

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
December 5-8, 2023 - Anchorage, AK

C4 GOA Groundfish Specs

Motion:

The AP has reviewed the 2023 Ecosystem Status Report for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and appreciates the thoroughness of the work by all contributors.

The AP recommends that the Council approve the 2023 Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The AP recommends that the Council approve the Final 2024 and 2025 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The TACs for both GOA Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water Guideline Harvest Level fisheries. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in Table 2 in the action memo.

The AP recommends that the Council set the final 2024 and 2025 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances and apportionments in the GOA as shown in Tables 3 – 5 in the action memo.

The AP recommends the Council approve the updated halibut discard mortality rates for 2024 and 2025 as shown in Table 6.

Motion passed: 14/0

Motion in Support of Rationale

- Table 1 reflects the SSC's adjustments to the pollock, shortraker rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, and other rockfish ABCs relative to the Plan Team's recommendations.
- The AP set the sablefish TACs equal to the ABC for the WGOA, CGOA, and SEO; the WGOA was the only area that had an increase (226 mt) for 2024. Given that the WGOA increase was a small amount of the Alaska-wide TAC, there was no discussion at the AP table about lowering the WGOA TAC relative to ABC.
- The AP heard public testimony about the significant struggles in Kodiak in 2023 with the loss of pollock markets and processor constraints. Over 13,000 mt of GOA pollock went unharvested in 2023 and with the significant increase in GOA Pollock TAC for 2024, even more is likely to go unharvested. The motionmaker felt that despite this, it was still important to set the TAC equal to ABC since the best available science indicated this was appropriate. Setting a TAC does not require that it be harvested.

Advisory Panel

C4 Motion

December 2023

- The AP heard in public testimony and at the table that it's important for the WGOA to receive pollock surveys more consistently like the CGOA; the WGOA is often the first area to be dropped when there are logistical, crew, or weather issues but also can have the most variable biomass. It would also be helpful if the WGOA stock was included more specifically in presentations and when considering drops in Gulf-wide ABC. Given the small apportionment that the WGOA receives, it is more impacted by reductions than other areas of the GOA. The WGOA pollock fishery has not had enough quota for an A season fishery since 2020 via catch share only; the last A season race fishery was in 2017. It is helpful if the plan teams and SSC have information to consider whether concerns are GOA-wide or different between the WGOA and CGOA.
- The AP noted and thanked everyone involved for providing us a thorough, statistically sound specification process which provides us the ability to make decisions on the best available science. AP members also noted that they were looking forward to more socioeconomic data to be included in the specification process.

Table 1. SSC Recommended OFL and ABC and AP recommended TAC for Final Harvest Specifications for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska for 2024 and 2025 (metric tons)

Species	Area	2023			Catch 11/9/2023	2024			2025		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	3,723	n/a	-	n/a	4,769	n/a	n/a	3,942	n/a
	W (610)	n/a	26,958	26,958	26,226	n/a	38,882	38,882	n/a	32,144	32,144
	C (620)	n/a	77,005	77,005	65,384	n/a	90,937	90,937	n/a	75,179	75,179
	C (630)	n/a	33,729	33,729	33,394	n/a	50,587	50,587	n/a	41,821	41,821
	WYAK	n/a	7,523	7,523	6,888	n/a	5,565	5,565	n/a	4,601	4,601
	Subtotal	173,470	148,938	145,215	131,892	269,916	190,740	185,971	182,891	157,687	153,745
	EYAK/SEO	15,150	11,363	11,363	0	12,998	9,749	9,749	12,998	9,749	9,749
	Total	188,620	160,301	156,578	131,892	282,914	200,489	195,720	195,889	167,436	163,494
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	7,464	5,225	3,630	n/a	8,745	6,121	n/a	7,719	5,347
	C	n/a	14,830	11,123	10,836	n/a	20,590	15,442	n/a	17,981	13,486
	E	n/a	2,340	1,755	417	n/a	2,937	2,203	n/a	2,565	1,924
	Total	29,737	24,634	18,103	14,883	38,712	32,272	23,766	33,970	28,184	20,757
Sablefish	W	n/a	4,473	4,473	2,723	n/a	4,699	4,699	n/a	4,719	4,719
	C	n/a	9,921	9,921	6,413	n/a	9,651	9,651	n/a	9,693	9,693
	WYAK	n/a	3,205	3,205	2,401	n/a	2,926	2,926	n/a	2,940	2,940
	SEO	n/a	5,602	5,602	4,582	n/a	5,320	5,320	n/a	5,343	5,343
	GOA Total	n/a	23,201	23,201	16,118	n/a	22,596	22,596	n/a	22,695	22,695
	AK Total	47,390	40,502	n/a	22,746	55,084	47,146	n/a	55,317	47,350	n/a
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	22,485	13,250	25	n/a	23,337	13,250	n/a	23,782	13,250
	C	n/a	26,769	26,769	1,002	n/a	27,783	27,783	n/a	28,311	28,311
	WYAK	n/a	2,677	2,677	6	n/a	2,778	2,778	n/a	2,851	2,851
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,606	1,606	0	n/a	1,667	1,667	n/a	1,699	1,699
	Total	65,736	53,537	44,302	1,034	68,121	55,565	45,478	69,354	56,623	46,091
Deep-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	256	256	24	n/a	237	237	n/a	234	234
	C	n/a	2,105	2,105	72	n/a	2,655	2,655	n/a	2,614	2,614
	WYAK	n/a	1,407	1,407	4	n/a	1,856	1,856	n/a	1,827	1,827
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,048	2,048	4	n/a	2,314	2,314	n/a	2,278	2,278
	Total	6,918	5,816	5,816	105	8,387	7,062	7,062	8,257	6,953	6,953
Rex Sole	W	n/a	3,236	3,236	23	n/a	3,367	3,367	n/a	3,363	3,363
	C	n/a	13,110	13,110	392	n/a	13,639	13,639	n/a	13,624	13,624
	WYAK	n/a	1,439	1,439	1	n/a	1,453	1,453	n/a	1,439	1,439
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,879	2,879	0	n/a	2,905	2,905	n/a	2,877	2,877
	Total	25,135	20,664	20,664	415	25,978	21,364	21,364	25,900	21,303	21,303
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	n/a	30,469	14,500	384	n/a	30,409	14,500	n/a	30,323	14,500
	C	n/a	65,000	65,000	8,780	n/a	64,871	64,871	n/a	64,688	64,688
	WYAK	n/a	7,886	7,886	35	n/a	7,870	7,870	n/a	7,848	7,848
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	16,130	6,900	49	n/a	16,099	6,900	n/a	16,053	6,900
	Total	142,749	119,485	94,286	9,248	142,485	119,249	94,141	142,074	118,912	93,936
Flathead Sole	W	n/a	12,793	8,650	30	n/a	13,273	8,650	n/a	13,521	8,650
	C	n/a	21,487	21,487	434	n/a	21,307	21,307	n/a	21,702	21,702
	WYAK	n/a	2,320	2,320	0	n/a	3,876	3,876	n/a	3,949	3,949
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,880	2,880	0	n/a	2,047	2,047	n/a	2,086	2,086
	Total	48,161	39,480	35,337	464	49,414	40,503	35,880	50,322	41,258	36,387
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	2,529	2,529	2,486	n/a	1,787	1,787	n/a	1,726	1,726
	C	n/a	29,940	29,940	25,941	n/a	28,757	28,757	n/a	27,768	27,768
	WYAK	n/a	1,370	1,370	1,366	n/a	2,110	2,110	n/a	2,038	2,038
	W/C/WYAK (for 2023 only)	40,308	33,839	33,839	29,793	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	SEO	3,994	3,354	3,354	0	n/a	7,065	7,065	n/a	6,822	6,822
	Total	44,302	37,193	37,193	29,793	47,466	39,719	39,719	45,835	38,354	38,354
Northern Rockfish	W	n/a	2,614	2,614	388	n/a	2,535	2,535	n/a	2,446	2,446
	C	n/a	2,350	2,350	935	n/a	2,280	2,280	n/a	2,200	2,200
	E	n/a	-	-	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0
	Total	5,927	4,964	4,964	1,323	5,750	4,815	4,815	5,548	4,646	4,646
Shortraker Rockfish	W	n/a	51	51	21	n/a	34	34	n/a	34	34
	C	n/a	280	280	263	n/a	189	189	n/a	189	189
	E	n/a	374	374	204	n/a	424	424	n/a	424	424
	Total	940	705	705	488	863	647	647	863	647	647
Dusky Rockfish	W	n/a	149	149	74	n/a	145	145	n/a	137	137
	C	n/a	7,647	7,647	3,415	n/a	7,365	7,365	n/a	6,979	6,979
	WYAK	n/a	90	90	1	n/a	84	84	n/a	81	81
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	31	31	1	n/a	30	30	n/a	28	28
Total	9,638	7,917	7,917	3,491	9,281	7,624	7,624	8,796	7,225	7,225	
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W	n/a	180	180	101	n/a	197	197	n/a	197	197
	C	n/a	232	232	156	n/a	315	315	n/a	315	315
	E	n/a	363	363	176	n/a	525	525	n/a	525	525
	Total	930	775	775	434	1,555	1,037	1,037	1,566	1,037	1,037
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	376	283	283	188	376	283	283	376	283	283
	W	n/a	314	314	53	n/a	314	314	n/a	314	314
	C	n/a	693	693	91	n/a	693	693	n/a	693	693
	E	n/a	621	621	57	n/a	621	621	n/a	621	621
Thornyhead Rockfish	Total	2,170	1,628	1,628	201	2,170	1,628	1,628	2,170	1,628	1,628
	W/C/WYAK (for 2024 and 2025 only)	n/a	940	940	940	n/a	1,353	1,353	n/a	1,353	1,353
	WYAK (for 2023 only)	n/a	370	370	54	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	2,744	300	32	n/a	2,421	300	n/a	2,421	300
Other Rockfish	Total	5,320	4,054	1,610	1,026	4,977	3,774	1,653	4,977	3,774	1,653
	Atka mackerel	6,200	4,700	3,000	462	6,200	4,700	4,700	6,200	4,700	4,700
	W	n/a	591	591	117	n/a	745	745	n/a	745	745
	C	n/a	1,482	1,482	814	n/a	1,749	1,749	n/a	1,749	1,749
Big Skate	E	n/a	794	794	189	n/a	341	341	n/a	341	341
	Total	3,822	2,867	2,867	1,120	3,780	2,835	2,835	3,780	2,835	2,835
	W	n/a	151	151	66	n/a	104	104	n/a	104	104
	C	n/a	2,044	2,044	481	n/a	1,894	1,894	n/a	1,894	1,894
Longnose Skate	E	n/a	517	517	631	n/a	538	538	n/a	538	538
	Total	3,616	2,712	2,712	1,178	3,380	2,536	2,536	3,380	2,536	2,536
	Other Skates	1,311	984	984	443	887	665	665	887	665	665
	Sharks	6,521	4,891	4,891	1,777	6,521	4,891	4,891	6,521	4,891	4,891
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,307	980	980	154	1,307	980	980	1,307	980	980
	TOTAL	646,826	539,072	468,796	222,863	765,608	599,784	520,020	673,289	562,220	483,696

Sources: 2023 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from harvest specifications adopted by the Council in December 2022, 2022 catches through December 31, 2022, and 2023 catches through November 9, 2023 from the AKR Catch Accounting System.

Additional Tables for GOA Groundfish Final Harvest Specifications 2024-2025

Note: Tables 3-6 will correspond to Tables 14-17 in the final rule for harvest specifications, to be published in 2024.

Table 2 -- GOA TAC and GHL for State Waters Pacific Cod based on Plan Team recommendations for ABC/OFLs.

Final 2024 GOA Pacific cod ABCs, TACs, and State GHGs (mt)

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	8,745	20,590	2,937	32,272
State GHG	2,624	5,148	734	8,506
(%)	30%	25%	25%	
Federal TAC	6,121	15,442	2,203	23,766

Note: The Federal TAC is designated for Federal fisheries only and does not include the State GHG.

Final 2025 GOA Pacific cod ABCs, TACs, and State GHGs (mt)

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	7,638	17,981	2,565	28,184
State GHG	2,291	4,495	641	7,427
(%)	30%	25%	25%	
Federal TAC	5,347	13,486	1,924	20,757

Note: The Federal TAC is designated for Federal fisheries only and does not include the State GHG.

Table 3 -- Final 2024 and 2025 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments
[Values are in metric tons]

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear ¹				
			Other than DSR			DSR	
Season	Percent	Amount ²	Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	30.5%	520	January 1 - June 10	86%	220	January 1 - December 31	9
April 1 - July 1	20%	341	June 10 - September 1	2%	5		
July 1 - August 1	27%	460	September 1 - December 31	12%	31		
August 1 - October 1	7.5%	128					
October 1 - December 31	15%	256					
Total		1,705			256		9

¹ The Pacific halibut PSC limit for hook-and-line gear is allocated to the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and fisheries other than DSR. Since 1995, the Council recommended and NMFS proposed that the hook-and-line sablefish fishery and the pot and jig gear groundfish fisheries be exempt from halibut PSC limits.

² PSC limits published in the Final Harvest Specifications (88 FR 13238, March 2, 2023) had rounding errors. The values presented in this table correct these rounding errors and will be published accordingly in the Proposed and Final 2024 and 2025 Harvest Specifications.

Table 4 -- Final 2024 and 2025 Apportionment of the Pacific Halibut PSC Limits Apportioned Between the Trawl Gear Shallow-Water and Deep-Water Species Fisheries

[Values are in metric tons]

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water ¹	Total ³
January 20 - April 1	384	135	520
April 1 - July 1	85	256	341
July 1 - August 1	121	341	460
August 1 - October 1	53	75	128
Subtotal January 20 - October 1	643	807	1,449
October 1 - December 31 ²	n/a	n/a	256
Total	n/a	n/a	1,705

¹ Vessels participating in cooperatives in the Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 – August 1) deep-water species fishery Halibut PSC apportionment.

² There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fisheries during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

³ PSC limits published in the Final Harvest Specifications (88 FR 13238, March 2, 2023) had rounding errors. The values presented in this table correct these rounding errors and will be published accordingly in the Proposed and Final 2024 and 2025 Harvest Specifications.

Table 5 -- Final 2024 and 2025 Apportionments of the “Other Hook and Line Fisheries” Halibut PSC Allowance Between the Hook-and-Line Gear Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Sectors

[Values are in metric tons]

Hook-and-Line gear (Other than DSR) Annual PSC Amount	Hook-and-line Sector	Annual Amount	Season	Seasonal Percentage	Seasonal Amount
256	CV	149	A	86%	128
			B	2%	3
			C	12%	18
	CP	107	A	86%	92
			B	2%	2
			C	12%	13

Table 6 -- Final 2024 and 2025 Discard Mortality Rates for Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Alaska [Values are percent of halibut assumed to be dead]

Gear	Sector	Groundfish fishery	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	All	100
	Catcher/processor	All	100
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	Rockfish Program	56
	Catcher vessel	All others	69
	Mothership and catcher/processor	All	83
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	All	11
	Catcher vessel	All	10
Pot	Catcher vessel and catcher/processor	All	26