



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

January 31, 2017

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Status of Actions Report online

Updated daily at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/reports/amendments.pdf>

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the June 2016 meeting include:

- Final Rule for Amendment 47 to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Management Plan – Allow custom processing in the Tanner crab fishery.
https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-20/pdf/2016-30068.pdf?utm_campaign=subscription%20mailing%20list&utm_source=federalregister.gov&utm_medium=email
Effective: January 19, 2017
- Final Rule for Amendment 101 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska – Allow the use of pot gear in the sablefish IFQ fishery.
<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/81fr95435.pdf>
Effective: Modified Date – March 12, 2017 (see below)
- Notice announcing revised effective date for Final Rule for Amendment 101
https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-01-31/pdf/2017-02055.pdf?utm_campaign=subscription%20mailing%20list&utm_source=federalregister.gov&utm_medium=email
Published: January 31, 2017

See Attachment 1 for additional detail.

Executive Orders

Several new Executive Orders and Presidential Memoranda have published recently that affect Federal staffing and regulations. We are coordinating with the Administration to ensure we implement these new executive orders correctly. We will update the Council as more information becomes available.



Regulatory Freeze Pending Review (January 21, 2017)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/20/memorandum-heads-executive-departments-and-agencies>

Implementation of Regulatory Freeze (January 24, 2017)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/24/implementation-regulatory-freeze>

Hiring Freeze (January 23, 2017)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-hiring-freeze>

Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs (January 30, 2017)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/30/presidential-executive-order-reducing-regulation-and-controlling>

Halibut Decksorting Exempted Fishing Permit Renewal

On May 6, 2016 NMFS issued exempted fishing permit (EFP) to John Gauvin, Alaska Seafood Cooperative, to permit otherwise unauthorized sorting of halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) on the deck of non-pelagic trawl catcher/processor vessels while targeting flatfish in the Bering Sea. The objective of the EFP is to test methods for quickly returning halibut to the water to reduce halibut PSC mortality in non-pelagic trawl fisheries. The EFP (EFP 2016-01) is valid through April 30, 2017. In December 2016, NMFS consulted with the Council on proposed modifications to the EFP for the 2017 fishing year. NMFS issued modified EFP 2016-01 on January 10, 2017. The modified EFP is available on the NMFS Alaska Region webpage: https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/efp16_01_halibut_mod_permit.pdf

On January 10, 2017 NMFS received an application from Mr. Gauvin to renew the modified EFP to be effective through December 31, 2017. On January 18, 2017 NMFS published a notice in the Federal Register (82 FR 5539) announcing the receipt of the application and inviting public comment on the request to renew the EFP through the end of 2017. The comment period ends on February 7, 2017. Through this management report, NMFS is consulting with the Council on the request to renew the EFP as required by 50 CFR 679.6. Barring objection from the Council, NMFS will renew modified EFP 2016-01 to be effective through December 31, 2017.

One objective of the halibut decksorting EFP is to develop protocols that can be implemented in regulations in the future. NMFS, the permit holders, and the participating fishing companies have learned what is needed for proper catch accounting and data collection while allowing halibut to be sorted on the deck of catcher/processors. The iterative EFP process has allowed for many process refinements that will provide a robust foundation for a regulated decksorting option in the coming years. NMFS anticipates at least one more halibut decksorting EFP for 2018, with further refinements based on what is learned during the EFP in 2017. Later this year, NMFS will commence an analysis to allow decksorting of halibut on non-pelagic trawl catcher/processors operating in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands as an option permitted in regulation. This option could be available for the 2019 fishing year at the earliest.

Staff Changes

Julie Scheurer will be leaving Sustainable Fisheries this spring to take a new position with Protected Resources in the Alaska Region. Julie began working with the Alaska Region in Sustainable Fisheries from 2006 through 2008, then worked with the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Newport Oregon as a Research Fish Biologist and Technical Editor, and returned to Sustainable Fisheries in 2012. Since joining SF, Julie has been led many of our changes to the charter halibut management program. Julie also vastly enhanced the region's communication and outreach with recreational fishery stakeholders in her role as the Alaska Region Recreational Fisheries Coordinator. In her new role, Julie will continue to work on fishery interactions and their impacts on protected species. We are glad she is staying in with the Alaska Region, and look forward to working with her “down the hall”.

Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory Actions

Changes since December 2016 are noted in **Bold Red Text**, EOC = End of Comment [period]

Action Status	Lead Council, SF, and GCAK Staff	Date of Council Final Action	Start Regional Review	Received by GCAK	Transmittal Date of Action to NMFS HQ for Review	Notice of Availability (FMP) Published in Federal Register	Proposed Rule Published in Federal Register	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in Federal Register
FMP Amendments								
Amendment 47 (KTC) Establish custom processing exemption for Tanner crab fisheries Approved: December 6, 2016	Cunningham Kent Smoker	June 2016	PR: 6/28/16 FR: 11/14/16	PR: 7/5/16 FR: 11/14/16	PR: 9/6/16 FR: 12/2/16	Sep 13, 2016 81 FR 62850 EOC: 11/14/16	Sep 23, 2016 81 FR 65615 EOC: 10/24/16	Dec 20, 2016 81 FR 92697 Effective: 1/19/17
Amendment 101 (GOA) Allow pot longline gear in GOA sablefish IFQ Fishery Approved: November 4, 2016	Cunningham Baker Meyer	April 2015	PR: 5/25/16 FR: 10/17/16	PR: 6/2/16 FR: 11/9/16	PR: 8/2/16 FR: 12/12/16	Aug 8, 2016 81 FR 52394 EOC: 10/7/16	Aug 19, 2016 81 FR 55408 EOC: 9/19/16	Dec 28, 2016 81 FR 95435 Effective: 3/12/17
Amendments 114 (BSAI) and 104 (GOA) Electronic Monitoring (EM)	Evans Harrington/ Watson Meyer	December 2016						
Regulatory Amendments								
Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands 2017 and 2018 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish	Stram Whitney Sullivan	- NMFS -	PR: 10/25/16 FR: 1/13/17	PR: 10/28/16 FR: 1/17/17	PR: 11/23/16	N/A	Dec 6, 2016 81 FR 87863 EOC: 1/5/17	
Gulf of Alaska 2017 and 2018 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish	Armstrong Davis Sullivan	- NMFS -	PR: 10/20/16 FR: 1/13/17	PR: 10/26/16 FR: 1/16/17	PR: 11/18/16	N/A	Dec 6, 2016 81 FR 87881 EOC: 1/5/17	
Authorizing a Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) to hold halibut QS	Marrinan Scheurer Lepore	December 2016						
Annual Halibut Management Measures	Scheurer Pollard	- IPHC – January 2017						

Attachment 2 Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2017 is through January 21, 2017 and is compared to catch during 2016 through January 23, 2016. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information from catch reports and information bulletins are available at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries-catch-landings>

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

The 2017 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,345,000 mt compared to 1,340,000 mt in 2016. The A season opened at noon, A.l.t., January 20, 2017. NMFS is working on a TAC reallocation from the Aleutian Islands to the Bering Sea.

Aleutian Islands Pacific cod

No catch has been reported in the Pacific cod target. In 2016, NMFS closed the Federal Aleutian Islands Pacific cod directed fishery on March 22, 2016.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

The 2017 Pacific cod TAC is 223,704 mt in the Bering Sea and 15,695 mt in the Aleutian Islands compared to the 2016 Bering Sea TAC of 238,680 mt and Aleutian Islands TAC of 12,839 mt. For 2017, NMFS reallocated 1,700 mt from jig to hook-and-line/pot catcher vessels less than 60 feet.

BSAI Sector	2017				2016			
	A Season Allocation	Catch Jan 21	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 21	A Season allocation	Catch Jan 23	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 23
CDQ	15,369	951	n/a	3	16,147	1,109	n/a	10
Hook-and-line C/P	52,893	9,526	n/a	27	55,581	11,476	n/a	28
Pot C/P	1,629	1,380	Jan 25	4	1,712	1,270	Jan 29	4
Pot CV >= 60 ft	9,123	7,918	Jan 25	30	9,587	2,031	n/a	11
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	5,959	3,827	n/a	19	6,226	3,210	n/a	18
Jig	96	0	n/a	0	136	0	n/a	0
Trawl CV	34,962	491	n/a	33	36,732	288	n/a	54
AFA C/P	3,688	24	n/a	5	3,874	96	n/a	13
Amendment 80 C/P	21,485	57	n/a	5	22,573	292	n/a	12
Total	149,618	24,174		126	152,568	19,772		150

Gulf of Alaska**Pacific cod - Western GOA**

The 2017 Western GOA Pacific cod TAC is 25,404 mt compared to 28,352 mt in 2016. On publication of the final 2017/2018 harvest specifications, the jig allocation will decrease to 2.5% in 2017 from 3.5% in 2016.

Sector	2017				2016			
	A season allocation	Catch Jan 21	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 21	A season allocation	Catch Jan 23	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 23
Hook-and-line C/P	2,672	0	n/a	0	2,982	2,865	22	<4
Hook-and-line CV	172	0	n/a	0	192	0	n/a	0
Jig	533	2	n/a		595	0	n/a	0
Pot CV/CP	4,854	1,171	n/a		5,417	1,591	n/a	29
Trawl CV	6,791	0	n/a	0	7,579	41	n/a	21
Trawl C/P	221	0	n/a	0	246	0	n/a	0
Total	15,243	1,174			17,011	1,653		51

Pacific cod - Central GOA

The 2017 GOA Pacific cod TAC is 33,135 mt compared to 36,984 mt in 2016.

Sector	2017				2016			
	A season allocation	Catch Jan 21	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 21	A season allocation	Catch Jan 23	A season closed	# of vessels Jan 23
Hook-and-line C/P	1,347	0	n/a	0	1,504	98	n/a	<4
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	3,056	443	n/a	32	2,411	320	n/a	166
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	1,840	70	n/a	4	1,354	152	n/a	149
Jig	199	.23	n/a	3	422	48	n/a	40
Pot CV/CP	5,849	2,142	n/a	47	8,028	4,629	n/a	50
Trawl CV	6,933	1	n/a	9	7,738	263	n/a	56
Trawl C/P	657	0	n/a	0	734	0	n/a	0
Total	19,881	2,657		95	22,190	5,510		122

Pollock

The Area 610 A season closed on January 23 based on projected catch rates. However, catch rates were low, and salmon PSC rates and weather were a concern. The A season TAC was not reached. NMFS will assess reopening the 610 A season when catch rates improve. The Area 630 A season closed on January 29 and the A season TAC is projected to be reached. NMFS expects effort to move to the Area 620 A season pollock fishery. Complete catch reports for 610 and 630 A season fisheries are not yet available.

2017 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	2,232	34,549	11,014	9,348 (annual)
A season catch	6	30	1,941	n/a
A season closure	January 23	n/a	January 29	n/a

BSAI and GOA Salmon PSC

Chinook salmon PSC data is incomplete because the trawl fisheries opened on January 20, 2017.

BSAI and GOA Halibut Mortality Data

Halibut PSC data for the trawl fleet is also incomplete. One sector, the hook-and-line catcher vessels in the GOA, has encountered high halibut PSC rates. Around mid-January, most of the fleet reduced fishing effort because of weather and halibut PSC concerns. NMFS expects the fleet to resume fishing for Pacific cod this week.