



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
 P.O. Box 21668
 Juneau Alaska 99802-1668

December 21, 2018

David Witherell
 Executive Director
 North Pacific Fishery Management Council
 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Mr. Witherell:

I am writing to notice the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) that we will need to clarify and correct the apportionment of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2019 pollock harvest specifications for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) that were recommended by the Council at its December 2018 meeting. At the December meeting, the Council approved the final 2019 and 2020 Overfishing Levels (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) limits as recommended by its Scientific and Statistical Committee, and the total allowable catch (TAC) limits recommended by its Advisory Panel. The Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, and its implementing regulations, require that NMFS, after consultation with the Council, specify the TAC for each target species (50 CFR 679.20(a)(2) & (c)).

The GOA harvest specifications are based on the stock assessment information compiled in the 2018 GOA Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report. The SAFE report encompasses the most recent groundfish stock assessment information available for the GOA, and is reviewed by the Council's GOA Groundfish Plan Team (Plan Team) prior to the SAFE report being presented to the Council. During the November 2018 Plan Team meeting, the Plan Team reviewed the pollock stock assessment.¹ The team adopted revisions to the pollock stock assessment that differed slightly from the author's recommendation for the 2019 pollock ABC.² In association with these revisions, the team calculated revised area apportionments of the ABC for the Western GOA (Statistical Area 610), Central GOA (Statistical Areas 620 and 630), and West Yakutat (WYAK) management areas (collectively, W/C/WYAK). The team also calculated revised seasonal apportionments for Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630 to replace the apportionments that had been calculated in the stock assessment. The sum of the seasonal

¹ The 2018 GOA pollock assessment is available at https://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/plan_team/2018/GOApollock.pdf. In addition to the assessment itself, Appendix C describes the methodology for the seasonal distribution and apportionment of pollock among management areas in the GOA.

² This is discussed in the GOA Plan Team November 2018 meeting minutes at <https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=0799bd33-09d2-4d94-b8a4-ae27e1c2e035.pdf&fileName=C2b%20GOA%20Minutes.pdf>.



apportionments for both the Western GOA and Central GOA management areas yields the annual total ABC, and subsequently, the annual total TAC for the Western GOA and Central GOA management areas.

Following the December Council meeting, Alaska Regional Office staff identified an error that occurred when using the correct percentages of seasonal biomass distribution to calculate seasonal apportionments (for the A season) for pollock in Statistical Areas 620 and 630. This error does not affect the determination of the OFL or ABC (i.e., the annual catch limit) for the combined W/C/WYAK management areas. The error affects the 2019 seasonal TAC apportionments for the A season for Statistical Areas 620 and 630 (i.e., the Central GOA management area), and the total ABC and TAC for the Central GOA management area.

A comparison of the 2019 pollock ABCs and TACs recommended by the Council based on this error and the correctly calculated values for 2019 is shown in Attachment 1. NMFS is advising the Council that it is our intent when implementing the final GOA groundfish harvest specifications to make this correction and amend the final 2019 harvest specifications recommended by the Council on December 6, 2018. NMFS will incorporate the correct pollock ABCs and TACs for the Central GOA management area, and the correct seasonal apportionments for the A season for Statistical Areas 620 and 630, in the final 2019 and 2020 groundfish specifications.

For additional information or clarification, please contact Obren Davis at 907-586-7241 or at obren.davis@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Region

For

cc: James Ianelli, NMFS AFSC

Attachment

Attachment 1: Comparison of the Council's recommended 2019 pollock TACs with corrected pollock TACs for 2019.

SSC's GOA OFL and ABC Recommendations and AP TAC recommendations (mt) for 2019

Species	Area	2019		
		OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	State GHL		3,396	0
	W(61)		24,875	24,875
	C(62)		71,459	71,459
	C(63)		30,372	30,372
	WYAK		5,748	5,748
	Subtotal	194,230	135,850	132,454
	EYAK/SEO	11,697	8,773	8,773
	Total	205,927	144,623	141,227

Corrected Pollock ABCs and TACs

Species	Area	2019			Change
		OFL	ABC	TAC	
Pollock	State GHL		3,396	0	
	W(61)		24,875	24,875	0
	C(62)		67,388	67,388	-4,071
	C(63)		34,443	34,443	4,071
	WYAK		5,748	5,748	0
	Subtotal	194,230	135,850	132,454	0
	EYAK/SEO	11,697	8,773	8,773	0
	Total	205,927	144,623	141,227	0

Note: There is no change to the State GHL amount, Area 610 ABC/TAC, or WYAK ABC/TAC.