

SUBSISTENCE HARVESTS OF PACIFIC HALIBUT IN ALASKA, 2012

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Through a grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Subsistence conducted a study to estimate the subsistence harvests of Pacific halibut in Alaska in 2012. The full results of the study appear in the Division's Technical Paper No. 388, "Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2012" (January 2014). Key points in the report include the following:

- In May 2003, the NMFS published final federal regulations for a subsistence halibut fishery in Alaska. Residents of 118 rural communities and designated rural areas, and members of 123 tribes are eligible to participate. Fishers must obtain a subsistence halibut registration certificate (SHARC) from NMFS before fishing (www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm; 800-304-4846).
- 2012 was the tenth year in which subsistence halibut fishing took place under these regulations. Information about subsistence halibut harvests in 2003–2011 is reported in Division of Subsistence Technical Papers 288, 304, 320, 333, 342, 348, 357, 367, and 378, respectively.
- To estimate the 2012 harvests, a one-page survey form was mailed to SHARC holders in early 2013 or administered in person. After three mailings and community visits, 7,054 of 9,944 SHARC holders (71%) responded. Participation in the survey was voluntary.
- An estimated 4,394 individuals subsistence fished for halibut in 2012 (Figure 9).
- The estimated subsistence harvest was 37,093 halibut for 686,991 pounds net weight.
- Of this total, 78% was harvested with setline (stationary) gear (longline or skate) and 22% was harvested with hand-operated gear (handline or rod and reel).
- The largest subsistence harvests occurred in Southeast Alaska (Halibut Regulatory Area 2C), at 58% of the total, followed by Southcentral Alaska (Area 3A) at 37%. Table 6 and Figure 17 from the final report give more details on harvests by gear type and area.
- Based on place of residence of SHARC holders, communities with the largest subsistence halibut harvests in 2012 were Kodiak and Sitka (the largest eligible communities) (Figure 22).
- An estimated 9,568 rockfish were harvested by 1,161 fishers in the subsistence halibut fishery in 2012. Most (73%) were harvested in Southeast Alaska. An estimated 2,247 lingcod were harvested by 696 fishers in the subsistence halibut fishery in 2012. Most (68%) were harvested in Southeast Alaska.
- Based on preliminary data from the International Pacific Halibut Commission and this study, the estimated halibut removal in Alaska in 2012 was 42.491 million pounds, net weight. Subsistence harvests accounted for 1.7% of this total (Figure 33).
- The report concludes that the project was, overall, a success, with good response rates and a reliable estimate of subsistence halibut harvests. However, analysis suggests that fishers in some communities may not have renewed their SHARCs. Additional outreach among eligible tribes and rural areas is necessary to maximize enrollment of fishers in the SHARC program.
- Due to budget constraints, a survey to estimate subsistence halibut harvests in Alaska in 2013 will not take place. The report recommends that monitoring of the Alaska subsistence halibut harvest resume in the future to evaluate trends in the fishery.

For a copy of the full report, go to <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>, or call the Division of Subsistence of ADF&G at 907-267-2353 (Anchorage) or 907-465-4147 (Juneau).

Table 1.—Estimated harvests of halibut in numbers of fish and pounds net (dressed, head-off) weight by regulatory area and subarea, 2012.

Subarea	Regulatory area	Number of SHARCs fished ^c	Estimated subsistence harvest by gear type ^a									Estimated sport harvest		
			Set hook gear		Hook and line or handline			All gear						
			Estimated number fished	Estimated number halibut harvested	Estimated pounds halibut harvested ^b	Estimated number fished	Estimated number halibut harvested	Estimated pounds halibut harvested ^b	Estimated number fished	Estimated number halibut harvested	Estimated pounds halibut harvested ^b	Estimated number fished	Estimated number halibut harvested	Estimated pounds halibut harvested ^b
Southern Southeast Alaska	2C	1,454	1,183	7,497	163,184	616	2,667	40,878	1,454	10,164	204,062	735	2,541	43,043
Sitka Lamp Area	2C	736	693	3,346	75,770	163	456	7,666	736	3,803	83,436	259	522	8,295
Northern Southeast Alaska	2C	770	677	4,316	86,936	244	812	12,533	770	5,128	99,470	256	905	12,935
Subtotal, Area 2C		2,859	2,462	15,160	325,890	977	3,935	61,078	2,859	19,095	386,967	1,200	3,967	64,274
Yakutat Area	3A	88	69	545	11,949	41	253	3,813	88	798	15,762	29	141	2,345
Prince William Sound	3A	273	239	1,398	26,079	105	394	6,743	273	1,791	32,822	136	327	5,372
Cook Inlet	3A	258	167	2,210	34,026	169	2,109	26,310	258	4,319	60,337	116	536	7,246
Kodiak Island road system	3A	575	484	3,440	61,258	274	1,354	18,649	575	4,794	79,907	414	1,865	31,503
Kodiak Island–Other	3A	592	466	3,112	55,344	279	1,120	21,932	592	4,233	77,276	285	1,073	19,398
Subtotal, Area 3A		1,580	1,237	10,705	188,657	774	5,231	77,447	1,580	15,936	266,104	839	3,942	65,864
Chignik Area	3B	35	20	159	1,988	29	111	1,632	35	271	3,621	3	11	56
Lower Alaska Peninsula	3B	146	95	685	9,442	115	464	8,948	146	1,149	18,390	47	89	1,796
Subtotal, Area 3B		181	114	844	11,430	142	575	10,581	181	1,419	22,011	50	100	1,852
Eastern Aleutians–East	4A	67	38	355	4,972	50	459	7,844	67	814	12,816	25	200	2,714
Eastern Aleutians–West	4A	5	4	14	330	4	20	460	5	33	790	7	11	255
Subtotal, Area 4A		70	39	369	5,302	52	478	8,304	70	847	13,606	32	211	2,969
Western Aleutians–East	4B	9	9	12	280	6	15	257	9	27	537	6	0	0
Subtotal, Area 4B		9	9	12	280	6	15	257	9	27	537	6	0	0
St. George Island	4C	4	4	20	490	0	0	0	4	20	490	0	0	0
St. Paul Island	4C	7	4	35	346	4	11	812	7	46	1,158	0	0	0
Subtotal, Area 4C		11	8	55	836	4	11	812	11	66	1,648	0	0	0
St. Lawrence Island	4D	8	7	22	556	3	1	60	8	23	615	0	0	0
Subtotal, Area 4D		8	7	22	556	3	1	60	8	23	615	0	0	0
Bristol Bay	4E	10	5	0	0	10	34	403	10	34	403	3	0	0
Yukon Delta	4E	78	26	198	2,089	65	497	3,194	78	695	5,283	6	14	264
Norton Sound	4E	5	5	21	482	0	0	0	5	21	482	0	0	0
Subtotal, Area 4E		91	35	220	2,571	72	531	3,597	91	750	6,168	9	14	264
Total, Alaska^c		4,705	3,821	27,385	535,521	1,977	10,777	162,136	4,705	38,162	697,656	2,070	8,235	135,224

Source ADF&G Division of Subsistence SHARC survey, 2011.

a. “Setline” = longline or skate. “Hand-operated gear” = rod and reel, or handline.

b. Weights given are “net weight.” Pounds net (dressed, head off) weight = 75% of round (whole) weight.

c. Because fishers may fish in more than one area, subtotals for regulatory areas and the state total might exceed the sum of the subarea values. Includes subsistence and sport fishing.

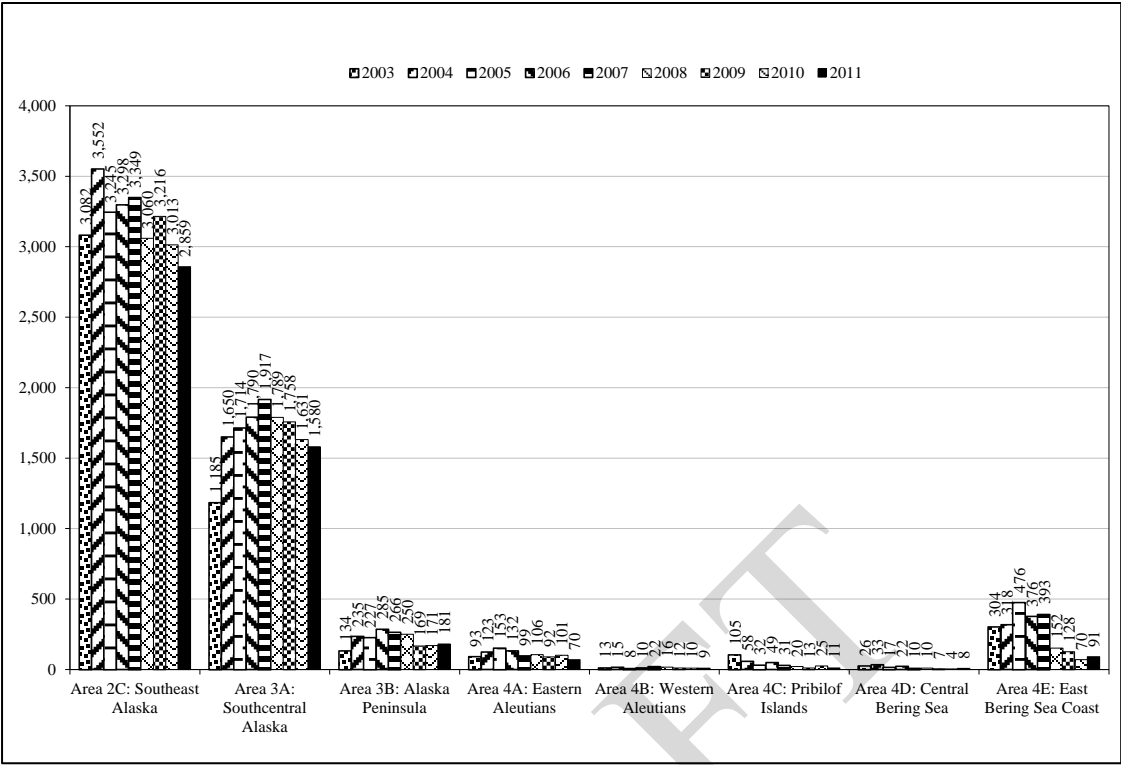


Figure 9.—Estimated number of Alaska subsistence halibut fishers, 2003–2012 by regulatory area fished.

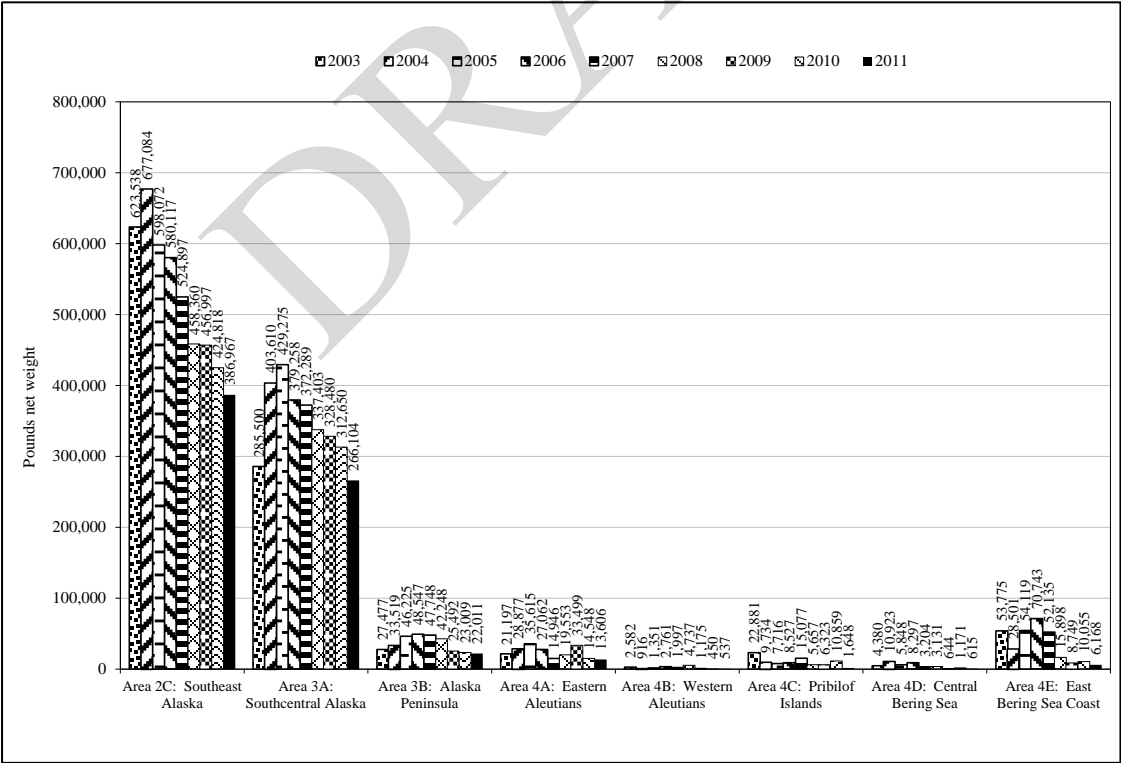


Figure 1.—Estimated subsistence halibut harvests, pounds net weight, by regulatory area fished, 2003–2012.

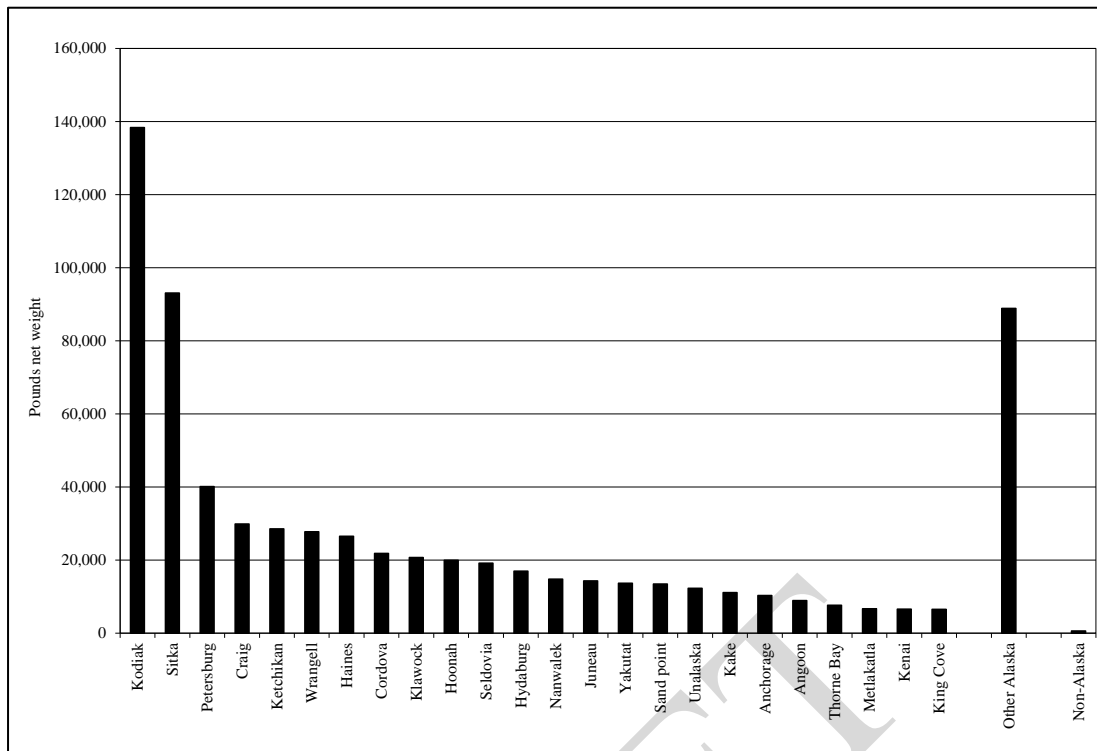


Figure 2.—Alaska subsistence halibut harvests by place of residence, 2012.

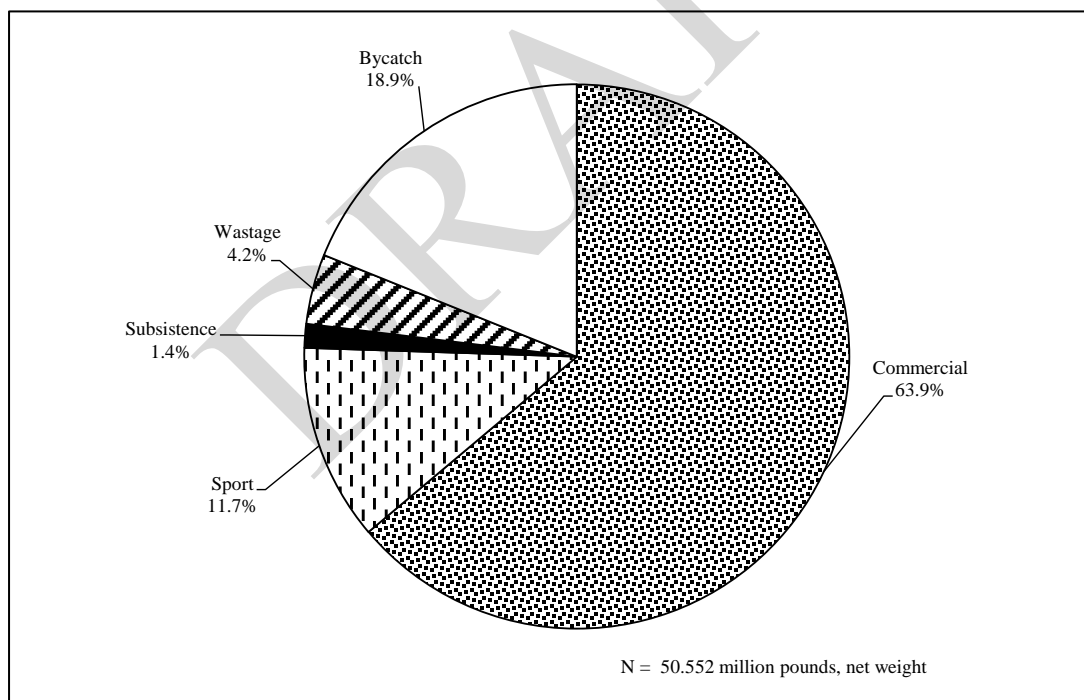


Figure 3.—Halibut removals, Alaska, 2012.

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