



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

Fisheries managed by the State of Alaska since the last Council meeting includes those for crab and Pacific cod.

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab. During the 2016/17 season, fisheries opened for Aleutian Islands golden king crab, Bristol Bay red king crab and Eastern Bering Sea snow (*opilio*) crab. Since the April 2017 Council meeting, fisheries for Aleutian Islands golden king crab and Eastern Bering Sea snow crab have been ongoing.

Bering Sea snow crab

The Bering Sea snow crab fishery opened on October 15, 2016 and closed May 15, 2017 in the Eastern Subdistrict (between 166° W long. and 173° W long.) and May 31, 2017 in the Western Subdistrict (west of 173° W long.). The 2016/17 snow crab TAC was 21.57 mlbs. Sixty-three vessels harvested a total of 21.5 mlbs (>99% of TAC). Catch rates steadily declined throughout the season ending with a cumulative CPUE of 130 crabs per pot.

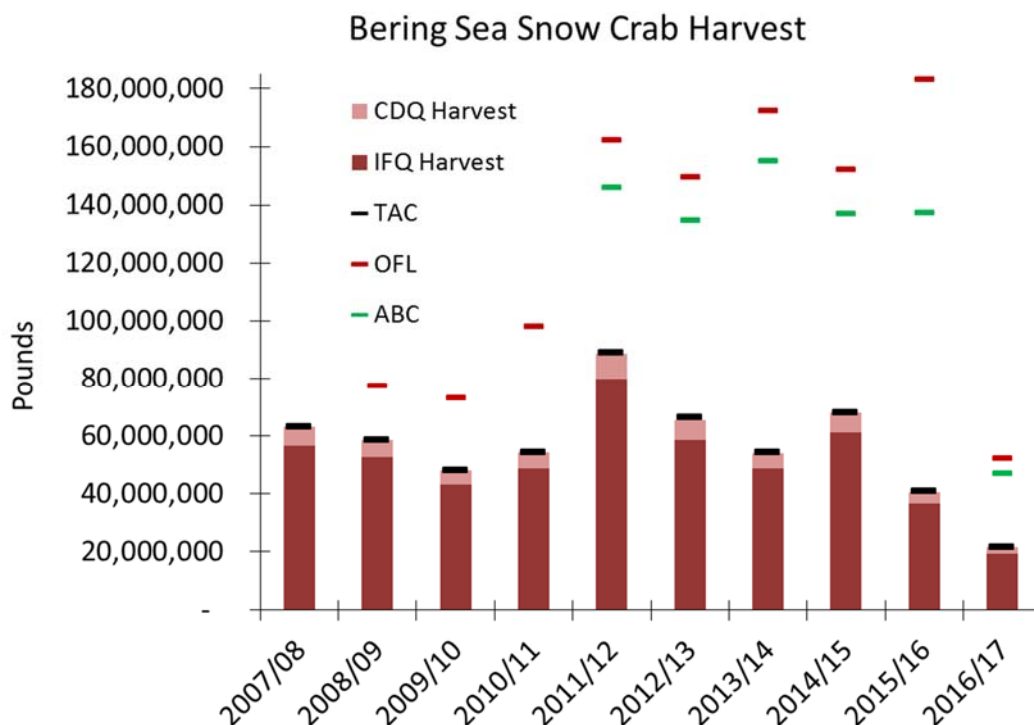


Figure 1. Bering Sea snow crab harvest, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2007/08 – 2016/17 seasons.

Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab

The 2016/17 Area 0 (Aleutian Islands) golden king crab fishery opened August 1, 2016. The TAC was set at 5.545 million pounds and is apportioned east and west of 174° W long; the eastern TAC is 3.31 million pounds and the western TAC is 2.235 million pounds. In the east area, three vessels harvested 3.28 million pounds, or about 99% of the TAC. In the west area, three vessels have harvested 2.23 million pounds (100% of TAC). Fisheries in both areas have concluded. Catch rates were higher in the east area, at 31 crabs per pot compared to 14 crabs per pot in the west area.

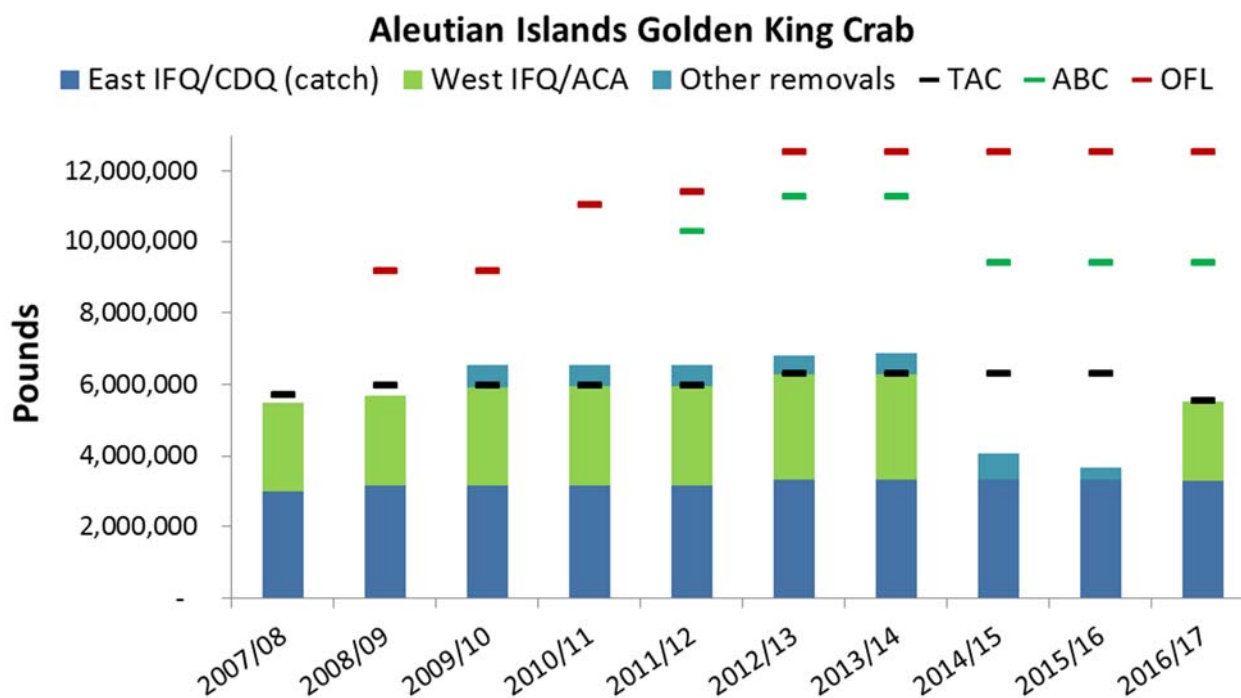


Figure 2. Aleutian Islands golden king crab harvest, TAC, OFL, and ABC; 2007/08 – 2016/17 seasons.

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 as follows:

State Management Area	Pacific cod ABC	GHL as % of ABC		2017 GHL (mt)
Prince William Sound	EGOA	25%		1,968
Chignik	CGOA	25%	8.75%	3,866
Kodiak			12.5%	5,523
Cook Inlet			3.75%	1,657
South Alaska Peninsula	WGOA	30%		10,887
Dutch Harbor Subdistrict	BS	6.4%		15,296
Aleutian Islands District	AI	27%		5,805

Central Region Pacific Cod

Prince William Sound: The state-waters pot season is scheduled to re-open on June 10, 2017. No vessels have registered to fish with pot gear. The state-waters longline season is scheduled to open on June 17, seven days after closure of the federal less than 50 foot hook and line sector. The state-waters jig season will open 24 hours after the initial federal jig season closes.

Cook Inlet: The state-waters pot season is scheduled to re-open on June 10, 2017. A total of 13 vessels have harvested 1.6 million pounds (45% of the GHL). The state-waters jig season in Cook Inlet will open 24 hours after the initial federal jig season closes.

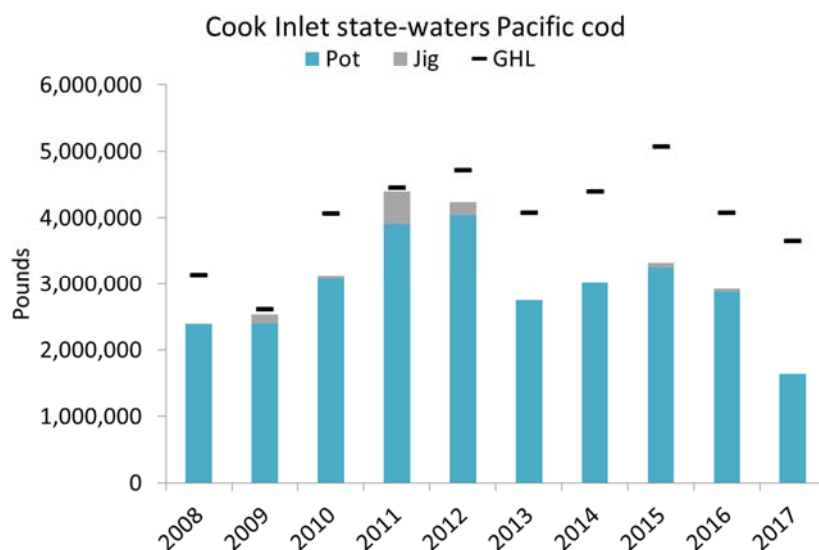


Figure 5. Cook Inlet state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Westward Region Pacific Cod

Kodiak: The 2017 state-waters GHL for the Kodiak Area is allocated 50 percent to mechanical jig and hand troll gears and 50 percent to pot gear, or 6.09 mlbs each. The state-waters pot fishery opened on March 2, 2017, seven days after the CGOA federal A-season pot fishery closure. Total harvest by 25 vessels is 3.7 mlbs (61% of the GHL). The season remains open; however, there has been no participation since the beginning of May. The state-waters jig fishery opened on March 15, 2017 by regulation. To date, a total of 21 vessels have harvested 0.98 mlbs.

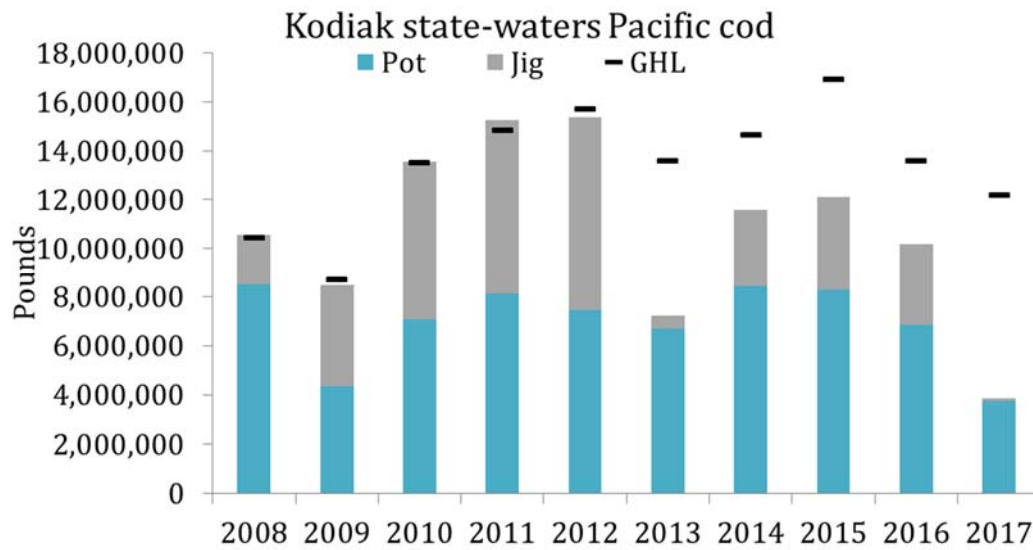


Figure 6. Kodiak state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Chignik: The state-waters pot season opened by regulation on March 2, 2017. Total harvest by ten vessels is 3.1 mlbs (41% of the GHL). Vessels participating in the Chignik Area may not exceed 58 feet in overall length. The state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 15; however, no vessels have participated in the fishery.

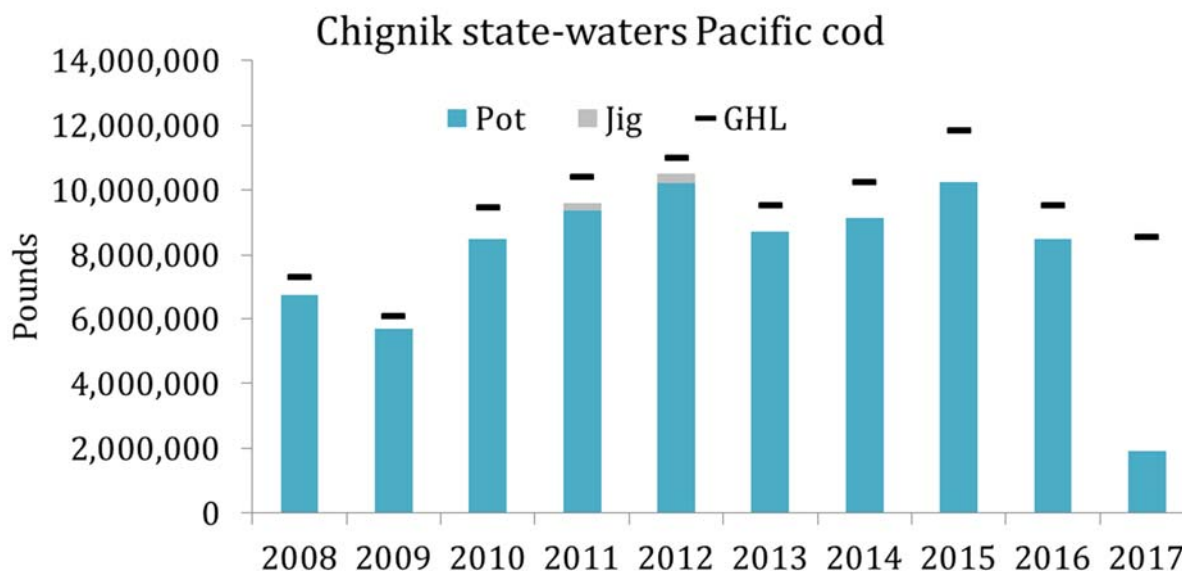


Figure 7. Chignik state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

South Alaska Peninsula: Eighty-five percent of the GHL in the South Alaska Peninsula Area is targeted by pot gear and vessels may not exceed 58 feet in overall length. The state-waters pot season opened by regulation on March 7, 2017 and 42 vessels have harvested a total of 20.1 mlbs (99% of the GHL). The state-waters jig fishery opened by regulation on March 17, 2017. Total jig harvest by six vessels is 0.50 mlbs.

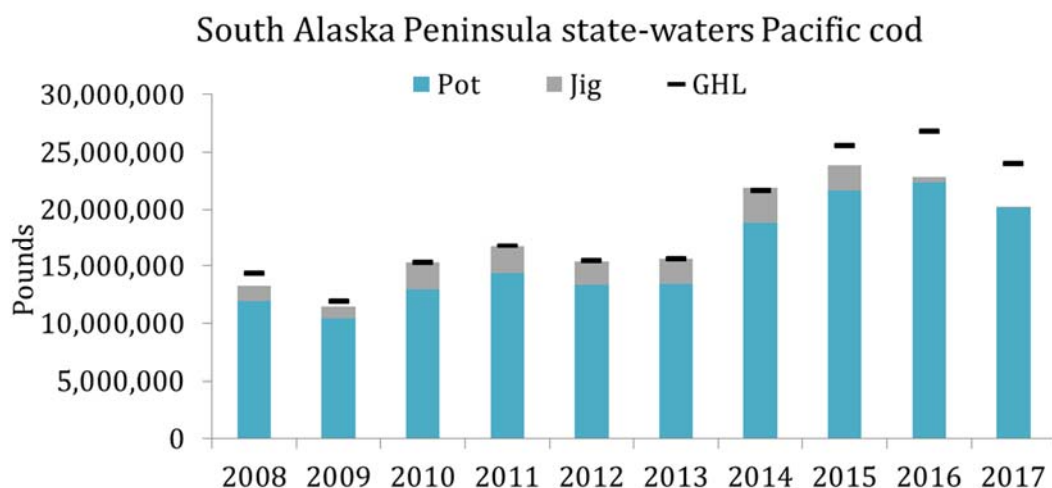


Figure 8. South Alaska Peninsula state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2008 – 2017.

Dutch Harbor Subdistrict: The Dutch Harbor Subdistrict opened on February 9, 2017, seven days after the initial federal Pacific cod season for the BSAI <60' hook-and-line and pot catcher vessel sector fishery closed. The fishery is only open to vessels ≤58' using pot gear (60 pot limit). The fishery closed April 8. Total harvest by 24 vessels was 27.76 mlbs (99% of the GHL).

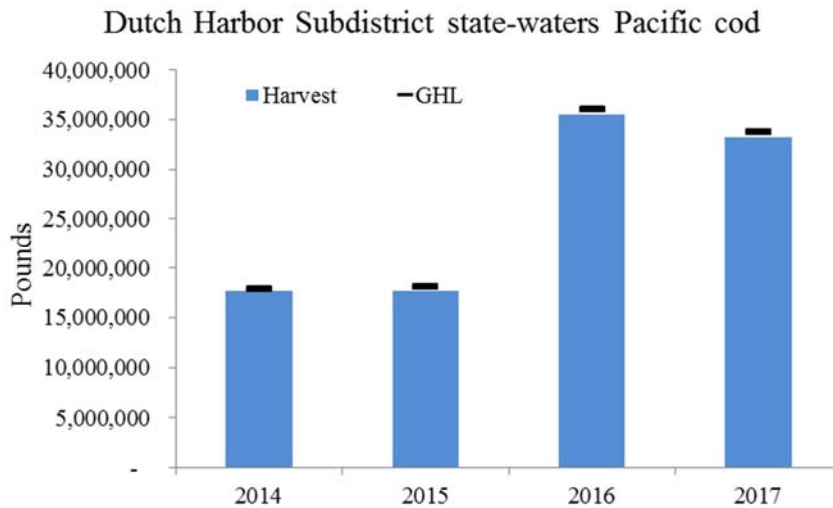


Figure 9. Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod harvest and Guideline Harvest Level, 2014 – 2017.

Aleutian Islands: The 2017 Aleutian Islands District state-waters Pacific cod season initially opened January 1, 2017 in the Adak Section (between 175° W long. and 178° W long.) to vessels 60 feet overall length (OAL) or less using pot, jig, and non-pelagic trawl gear and vessels 58 feet OAL or less using longline gear with a GHL of 12.79 mlbs. Beginning February 27, 2017, the state-waters season was expanded to include all state waters west of 170° W long. and opened to vessels 125 feet or less OAL using pot gear, vessels 100 feet OAL or less using trawl gear, and vessels 58 feet or less OAL using longline and jig gear. Three vessels have participated in the fishery and harvest remains confidential given the number of processors.

Alaska Board of Fisheries

TANNER CRAB HARVEST STRATEGY SPECIAL MEETING

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) addressed a board generated proposal May 17-18, focused on considering changes to the Bering Sea District *C. bairdi* Tanner Crab Harvest Strategy. The proposal focused on the following four elements:

- (a) Criteria used to determine mature female Tanner crab(female size-at-maturity);
- (b) Area used to estimate biomass expanded to consider west of 173° W. long. and other surveyed areas where biomass estimates are consistently available and areas closed to commercial crab fishing;
- (c) Years used to estimate long-term average mature female Tanner crab biomass;
- (d) Provision that TAC is reduced 50% in any year succeeding a year in which the mature female Tanner crab biomass falls below 40% of its long-term average.

The board modified the harvest strategy based on revised language found in RC 8¹. The substantive changes include; 1) adjusting the suite of years used to establish the mature female threshold, 2) including differential harvest limit calculations based on whether the mature female

¹ <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo&date=05-17-2017&meeting=anchorage>

point estimate from the Eastern Bering Sea survey is within or below the 95 percent confidence interval at the time of the survey, and 3) the definition of mature female crab was changed from a size based determination to observed morphology of the abdominal flap at the time of the survey.