



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

Fisheries

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last Council report includes those for crab and groundfish.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab

The 2022/23 Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery opened on July 1, 2022 for the Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishery and on August 1, 2022 for the Adak Community Allocation (ACA) and Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries. The total allowable catch (TAC) for Aleutian Islands golden king crab is 5.05 million pounds and the TAC is apportioned east and west of 174° west longitude. For the 2022/23 fishing year, the Eastern Aleutian Islands golden king crab (EAG) TAC is 3.32 million pounds and the Western Aleutian Islands golden king crab (WAG) TAC is 1.73 million pounds. Ten percent of the EAG TAC is allocated to the CDQ fishery and ten percent of the WAG TAC is allocated to the ACA fishery. Current EAG harvest is 3,158,601 pounds, 95% of the TAC, and WAG harvest is 1,729,215 pounds, 100% of the TAC (Figure 1). Both areas close by regulation on April 30, 2023.

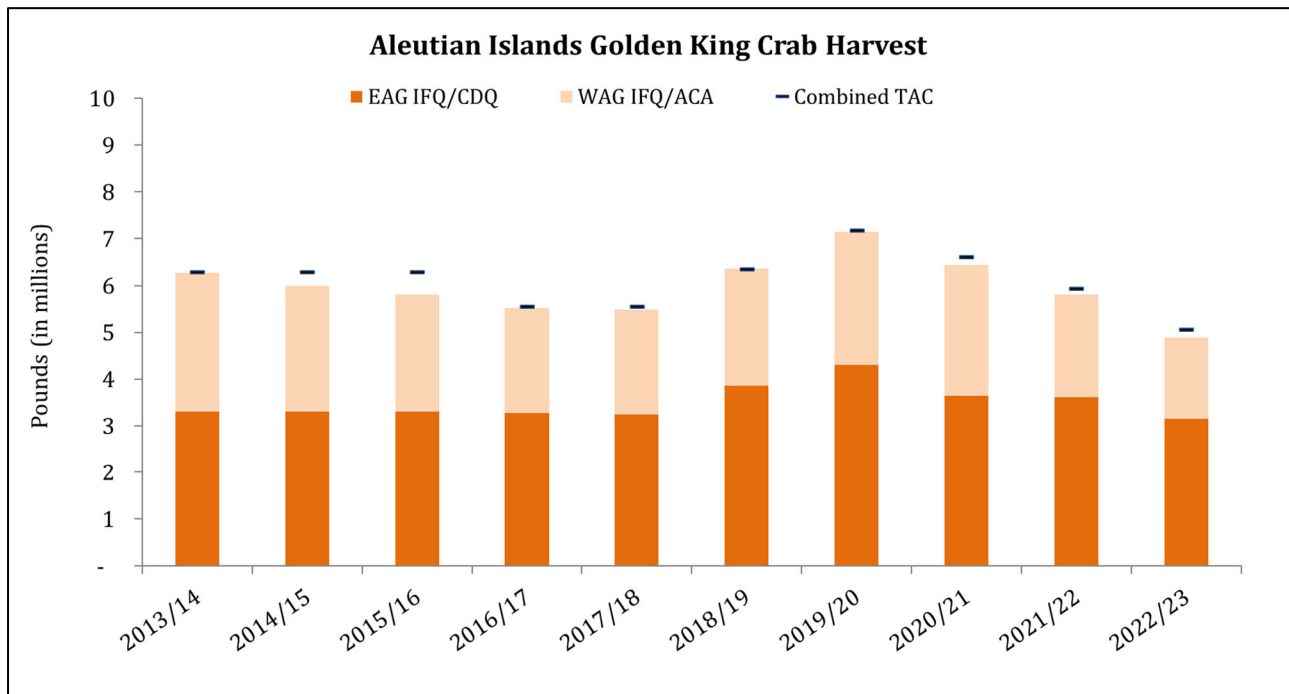


Figure 1. Aleutian Islands golden king crab harvest by area and TAC, 2013/14 – 2022/23 seasons.

Eastern Bering Sea Tanner Crab

The 2022/23 Bering Sea District Tanner crab fishery opened in both the western area (west of 166° west longitude) and eastern area (between 166° west longitude and 163° west longitude) on October 15, 2022. TAC in the western area is 850,000 pounds and TAC in the eastern area is 1.163 million pounds; 10% of the TAC in each area is allocated to CDQ fisheries. Current harvest in the western area is 847,401 pounds, 100% of the western TAC, and harvest in the eastern area is 1,164,897 pounds, 100% of the eastern TAC (Figure 2). Both areas closed by regulation on March 31, 2023.

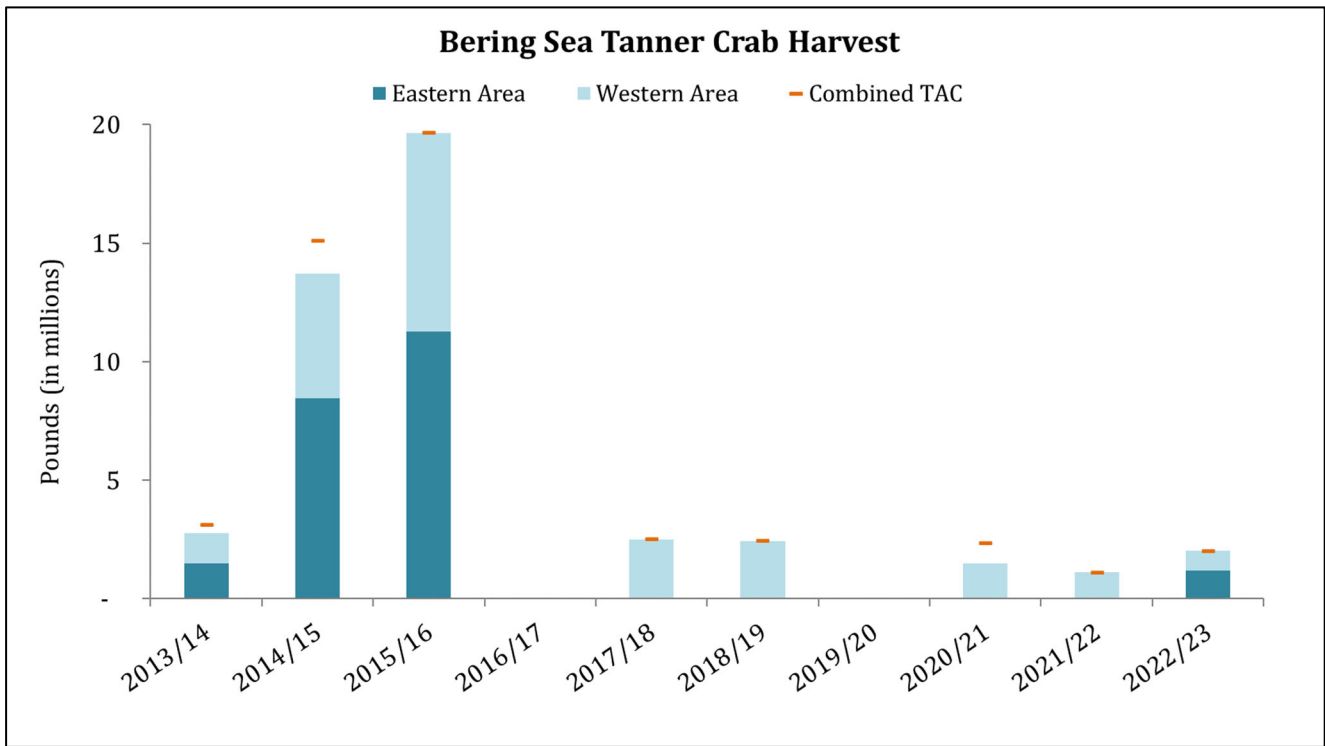


Figure 2. Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab harvest and TAC, 2013/14 – 2022/23 seasons.

Pacific Cod

State-water Pacific cod fisheries are established in the Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, South Alaska Peninsula, and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Management Areas. Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) are calculated as a percentage of area ABCs and 2023 GHLs are as follows:

State Water Pacific Cod GHL and Harvest					
State Management Area	ABC and GHL percentage in regulation		Gear	2023 GHL (pounds)	2023 GHL (mt)
Prince William Sound	EGOA - 25%		Jig/Pot	193,456	88
			Longline	1,096,249	497
Chignik	CGOA - 25%	8.75%	Jig	286,074	130
Kodiak			Pot	2,574,670	1,168
		Cook Inlet	3.75%	Jig	2,043,389
Pot				2,043,389	927
South Alaska Peninsula		WGOA - 30%	Jig	183,907	83
			Pot	1,042,139	473
Dutch Harbor Subdistrict	Bering Sea - 12%	Jig	740,481	336	
		Pot	4,196,059	1,903	
Aleutian Islands Subdistrict	Aleutian Islands - 39%	Jig	100,000	45	
		Pot	38,316,000	17,380	
Aleutian Islands Subdistrict	Aleutian Islands - 39%	All	11,875,000	5,386	

Prince William Sound: The 2023 GHL for Prince William Sound (Eastern Gulf of Alaska) is 1.290 million pounds and is allocated 85% to longline gear and 15% to pot and jig gear. The state-waters fishery opened to vessels fishing with pot gear on February 27 and remains open. State-waters opened for vessels fishing with longline gear on March 10 and closed on March 23. Vessels using longline gear harvested 1.04 million pounds and vessels using pot gear have harvested 42,000 pounds (Figure 3). If there is remaining GHL on September 1, the fishery may re-open to longline gear.

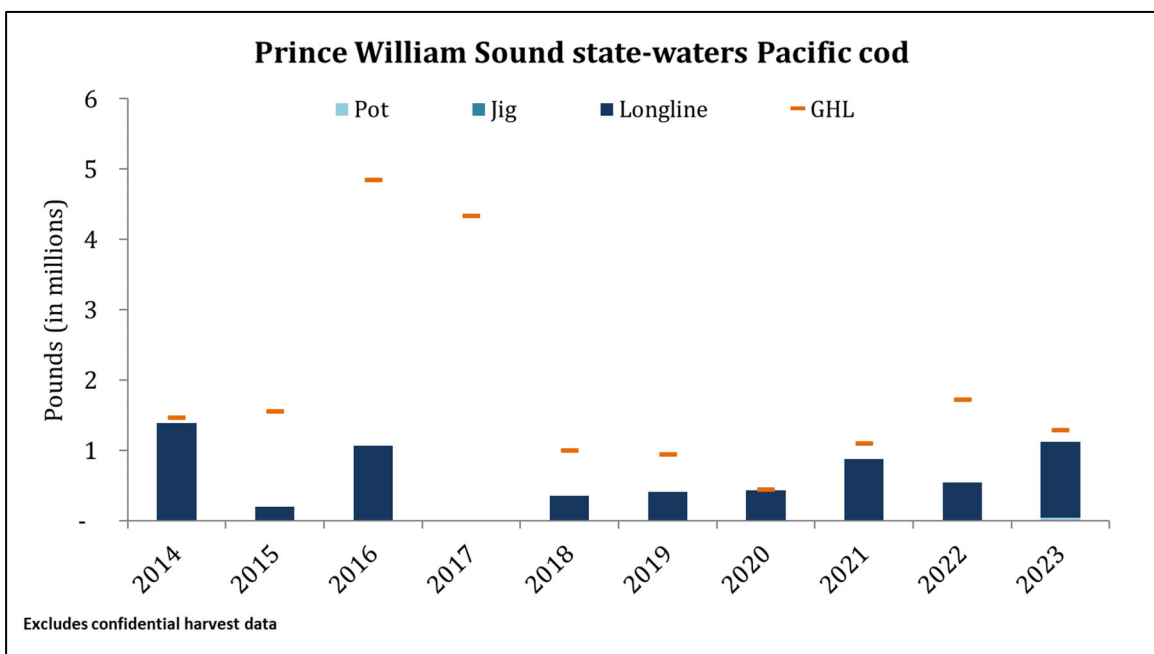


Figure 3. Annual Prince William Sound Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

Chignik

The 2023 GHL for the Chignik Area (Central Gulf of Alaska) is 2.860 million pounds and is allocated 90% to pot gear and 10% to jig gear. The state-waters fishery opened to vessels fishing with pot gear on March 5 and to vessels fishing with jig gear on March 15. The fishery closed to vessels fishing with pot gear on March 15 and remains open for vessels fishing with jig gear. Harvest is confidential.

Kodiak

The 2023 state-waters GHL for the Kodiak Area (Central Gulf of Alaska) is 4.087 million pounds and is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear. The state-waters fishery opened to vessels using pot gear on March 5 and closed on March 15, harvesting 2.18 million pounds (Figure 4). The jig fishery opened on January 1 and remains open. Vessels using jig gear have harvested 393,000 pounds.

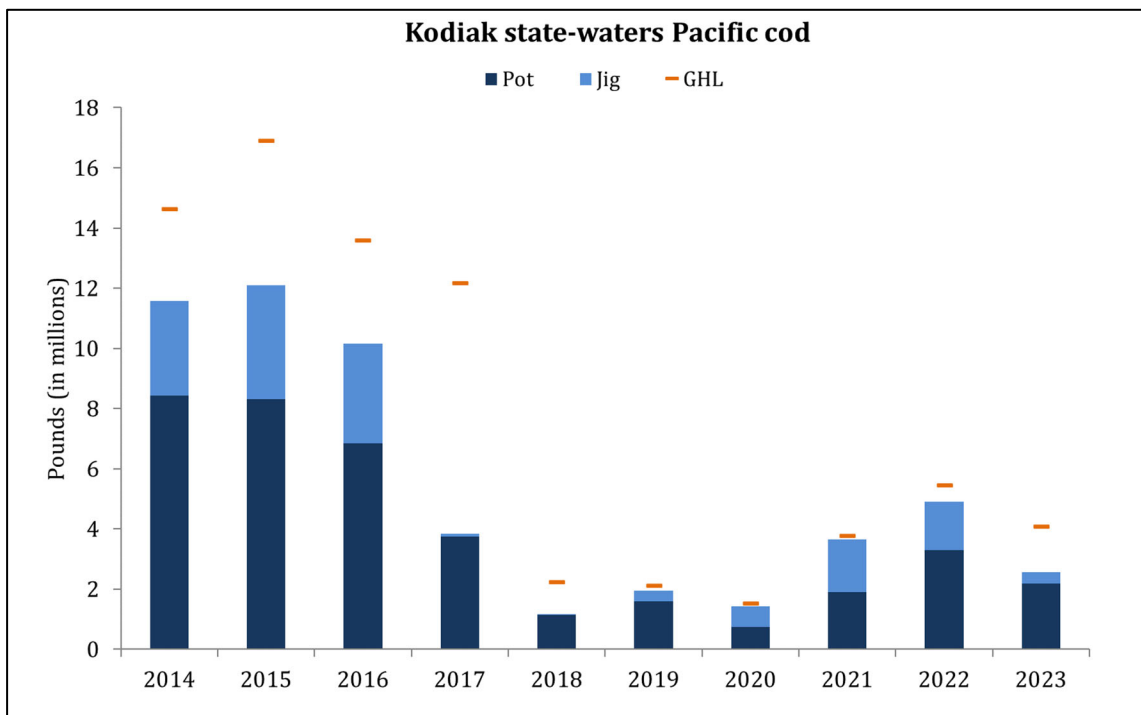


Figure 4. Annual Kodiak Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

Cook Inlet

The 2023 GHL for Cook Inlet (Central Gulf of Alaska) is 1.226 million pounds with 1.042 million pounds allocated to pot gear and 184,000 pounds allocated to jig gear. The state-waters pot fishery opened on February 27 and remains open for vessels less than or equal to 58 feet in length; the fishery closed to vessels greater than 58 feet in length on March 5. Harvest is confidential. If there is remaining GHL on September 1, the fishery may re-open to pot gear. The jig fishery is closed and will open following the closure of that federal sector.

South Alaska Peninsula

The 2023 GH L for the South Alaska Peninsula is 4.937 million pounds and is allocated 85% to pot gear and 15% to jig gear. The State-waters fishery opened to vessels fishing with pot gear on March 7 and closed on March 12, harvesting 3.98 million pounds (Figure 5). The fishery opened to vessels fishing with jig gear on March 14 and 118,000 pounds have been harvested by jig gear.

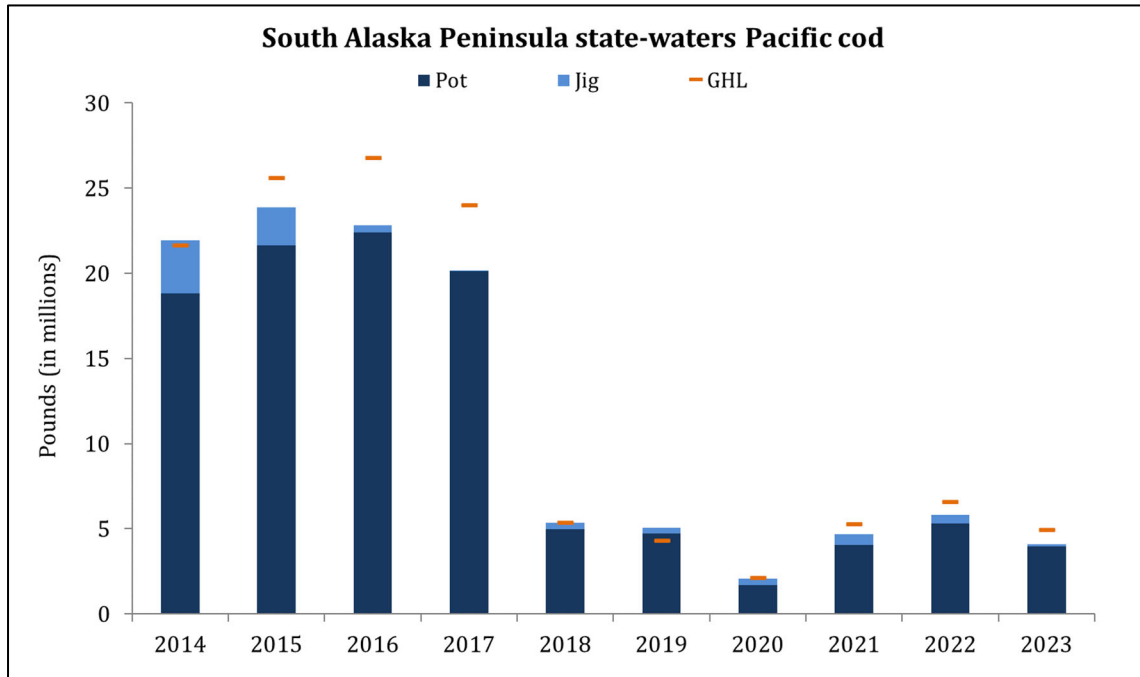


Figure 5. Annual South Alaska Peninsula Pacific cod harvest by gear and GH L, 2014-2023.

Dutch Harbor

The Dutch Harbor Subdistrict pot fishery opened on January 23 with a GH L of 38.316 million pounds and 29.971 million pounds, 78% of the GH L, have been harvested by 26 vessels as of March 30 (Figure 6). The Dutch Harbor jig fishery is scheduled to open May 1 with a GH L of 100,000 pounds. By regulation, the fishery closes December 31, 2023, or when the GH L is achieved.

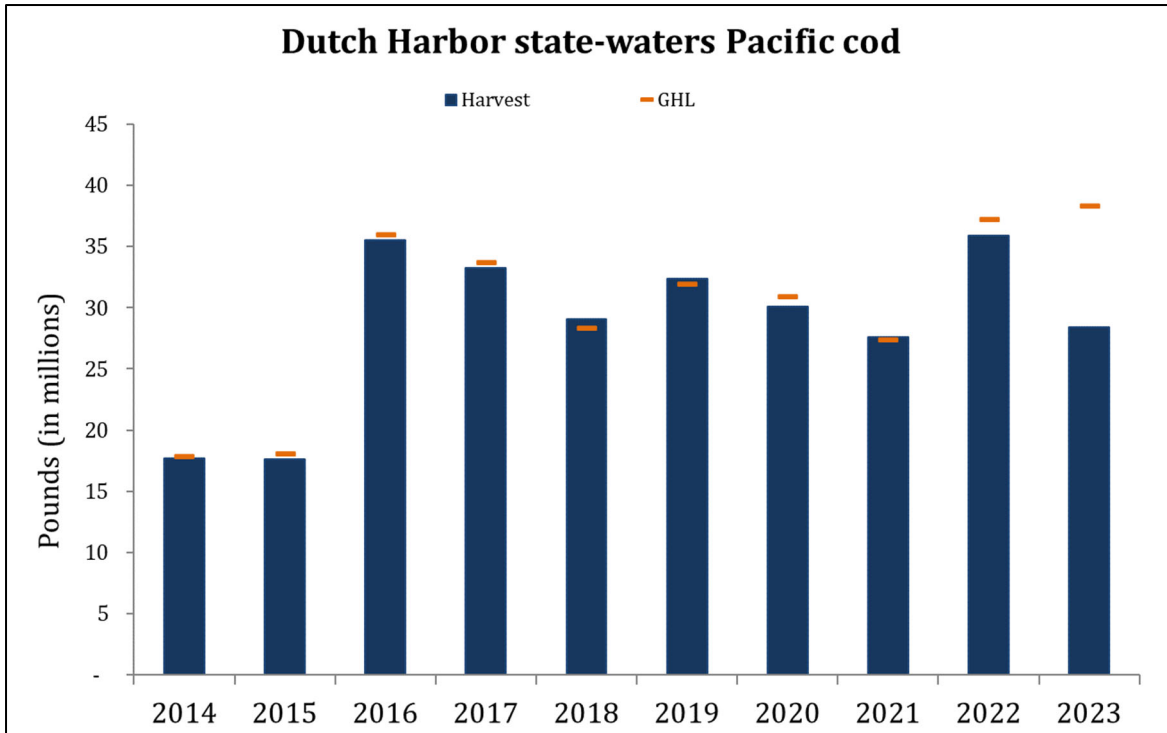


Figure 6. Annual Dutch Harbor Subdistrict Pacific cod harvest by gear and GHL, 2014-2023.

Aleutian Islands

The 2023 Aleutian Islands Subdistrict (AIS) GHL is 11.875 million pounds which represents 39% of the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod ABC. The state-waters fishery in the Adak Section, between 175° west longitude and 178° west longitude, opened January 1 to vessels 60 feet or less overall length (OAL), except for vessels fishing with longline gear which are limited to an OAL of 58 feet. On January 16, the AIS opened to vessels 100 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 60 feet or less OAL using trawl or mechanical jig gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline gear. On March 15, the AIS opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 100 feet or less OAL using trawl gear. By regulation, the fishery closes December 31 or when the GHL is achieved. Seven vessels have harvested 7.4 million pounds, 62% of the GHL (Figure 7).

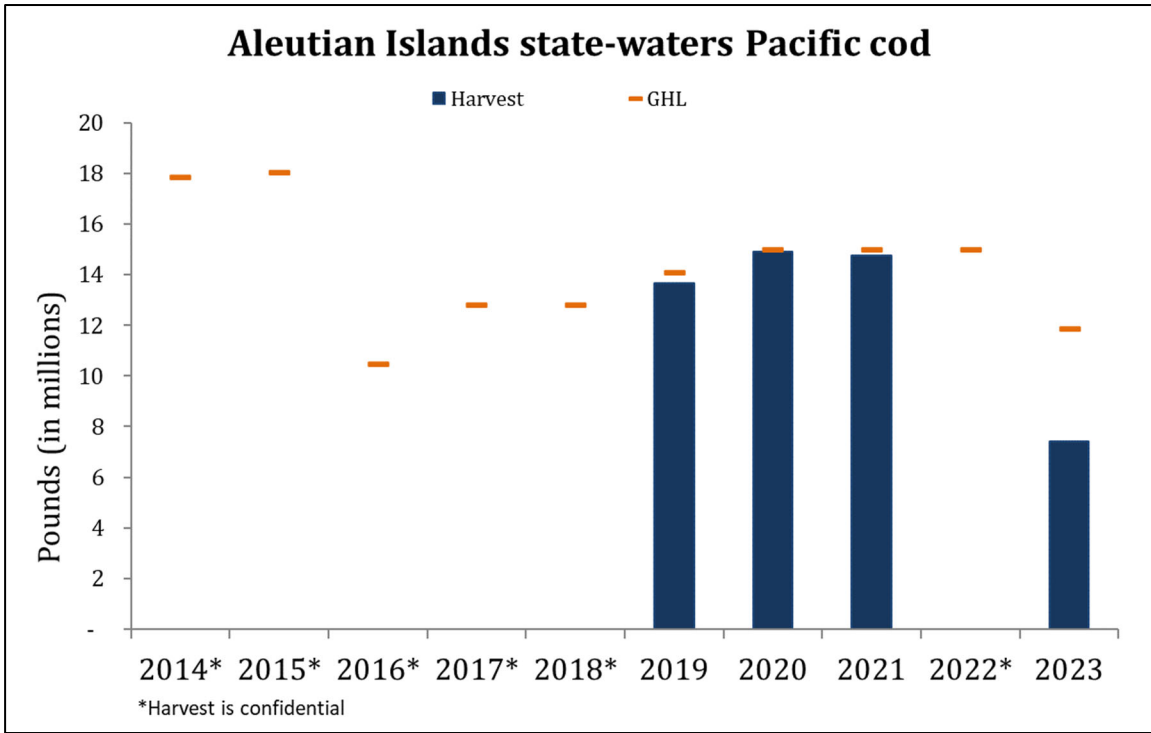


Figure 7. Annual Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific cod harvest and GHL, 2014-2023.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

The Board of Fisheries is currently accepting proposed changes to fishing regulations for the 2023/24 cycle which includes Lower Cook Inlet finfish, Upper Cook Inlet finfish, and Kodiak finfish management areas. Proposals are due April 10, 2023.

Summaries of the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Island, and Chignik Finfish meeting, held in February, and the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting, held March, are available at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo>.

At the Statewide Finfish meeting, the Board adopted new regulations to define the escape mechanism for collapsible groundfish pots commonly known as slinky pots. Slinky pots must contain two openings in the mesh with each equal to or exceeding 18 inches in length; the openings must each be laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine, no larger than 30 thread; the cotton twine may be knotted at each end only; the openings must be on opposite sides of the pot, if placed on the tunnel side the opening must be in an area that does not include the door opening, within six inches of the edge of the pot.

Staff Changes

ADF&G Fishery Scientist Dr. Shareef Siddeek is retiring in May after twenty-three years with the department. Dr. Siddeek has been the lead stock assessment author for Aleutian Islands golden king crab

and has contributed to many other shellfish stock assessments and harvest strategies during his time at ADF&G. He currently serves on the BSAI Crab Plan Team.

Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council

The Commissioner of the ADF&G established the Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council to advise ADF&G and policy makers on ways to implement the recommendations contained in the final report of the Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force. Additional information is available at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bycatchtaskforce.main>.

Cook Inlet Invasive Species

The northern pike is native to most of Alaska but does not naturally occur in southcentral Alaska and is considered an invasive species in this area. Invasive northern pike are top-level predators known to eat juvenile salmon and can decimate native fish populations. Although considered a freshwater species, invasive northern pike in southcentral Alaska have long been suspected of utilizing Cook Inlet. Recent studies have shown that northern pike can survive at salinity levels typical of northern Cook Inlet and invasive northern pike in the region had chemical signatures in their otoliths consistent with spending time in marine waters. ADF&G's Invasive Species Program is asking fishermen in Cook Inlet and adjacent waters to retain and report any invasive northern pike they catch through the online reporting system at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=invasivespeciesreporter.main> or by calling 1-877-INVASIV.