

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Harvest & Prohibited Species Catch Use
NPFMC, June 2015
Prepared by: NMFS Staff
Agenda E-1

Overview

In 2013, NMFS implemented Amendment 93 to the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 93 established a 25,000 Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) limit for trawl catcher vessels in the Western and Central GOA pollock fisheries. This PSC limit was split between the Western and Central GOA, with a 6,686 and 18,316 Chinook salmon PSC limit, respectively. In 2015, NMFS implemented Amendment 97 to the FMP that established a 7,500 Chinook salmon PSC limit for non-pollock trawl fisheries in the Western and Central GOA. This limit is split among three sectors: the catcher/processor (3,600); Rockfish Program catcher vessel (1,200); and the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel (2,700) sectors. On May 2, 2015, the non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector reached its Chinook salmon PSC limit and the fishery was closed.

During the B-2 Report, the Council indicated its interest in pursuing regulatory changes that could allow for the reallocation of unused Chinook salmon PSC among the pollock and non-pollock sectors. To help guide its discussions at this meeting, the Council requested data on groundfish harvest and Chinook and halibut PSC use by the pollock and non-pollock fisheries. The Council requested data on harvest and PSC use prior to and after the May 1 to determine likely harvest and PSC use before and after the date of the closure of the non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program sector. The following sections summarize and provide tables showing groundfish harvests and PSC use since 2010. We provide data on the harvest and use of PSC by the non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program catcher vessel sector, the Western and Central GOA pollock fisheries, and the non-pollock catcher/processor sector. We did not provide data on the Rockfish catcher vessel sector because Amendment 97 already provides a mechanism for reallocating Chinook salmon PSC from this sector to the non-Rockfish Program sector.

Non-Pollock/Non-Rockfish Program Sector

On an average annual basis since 2010, approximately 32 vessels participate in the non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program sector after May 1. After May 1, vessels in this sector participate almost exclusively in Central GOA Pacific cod and flatfish fisheries. More vessels participate prior to May 1 -- primarily in the Western GOA Pacific cod fishery, and in the Central GOA Pacific cod and flatfish fisheries.

Tables 1 and 2 show harvests and PSC use prior to, and after, May 1 in each year since 2010. Data are aggregated by species groups and in two-month increments to ensure that confidential data are not released. Several important points are clear from these data. First, approximately 40 percent of groundfish catch and more than 50 percent of the PSC use occurs after May 1. Second, in 3 out of the 5 years examined (2010, 2011, and 2013) Chinook salmon catch by this sector exceeded 2,700 salmon. Had the Chinook salmon PSC limit been in place during those years, it would have resulted in a fishery closure. It is likely that in 2 out of those 3 years (2011 and 2013), the closure would have occurred before the end of May. We note that PSC use by

this sector in 2013 and 2014 were not available to be considered by the Council when it established the Chinook salmon PSC limit under Amendment 97. Third, Tables 1 and 2 show that approximately 1,600 Chinook salmon and 500 mt of halibut PSC is needed to support the non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program groundfish fisheries after May 1.

Pollock Fisheries

Table 3 shows the average amount of groundfish harvest and Chinook salmon PSC use in the directed pollock fisheries in the Western and Central GOA from 2012 through 2014 by quarter (the first and second quarters are January through June 1 and provide an indication of use pre-May and the third and fourth quarters begins on June through December and provides an indication of use post-May). A three-year average was used because Chinook salmon PSC was significantly higher in 2010 and those data skew the calculation of average use.

Over the time periods analyzed, a substantial amount of Chinook salmon PSC remained unused in both the Western and Central GOA. On average, approximately 3,000 Chinook salmon PSC remained unused in the Western GOA, and 8,000 Chinook salmon PSC remained unused in the Central GOA.

Caution is warranted in using only past Chinook salmon PSC use to calculate future PSC use in the fall pollock fishery. Pollock TACs have increased in recent years and if the average rate of Chinook salmon PSC use is applied to anticipated TACs, this indicates a need of 10,000 Chinook salmon PSC in the fall fisheries. This estimate is contingent on the fleet participating in voluntary catch share programs as they have done in the past. If a voluntary agreement is not reached, then the rate will likely be higher as vessels engage in a race for fish. This could further limit the amount of Chinook salmon PSC available for reallocation to other fishery sectors.

However, even with these caveats, it is likely that Chinook salmon PSC would be available from the pollock directed fisheries to accommodate the amount of Chinook salmon PSC needed to support non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program summer and fall groundfish fisheries. Again, these estimates assume the recent average use of Chinook salmon PSC, or slightly higher average use of Chinook salmon PSC in both of these sectors.

Trawl Catcher/Processors

Tables 4 and 5 show harvests and PSC use prior to, and after, May 1 in each year since 2010. Data are aggregated by species groups and pre- and post-May to ensure that confidential data are not released. On average over the past 3 and 5-year period, approximately 300 Chinook salmon PSC of the 3,600 Chinook salmon PSC limit remained unused in this sector. In two years, 2010 and 2013, more than 3,600 Chinook salmon were caught and the PSC limit would have been reached had it been in place. Given the limited amount of Chinook salmon PSC remaining in this sector on average, and the fact that catcher/processors can and do fish until December, Chinook salmon PSC may not be available for reallocation in most years.

Tables 1 & 2: Groundfish catch and PSC by non-pollock/non-Rockfish Program trawl catcher vessels (2010 through 2014).

3-year Average 2012-2104								
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total	May-Dec	%
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	6,985	1,598	743	1,011	916	11,254	4,268	38%
Shallow Flats	1,576	536	1,070	1,188	400	4,769	3,193	67%
Pacific Cod	14,318	390	920	2,179	364	18,171	3,853	21%
Pollock (non-pollock target)	1,037	262	355	413	113	2,180	1,143	52%
Other Species	1,359	248	230	232	238	2,307	948	41%
Total Groundfish	25,275	3,033	3,318	5,024	2,031	38,681	13,406	40%
Halibut PSC (mt)	454	122	146	103	57	882	428	49%
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	940	583	399	274	100	2,297	1,357	59%
5-year Average 2010-2104								
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total	May-Dec	%
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	7,253	1,108	882	2,284	771	12,298	5,045	41%
Shallow Flats	1,772	705	1,082	1,333	285	5,176	3,404	66%
Pacific Cod	12,187	441	773	3,483	240	17,124	4,937	29%
Pollock (non-pollock target)	862	198	325	493	91	1,968	1,107	56%
Other Species	1,313	248	284	461	175	2,481	1,168	47%
Total Groundfish	23,386	2,699	3,346	8,054	1,561	39,047	15,661	40%
Halibut PSC (mt)	425	121	135	248	48	976	552	56%
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	1,376	410	248	757	112	2,904	1,528	53%

Groundfish catch and PSC by non-pollock, non-Rockfish Program trawl Catcher Vessels.

2010						
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	7,764	408	892	2,775	670	12,509
Shallow Flats	2,340	1,190	1,471	1,801	162	6,964
Pacific Cod	10,264	823	565	6,438	74	18,163
Pollock (non-pollock target)	582	106	428	441	64	1,622
Other Species	1,360	285	422	700	65	2,831
Total Groundfish	22,310	2,812	3,779	12,155	1,033	42,089
Halibut PSC (mt)	352	186	105	372	34	1,049
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	1,540	299	33	2,031	223	4,126
2011						
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	7,544	340	1,288	5,612	435	15,218
Shallow Flats	1,792	725	729	1,301	62	4,609
Pacific Cod	7,715	213	541	4,438	36	12,942
Pollock (non-pollock target)	615	97	128	786	53	1,680
Other Species	1,130	210	309	909	95	2,652
Total Groundfish	18,796	1,584	2,995	13,045	681	37,102
Halibut PSC (mt)	411	54	131	556	36	1,188
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	2,520	4	7	933	37	3,501
2012						
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	5,878	277	872	994	2,039	10,061
Shallow Flats	1,765	106	793	1,210	573	4,448
Pacific Cod	14,796	70	491	1,255	141	16,753
Pollock (non-pollock target)	1,360	216	301	344	190	2,411
Other Species	1,409	25	293	341	320	2,387
Total Groundfish	25,208	694	2,751	4,145	3,263	36,061
Halibut PSC (mt)	718	28	245	115	101	1,207
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	408	-	-	396	123	926
2013						
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	9,158	861	135	1,293	260	11,707
Shallow Flats	1,860	634	852	1,598	245	5,189
Pacific Cod	13,805	220	430	2,898	846	18,200
Pollock (non-pollock target)	711	173	511	525	80	2,000
Other Species	1,898	117	50	201	340	2,606
Total Groundfish	27,432	2,004	1,978	6,516	1,772	39,703
Halibut PSC (mt)	424	63	25	139	20	670
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	2,088	1,724	163	427	132	4,534
2014						
	Pre-May	May/June	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	5,920	3,655	1,222	746	449	11,993
Shallow Flats	1,102	869	1,563	754	382	4,670
Pacific Cod	14,353	879	1,840	2,385	104	19,561
Pollock (non-pollock target)	1,040	397	255	371	68	2,130
Other Species	770	602	346	155	55	1,927
Total Groundfish	23,185	6,402	5,225	4,410	1,058	40,280
Halibut PSC (mt)	219	275	169	56	50	769
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	324	26	1,035	-	46	1,431

Table 3: Harvest and Chinook salmon PSC use in Western and Central GOA directed pollock fisheries (2012 through 2014).

Chinook Salmon PSC in Pollock Fisheries in the Central GOA						
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	Total	Remaining of 18,316 cap
3-Year Average	2,287	1,087	2,104	4,316	9,794	8,522
Chinook Salmon PSC in Pollock Fisheries in the Western GOA						
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	Total	Remaining of 6,684 cap
3-Year Average	157	202	809	2,443	3,610	3,074

2012-2014 average. 2012 did not have chinook Salmon PSC limit

Tables 4 & 5: Groundfish catch and PSC by trawl catcher/processor vessels (2010 through 2014).

3 year Average (2012-2014)			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	5,332	10,258	15,590
Shallow Flats	456	1,354	1,810
Rockfish	541	12,046	12,588
Pacific Cod	379	1,537	1,916
Pollock (non-pollock target)	280	1,791	2,070
Other Species	293	1,928	2,222
Total Groundfish	7,280	28,915	36,195
Halibut PSC (mt)	168	253	422
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	1,776	1,347	3,123
5 year Average (2010-2014)			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	5,719	9,456	15,176
Shallow Flats	509	1,231	1,740
Rockfish	477	11,920	12,396
Pacific Cod	377	1,286	1,664
Pollock (non-pollock target)	260	1,615	1,875
Other Species	325	2,197	2,521
Total Groundfish	7,667	27,705	35,372
Halibut PSC (mt)	201	251	452
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	2,182	1,215	3,397

Groundfish catch and PSC by trawl catcher/processors

2010			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	7,064	5,914	12,978
Shallow Flats	564	1,168	1,732
Rockfish	398	12,543	12,941
Pacific Cod	352	931	1,283
Pollock (non-pollock target)	255	969	1,224
Other Species	409	2,798	3,207
Total Groundfish	9,042	24,323	33,365
Halibut PSC (mt)	259	233	492
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	3,506	1,125	4,631
2011			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	5,537	10,593	16,130
Shallow Flats	614	924	1,537
Rockfish	362	10,917	11,279
Pacific Cod	399	890	1,288
Pollock (non-pollock target)	207	1,733	1,940
Other Species	334	2,401	2,734
Total Groundfish	7,452	27,457	34,909
Halibut PSC (mt)	242	263	505
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	2,075	910	2,985
2012			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	4,374	6,605	10,980
Shallow Flats	372	879	1,251
Rockfish	223	13,147	13,370
Pacific Cod	501	848	1,349
Pollock (non-pollock target)	399	1,178	1,577
Other Species	266	1,932	2,198
Total Groundfish	6,135	24,590	30,725
Halibut PSC (mt)	220	166	386
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	940	950	1,890

2013			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	3,433	7,598	11,031
Shallow Flats	721	1,732	2,453
Rockfish	667	10,573	11,239
Pacific Cod	277	1,551	1,828
Pollock (non-pollock target)	278	2,193	2,471
Other Species	226	1,961	2,187
Total Groundfish	5,601	25,608	31,209
Halibut PSC (mt)	135	242	377
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	3,312	1,322	4,634
2014			
	Pre-May	Post-May	Total
Arrowtooth/Deep Flats	8,189	16,572	24,760
Shallow Flats	274	1,452	1,726
Rockfish	734	12,420	13,153
Pacific Cod	359	2,212	2,570
Pollock (non-pollock target)	162	2,000	2,162
Other Species	387	1,892	2,280
Total Groundfish	10,105	36,547	46,652
Halibut PSC (mt)	150	352	502
Chinook PSC (# of fish)	1,075	1,769	2,844