

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](http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc)



# News & Notes

## North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2011

## 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: John Crowley, Jerry Downing, Jeff Favour, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Ernie Weiss, and Lori Swanson. Additionally, the AP welcomes two new members: Craig Lowenberg of Oregon who was appointed for the remainder of Bob Jacobson's term, and Andy Mezirow, on a special one-year appointment to address charter halibut issues. The Council also appointed a new SSC member, Alison Dauble from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Many thanks to the retiring members for their service: Doug Woodby of the SSC and Bob Jacobson of the AP.

A full list of AP, SSC, and Council members and their contact information and terms is available on our website.



Doug Woodby received plaque from Eric Olson and Chris Oliver



## BSAI Crab

At its December 2011 meeting, the Council considered three crab rationalization program agenda items. Under each of the items, the Council had requested that stakeholders work to develop solutions to concerns expressed by the Council at previous meetings. The first item included several overlapping concerns related to **active participation requirements, high lease rates, limited entry opportunities, and crew compensation**. These issues were identified by the Council as areas of possible concern in the deliberations following presentation of the five-year review of the program in December of 2011. After hearing from stakeholders and the public, the Council elected to advance alternatives for analysis that would require persons acquiring quota share (QS) to meet minimum requirements for active participation in the rationalized crab fisheries. Under the proposed alternatives, active participation requirements could be satisfied by the QS holder either maintaining a minimum ownership interest in a vessel or a minimum participation as a crewmember. In addition, the Council requested staff to prepare a discussion paper examining the potential for cooperatives to develop provisions that would establish minimum crew compensation standards, maximum lease rates, maximum lease charges or deductions against crew compensation, and measures to promote quota share ownership by crew and active participants in the fisheries.

The Council also considered stakeholder comments concerning the performance of the **binding arbitration** system, which is used to settle price harvester/processor disputes for individual fishing quota (IFQ) landings that must be delivered to holders of individual processing quota (IPQ). Based on the concerns raised by stakeholders, the Council

requested the chair to appoint a workgroup to consider development of a process for the price formula for the golden king crab fishery. **Letters of nomination will be accepted at the Council office until January 10.** Under the arbitration system that price formula is used to inform negotiations and the application of the arbitration standard to specific price disputes. The Council's action is in response to the disproportionate amount of testimony from stakeholders concerning the equity and fairness of the formula in the golden king crab fishery. The Council also asked staff to prepare a discussion paper concerning three other aspects of the arbitration system: 1) the lengthy season approach to arbitration and its effects, 2) the potential for publishing arbitration findings, and 3) the potential for allowing either side to initiate arbitration proceedings.

The Council also reviewed its pending action to modify **community provisions, including rights of first refusal** on processor quota shares (PQS). The Council had requested that stakeholders consider issues that arise under the proposed actions, including revisions to the timeline for exercise of rights, the removal of terms under which the right lapses, applying the right to only to processor shares (rather than processor shares and other assets in the transaction), and prohibiting the use of IPQ outside of the community benefiting from the right of first refusal without the consent of that community. In response to testimony, the Council made minor technical revisions to one alternative concerning the lapse of rights and added an action that would require PQS holders to provide certain notices to right holders and NMFS to ensure that right holders and the agency are informed concerning the status of rights and whether those rights have been triggered. Staff contact on all crab issues is Mark Fina.

## EFH Consultation

The Council received a report from Jon Kurland, head of the NMFS Alaska Region Habitat Conservation Division, on the NMFS Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation process. The agency has a responsibility, under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, to provide consultation on the actions (fishing and non-fishing) of Federal agencies which may adversely affect EFH. The Council also has a statutory obligation to comment on such actions in some instances. As the report indicates, the agency annually reviews in the range of 100-200 Federal actions to determine whether they may adversely affect EFH, and NMFS habitat staff provide input both during early scoping and project design, and more formally during the consultation process, to provide suggestions for avoiding and/or minimizing impacts to EFH.

Under current practice, NMFS notifies the Council, or Council staff, of a pending action that may affect habitats of direct concern to the Council. The report lists recent examples where such coordination has resulted in Council involvement. Staff contact is Diana Evans. The complete written report is available at [www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat](http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat)

## Senator Begich addressed the Council

Alaska's Senator Mark Begich addressed the Council Friday afternoon and discussed issues of importance to Alaska and Alaska's fisheries. He noted that resolving complex fishery management issues is a vital part of maintaining sustainable fisheries, and lauded the Council process in Alaska as a model for other Councils. Senator Begich cited the importance of the seafood industry and all the economic impact it has throughout the region. In discussing budget issues in Washington, he emphasized the importance of maintaining resources for stock assessments and research, and safety and enforcement. He noted that there is a great interest in Alaska's Arctic and continued research and data collection in the area.

Senator Begich answered questions from Council members on funding issues for the Observer Program, seafood marketing, and Alaska's fishing industry representation on Fishery and Ocean-related panels and committees. He briefly discussed

the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, and issues related to the North Pacific that are on the horizon, and that he would be looking for input from the Council as these issues develop.

## Halibut EFP

At this meeting, the Council reviewed and approved the application from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to allow operators of non-pelagic trawl vessels to assess the operational feasibility of reducing halibut mortality in fisheries for flatfish by removing and releasing halibut from a codend on deck of a catcher/processor. The study conducted under this EFP will begin in early April 2012 and continue until the end of September 2012, and will allow seven non-pelagic trawl vessels to sort halibut on deck and release those fish back into the water after sampling for length and condition using IPHC halibut mortality assessment methods. The EFP application was developed in cooperation with NMFS and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.



# Freezer longline Vessel Replacement

In December, the Council reviewed the initial review draft of a proposed regulatory amendment that would allow BSAI freezer longline vessels to be replaced with larger vessels. Benefits of vessel replacement for the BSAI freezer longline fleet could include vessel safety, improved harvesting and processing efficiency, fuel efficiency, and resource utilization.

At its December meeting, the Council modified the problem statement to better reflect the proposed action. The revised problem statement follows:

*Vessel length restrictions included with LLP licenses and the AFA, established to maintain fleet capacity, inhibit the BSAI freezer longline fleet from replacing or rebuilding their vessels. Modifying or removing vessel length restrictions for BSAI freezer longline vessels to allow owners to rebuild or replace their vessels with larger vessels would allow for improved vessel safety, meet international class and loadline requirements that would allow a broader range of onboard processing options, and improve the economic efficiency of their vessels.*

The Council also modified the alternatives. Alternative 2 was revised so as to modify the MLOA of the BSAI freezer longline LLP licenses to allow for some increase in vessel length, but only for the those LLP licenses with an MLOA of less than 150'. Alternative 3, which eliminates the MLOA for BSAI freezer longline LLP licenses, was adjusted to include a Council recommendation that BSAI freezer longline vessels be authorized for use in the North Pacific to receive a certification of documentation. The American Fisheries Act limits vessels that: (1) exceed 165 feet in length, or (2) exceed 750 gross tons, or (3) have engines capable of producing more than 3,000 shaft horsepower from entering the North Pacific groundfish fisheries unless the vessel carried a fisheries endorsement prior to September 25, 1997 or the Council has recommended and the Secretary of Commerce has approved a conservation and management measure to allow the vessel to be used in fisheries under its authority.

The Council also added two new options under Alternative 3. The first option would limit any replaced BSAI freezer longline vessel to no greater than 220' LOA. The second option would maintain the current MLOA restriction freezer longline LLP

licenses with a pot cod endorsement when fishing in the BS or AI pot cod fishery.

Finally, the Council requested that the analysis be revised per Council and SSC comments and come back to the Council for final action in April 2012.

A copy of the final motion is posted on the Council web site. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

## Salmon FMP

The Council took final action to revise and update the Salmon FMP by adopting Alternative 3, which modifies the FMP's West Area to exclude from its scope of coverage the sport fishery and three traditional net commercial salmon fishing areas: Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and South Alaska Peninsula. Commercial salmon fishing in the modified West Area will continue to be prohibited. The FMP will delegate management authority to the State for the sport and directed commercial salmon troll fisheries in the East Area. The FMP will otherwise remain in effect in the East and modified West Areas.

The Council's action reflects its policy to facilitate State salmon management in accordance with applicable federal and international law and the six management objectives laid out in the revised FMP.

The Council also adopted specific FMP provisions, summarized as follows:

- Maintain the current status determination criteria in the East Area and use State escapement goal management as an alternative approach in the modified West Area;
- Establish annual catch limits using State salmon management as an alternative approach;
- Established optimum yield in the East Area and set optimum yield in the modified West Area equal to zero;
- Remove federal salmon limited entry permits in the East Area;
- Establish that the State will directly provide scientific information and fishing level recommendations to the Council;
- Adopt a fishery impact statement to addresses Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements;
- Establish a process for federal review of State management measures applicable in the East Area.

Staff contact is Sarah Melton.

## Upcoming Meetings in 2012

**Crab Modeling Workshop:**  
Bering Sea Tanner crab and Aleutian Islands golden king crab. January 9-13, 2012  
AFSC, Seattle

**International Pacific Halibut Commission, Annual meeting:**  
January 23-26, 2012  
Anchorage

**Council Coordination Committee, Interim meeting:**  
January 25-26, 2012  
Washington, DC

**Ecosystem Committee:**  
January 31, 2012  
Seattle (T)

**Joint Protocol Committee:**  
March 19, 2012  
Hilton, Anchorage

**Charter Management Implementation Committee:**  
late February to review discussion paper of proposed CSP management measures during times of low abundance

**Scallop Plan Team:**  
February 27, 2012  
Old Federal Bldg, Anchorage

**Commercial IFQ Implementation Committee:**  
March/April to review VMS discussion paper

**Crab Plan Team:**  
May 7-11, 2012  
Anchorage (location TBD)

# 2012-13 GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2012 and 2013 groundfish fisheries. As part of the Plan Team presentations and Council deliberations, the updated ecosystem and economics SAFE report sections were presented. New components of the economic section included graphical presentations of fishery products by species, gear, and sector. The ecosystem section included results from the newly formed Aleutian Islands ecosystem team to highlight key indicators from that region.

NMFS conducted a summer bottom-trawl survey in the Gulf of Alaska this year, so full assessments were presented for all 22 stocks and stock complexes under the GOA FMP. Proposed and final specifications were established for a period of up to two years. This required specifying OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2012 and 2013.

The sum of the ABCs increased by 3% (15,927 t) compared with last year. This was primarily driven by increases in pollock 20,229 t (21%) and sablefish 1,670 t (15%). Based on projections, ABC levels for groundfish (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 Prince William Sound pollock GHF was increased from 1,650 t to 2,770 t and this amount was deducted from the central and western pollock ABC prior to apportionments.

The abundances of Pacific cod, sablefish, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder, northern and southern rocksole, Pacific ocean perch, rougheye and blackspotted rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above  $B_{MSY}$ . The abundance of pollock is below  $B_{MSY}$  (see figure). 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.

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 C GOA), flathead sole (W and C GOA), arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and other rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC was 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 be placed on bycatch-only status due to concerns about reliability of biomass estimates (for both) and potentially under estimation of incidental catch in halibut fisheries (sharks) for those stocks.

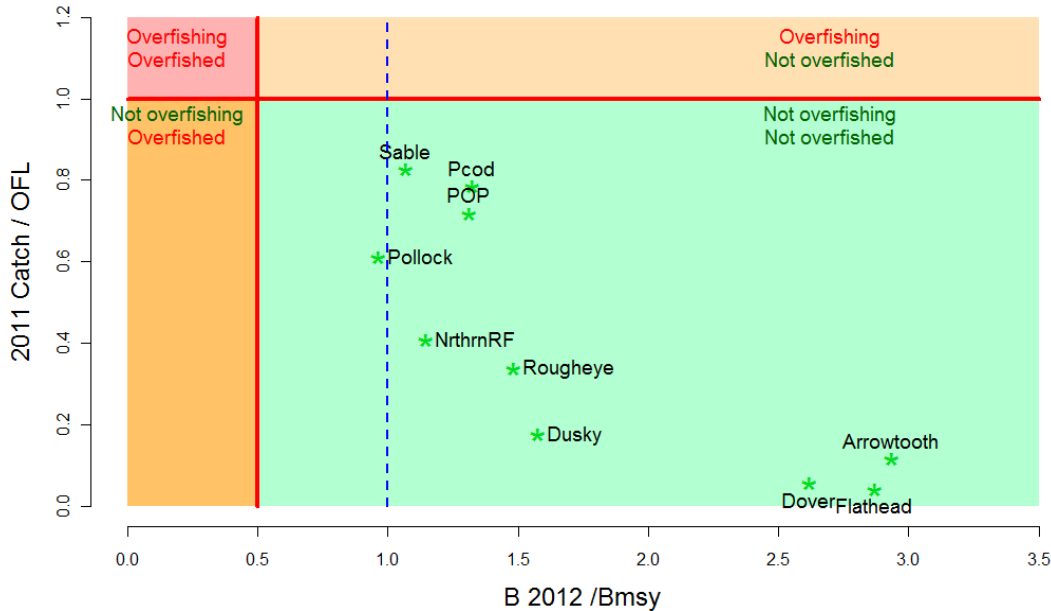
## Prohibited Species Catch Limits:

The Council adopted halibut prohibited species catch limits, by season and gear apportionment for 2012-2013, and further specified 2012 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 to be implemented in 2012. The PSC numbers and seasonal apportionments are available on the website.

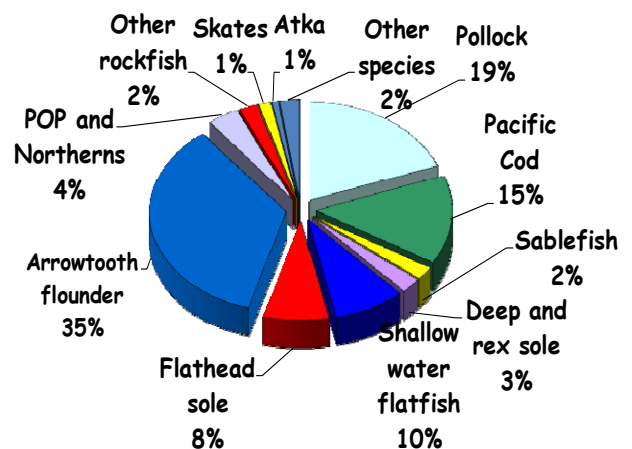
The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2012 and 2013, the SAFE Report for GOA groundfish, the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter and the Economic SAFE report. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at [www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm).

Summary status of age-structured GOA species relative to 2011 catch levels (vertical axis) and projected 2012 spawning biomass relative to  $B_{msy}$  levels. Note that the 2011 MSY level is defined as the 2011 catch at  $F_{OFL}$ .



2012 Allowable Biological Catches (ABCs) for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish (Percent of Total ABC)



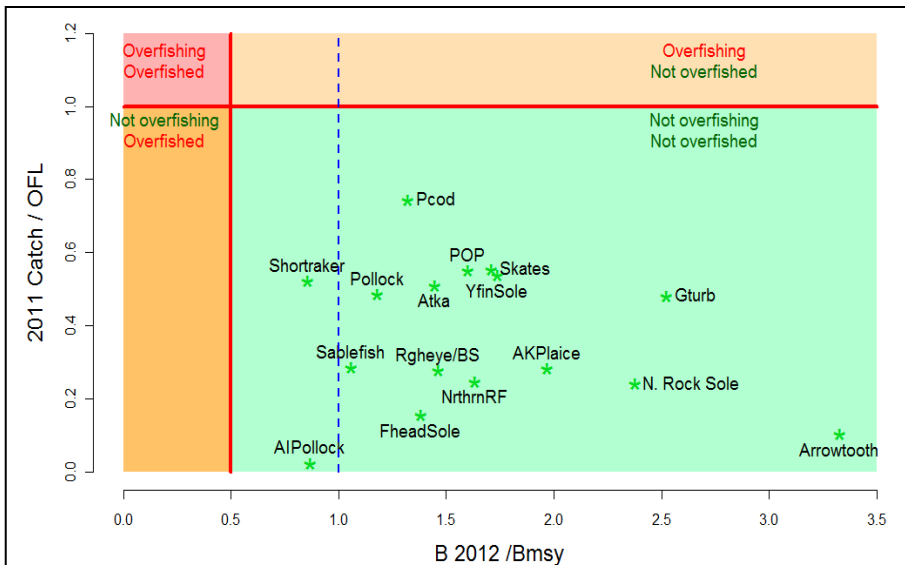
# 2012-13 BSAI Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted annual catch limits based on recommendations from its advisory committees. The sum of the total allowable catches (TACs) for all groundfish is 2,000,000 mt. The TACs were set below the sum of the recommended ABCs for 2012 and 2013 (2.51 million t and 2.64 million t, respectively). The 2012 and 2013 groundfish harvest specifications are posted on the Council website and included in this newsletter.

The status of BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. Many stocks are rebounding due to increased recruitment. Nearly all stocks are projected to be above a benchmark that identifies the stocks above the biomass (total weight of fish) that can support harvest of the maximum sustainable yield in 2012.

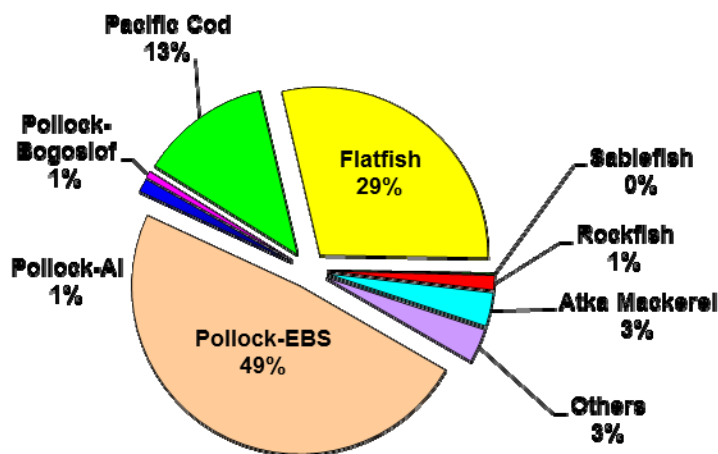
The sum of the biomasses for 2012 (19.4 million t) is down approximately 6 percent compared to 2011 (20.6 million t). Pollock and Pacific cod biomasses are increasing after a period of decline. Flatfishes generally are trending upwards.

Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.



Summary status of age-structured BSAI species as measured by 2011 catch level relative to OFL (vertical axis) and projected 2012 spawning biomass relative to  $B_{MSY}$ .

## 2012 Allowable Biological Catches (ABCs) for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish (Percent of Total ABC)



Dr. Loh-lee Low retired from the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team after serving as its first and only chairman for more than 30 years. Jane DiCosimo awarded him a plaque of recognition for his exemplary service to fisheries management, on behalf of the Council. Looking on are new BSAI Plan Team co-chairs, Dr. Grant Thompson and Dr. Mike Sigler.



## GOA Pacific cod Jig

The Council received a report on management of the GOA Pacific cod jig fishery and moved to discuss developments in management of the fishery at the next Joint Protocol Committee meeting in March 2012. Staff presented a report summarizing recent actions taken by the Council, the Board of Fisheries, and NMFS to ensure that operators using jig gear would have the most access to Federal TAC and State GHL Pacific cod allocations in the GOA. Recent Board actions and the jig season dates established under NMFS' final rule on the GOA sector split will allow harvest of GOA Pacific cod concurrently in both State and Federal waters. Jig vessels will be able to harvest in the State waters parallel fishery concurrent with the Federal fishery. Jig operators will also be able to concurrently harvest in the State GHL fishery and in Federal waters, if there is sufficient GHL and TAC available.

The Council postponed taking further action on management of the jig fishery until after the Joint Protocol Committee has met and reported back to the Council on the legal authority and management issues that could arise under implementation of a reverse parallel fishery, which could provide harvest opportunities in Federal waters for jig vessels when GHL is available but the Federal TAC has been taken. Under a reverse parallel fishery, jig operators could have year-round access to Federal waters. Catches in Federal waters would accrue to the State jig GHL, which is currently 25% of the GOA Pacific cod. The Committee will also look at the possibility of limiting the use of any other gear type on board a vessel while jig fishing in the Federal jig fishery and the reverse parallel fishery. Staff contact is Sarah Melton.

## Charter Halibut Management

It was a big week for charter halibut management issues before the Council. The Council received agency staff reports on proposed commercial catch limits and charter guidelines harvest levels (GHL), implementation issues related to the Council's October 2008 preferred alternative for a Halibut Commercial and Charter Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2C and Area 3A, and committee recommendations for potential changes to CSP management measures during times of low abundance.

**2012** For Area 2C the Council recommended one fish  $\leq 45$  inches or  $\geq 68$  inches ("U45/068") based on 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  $\leq 32$  lb and  $\geq 123$  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 will consider the Council recommendations at its January 2012 meeting in Anchorage.

**Catch Sharing Plan** The Council unanimously stated that it continues to support implementation of the CSP as the best approach to resolving longstanding allocation and management issues between the commercial and charter halibut sectors, as currently identified in the CSP Problem Statement. The Council also recognized that there are deficiencies in the current analysis that must be addressed before implementation can take place. Additionally, since 2008, changes in halibut management and the condition of the halibut stock have occurred, which will impact the effective implementation of the CSP as envisioned by the Council.

The Council provided needed clarifications to six main issues that were raised in public comment to the proposed rule. The Council requested additional analysis and revisions to the Halibut CSP that more specifically address a variety of public comments as outlined in the NMFS CSP report. More detail can be found in the motion posted on the Council website. The Council intends to review the supplemental analysis in April 2012 in order to determine what, if any, additional changes are necessary in order for the CSP to meet Council objectives. The Council also

requested a report from NMFS by that meeting as to whether the additions and revisions to the CSP result in the need for a new proposed rule, so that the Council may establish a timeline for implementing the CSP.

Given the myriad of components involved in commercial and charter halibut management, the Council recognized that there are management options available that were not included as part of the Halibut CSP preferred alternative. It is not the wish of the Council to delay implementation of the Halibut CSP any further than necessary. As such, the Council requested a discussion paper analyzing the following for potential use in future halibut management:

- The use of ADF&G logbooks for official harvest reporting
- Annual limits allowing for the retention of at least one fish of any size
- Restricting captain and crew retention of fish
- Trip limits, reverse slot limits, and two fish of a maximum size
- The use of a common pool purchase of QS by the charter sector
- Long-term management measures under Tier 1 of the CSP as identified in the Charter Halibut Implementation Committee Report

A draft analysis of the first four bullets (above) prepared by ADF&G will be reviewed during the next meeting of the Charter Management Implementation Committee. A discussion paper will incorporate that analysis and committee recommendations, along with a discussion of the remaining two bullets (above) and information from the supplemental analysis (described above), as is available at the time of completion of the paper, for Council review in April 2012. At that meeting the Council could determine whether to fold any of these new elements into a modified CSP or let others follow as a trailing amendment.

The Council also will request legal guidance on whether the charter sector may create a single entity (e.g., regional fishing association) that would hold the sector's allocation in trust for the benefit of all guided anglers. And the Council appointed Gary Ault, Inlet Charters Across Alaska Adventures in Homer, as a new member to the Charter Management Implementation Committee and Andy Mezirow, Crackerjack Sportfishing Charters in Seward, for a special one-year appointment to the Advisory Panel. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information on halibut management.

# BSAI/GOA Groundfish BiOp

The Council reviewed the draft Statement of Work (SOW) and Terms of Reference (TOR) for a review of the Final BSAI/GOA Groundfish Biological Opinion by the Center for Independent Experts (CIE). The draft SOW and TOR call for a two-chapter review of the BiOp. Under the draft SOW and TOR, Chapter 1 would be a “desk review” of the BiOp, and reviewers would be asked to:

- Evaluate the rationale developed, and the subsequent findings regarding factors potentially affecting Steller sea lion population status, vital rates, critical habitat, risk of extinction, and recovery including in particular the findings regarding the effects of fisheries on Steller sea lion population status, vital rates and critical habitat;
- evaluate the quality and completeness of the scientific and commercial information used in the BiOp, and to identify if the analysis is comprehensive or if there are relevant scientific or commercial data or information that was not used in the analysis;
- evaluate the scientific basis for the nutritional stress findings of the BiOp, and the strength of the linkages among fish biomass estimates, fishery removals, Steller sea lion reproductive rates, and recovery of the western Distinct Population Segment (WDPS), and whether the BiOp accurately evaluates the inter-relationships between Steller sea lion population status and trends, foraging ecology, and groundfish fisheries effects across broad geographic and temporal scales;
- evaluate whether there is any additional literature, assessments, or analyses that should have been considered in the BiOp;
- evaluate whether the findings of the BiOp are contradicted by any scientific information (available up to the close of the public comment period 9/3/2010) that were included in or omitted from the BiOp;
- and assess the scientific record to determine whether adequate consideration was given to the likelihood that factors other than fishing are negatively affecting the population status, critical habitat or recovery of the WDPS, including predation, changes in the ecosystem/carrying capacity, emigration, exposure to contaminants, or other factors.

For Chapter 2, reviewers would convene as a panel to hold a one-day meeting in Alaska to receive presentations from experts from environmental organizations, fishing industry, and affected communities. Reviewers would be asked to consider all available information available up to the

date of the Panel meeting, and would be asked, as practicable, to:

- reexamine the Final BiOp, its scientific record, and any new information and provide additional commentary on the findings they made in Chapter 1, and reevaluate the scientific basis for the conclusions of the Final BiOp, including the linkages among reproductive rates, nutritional stress, fishery removals, and the recovery of the WDPS;
- evaluate the utility of the RPA for an adaptive management experiment, metrics identified in the BiOp (e.g., trends in SSL abundance, trends in Atka mackerel biomass, etc.) and suggest other metrics not described in the BiOp that could be used to evaluate the efficacy of the RPA in ensuring the groundfish fisheries are not likely to adversely affect the survival and recovery of the WDPS.

Given that oral arguments in the State of Alaska’s lawsuit against NMFS over the 2010 BiOp are scheduled for 12/21/2011, and the likelihood that relevant questions will be raised at that hearing, the Council elected to table the discussion of the Statement of Work and Terms of Reference until the February, 2012 Council meeting in Seattle, WA. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

## Pribilof Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding

The Council reviewed new information regarding the development of the Pribilof Island blue king crab rebuilding plan. Additional information that was requested for the analysis includes specification of rollovers amongst sectors, increasing observer coverage, whole haul sampling for blue king crab, seasonal releases of a fishery-level bycatch cap and discard mortality rates applied in-season. The Council requested an update on the analysis in February, with specific information on the conversion of PSC weight to numbers and how this might impact implementation of the rebuilding plan, any additional catch accounting/qualified fisheries issues that might arise as well as further information on the surveyed stock distribution and process for modifying the Pribilof Island District boundaries if necessary. The Council may wish to modify alternatives further at the February Council meeting. Final action is currently scheduled for April 2012. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

## Staff Tasking

During the staff tasking agenda item, the Council discussed priorities relative to existing projects, new projects, and projects previously tasked but not yet initiated. These priorities are reflected in the revised 3-meeting outlook. The Council also requested staff send a comment letter to NOAA enforcement relative to the draft FY 2012 enforcement priorities, noting that the Council did not consider enhanced enforcement of marine mammal watching regulations as a priority relative to other enforcement activities in the Alaska region. The Council requested that another letter be sent to NOAA General Counsel requesting legal advice relative to establishing regional fishing associations for guided angler fish for use on charter halibut vessels. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

**DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 12/19/11**

January 30 - February 7, 2012 Seattle, WA	March 26 - April 3, 2012 Anchorage, AK	June 4 - 12, 2012 Kodiak, AK
<p>SOPP: <b>Review and Approve</b>                      SSL CIE: <b>Review Terms of Reference</b>                      EFH Consultation Process: <b>Update</b>                      BSIERP Report                      IPHC Report                      Halibut CSP: <b>Update</b></p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>GOA Pollock D-season: <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>CQE in Area 4B: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>BSAI Flatfish specification flexibility: <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>GOA Chinook Bycatch All Trawl Fisheries: <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>GOA Flatfish Trawl Sweep Modifications: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>BSAI Crab ROFR Workgroup: <b>Report; action as necessary (T)</b>                      BSAI Crab EDR Revisions: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: <b>Update; action as necessary</b>                      BSAI Tanner Crab rebuilding plan: <b>Preliminary Review</b>                      BSAI Crab Model Workshop Report: <b>SSC only</b></p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>BBRKC spawning area/fishery effects: <b>Updated Disc paper (T)</b></p> <p>Groundfish PSEIS: <b>Discuss schedule</b></p> <p>2012-2015 Deep Sea Coral Research: <b>Report</b></p>	<p>AFA Pollock Cooperative and IPA Reports                      Amendment 80 Cooperative Reports                      CGOA Rockfish Cooperative Reports</p> <p>Halibut CSP: <b>Review and action as necessary</b></p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: <b>Final Action (T)</b>                      GOA Pacific cod A-season opening dates: <b>Discussion paper</b>                      P.Cod Jig Management: <b>Review Progress</b>                      Limit Other Gear on Jig Vessels: <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>Northern Bering Sea Research: <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>BS Habitat Conservation Area Boundary: <b>Review</b></p> <p>BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>GOA Flatfish Trawl Sweep Modifications: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>FLL Vessel Replacement: <b>Initial Review/ Final Action</b></p> <p>Scallop SAFE: <b>Approve harvest specifications</b></p> <p>Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>VMS Use and Requirements: <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>Grenadiers: <b>Discussion paper</b></p>	<p>Halibut workshop report: <b>Review</b></p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: <b>Final Action (T)</b></p> <p>Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Leasing prohibition: <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>Halibut/sablefish IFQ changes: <b>Discussion paper (T)</b></p> <p>BSAI Crab ROFR: <b>Initial Review</b>                      BSAI Crab active participation requirements: <b>Initial Review</b>                      BSAI Crab Cooperative Provisions for Crew : <b>Discussion paper</b>                      BSAI Crab Binding Arbitration - GKC: <b>Workgroup report</b>                      Binding Arbitration Issues (lengthy season, publishing decisions, IPQ Initiation): <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>Revise BS FLL GOA cod sideboards: <b>Discussion paper (T)</b></p> <p>BSAI Greenland turbot allocation: <b>Discussion paper (T)</b></p> <p>Crab Plan Team Report: <b>Set Catch Specifications for 4 stocks</b>                      BSAI Tanner Crab rebuilding plan: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p><b>ITEMS BELOW FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Crab PSC numbers to weight: Discussion paper                      Crab bycatch limits in BSAI groundfish fisheries: Disc paper                      AI P.cod Processing Sideboards: Initial Review                      BSAI halibut PSC limit: Discussion paper                      GOA comprehensive halibut bycatch amendments: Disc paper                      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  
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit  
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement  
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat  
 FLL - Freezer longliners  
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska

GKC - Golden King Crab  
 GHLL - 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**

January 30-February 7, 2012 - Renaissance Hotel, Seattle  
 March 26-April 3, 2012 - Hilton Hotel, Anchorage  
 June 4-12, 2012 - Best Western, Kodiak  
 October 1-9, 2012 - Hilton Hotel, Anchorage  
 December 3-11, 2012 - Anchorage  
 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  
**(T) Tentatively scheduled**



**DRAFT NPFMC Recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish (December 10, 2011).**

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,474,000	1,220,000	1,200,000	2,840,000	1,360,000	1,201,900
	AI	39,600	32,500	19,000	42,900	35,200	19,000
	Bogoslof	22,000	16,500	500	22,000	16,500	500
Pacific cod	BSAI	369,000	314,000	261,000	374,000	319,000	262,900
Sablefish	BSAI	5,070	4,280	4,280	5,010	4,220	4,220
	BS	2,640	2,230	2,230	2,610	2,200	2,200
	AI	2,430	2,050	2,050	2,400	2,020	2,020
Atka mackerel	Total	96,500	81,400	50,763	78,300	67,100	42,083
	EAI/BS		38,500	38,500		31,700	31,700
	CAI		22,900	10,763		18,900	8,883
	WAI		20,000	1,500		16,500	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	222,000	203,000	202,000	226,000	207,000	203,900
Rock sole	BSAI	231,000	208,000	87,000	217,000	196,000	87,000
Greenland turbot	Total	11,700	9,660	8,660	9,700	8,030	8,030
	BS		7,230	6,230		6,010	6,010
	AI		2,430	2,430		2,020	2,020
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	181,000	150,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	24,800	18,600	17,700	24,800	18,600	17,700
Flathead sole	BSAI	84,500	70,400	34,134	83,100	69,200	34,134
Alaska plaice	BSAI	64,600	53,400	24,000	65,000	54,000	24,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,100	12,700	3,200	17,100	12,700	3,200
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	35,000	24,700	24,700	33,700	28,300	28,300
	BS		5,710	5,710		6,540	6,540
	EAI		5,620	5,620		6,440	6,440
	CAI		4,990	4,990		5,710	5,710
	WAI		8,380	8,380		9,610	9,610
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,500	8,610	4,700	10,400	8,490	4,700
Blackspotted/Rougheye	BSAI	576	475	475	605	499	499
	EBS/EAI		231	231		241	241
	CAI/WAI		244	244		258	258
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	524	393	393
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,700	1,280	1,070	1,700	1,280	1,070
	BS		710	500		710	500
	AI		570	570		570	570
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	2,620	1,970	425
Skate	BSAI	39,100	32,600	24,700	38,300	32,000	24,746
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	200	1,360	1,020	200
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	900	3,450	2,590	900
Sculpin	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	58,300	43,700	5,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>BSAI</b>	<b>3,996,000</b>	<b>2,511,778</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>4,341,869</b>	<b>2,639,792</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

**DRAFT NPFMC Recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish (December 9, 2011).**

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W(610)		30,270	30,270		32,816	32,816
	C(620)		45,808	45,808		49,662	49,662
	C(630)		26,348	26,348		28,565	28,565
	WYAK (640)		3,244	3,244		3,517	3,517
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	155,402	114,560	114,560
	SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	169,768	125,334	125,334
Pacific cod	W		28,032	21,024		29,120	21,840
	C		56,940	42,705		59,150	44,363
	E		2,628	1,971		2,730	2,047
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	108,000	91,000	68,250
Sablefish	W		1,780	1,780		1,757	1,757
	C		5,760	5,760		5,686	5,686
	WYK		2,247	2,247		2,219	2,219
	SEO		3,173	3,173		3,132	3,132
	E subtoal		5,420	5,420		5,350	5,350
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	15,129	12,794	12,794
Shallow water flatfish	W		21,994	13,250		20,171	13,250
	C		22,910	18,000		21,012	18,000
	WYAK		4,307	4,307		3,950	3,950
	SEO		1,472	1,472		1,350	1,350
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	56,781	46,483	36,550
Deep water flatfish	W		176	176		176	176
	C		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	SEO		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307	1,307		1,283	1,283
	C		6,412	6,412		6,291	6,291
	WYAK		836	836		821	821
	SEO		1,057	1,057		1,037	1,037
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	12,326	9,432	9,432
Arrowtooth flounder	W		27,495	14,500		27,386	14,500
	C		143,162	75,000		142,591	75,000
	WYAK		21,159	6,900		21,074	6,900
	SEO		21,066	6,900		20,982	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	249,066	212,033	103,300
Flathead sole	W		15,300	8,650		15,518	8,650
	C		25,838	15,400		26,205	15,400
	WYAK		4,558	4,558		4,623	4,623
	SEO		1,711	1,711		1,735	1,735
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	60,219	48,081	30,408

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,364	2,050	2,050
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	12,662	10,985	10,985
	WYAK		1,692	1,692		1,650	1,650
	SEO		1,861	1,861		1,815	1,815
	E (subtotal)	4,095	3,553	3,553	3,995	3,465	3,465
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	19,021	16,500	16,500
Northern rockfish	W		2,156	2,156		2,017	2,017
	C		3,351	3,351		3,136	3,136
	E		0	0		0	0
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	6,152	5,153	5,153
Shortraker	W		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Other slope rockfish	W		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230		230	230
	SEO		3,165	200		3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080
Pelagic shelf rockfish (Dusky)	W		409	409		381	381
	C		3,849	3,849		3,581	3,581
	WYAK		542	542		504	504
	SEO		318	318		296	296
	Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	5,822	4,762	4,762
Rougheye	W		80	80		82	82
	C		850	850		861	861
	E		293	293		297	297
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	1,492	1,240	1,240
Demersal shelf rockfish Thornyhead rockfish	SEO	467	293	293	467	293	293
	W		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Atka mackerel Big skate	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
	W		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose skate	W		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Octopuses	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Sculpins	GW	7,641	5,731	5,731	7,641	5,731	5,731
Total	GOA	747,780	606,048	438,159	756,621	612,506	447,752