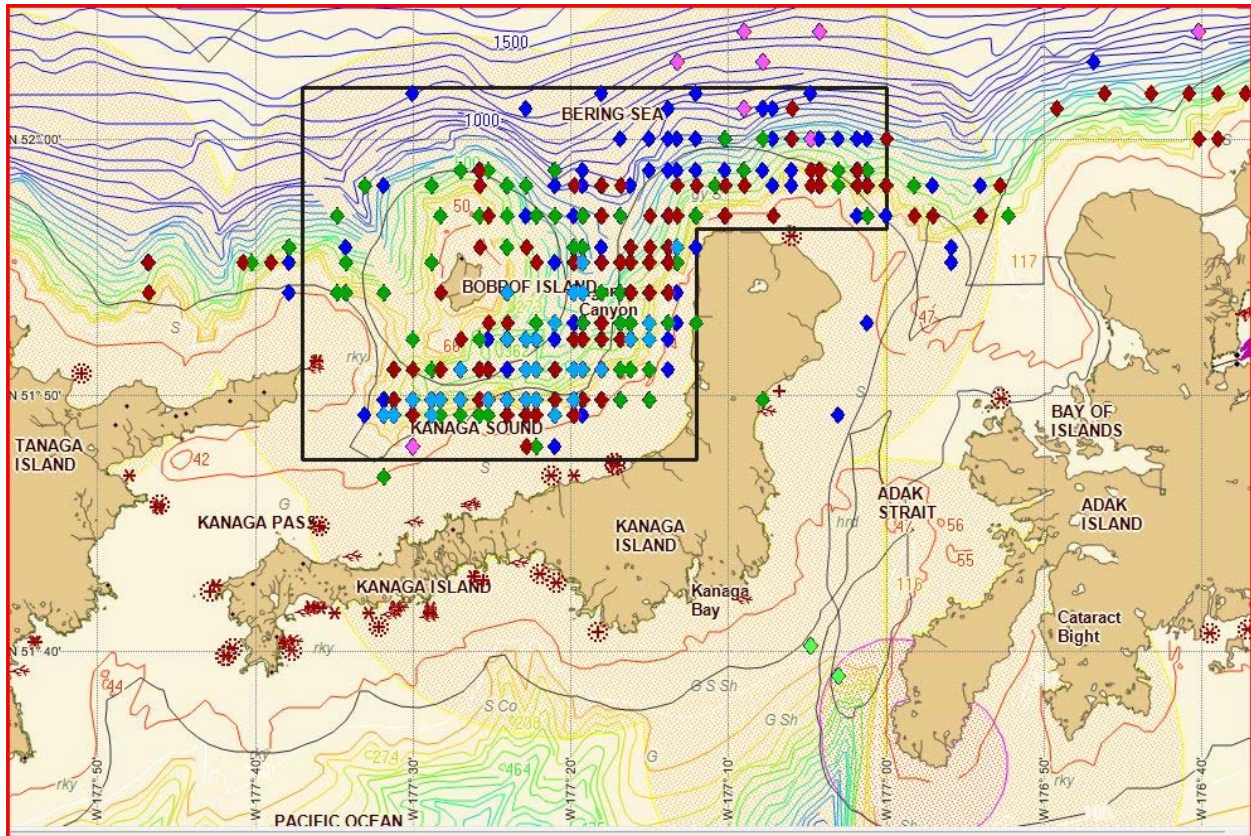
541

- Open portion of Critical Habitat identified in Alternative 1
- Open Critical Habitat to pelagic trawling outside of 10 nm from rookeries and 3 nm from haulouts in area 541 (Map 2-5)



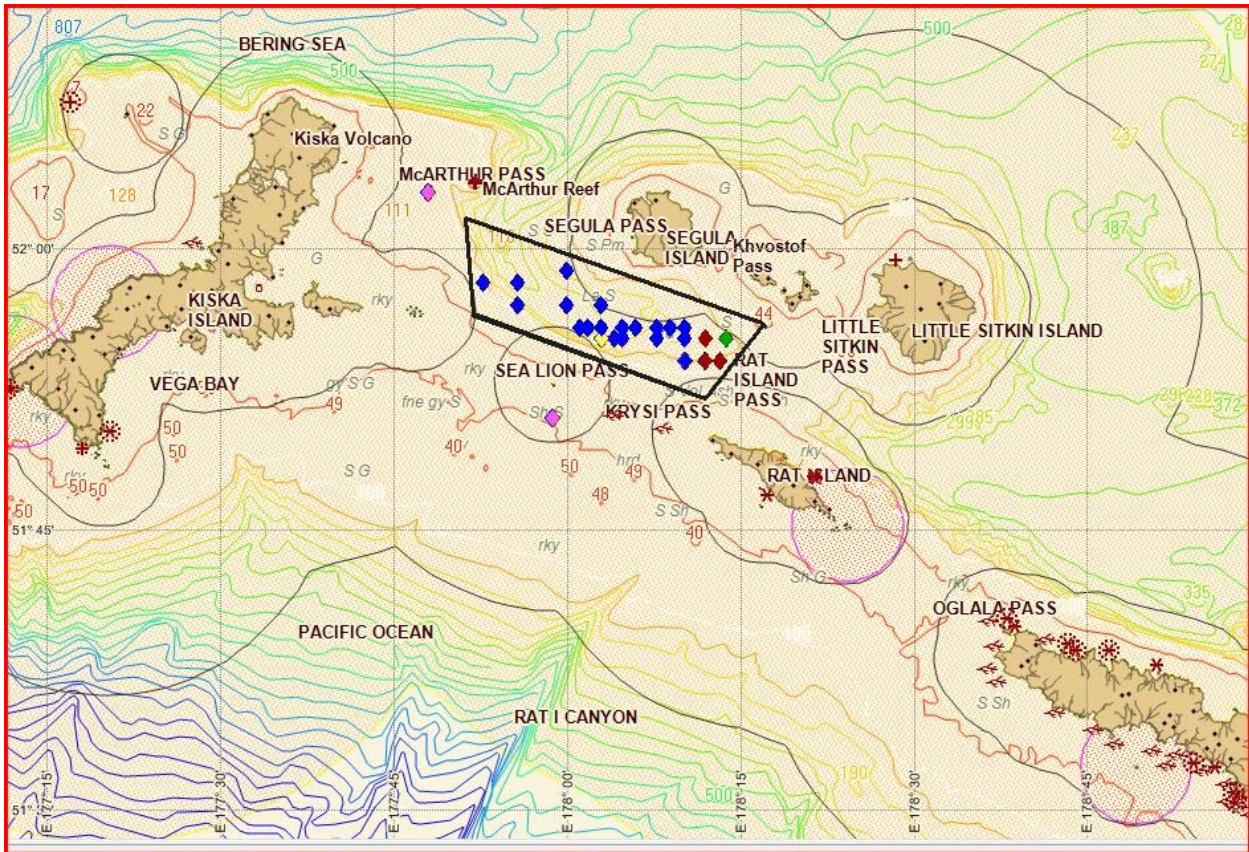
Map 2-5. Proposed 541 open areas. Please note that open areas at Atka North Cape and Segouan Pass, as identified in Alternative 1, are not shown on this map, but are intended to be included in Alternative 2.

Following are maps with open areas for walleye pollock based on specific coordinates. A list of coordinates follows each map.



Kanaga Sound Open Area. Area 542, Alternative 1 and 2.

- Kanaga 542 box:
- N52 02/W177 37
- N52 02/W177 00
- N51 56.5/W177 00
- N51 56.5/W177 12
- N51 47.5/W177 12
- N51 47.5/W177 37
- N52 02/W177 37



Rat Islands open area. Area 542, Alternative 1 and 2

Rat Islands 542 box:

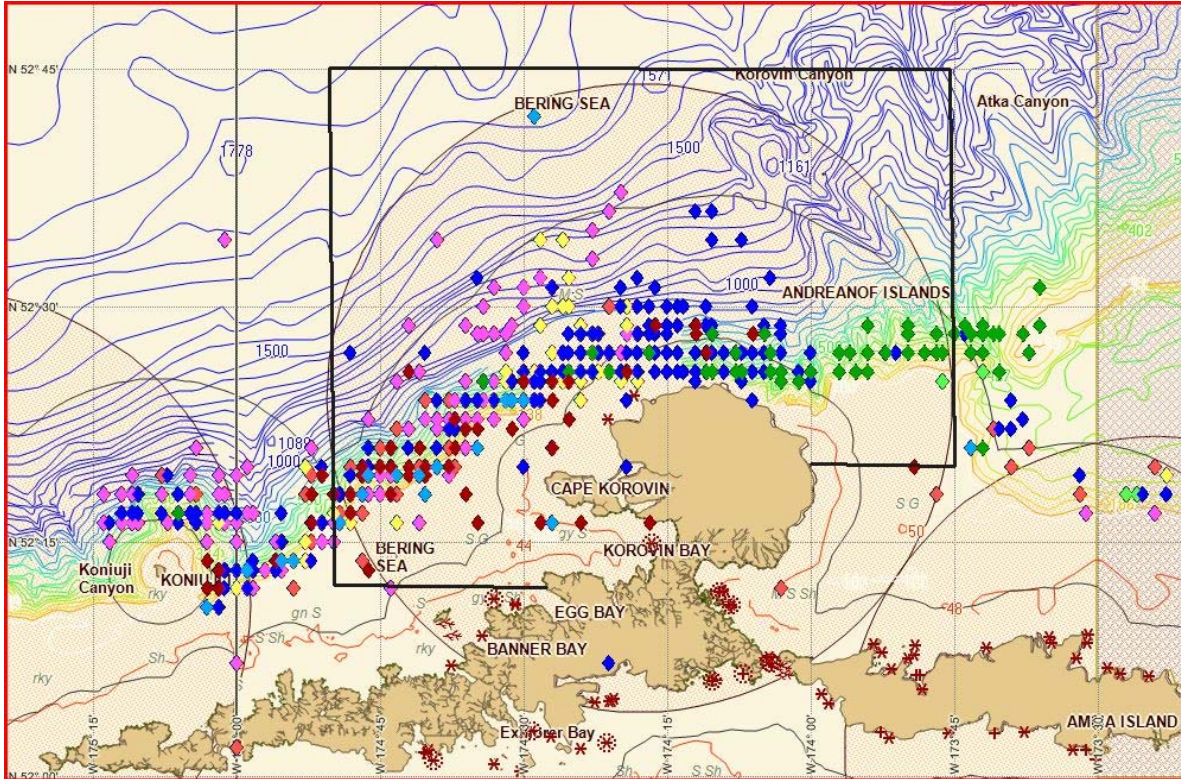
N52 03/E177 51

N51 56/E178 17

N51 52/E178 12

N51 56.5/E177 51.5

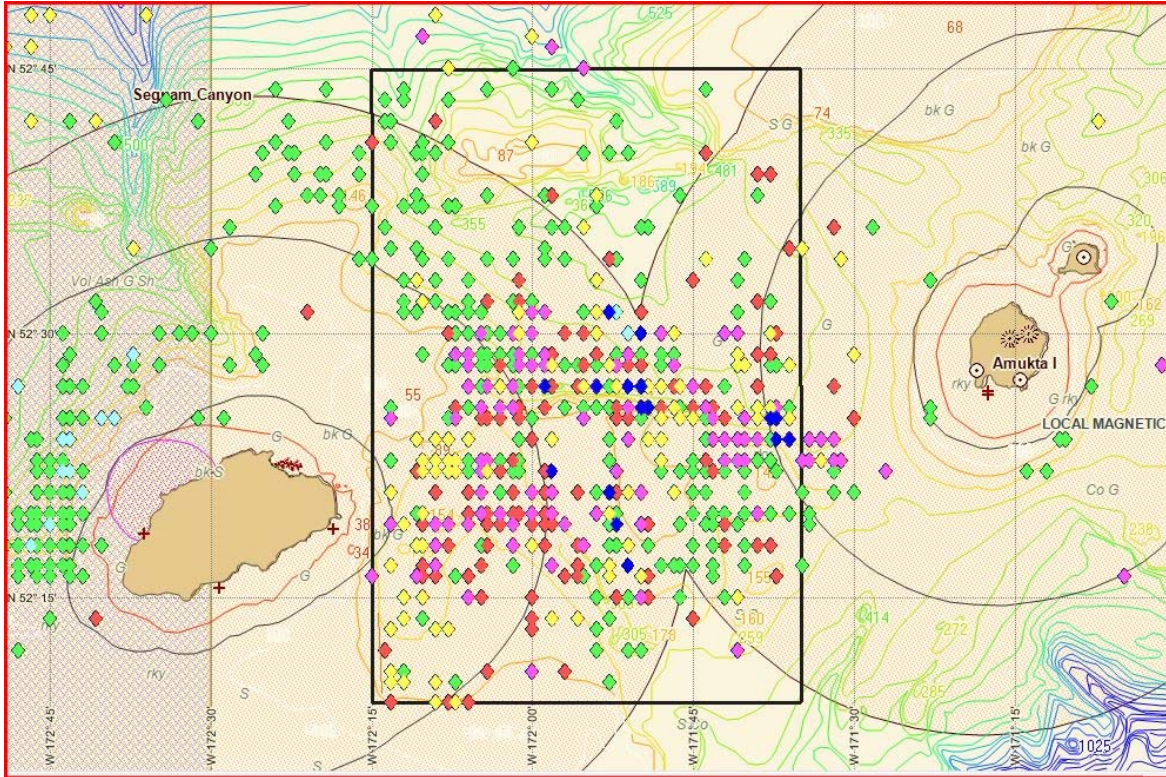
N52 03/E177 51



Atka North Cape Open Area. Area 541, Alternative 1 and 2.

Atka/N. Cape 541 box:

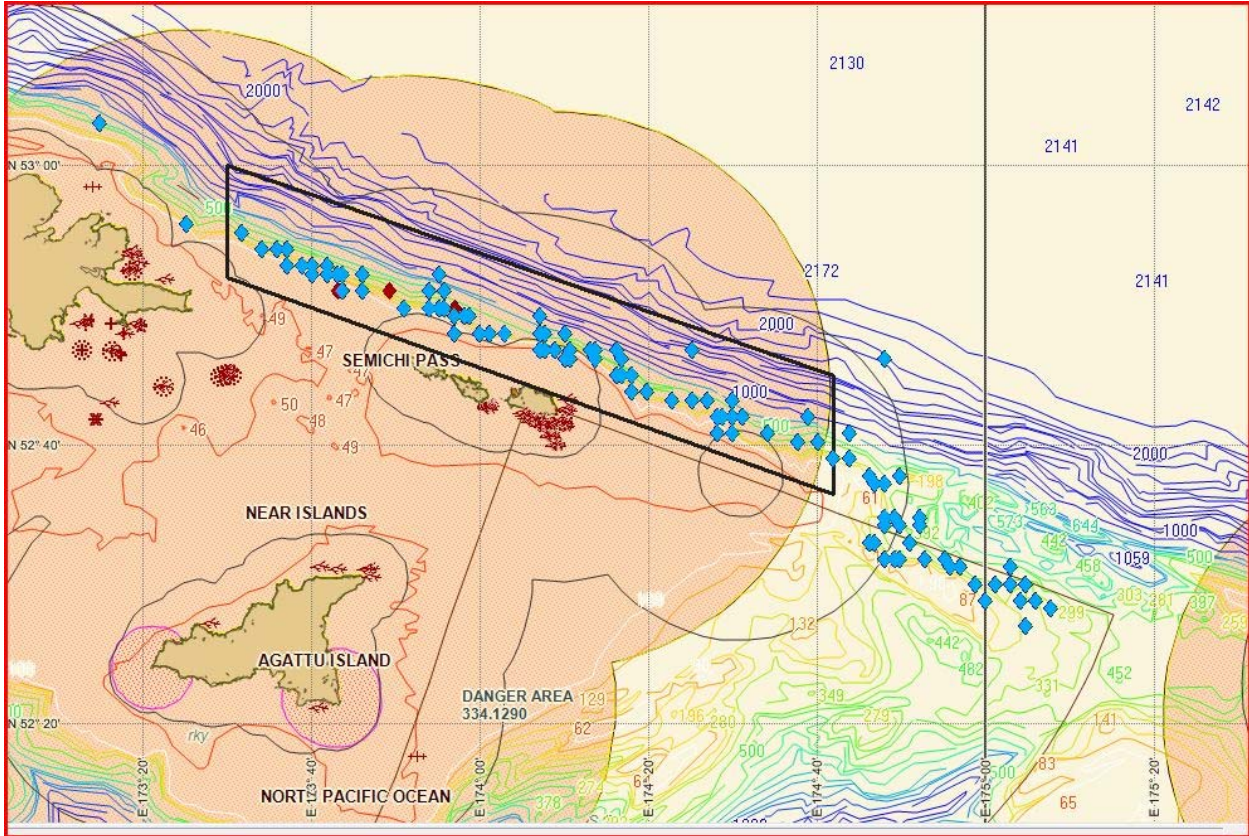
- N52 12/W174 28
- N52 12/W174 51
- N52 45/W174 51
- N52 45/W173 45
- N52 20/W173 45
- N52 20/W174 00



Amukta Pass Open Area. Area 541, Alternative 1 and 2.

Amukta Pass 541 box:

- N52 45/W172 15
- N52 45/W171 35
- N52 09/W171 35
- N52 09/W172 15
- N52 45/W172 15



Shemya Open Area. Area 543, Alternative 2

Shemya 543 box:
N53 00/E173 30
N52 45/E175 42
N52 36.5/E174.42
N52 52/E173 30
N53 00/E173 30

Charter Management Implementation Committee Report December 4, 2012 Anchorage Alaska

Committee: Chair Ed Dersham, Gary Ault, Seth Bone, Tim Evers, Kent Huff, Stan Malcom, Andy Mezirow, Richard Yamada, Ken Dole (by phone).

Council: Bill Tweit

NPFMC Staff: Jane DiCosimo

NOAA: Rachel Baker, Maura Sullivan, Julie Scheurer (by phone)

IPHC: Gregg Williams

ADF&G: Scott Meyer, Barbi Failor

Public: Heath Hilyard, Brian Lynch, Sarah Melton

The meeting convened at 3 pm.

Review of Analysis Chair Ed Dersham opened the meeting with introductions. He invited committee members to pose questions to Scott Meyer on his analysis of management options for the Area 2 C and Area 3A charter halibut fisheries for 2013. Scott made three corrections to data reported in the analysis and answered questions from committee members about the analysis. Gregg Williams clarified some of the findings from the IPHC Interim Meeting. Big year classes of small halibut entering the fishery are not occurring, as had been previously believed.

Using the same size average weight of halibut in the analysis is a conservative approach. There were general questions about the data and assumptions used in the analysis. ADF&G used a new method for projecting the current year's harvest. Under the previous method, if logbook harvest increased 10% between years, then the Statewide Harvest Survey estimate for the previous year was increased by 10%. With 6 years of prior data to compare between survey instruments, ADF&G now uses a regression between the two; the methodology is described in the November 2012 letter from ADF&G to the IPHC¹. It incorporates all the variability over the last six years and provides a projection with confidence intervals. The current projection methodology has resulted in much better projections. Projections should be within 5% of the final harvest estimate. Yield in Tables 4-6 of the analysis are based on estimates of average weight that are totally dependent on the 2010 size data.

Gregg concurred that the coastwide fishery constant exploitation yield (FCEY) that results in a total CEY would be about 28 Mlb (up from 22.17 Mlb) to get to the next GHl step for Area 2C. Scott reported that the next trigger of 5.841 Mlb would result in a harvest rate of 25.5%, compared to current rate of 21.5%. Jane DiCosimo suggested that the committee focus its recommendations on alternate GHls, rather than focus on potential TCEY or FCEY alternatives in the IPHC decision matrix (e.g., "blue line").

Gary Ault asked about potential Area 3A measures; he specifically referenced a limit of one trip per day using 2012 data. Scott replied that 2012 logbook data was incomplete. The analysis suggested a 6% reduction would result under a limit of one trip per day.

Andy Mezirow asked if a 6 fish annual limit would be possible. Ed responded that a one halibut annual limit exempt from a maximum length limit appears to be problematic due to the uncertainty involved. He thought an annual limit could be enforceable, based upon the state's experience with annual limits for salmon. Heath Hilyard asked if 2013 ADF&G license forms with a new field for recording the 'annual limit' fish were printed. Scott reported that some licenses were sold online without the new field. Rachel Baker noted that the 2013 logbooks would not have a specific field for anglers to mark the 'annual limit' halibut. Ed noted that instructions could be explicit to identify that halibut must be recorded on logbooks (e.g., for an annual limit of 1 fish exception to a reverse slot limit), without changing the forms. Scott said

data to determine harvest by angler would be available in logbook data to determine the compliance rate, after the fact. Enforcement can only be done at the vessel and the license would have to be used.

Projected harvest for Area 3A did not include the linear down trend in annual size and should be considered, since they more likely would get smaller. Andy suggested that the 40,000 lb buffer between the allocation and harvest from last year may suggest that regulations are not needed to be implemented, based on the extra conservatism incorporated into the methodology. Harvest was 700,000 lb under the GHL in 2011 and 40,000 lb under the 2012 GHL. No reduction appears necessary for Area 3A.

Kent Huff asked if the 6% mortality rate would be applied. Scott said no; his approach does not count discard mortality. Discard mortality would not be implemented until the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2C and Area 3A is implemented.

Heath asked if Scott's projection in Tables 4 and 5 presumed actual number of anglers. Scott said that his approach does not take number of anglers into account. The average weight results from that size limit imposed on 2010 data and multiplied by the number of fish. Effort is buried in the harvest projection. He suggested that a projection method based on effort would have to take the number of fish retained per angler into account. In 2011 the number of trips declined but harvest did not, therefore anglers were keeping more (smaller) fish each.

Recommendations

Area 3A Status quo (2 fish of any size); projected harvests for 2013 are expected to not exceed the current GHL or the next step down in the GHL using the IPHC "blue line" as a reference point.

Area 2C Status quo (U45O68) under the current GHL or for the next step up in the GHL, for consistency. Limiting the number of variables that change (each year) could lead to learning more about accuracy of the projections. If the Council does not accept the committee recommendation for status quo, then the committee prefers an adjustment to the upper end of the slot (i.e., U45/O70).

Other issues

- Committee members will notify the full committee as they identify potential management measures for future analyses; however no new analysis is expected prior to the committee's Fall 2013 meeting.
- Committee members recognized the effect of changes to the IPHC process for determining catch limits under the CSP, as well as the sector accountability of discard mortalities, that will be implemented under the proposed CSP. The Council process will be the same under either the GHL or proposed CSP; however the annual management measures may need to be more restrictive once the charter sector changes from fixed levels to a percentage of a combined commercial and charter catch limit.
- Committee members suggested that electronic reporting would be preferred method of accounting for removals, at least in Area 3A where there is better electronic coverage. Real time reporting may allow in-season changes to management measures, if needed. Richard Yamada reported that he submitted a proposal to develop an electronic reporting model to Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. Heath reported that he initiated a request for electronic reporting to ADF&G.
- Richard asked whether the committee could comment to the IPHC about potential impacts of potential IPHC changes to its process overlapped with the transition to the CSP from the GHL. Ed clarified that committee recommendations would be considered by the Council to forward to the IPHC.
- The committee thanked Scott for his hard work in finalizing the analysis with the latest information from the IPHC interim meeting, which met the previous week.

Adjourn The Committee adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Enforcement Committee Minutes

Fireweed Room, Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK

December 4, 2012

Committee: Roy Hyder (Chair), Asst. Special Agent in Charge Ken Hansen, CAPT Phil Thorne, LT Anthony Kenne, Martin Loefflad, Glenn Merrill, Special Agent in Charge Sherrie Myers, Jon Streifel, Garland Walker, and Jon McCracken (staff)

Others present included: Susan Auer, Bill Tweit, Dan Hull, Diana Evans, Sam Cunningham, Jane DiCosimo, Steve MacLean, Jeff Hartman, Brad Robbins, Bruce Buckson (Director of Office of Law Enforcement), Doug Marsden, Paul MacGregor, Jackie Smith, Julie Bonnie, Bob Krugger, Mike Szymanski, Dennis Moran, Glenn Charles, Les Cockreham, Kevin Heck, Gerry Shanahan, Maura Sullivan, Sarah Melton

1. **B-2 Halibut subsistence proposal**

Jane DiCosimo provide an overview of a proposal to allow immediate family members of SHARC holders to assist with subsistence halibut fishing activities on board the vessel from which the SHARC holder is subsistence halibut fishing.

The Committee spent time discussing some of the enforcement challenges associated with this proposal. One of the biggest challenges is clearly defining immediate family in regulation. Identifying the family member in the field may be difficult and therefore complicate enforcement by the need for follow up investigation to resolve questions about individual identity. It was also noted that the scope of the proposal will likely be difficult to quantify given there are different understandings of the meaning of immediate family. Another issue the Committee discussed was the increased work load that maybe necessary enforcing an immediate family member provision. In summary, if the Council elects to move forward with this proposal, the Committee recommends the analysis or discussion paper include the potential to identify immediate family members by advance registration and whether those family members would be required to comply with Alaska state residency requirements.

2. **C-2(b) Initial review on BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch**

Jeff Hartman provided an overview of the enforcement and monitoring section of the analysis that addresses the March 2012 Enforcement Committee recommendations. At the March 2012 Enforcement Committee meeting, it was recommended that the analysis include a discussion concerning “deckloading”, to include prohibiting deckloads as well as simply enforcing the existing requirements of delivering to shoreside processors or stationary floating processors all salmon stored in RSW tanks.

The Committee also recommended the analysis address proposed modification of the Amendment 91 monitoring program regulations that are currently in place for catcher vessels, to allow storing salmon bycatch in other secure locations approved in writing by NMFS. The Committee noted the need to expand the analysis to accommodate two housekeeping regulatory corrections that were felt would improve monitoring and enforcement of both Chinook and non-Chinook salmon bycatch.

At this meeting, the Committee noted the proposed changes in monitoring measures described in section 2.5 of the Draft RIR were the result of weekly and bi-weekly meetings of FMA, OLE and SF staff that oversaw Inseason implementation of the Amendment 91 Program. The committee viewed the storage container and removal of salmon regulations as minor housekeeping measures, and saw no enforcement or compliance concerns.

The Committee felt the suggested regulation change to redefine directed fishing for pollock was a means to address what was recognized as confusion in the fleet regarding when a CV offload was subject to Amendment 91 offload monitoring requirements, and supported this recommendation.

The Committee did not discuss the ATLAS software requirement in detail, but noted this was a recommendation arising from the Amendment 91 workgroup, who generally believed this requirement would improve quality and timeliness of data.

The Committee noted it was their understanding and reaffirmed their position that “deckloads” were a frequent and legitimate practice in the pollock CV fishery, and noted the existence of IR/IU regulations prohibiting discard of pollock. The Committee recognized the collaborative processes used to develop the current process for dealing with deckloads, and noted the recommendations for proposed deckloading regulations in the analysis are intended to simply codify the agreements and practices currently in place.

After hearing the presentation by Mr. Hartman, the Committee noted that the analysis adequately addresses the Committee’s March 2012 recommendations and supports the proposed recommendations concerning deckloads and other issues that were noted in the previous minutes.

3. C-2(c) Initial review on GOA Chinook Bycatch all trawl fisheries

Diana Evans provided an overview of the initial review analysis on GOA Chinook Bycatch for all trawl fisheries. This analysis evaluates management measures to address Chinook salmon bycatch or prohibited species catch (PSC) in the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries. The alternatives included in the initial review document are specific to the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries occurring in the Western and Central GOA, and include setting Chinook salmon PSC limits for these fisheries, and requiring full retention of all salmon species.

Overall, the Committee felt that the initial review analysis adequately addresses the monitoring issues associated with the full retention alternative. In their discussions concerning this action, the Committee expressed concern regarding the monitoring and enforcement of a full retention requirement for Chinook salmon, given the level of observer coverage in the CV trawl fisheries. The requirement of full retention combined with current and future observer coverage levels in the GOA, could generate intentional biasing of Chinook bycatch at sea. This concern is reduced if the goal of the full retention requirement is to seek stock composition and genetic data, and not to be the basis of a cap monitoring program.

Additionally, the limited resources necessary to monitor and enforce a full retention requirement in the GOA make this alternative impracticable to enforce. Finally, the Committee noted that if a program is weak in its ability to be supported by adequate monitoring and enforcement then we lose voluntary compliance and credibility with the industry.

~~4. C-3(a) Recommendations for 2013 Charter Halibut (tentative)~~

5. C-3(c) Discussion paper on retention of 4A halibut in sablefish pots

Jane DiCosimo presented an overview of a proposal to allow fishermen with commercial IFQs for both halibut and sablefish to retain halibut in IPHC Regulatory Area 4A that were caught in sablefish pots. The Committee spent some time discussing the importance of this proposal in relation to halibut resource in area 4A. It was generally viewed by the Committee, that the continued high halibut usage and the potential to reduce halibut discards makes this proposal relevant.

From the Committee's perspective, the intent of this proposal is not to permit increased directed fishing of halibut with pot gear, but rather better use of the halibut resource. The Committee noted that if the Council felt the need to reduce potential for increased directed effort toward halibut bycatch, a management tool such as a "MRA" could be considered. This would not present undue enforcement or compliance challenges. It was noted that area 4A is subject to both halibut clearance requirements and a sablefish directed fishing requirement to operate VMS, so there are monitoring and enforcement tools already in use in the fishery.

In summary, the Committee felt that proposal does not present any obvious compliance or enforcement issues. The Committee noted that the action could potentially be a vehicle to rectify conflicting "check-in" procedures required under halibut and sablefish requirements. The proposal indicates the need to redefine the area by latitude and longitude, but the Committee does not believe this is necessary, since the proposal would apply to those sablefish areas of the BSAI overlapped by area 4A. (Pot groundfish gear is not authorized in the portion of 4A contained within the WGOA). The Committee noted that authorizing retention of halibut IFQ in the sablefish fishery in IPHC Regulatory Area 4A necessitates the need for independent real-time positional reporting using VMS.

6. D-1(b) Discussion paper on VMS

Jon McCracken provided an update on the VMS discussion paper based on recommendations from the Enforcement Committee in October 2012. These additions to the discussion paper include an evaluation of previous search and rescue cases, and further refinement of the characterization of vessels that are not required to carry VMS. A copy of the October 2012 Enforcement Committee minutes are included in Appendix 4 of the December 2012 discussion paper.

After a brief discussion by the Committee, it was recommended by the Committee that the VMS discussion paper move forward for analysis. The Enforcement Committee stated that an objective of VMS is to provide improved independent, real-time, confidential positional reporting to enforce current and future management decisions, and VMS is a tried and true tool designed for this purpose. In addition, given the current constrained monitoring and enforcement resources, the need to maximize these enforcement and monitoring resources, and the increasing complexity necessary to manage the North Pacific fishery resource, VMS should be given full consideration.

If the Council elects to move this action forward for analysis and exemptions are desired to be included in the action, there was general agreement by Committee members that exemptions other than vessel length be considered. One such example noted by the Committee would be to exempt vessels that fish in only one regulatory area, on a per-trip or annual basis. In addition, the Committee noted that the action should also include a requirement for vessels that require an operational VMS in one area must have their VMS operational for the vessel's entire fishing trip.

7. D-2(c) Provide direction on Round Island Transit analysis scope, purpose and need

At the June Council meeting, Committee discussion resulted in the Council initiating a regulatory amendment to address a problem related to enforcement concerns with existing regulations. Currently, vessels with Federal Fishing Permits are prohibited from transiting between 3 and 12 nm around Round Island and Cape Peirce, between April 1 and September 30. The Committee received an update from Steve Maclean concerning considerations for transit corridors to be included in the regulatory amendment. One such corridor would be north of Round Island to allow tenders to support herring fisheries in the Togiak area and Amendment 80 vessels to transit from fishing grounds to lawful roadsteads to conduct transshipment operations. A primary consideration in developing any proposed management measures is avoiding disturbing walrus at a more recently developed walrus haulout at Hagemeister Island, and addressing transiting vessels that might be crossing the route that walrus take when moving South from Round Island to their feeding grounds in Bristol Bay. The other corridor request is through the federal walrus protection area at Cape Peirce. Currently, tenders can lawfully travel within State waters to Security Cove or other herring fishing areas in the proximity of Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham.

Mr. Maclean indicated that US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released its 12-month finding and concluded that listing the Pacific walrus as threatened or endangered is warranted but precluded at this time by higher priority actions under the ESA. Therefore the agency has added Pacific Walrus to the candidate species list. By 2017, the USFWS will either begin to develop a proposed rule to list the Pacific walrus and define Critical Habitat for the species, or remove Pacific walrus from the candidate list. It is likely critical habitat will include areas around Round Island and The Twins, Cape Peirce, and Cape Newenham, in addition to the haulout at Hagemeister Island. It is also possible, though not certain, that transit corridors through the walrus protection areas, defined by time and species, could be considered when USFWS designates Critical Habitat for Pacific Walrus.

In general, when this action was presented to the Enforcement Committee in June 2012, the recommendation to initiate a regulatory amendment was not limited to just Togiak herring tenders. It was the intent of the Committee that Amendment 80 vessels historically transiting south of Round Island and through Hagemeister Strait to deliver yellowfin sole to trampers in the roadsteads in Hagemeister Strait or Togiak Bay also be included. The Committee also noted that the addition of Cape Peirce appears to be within the scope of the original recommendation concerning Round Island corridor. However, the Committee noted that there is a disparity between federal and state regulations relative to access to the waters surrounding these transit zones that causes enforcement challenges. The Committee recognized that VMS was the only practical method for monitoring and enforcing the few vessels that would be using these corridors, and therefore the Committee recommends that vessels using these corridors be required to have an operating VMS onboard. It was noted by the Committee that most vessels, if not all vessels, using these corridors are already required to operate VMS. There was also some discussion concerning the opening of these corridors, and the Committee agreed that an April through June opening would likely meet the greatest need.

Eric A. Olson
Chairman
Chris Oliver
Executive Director

605 W 4th, Ste 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-2809
(907) 271-2817

www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc



News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2012

Council Recognition

Three long-time NOAA Fisheries employees who are retiring and leaving the Council process were recognized at the December Council meeting. Ken Hansen, Assistant Special Agent in charge of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, was awarded the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award. Hansen has had a long and close involvement in the fishing industry in Alaska, and has been described as "not your ordinary law enforcement officer."

Sherrie Tinsley Meyers, Special Agent in charge, also from NOAA's office of Law Enforcement, was recognized for her work with the Council and her involvement in law enforcement. Jesse Gharrett, the head of National Marine Fisheries Restricted Access Management Division, will be retiring after 37 years. Gharrett is an expert on limited access programs, and her expertise will be missed.

We wish them all luck in their future endeavors, and thank them for their stewardship in managing Alaska's resources.



Ken Hansen recognized by Eric Olson, NPFMC Chairman.



GOA Chinook Bycatch

The Council reviewed an initial analysis of alternatives to establish a hard cap for Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) taken in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) non-pollock trawl fisheries. The Council expanded the apportionment options for the PSC limit available under Alternative 2, and requested additional analysis to reflect the varying level of monitoring tools available among different user groups within the GOA trawl fleet.

The Council added the following options for the apportionment of a Chinook salmon PSC limit:

- a direct apportionment of Chinook PSC to the Central GOA Rockfish Program,
- a limit on the proportion of the PSC limit that can be used in the first half of the year, and
- an option to base apportionment among sectors on proportion of historic groundfish harvest.

The Council also limited, to some extent, how options will be evaluated in combination, acknowledging that the creation of very small PSC allowances poses an inseason management challenge for some sectors. The Council motion, with the complete suite of alternatives, is available on the Council website.

The Council also noted that obtaining information on stock of origin of Chinook salmon caught as bycatch in the non-pollock trawl fisheries is a high priority, and asked the agency to assess, by sector and fishery, any changes to monitoring requirements or sampling design that might be

possible in order to successfully implement a full retention requirement for Chinook salmon PSC. Other areas where the Council asked for additional analysis are referenced in the motion, available on the Council website.

A revised draft of the analysis will be released in preparation for Council final action on this issue in either April or June of 2013. Staff contacts are Diana Evans and Sam Cunningham.

Round Island Transit Corridor

The Council received a brief discussion paper outlining preliminary information for establishing a transit corridor through the Round Island walrus protection area. The Council originally directed staff to prepare an analysis to allow transit of vessels with FFPs to transit the walrus protection area while tendering herring for the Togiak area herring fishery. During investigations, staff learned of additional information that may impact the scope of the analysis. The discussion paper requested input from the Council on whether they wished to expand the initial scope of the analysis to include passage of vessels other than those tendering herring (e.g., Amendment 80 vessels delivering yellowfin sole) through the Round Island area, or to include a transit corridor through the walrus protection area around Cape Peirce. The Purpose and Need statement, along with the alternatives, are posted on the Council's website. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

EFH Consultation

At the December meeting, NMFS provided a report on essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation actions in which they have been engaged. This is the first such report since the Council adopted its formal EFH consultation policy in April, in response to which the agency will provide regular reports to the Council.

The report also includes a discussion of future actions of possible interest to the Council, and identifies that input from the Council would be appreciated on proposed Norton Sound mining operations and implications for red king crab. The Council tasked their Ecosystem Committee with considering this issue at their next meeting. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

PSEIS SIR

The Council concurred with staff's proposed approach for developing the Supplemental Information Report (SIR) for the 2004 *Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (PSEIS). The SIR will focus on re-evaluating the conclusions of the PSEIS in the light of new information and new analytical methods, to determine whether the 2004 conclusions continue to be valid. Under a tentative timeline outlined in the staff discussion paper, a draft SIR could be ready for Council review late in 2013. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS

At the December 2012 Council meeting, the Council received an update on progress made of the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS, and forwarded alternatives to NMFS SF for evaluation in the EIS. Staff from NMFS, Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division summarized the Scoping Report for the Council. The scoping period for the EIS closed on October 15, 2012. The Scoping Report was submitted to the Council on November 19, 2012. The Scoping Report is posted on the NMFS AKR website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/sslpm/eis/default.htm>.

The Chairman and Council staff for the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee presented two draft alternatives for consideration in the 2012 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS. The Council passed a motion that edited those alternatives, and presented a third alternative for evaluation by NMFS. The motion reads:

- 1. The Council acknowledges NMFS' efforts to produce the EIS consistent with the court order and timelines approved therein, fully incorporating the findings of both independent reviews, and providing full analysis of all relevant issues,*
- 2. The Council expects the EIS to state how alternatives considered and decisions based on it will or will not achieve the requirements of other environmental laws.*
- 3. The Council expects the EIS process will result in reconsultation on a package of fishery measures that, when compared to the 2010 BiOp, better balance the need to protect Steller sea lion populations in the central and western AI, the needs of the groundfish fisheries and fishery dependent communities, using the best scientific information as a foundation, including the results of the peer-review process.*
- 4. The Council forwards the two alternatives developed by the SSLMC for analysis in the EIS, with the following modifications:*
 - a. In Alternative 1, strike language for Pacific cod Area 542/541 starting with "Option 1: Limit to HAL..." and ending with "Option 2: Include Mothership participation".*
 - b. In Alternative 2, strike language for Pacific cod area 543 starting with "Option 1: Limit to HAL..." and ending with "Option 2: Include Mothership participation".*

In addition, the Council moves a third alternative which consists of the regulations and RPAs for Atka mackerel and Pacific cod in place prior to adoption of the 2011 Interim Final Rule, adjusted to take into account changes in fishery management that have occurred since 2003 (e.g., Amendment 80, etc.), and for walleye pollock, includes the measures contained in SSLMC Alternative 2 to allow a fishery in areas 543, 542, 541.

The full alternatives, including detailed maps of proposed open areas, are posted on the Council website. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Council Appointments

Appointments to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel were made at the December meeting. The Council announced the following reappointments for three-year terms to the Advisory Panel: Joel Peterson, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Anne Vanderhoeven, Craig Lowenberg and Andy Mezirow. Tim Evers was appointed for a one year term to address charter halibut issues. Additionally, the AP welcomes two new members: John Gruver, of United Catcher Boats and Mitch Kilborn of International Seafoods of Alaska, in Kodiak. The AP membership also includes Kurt Cochran, John Crowley, Jerry Downing, Tom Enlow, Jeff Farvour, Alexis Kwachka, Bryan Lynch, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Ed Poulsen, Neil Rodriguez, Ernie Weiss, and Lori Swanson. Many thanks to Jan Jacobs and Matt Moir, retiring members of the AP, for their service.

The Council also re-appointed the SSC members for another year term. SSC membership includes Dr. Jennifer Burns, Dr. Henry Cheng, Bob Clark, Alison Dauble, Sherri Dressel, Dr. Anne Hollowed, Dr. George Hunt, Dr. Gordon Kruse, Dr. Kathy Kuletz, Pat Livingston, Dr. Seth Macinko, Dr. Steve Martell, Dr. Franz Mueter, Dr. Jim Murphy, Lew Queirolo, Dr. Terry Quinn, Dr. Kate Reedy-Maschner, and Farron Wallace.

Additionally, the Council appointed Dr. Ian Stewart to replace Steven Hare on the GOA Groundfish Plan Team, and made two appointments to the Crab Plan Team: Dr. Buck Stockhausen, who replaced Lou Rugalo, and Dr. Martin Dorn. We look forward to working with them in the future.

Observer Program

At the December meeting, the Council reiterated its support for the restructured Observer Program, and the 2013 observer annual deployment plan (ADP), including the deployment of observers on vessels in the trip selection and vessel selection pools, as well as the 2013 electronic monitoring (EM) pilot project. The Council received an update from NMFS on changes the agency has made to the 2013 ADP, based on the Council's recommendations in October 2012:

- Vessels selected for observer coverage in the vessel selection pool will now be selected for a 2-month period of coverage, as opposed to a 3-month period.
- Instead of assigning a uniform ~13% coverage rate for vessels in the vessel selection pool and trips in the trip selection pool, the ADP has been revised to assign a higher rate of coverage to trips in the trip selection pool (anticipated to be approximately 14-15%). As a consequence, the coverage rate in the vessel selection pool will reduce to approximately 11%.

At the Council's request, NMFS has also been working with industry to accommodate requests for voluntary 100% observer coverage in some fisheries that currently fall within the partial observer coverage category.

The Council requested that in April 2013 the agency

bring back a framework for analyzing several of the key issues that the Council has already identified for discussion in the first year program review scheduled in June 2013. These issues are listed in full in the motion posted on the Council website. The April framework will provide an opportunity for the Council and the public to comment on the proposed data and methodology to be used for these evaluations, prior to the June report. The Council also requested a framework or outline to be presented on the EM Strategic Plan in April, which would include the identification of alternative approaches to achieving the Council's EM objectives.

Additionally, the Council asked staff to develop a discussion paper to explore cost savings and efficiencies that may be obtained by use of a third party entity, for example the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSFMC), to solicit and contract with observer and/or EM providers, and to interface with the industry and the agency in the management of the Observer Program.

Finally, the Council noted appreciation for NMFS' clarifications on the program, in response to Council, State, and stakeholder requests, many of which have been addressed in outreach materials, including a Frequently Asked Questions document, and at outreach events. Information is accessible from the NMFS observer webpage (<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/>). Staff contact is Diana Evans.

VMS

At this meeting, the Council reviewed a revised discussion paper on the use of, and requirements for, Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) in the North Pacific fisheries, and in other regions of the U.S. With respect to expanding the program to vessels that are not currently required to operate VMS, the Council passed a motion to take no further action until the Alaska Fisheries Science Center has provided information and results from the deployment of electronic monitoring (EM) under the new Observer Program in 2013. For those vessels that carry EM and already carry VMS, the agency plans to compare the effectiveness, reliability, and costs of both technologies, with results likely available by early 2014. The Council also plans to review the strategic plan for developing EM at the June 2013 meeting. Much of the Council's discussion focused on whether there are alternatives to VMS that could meet the Council's management and enforcement objectives, and which should be further investigated. The Council indicated they anticipate that a discussion of these tools will be included in the EM strategic plan.

On a related issue, the Council also considered the paper's evaluation of how advanced features of VMS are being utilized in other regions. The Council recommended that the Enforcement Committee assess the utility of features such as geo-fencing, increased polling rates, and declarations of species, gear, and area, for improving enforcement efforts and efficiency for vessels already subject to VMS requirements. The committee will provide implementation recommendations to the Council. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Upcoming Meetings in 2013

Ecosystem Committee:
February 5, 2013

Scallop Plan Team: February 19-20 Kodiak

Crab Modeling workshop on AIGKC and NSRKC February 26-March 1, Anchorage

Crab Plan Team: April 30-May 3, Anchorage; September 17-20, Seattle

Managing Our Nation's Fisheries: May 7-9, Washington DC

Groundfish Plan Teams:
September 10 - 13, 2013
November 18 - 22, 2013

PNCIAC Nominations

The Council is seeking nominations to the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee, PNCIAC. There are 13 seats available, and each member serves a two year term. Nominations are due by Friday, January 25, 2013.

BSAI Harvest Specifications for 2013/2014

The Council adopted the BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and annual catch limits based on recommendations from its advisory committees. The sum of the total allowable catches (TACs) for all groundfish is 2 million mt. The TACs were set below the sum of the recommended ABCs for 2013 and 2014 are 2.64 million mt and 2.70 million mt, respectively. The Council raised the 2013 pollock TAC by about 4 percent to 1.247 million mt of 1.2 million mt from the TAC and harvests of 1.205 million mt in 2012. The 2013 Pacific cod TAC was set at 260,000 mt. *The Scientific and Statistical Committee advised the Council of its intent to recommend a split of the BSAI Pacific cod ABC (and thus the TAC) into separate BS and AI allocations next December for the 2014 fishing year, based on the best available scientific information at that time.* Such an action would have ramifications on Stellar sea lion (SSL) mitigation (see elsewhere in the newsletter for a discussion of the SSL Environmental Impact Statement).

Overall, the status of the BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. Nearly all stocks are above minimum stock size thresholds. The abundances of EBS pollock; Pacific cod; sablefish; all rockfishes managed under Tier 3; and all flatfishes managed under Tiers 1 or 3 are projected to be above the B_{MSY} or the B_{MSY} proxy of $B_{35\%}$ in 2013. Two stocks are projected to be below $B_{35\%}$ for 2013: AI pollock by about 2 percent, and Greenland turbot, by about 44 percent. Two stocks are projected to be below $B_{40\%}$ for 2013: Sablefish, by about 9 percent and Atka mackerel, by about 7 percent.

The sum of the biomasses for 2013 (18.4 million mt) is 5 percent less than total biomasses reported for 2012 (19.3 million mt), following a six percent decline in total biomasses as reported in 2012 and 2011 (20.6 million mt). Pollock and Pacific cod biomasses were fairly flat at increased levels, after a period of decline. Pollock biomass was 8.34

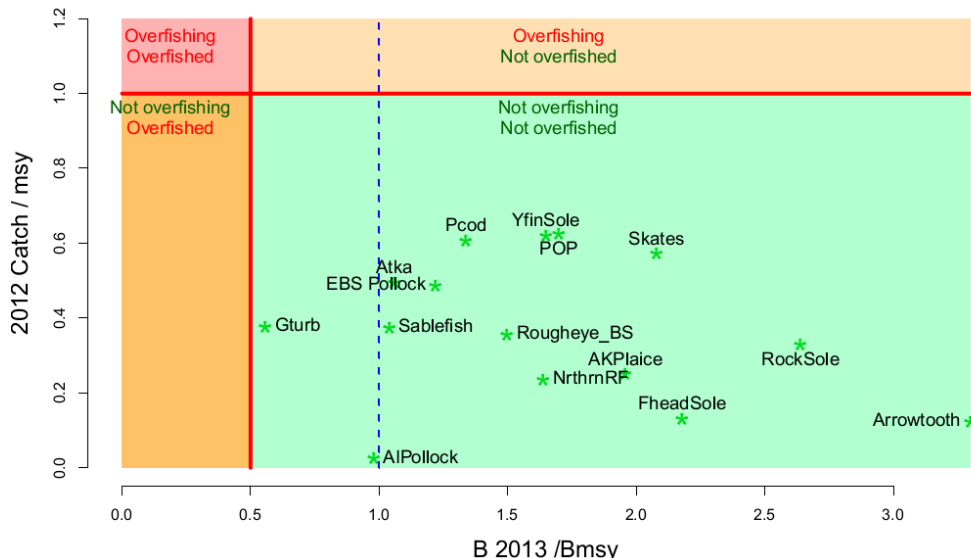
million mt for 2012, compared with 8.14 million mt for 2013. Pacific cod biomass was 1.62 million mt for 2012, compared with 1.51 million mt for 2013. Flatfish are generally increasing. Due to recent high recruitments however biomass of Greenland turbot is increasing from 69,000 mt in 2012 to 81,000 t in 2013, but is still much lower than its historic high of 494,000 mt in 1972. Biomass of Atka mackerel for 2013 is estimated at 289,000 mt, down 29 percent from 2012.

The Council also requested a briefing on how

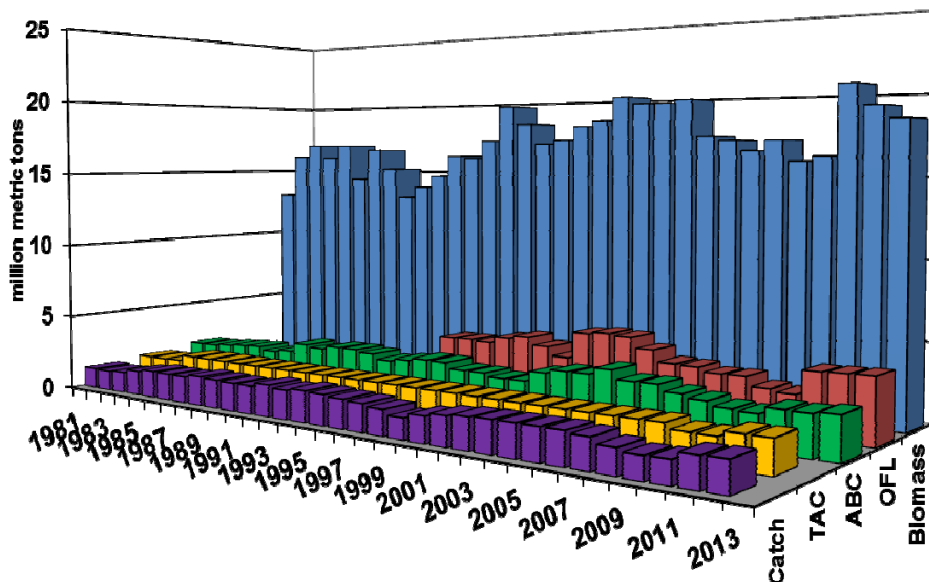
to proceed with splitting the sablefish TAC into IFQ and non-IFQ allocations to maximize sablefish harvest and possibly to reduce the halibut PSC associated with that fishery.

Final harvest specifications are posted on the Council website. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information on prohibited species catch limits and discard mortality rates adopted for the BSAI for 2013 and 2014.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands



Summary status of age-structured BSAI species as measured by 2012 catch level relative to OFL (vertical axis) and projected 2013 spawning biomass relative to B_{MSY} .



BSAI Groundfish Biomass, Overfishing Level, Acceptable Biological Catch, and Total Allowable Catch. 1981-2013. and Catch. 1981-2013.

2013/2014 GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries. As part of the Plan Team presentations and Council deliberations, the updated ecosystem and economics SAFE report sections were presented. There was no survey in the GOA in 2012 thus most stock assessments are in an 'off-year' cycle and executive summaries of most stocks were provided for this assessment cycle. A full survey is planned for 2013 contingent upon sufficient federal funding.

The sum of the ABCs increased by 3% (15,927 t) compared with last year. This is primarily driven by increases in pollock 20,229 t (21%) and sablefish 1,670 t (15%). Based on projections, ABC levels roundfish (pollock, Pacific cod, and sablefish) are up by 22,699 t (12%) whereas flatfish declined by 8,685 t (-3%). Rockfish ABCs increased 3% (1,197 t) and the largest percentage increase was seen for octopus at 53% (501 t). Combined, the skates ABC increased by 2% (149 t).

The abundances of Pacific cod, sablefish, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder, northern and southern rocksole, Pacific ocean perch, roughey and blackspotted rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above B_{MSY} . The abundance of pollock is below B_{MSY} (see figure below). The target biomass levels for other deep-water flatfish (including Dover sole), other shallow-water flatfish, rex sole, shorttraker rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, other rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, Atka mackerel, skates, sculpins, squid, octopus, and sharks are unknown.

Previously the Pacific ocean perch stock had area-specific OFLs in the GOA. The OFLs in the WGOA and CGOA were combined for management purposes in 2013-2014 with a separate OFL continued in the EGOA where there is no fishing. The SSC concurred with recommendations of the GOA Plan Team that area-specific OFLs were no longer necessary for this stock but that consideration will continue to be given to re-establishing them depending upon new information on stock structure for POP in the future.

For most stocks the Council established TACs equal to ABCs with some exceptions. These exceptions include Pacific cod where the quota

was reduced 25% to account for removals in the state managed fishery, and those fisheries where the bycatch of other target species is a concern, specifically for shallow water flatfish (W and Central GOA), flathead sole (W and C GOA), arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and other rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC is set below the ABC. Atka mackerel was also established at levels to meet incidental catch needs in other fisheries only (no directed fishing is allowed). The Council requested that octopus and sharks continue to be placed on bycatch only status while requesting that the Agency consider allowing a directed fishery for sculpins. The Council requested staff come back with a discussion paper of issues related to opening up Big and Longnose skates to directed fishing in the EGOA but did not recommend a directed fishery go forward for them in 2013. Specifications for 2013-2014 are posted on the Council's website.

Stock Structure:

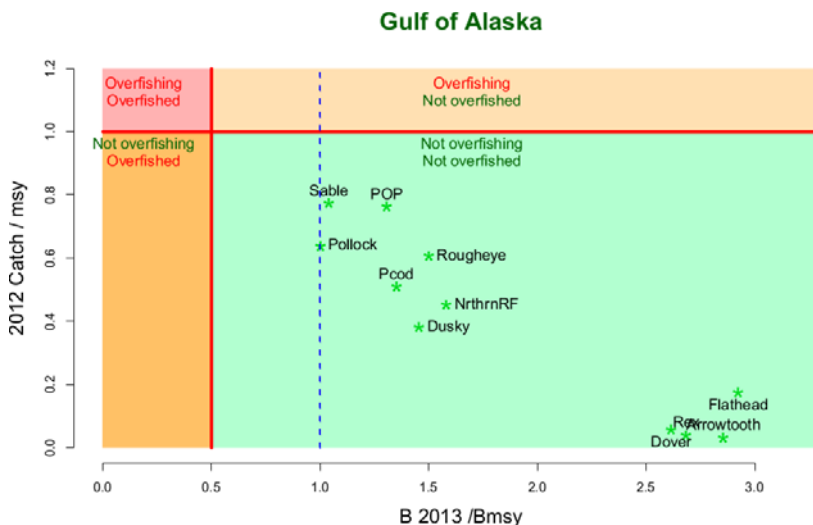
The Council recommended that staff work with the Plan Team chairs to develop an agenda and time frame for a public workshop on policy and management implications resulting from

stock structure determinations. A report to the Council on progress towards organizing this workshop was requested for February. The workshop is to be held sometime in 2013.

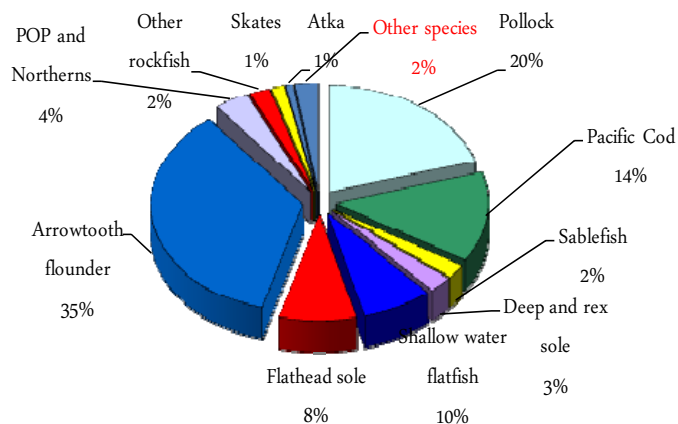
Prohibited Species Catch Limits:

The Council adopted halibut prohibited species catch limits, by season and gear apportionment for 2013-2014 and further specified apportionments of the 'other hook and line fisheries' annual halibut PSC allowance between the hook-and-line gear catcher vessel and catcher/processor sectors following the Pacific cod sector split allocation implemented in 2012. The PSC numbers and seasonal apportionments are available on the website.

The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013 and 2014, the SAFE report for GOA groundfish, the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter and the Economic SAFE report. Additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm. Staff contact is Diana Stram



Summary status of age-structured GOA species relative to 2012 catch levels (vertical axis) and projected 2013 spawning biomass relative to B_{msy} levels. Note that the 2012 MSY level is defined as the 2012 catch at F_{OFL} .



Percentage breakouts of 2012 ABCs by species and stock complexes.

Staff Tasking

During its Staff Tasking agenda item, the Council discussed several issues and took action on the following items (in addition to those noted elsewhere in the newsletter): (1) provided direction to the Ecosystem Committee for its next meeting; (2) passed motions regarding various aspects of the restructured observer program (see separate newsletter article); (3) requested discussion paper on possible separation of the Bering Sea sablefish TAC between IFQ and non-IFQ fisheries; (4) requested discussion paper on biological and management implications of a potential directed longline fishery for skates in the Eastern GOA; (5) put on hold an analysis of Greenland turbot sector allocations until results of the 2013 fishery become available; (6) provided direction on packaging and priorities for various halibut/sablefish IFQ program proposals; (7) provided direction to its Enforcement Committee to assess advanced aspects of VMS for vessels already subject to VMS requirements; (8) requested discussion paper on the implications of pending SSC advice to set separate ABCs in 2014 for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific cod, particularly in the context of current alternatives in the Steller sea lion EIS; (9) acknowledged that at the Council's February 2013 meeting, in the context of the Council's Central GOA trawl catch share initiative, the Council will consider related proposals, including proposals relevant to the Western GOA fisheries; and, (10) discussed the possibility of revisiting, sometime in 2013, a discussion paper on BSAI halibut PSC reductions.

Halibut Management

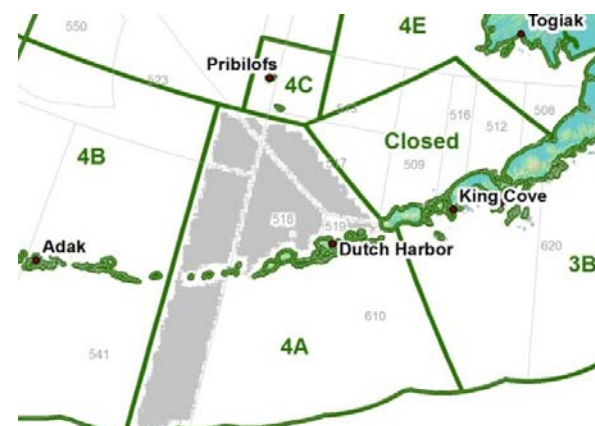
The Council adopted 2013 **annual management** measures based on an analysis by ADF&G and committee recommendations. The Council recommended the status quo for Area 2C and Area 3A. For Area 2C the Council recommended continuation of the one fish \leq 45 inches or \geq 68 inches ("U45068"). This "reverse slot limit" would continue to allow the retention of halibut approximately \leq 32 lb and \geq 123 lb (dressed weight). For Area 3A the Council recommended status quo (2 fish of any size). These measures are projected to keep charter halibut harvests below the guideline harvest levels expected to be in effect in 2013.

The Council also considered a proposal to the IPHC, which also would require Federal rulemaking if the IPHC redefined **legal gear to include (sablefish) pots** (single or longline) as legal gear in Area 4A. The result would only allow the use of sablefish pots fished in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands to retain only Area 4A halibut IFQs. The Council requested an expanded paper in 2013 to address four additional concerns listed below. The Council will send a letter to the IPHC to describe the Council's interest in, and further review of, the proposal.

1. Determine whether there is overlap in the spatial and/or temporal distribution of halibut longlining and sablefish pot fishing in the portion of Area 4A to which this proposal would apply.
2. Discuss the potential need for the following regulations:
 - a. Requiring the removal of sablefish pots from the fishing grounds upon completion of the harvest of the vessel's sablefish IFQ, and at the end of the season.
 - b. Requiring radar reflectors or other gear markers at both ends of a longline pot string.
 - c. Prohibiting "pot sharing" while pots are in the water.
 - d. Prohibiting the modification of sablefish pot tunnels.
3. Discuss the physical and market condition of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots.
4. Provide a discussion of the experiences and

lessons learned by the industry and managers in Areas 2A and 2B from allowing the retention of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots, including retention caps.

The Council reviewed its **halibut/sablefish priorities** for staff tasking. The Council affirmed that NMFS and Council staffs should place the highest priority on implementation of past actions. The second highest priority is on initial review/final action of a regulatory amendment to relieve a restriction on the number of IFQ blocks a CQE may hold and discussion papers that are scheduled for review in February 2013 on 1) IFQ leasing practices under the hired skipper provision and use of medical leases and 2) revising the Federal definition of a fishing guide. The third highest priority is on an expanded discussion paper of whether to allow Area 4A halibut IFQs to be retained in sablefish pots fished in the BSAI and a discussion paper on the potential for a Recreational Quota Entity program under a proposal for a common pool program that may be submitted to the Council for the April 2013 meeting, at the earliest. The next priority was identified for discussion papers on whether to allow the use of pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish IFQ program, which would advise a yet to be named gear committee, and a proposed increase in the cap on sablefish IFQ holdings. The Council took no action to develop a discussion paper to address unharvested halibut in Area 4C, at the request of the proposer, and on a proposal to allow ineligible family members to assist permitted subsistence halibut fishermen. All new proposals to amend the IFQ/CDQ/CQE programs will be held until the Council's next call for proposals. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.



At the December meeting, the Council received testimony from participants in the Western Gulf trawl fishery requesting that the trawl fishery in that management area be included in any catch share program considered for the Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries. To date, the Council has suggested that the program would be limited to Central Gulf trawl fisheries. On hearing this testimony, the Council requested that participants in the Western Gulf trawl fisheries who support inclusion of those fisheries in the catch share program present the Council with elements and options appropriate for the Western Gulf fisheries at the February Council meeting. The Council suggested that specific elements should be developed for the Western Gulf to recognize the different fishery, regional, and community interests.

CQE Small Block Restriction

At the December meeting, the Council initiated an analysis to consider removing a current limitation restricting the purchase of small blocks of halibut and sablefish quota share by community quota entities (CQEs), under the GOA community quota share purchase program. Under the current program, GOA CQEs are restricted to purchasing blocks of shares of a minimum size that resulted in an equivalent of at least 5,000 pounds of IFQ, based on 1996 TACs. Note that there is no minimum size limit for purchasing halibut quota share in Area 3B, nor are there minimum size limits in place for the recently approved Adak CQE program, once it is implemented. The Council considered a staff discussion paper providing the context of CQE purchase restrictions, as well as the original rationale for implementing the small block restriction, before initiating the amendment analysis. The problem statement and alternatives to be evaluated are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

Chum salmon bycatch

The Council reviewed an updated analysis of the Chum salmon PSC management measures E/RIR/IRFA. This amendment package evaluates alternative chum salmon PSC measures in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. Measures under consideration include PSC limits which would close the fishery upon reaching the limit either until the end of July or for the remainder of the B-season, and bycatch management under a revised rolling hot spot (RHS) system (with or without additional triggered area closures). This is the third time that the Council has reviewed the analysis in order to best tailor alternatives to meet the Council's purpose and need. The Council's problem statement is shown below:

Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards direct management Councils to balance achieving optimum yield with bycatch reduction as well as to minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. Non-Chinook salmon (primarily made up of chum salmon) prohibited species bycatch (PSC) in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery is of concern because chum salmon are an important stock for subsistence and commercial fisheries in Alaska. There is currently no limitation on the amount of non-Chinook PSC that can be taken in directed pollock trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea. The potential for high levels of chum salmon bycatch as well as long-term impacts of more moderate bycatch levels on conservation and abundance, may

have adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities.

Non-Chinook salmon PSC is managed under chum salmon savings areas and the voluntary Rolling Hotspot System (RHS). Hard caps, area closures, and possibly an enhanced RHS may be needed to ensure that non-Chinook PSC is limited and remains at a level that will minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. The Council should structure non-Chinook PSC management measures to provide incentive for the pollock trawl fleet to improve performance in avoiding non-Chinook salmon while achieving optimum yield from the directed fishery and objectives of the Amendment 91 Chinook salmon PSC management program. Non-Chinook salmon PSC reduction measures should focus, to the extent possible, on reducing impacts to Alaska chum salmon as a top priority.

In developing this problem statement, the Council indicated the need to balance competing objectives including: 1) providing incentive to reduce chum salmon PSC to the extent practicable with priority within chum salmon measures placed on measures which reduce impacts to Alaska chum, 2) allowing for the pollock fishery to operate to achieve optimum yield, and 3) achieving the objectives of the current Chinook salmon PSC management program. Balancing these competing objectives has complicated developing appropriate management measures for chum salmon PSC. Analysis of the various alternatives indicates that most measures which balance OY from the pollock fishery with reduced chum salmon PSC do so at the risk of undermining reducing Chinook salmon PSC.

After consideration of the complicated suite of alternatives and the analysis of impacts, the Council elected to move the analysis to a different direction. The Council requested that the pollock industry give consideration to how they might incorporate an explicit chum salmon PSC avoidance program within their existing sector-specific Chinook salmon incentive program agreements (IPAs) with vessel-level accountability. In doing so, the Council recognized that this would delay selection of a preferred chum salmon management approach but indicated that the IPAs may provide the most adaptive, flexible forum for managing competing objectives in bycatch avoidance between Chinook salmon and chum salmon.

The Council indicated that these proposals would be presented to the Council no sooner than October 2013, and that upon review and public input the Council would then determine whether to further pursue this potential approach to meet the multiple objectives outlined in the problem statement. The Council may receive a progress report prior to October from the industry. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013-2014 and Council's adopted specifications for 2012.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch ^{1/}	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	30,270	30,270	27,893		28,072	28,072		25,648	25,648	
	C (62)	45,808	45,808	45,050		51,443	51,443		47,004	47,004	
	C (63)	26,348	26,348	25,589		27,372	27,372		25,011	25,011	
	WYAK	3,244	3,244	2,380		3,385	3,385		3,093	3,093	
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	100,912	150,817	110,272	110,272	138,610	100,756	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774		14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	100,912	165,183	121,046	121,046	152,976	111,530	111,530	
Pacific Cod	W	28,032	21,024	17,703		28,280	21,210		29,470	22,103	
	C	56,940	42,705	34,901		49,288	36,966		51,362	38,522	
	E	2,628	1,971	338		3,232	2,424		3,368	2,526	
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	52,942	97,200	80,800	60,600	101,100	84,200	63,150
Sablefish	W	1,780	1,780	1,390		1,750	1,750		1,641	1,641	
	C	5,760	5,760	5,248		5,540	5,540		5,195	5,195	
	WYAK	2,247	2,247	2,028		2,030	2,030		1,902	1,902	
	SEO	3,176	3,176	3,188		3,190	3,190		2,993	2,993	
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	11,854	14,780	12,510	12,510	13,871	11,731	11,731
Shallow-water Flatfish	W	21,994	13,250	153		19,489	13,250		18,033	13,250	
	C	22,910	18,000	3,322		20,168	18,000		18,660	18,000	
	WYAK	4,307	4,307			4,647	4,647		4,299	4,647	
	EYAK/SEO	1,472	1,472			1,180	1,180		1,092	1,180	
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	3,475	55,680	45,484	37,077	51,580	42,084	37,077
Deep-water Flatfish	W	176	176	8		176	176		176	176	
	C	2,308	2,308	246		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308	
	WYAK	1,581	1,581	5		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581	
	EYAK/SEO	1,061	1,061	3		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061	
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	262	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex Sole	W	1,307	1,307	215		1,300	1,300		1,287	1,287	
	C	6,412	6,412	1,972		6,376	6,376		6,310	6,310	
	WYAK	836	836			832	832		823	1,041	
	EYAK/SEO	1,057	1,057			1,052	1,052		1,040	822	
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	2,187	12,492	9,560	9,560	12,362	9,460	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	27,495	14,500	1,331		27,181	14,500		26,970	14,500	
	C	143,162	75,000	18,213		141,527	75,000		140,424	75,000	
	WYAK	21,159	6,900	53		20,917	6,900		20,754	6,900	
	EYAK/SEO	21,066	6,900	140		20,826	6,900		20,663	6,900	
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	19,737	247,196	210,451	103,300	245,262	208,811	103,300
Flathead Sole	W	15,300	8,650	277		15,729	8,650		16,063	8,650	
	C	25,838	15,400	1,613		26,563	15,400		27,126	15,400	
	WYAK	4,558	4,558			4,686	4,686		4,785	4,785	
	EYAK/SEO	1,711	1,711			1,760	1,760		1,797	1,797	
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	1,890	61,036	48,738	30,496	62,296	49,771	30,632

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

(GOA Groundfish Specifications table continued)

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,452	2,040	2,040	2,005	2,005		
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	10,741	10,926	10,926	10,740	10,740		
	WYAK		1,692	1,692	1,682	1,641	1,641	1,613	1,613		
	W/C/WYAK					16,838		16,555			
	SEO	4,095	1,861	1,861		2,081	1,805	1,805	2,046	1,775	1,775
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	14,875	18,919	16,412	16,412	18,601	16,133	16,133
Northern Rockfish	W		2,156	2,156	1,817	2,008	2,008	1,899	1,899		
	C		3,351	3,351	3,210	3,122	3,122	2,951	2,951		
	E										
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	5,027	6,124	5,130	5,130	5,791	4,850	4,850
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104	104	110	104	104	104	104		
	C		452	452	361	452	452	452	452		
	E		525	525	402	525	525	525	525		
		Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	873	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081
Dusky Rockfish	W		409	409	435	377	377	354	354		
	C		3,849	3,849	3,558	3,533	3,533	3,317	3,317		
	WYAK		542	542	2	495	495	465	465		
	EYAK/SEO		318	318	6	295	295	277	277		
		Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	4,001	5,746	4,700	4,700	5,395	4,413
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W		80	80	39	81	81	83	83		
	C		850	850	389	856	856	871	871		
	E		293	293	236	295	295	300	300		
		Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	664	1,482	1,232	1,232	1,508	1,254
Demersal Rockfish	Total	467	293	293	178	487	303	303	487	303	303
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150	150	186	150	150	150	150		
	C		766	766	340	766	766	766	766		
	E		749	749	217	749	749	749	749		
		Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	743	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665
Other Rockfish	W		44	44	255	44	44	44	44		
	C		606	606	724	606	606	606	606		
	WYAK		230	230	37	230	230	230	230		
	EYAK/SEO		3,165	200	24	3,165	200	3,165	200		
		Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	1,040	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045
Atka Mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,187	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big Skate	W		469	469	60	469	469	469	469		
	C		1,793	1,793	1,596	1,793	1,793	1,793	1,793		
	E		1,505	1,505	38	1,505	1,505	1,505	1,505		
		Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	1,694	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70	70	28	70	70	70	70		
	C		1,879	1,879	656	1,879	1,879	1,879	1,879		
	E		676	676	78	676	676	676	676		
		Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	762	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625
Other Skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,030	1,110	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	5,731	802	7,614	5,884	5,884	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	6,028	595	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,148	18	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,455	368	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Total	Total	747,780	606,048	438,157	227,196	738,676	595,920	436,255	723,580	584,094	427,722

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

NPFMC Council Motion 12/6/12 BSAI Specifications

Species	Area	2012			2013			2014		
		ABC	TAC	Catch 11/24/12	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,204,554	2,550,000	1,375,000	1,247,000	2,730,000	1,430,000	1,247,000
	AI	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	19,000	48,600	39,800	19,000
	Bogoslof	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	100	13,400	10,100	100
Pacific cod	BSAI	314,000	261,000	231,682	359,000	307,000	260,000	379,000	323,000	260,880
Sablefish	BSAI	4,280	4,280	1,940	4,400	3,720	3,720	4,130	3,490	3,490
	BS	2,230	2,230	738	1,870	1,580	1,580	1,760	1,480	1,480
	AI	2,050	2,050	1,202	2,530	2,140	2,140	2,370	2,010	2,010
Atka mackerel	Total	81,400	50,763	47,832	57,700	50,000	25,920	56,500	48,900	25,379
	EAI/BS	38,500	38,500	37,314		16,900	16,900		16,500	16,500
	CAI	22,900	10,763	10,323		16,000	7,520		15,700	7,379
	WAI	20,000	1,500	195		17,100	1,500		16,700	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	203,000	202,000	144,253	220,000	206,000	198,000	219,000	206,000	198,000
Rock sole	BSAI	208,000	87,000	75,896	241,000	214,000	92,380	229,000	204,000	92,000
Greenland turbot	Total	9,660	8,660	4,662	2,540	2,060	2,060	3,270	2,650	2,650
	BS	7,230	6,230	3,005		1,610	1,610		2,070	2,070
	AI	2,430	2,430	1,657		450	450		580	580
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	150,000	25,000	22,535	186,000	152,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	18,600	17,700	9,629	16,300	12,200	10,000	16,300	12,200	10,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,400	34,134	11,281	81,500	67,900	22,699	80,100	66,700	22,543
Alaska plaice	BSAI	53,400	24,000	16,445	67,000	55,200	20,000	60,200	55,800	20,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	12,700	3,200	3,517	17,800	13,300	3,500	17,800	13,300	4,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	24,700	24,700	24,147	41,900	35,100	35,100	39,500	33,100	33,100
	BS	5,710	5,710	5,590		8,130	8,130		7,680	7,680
	EAI	5,620	5,620	5,519		9,790	9,790		9,240	9,240
	CAI	4,990	4,990	4,798		6,980	6,980		6,590	6,590
	WAI	8,380	8,380	8,240		10,200	10,200		9,590	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	8,610	4,700	2,478	12,200	9,850	3,000	12,000	9,320	3,000
Blackspotted/Roughy	BSAI	576	475	208	462	378	378	524	429	429
	EBS/EAI		231	77		169	169		189	189
	CAI/WAI		244	131		209	209		240	240
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	393	393	342	493	370	370	493	370	370
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,280	1,070	942	1,540	1,160	873	1,540	1,160	1,159
	BS	710	500	208		686	400		686	686
	AI	570	570	734		473	473		473	473
Squid	BSAI	1,970	425	691	2,620	1,970	700	2,620	1,970	700
Skate	BSAI	32,600	24,700	23,291	45,800	38,800	24,000	44,100	37,300	25,000
Shark	BSAI	1,020	200	91	1,360	1,020	100	1,360	1,020	100
Octopus	BSAI	2,590	900	133	3,450	2,590	500	3,450	2,590	500
Sculpin	BSAI	43,700	5,200	5,585	56,400	42,300	5,600	56,400	42,300	5,600
Total	BSAI	2,511,303	2,000,000	1,833,185	4,028,465	2,639,317	2,000,000	4,205,287	2,697,498	2,000,000

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 12/18/12

February 4-12, 2013 Portland, OR	April 1-9, 2013 Anchorage, AK	June 3-11, 2013 Juneau, AK
<p>Deep Sea Coral Strategic Plan; ESA listing: NOAA Report IPHC Report: Action as necessary SSL EIS: Action as necessary AI Risk Assessment: Report Observer Program: Update and action as necessary</p> <p>Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Leasing prohibition: NMFS Disc. paper (T) Definition of Fishing Guide: Discussion Paper</p> <p>CGOA Trawl Economic Data Collection: Discussion paper CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: Discussion paper</p> <p>Crab bycatch limits in BSAI groundfish fisheries: Disc paper BSAI Crab ROFR: Final Action BSAI Crab active participation requirements: Initial Review BSAI Crab Cooperative Provisions for Crew : Discussion paper</p> <p>GOA P cod sideboards for FLL: Initial Review</p> <p>AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: Initial Review</p> <p>BSAI Flatfish Specification Flexibility: Initial Review (T)</p> <p>BBRKC spawning area/fishery effects: Updated Discussion paper</p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: Final Action</p>	<p>AFA Coop Reports; ICA report: Action as Necessary Observer Program: Update; 3rd Party discussion paper SSL EIS: Initial Review, Select PPA</p> <p>BS and AI P. cod ABC/TAC split: Updated Discussion Paper</p> <p>Retention of 4A halibut in BSAI sablefish pots: Expanded Disc Paper</p> <p>BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch: Industry Progress Report GOA Chinook Bycatch non-pollock trawl fisheries: Final Action (T) Salmon Bycatch Genetics: Update CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: Action as necessary</p> <p>Crab modeling report: SSC only</p> <p>BSAI Crab active participation requirements: Final Action Scallop SAFE and harvest specifications: Review and Approve</p> <p>GOA P cod sideboards for FLL: Final Action AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: Final Action</p> <p>Round Island Transit: Initial Review</p> <p>Grenadier management: Initial Review (T)</p> <p>BSAI Flatfish Specification Flexibility: Final Action (T)</p> <p>Research Priorities: SSC only</p>	<p>Observer Program: Update and action as necessary SSL EIS: Progress Report</p> <p>CQE Small Blocks: Initial Review/Final Action</p> <p>H/S IFQ Disc papers (GOA sablefish pots, sablefish A-share caps) (T) Halibut compensated reallocation pool: Discussion Paper (T)</p> <p>CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: Action as necessary</p> <p>BSAI Crab: CPT report; OFL/ABC specifications for 4 stocks</p> <p>BS Canyons: Updated AFSC report; Fishing activities and management discussion paper (T)</p> <p>Round Island Transit: Final Action</p> <p>Grenadier management: Final Action (T)</p> <p>ITEMS BELOW FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Crab PSC numbers to weight: Discussion paper Salmon EFH revisions: Initial Review BS Sablefish IFQ & non-IFQ specifications: Discussion Paper BSAI Halibut PSC: On Hold EGOA skate fishery: Discussion paper Greenland Turbot allocation: Initial Review MPA Nominations: Discuss and consider nominations</p>

AI - Aleutian Islands
 AFA - American Fisheries Act
 BiOp - Biological Opinion
 BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
 BKC - Blue King Crab
 BOF - Board of Fisheries
 CQE - Community Quota Entity
 CDQ - Community Development Quota
 EDR - Economic Data Reporting
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
 FLL - Freezer longliners
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska

GKC - Golden King Crab
 GHF - Guideline Harvest Level
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota
 IBQ - Individual Bycatch Quota
 MPA - Marine Protected Area
 PSEIS - Programmatic Supplemental Impact Statement
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch
 RKC - Red King Crab
 ROFR - Right of First Refusal
 SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
 SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion
 TAC - Total Allowable Catch

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

February 4-12, 2013, Portland
 April 1-9, 2013, Anchorage
 June 3-11, 2013, Juneau
 September 30-Oct 8, 2013 Anchorage
 December 9-17, 2013, Anchorage
 February 2-10, 2014, Seattle
 April 7-15, 2014, Anchorage
 June 2-10, 2014, Nome
 October 6-14, 2014 Anchorage
 December 8-16, 2014, Anchorage
 February 2-10, 2015, Seattle

(T) = Tentative