



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

June 5, 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 February 2017 meeting include:

- Approval of Amendment 114 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish, and Amendment 104 to the FMP for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish – Implement Electronic Monitoring.

FMP Approval: June 5, 2017

See Attachment 1 for additional detail.

Update on Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group

The Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group (Working Group) will hold its first in-person meeting on September 21, 2017 at the Alaska Region in Juneau, Alaska. The Working Group was formed as a result of the 2015 Biological Opinion on the effects of the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries on short-tailed albatross. The Working Group is tasked with reviewing information for mitigating effects of the groundfish fisheries on short-tailed albatross and other seabirds. The Working Group will explore emerging seabird mitigation technologies. NMFS will keep the Council apprised of the working group's activities and any resulting recommendations for methods to reduce seabird bycatch. Any changes to seabird avoidance regulations are expected to follow the standard Council process. For additional information, please contact Anne Marie Eich (907-586-7172 or annemarie.eich@noaa.gov).

Seabird Cable Strike Mitigation Workshop

NOAA Fisheries will host a 2-day workshop on gear modification strategies for reducing seabird bycatch on November 7-8, 2017 in Seattle at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. The goal is to develop mitigation strategies that reduce cable strikes and could be used in the West Coast hake and Alaska pollock fisheries. This workshop will bring together experts from the at-sea processing industry, engineers, biologists and fisheries managers to develop innovative, practical gear-modifications for reducing seabird cable strike mortality. For additional information, please contact Anne Marie Eich (907-586-7172 or annemarie.eich@noaa.gov).



Halibut Decksorting Regulatory Process

On February 17, 2017 NMFS issued a renewed 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 EFP is valid for 2017. 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 2EFP (EFP 2016-01) is available on the NMFS Alaska Region webpage: https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/efp16_01_halibut_renew_permit.pdf

Pending interest from the permit holder, we intend to issue a new EFP for 2018 and 2019 prior to the expiration of the existing EFP in December 2017. If we receive a new EFP application by August 2017, we will consult with the Council at its October 2017 meeting and we would intend to have a new EFP in place by January 2018.

One objective of the EFP is to develop protocols that can be implemented in regulations. Under the halibut decksorting EFPs to date, 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 is commencing an analysis to allow decksorting of halibut on non-pelagic trawl catcher/processors operating in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and possibly the Gulf of Alaska, as an option permitted in regulation. With Council concurrence, NMFS intends to present an initial and final analysis to the Council at its February and June 2018 meetings, respectively. If approved, the final rule would publish in 2019, and become effective on January 1, 2020.

Staff Changes

Stephanie Warpinski joined Sustainable Fisheries on May 15. Stephanie previously worked for the McDowell Group, where she was an economist and lead analyst for all fisheries-related projects. Stephanie's recent work included an analysis of the economic impacts of the seafood industry on the Kodiak Island Borough and a report on the modernization of the North Pacific fishing fleet for the Port of Seattle. Stephanie's professional and academic work has focused on quantitative analyses of fisheries management actions using economic and biological data. Stephanie holds a Master's of Science in Resource and Applied Economics from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

Kurt Iverson joined us on May 30. Many of you know Kurt from his many years of involvement with fisheries issues working for the State of Alaska. Since mid-2015, Kurt has served as Alaska Department of Fish and Game Extended Jurisdiction staff tracking issues at the Council. Prior to that, Kurt spent over two decades at the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission as a Project Leader and Fisheries Analyst for the Commission's Research and Planning Division. In these

positions, Kurt developed an extensive knowledge of State of Alaska and Federal fisheries management systems. His work focused on analyses of fisheries economics and participation for a broad suite of fisheries management issues. Kurt holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Central Michigan University.

Both Stephanie and Kurt will be joining Rachel's Catch Share branch and focusing on regulatory and analytic work needed to support our various catch share programs and allocations.

In addition to his new role as a father, Dr. Jason Gasper has been selected to fill the role of Sustainable Fisheries' Senior Analyst. Jason's knowledge and skills will be put to good use in his new role leading our complex analytical efforts and providing guidance to existing staff. Jason has worked as a Resource Management Specialist with Sustainable Fisheries for the past 12 years. Jason has expertise with a broad range of analytical issues including the North Pacific Observer Program, fishery stock assessment, catch and bycatch estimation, and recreational fishery management. He has led or co-authored numerous publications on these and other topics. Jason is currently serving on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's SSC. Dr. Gasper received his doctorate from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences in 2011, and a Masters of Marine Affairs from the University of Washington, School of Marine Affairs in 2004. Jason will be starting his new position once he returns from "dad detail".

On a sad note, Keeley Kent will be leaving the Sustainable Fisheries Division shortly after the June Council meeting to take a position with the NMFS West Coast Region. Keeley will split her time in the fall between Alaska and West Coast Region projects while working out of the West Coast Region office in Seattle. She will make the full transition to the West Coast Region in late September.

Keeley joined us in June 2015 and hit the ground running on analyses and regulations that revised the crab and IFQ programs and our other catch share programs. Keeley helped lead the effort to implement four new cost recovery programs in 2016. This was a high priority project for the region, and Keeley played a critical role in our success by effectively and efficiently coordinating a large group of staff among several divisions.

Thank you Keeley, for your many contributions. The West Coast Region is lucky to have you.

Attachment 1 -- Status of Regulatory ActionsChanges since April 2017 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 <i>Federal Register</i>	Proposed Rule Published in <i>Federal Register</i>	Final Rule or Notice of Approval Published in <i>Federal Register</i>
FMP Amendments								
Amendments 48 (KTC) Community Development Quota (CDQ) Ownership Attribution	Marrinan Kent Watson	April 2017	PR: 4/26/17	PR: 5/2/17				
Amendments 114 (BSAI) and 104 (GOA) Electronic Monitoring (EM) Approved: June 5, 2017	Evans Harrington/Watson Meyer	December 2016	PR: 2/7/17	PR: 2/8/17	PR: 3/3/17	Mar 10, 2017 82 FR 13302 EOC: 5/9/17	Mar 23, 2017 82 FR 14853 EOC: 5/22/17	
Amendments 115 (BSAI), 105 (GOA), 49 (KTC), 13 (Salmon), 2 (Arctic) EFH Omnibus	MacLean Mackey Meyer	April 2017						
Regulatory Amendments								
Authorizing a Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) to hold halibut QS	Marrinan Scheurer Lepore	December 2016	PR: 5/16/17	FR: 5/23/17				

Attachment 2 Inseason Management Report

Catch during 2017 is through May 27, 2017 and is compared to catch through May 28, 2016. All catch amounts are shown in metric tons. More information is 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.

Bering Sea	2017 allocation ¹	2017 catch	2017 percent taken	2016 allocation ¹	2016 catch	2016 percent taken
Inshore	586,145	243,502	43%	585,379	230,600	39%
C/P	468,916	205,845	44%	468,304	183,852	39%
Mothership	117,229	51,727	44%	117,076	46,452	40%
CDQ	136,400	61,031	45%	135,900	54,229	40%
Incidental	47,210	19,772	42%	48,240	24,465	51%
Total	1,355,900	581,877	43%	1,354,899	539,598	40%

¹NMFS reallocated 1,900 mt of CDQ and 9,000 mt of Aleut Corporation pollock TAC in 2017 and 1,900 of CDQ and 13,000 mt of Aleut Corporation TAC in 2016 from the Aleutian Islands to the respective Bering Sea TACs.

BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

BSAI Sector	2017				2016			
	Season allocation	Catch May 27	Season closed	# of vessels May 27	Season allocation	Catch May 28	Season closed	# of vessels May 28
CDQ	16,166	16,078	n/a	35	16,147	16,786	n/a	33
Hook-and-line CP	52,893	52,736	n/a	28	55,581	54,489	n/a	29
Pot C/P	1,629	1,626	Jan 25	4	1,712	1,724	Jan 29	4
Pot CV ≥ 60 ft	9,123	9,377	Jan 25	30	9,587	9,073	Jun 10	15
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	5,959	6,396	Jan 29	22	6,226	6,163	Feb 5	19
Jig	96	0	n/a	0	136	2	n/a	0
Trawl CV	40,159	42,979	Apr 3	95	42,192	42,161	Mar 9	93
AFA CP	4,917	4,398	n/a	16	5,166	2,941	n/a	15
Amendment 80 CP	28,647	14,349	n/a	17	30,097	19,247	n/a	18
Total	159,589	148,025		247	166,844	152,586		226

¹In 2017 NMFS reallocated 1,700 mt and in 2016 NMFS reallocated 1,750 mt of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 ft length overall allocation.

Aleutian Islands Pacific cod

- In 2017, the non-CDQ allocation of Pacific cod in the Aleutian Islands remains open with 36% of the 14,016 mt TAC taken relative to 2016 with 82% of the 11,465 mt TAC taken, and closure on March 22. Seven vessels have targeted Pacific cod in 2017 compared to 14 vessels in 2016.

BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)

- In 2017 most flatfish total catch is lower relative to 2016, except for Alaska plaice, Greenland turbot, and yellowfin sole.
- NMFS prohibited directed fishing for yellowfin sole by vessels in the BSAI trawl limited access sector on May 18, 2017. The 18,151 mt TAC was exceeded by 436 mt as catch rates increased the last week of the fishery. The total halibut PSC is 125 mt out of the 150 mt limit. The halibut PSC rate was 3.91 mt per mt of groundfish in the yellowfin sole target. In 2016, this fishery closed on June 8, 2016 on reaching the TAC.

Species	2017			2016		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Alaska plaice	9,672	13,000	74%	5,724	14,500	39%
Arrowtooth flounder	1,546	14,000	11%	2,516	14,000	18%
Flathead sole	3,351	14,500	23%	3,800	21,000	18%
Greenland turbot	336	4,500	7%	163	2,873	6%
Kamchatka flounder	736	5,000	15%	2,575	5,000	52%
Other flatfish	1,535	2,500	61%	2,088	2,500	84%
Rock sole	25,579	47,100	54%	37,362	57,100	65%
Yellowfin sole	61,060	154,000	40%	61,123	144,000	42%
Total	103,815	254,600	41%	115,360	260,973	44%

BSAI Atka mackerel and Pacific ocean perch (includes CDQ)

Species	2017			2016		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	26,793	65,000	41%	22,448	55,000	41%
Pacific ocean perch	2,324	34,900	7%	4,394	31,900	14%

Bering Sea Trawl Sablefish

- NMFS prohibited directed fishing for non-CDQ sablefish by vessels using trawl gear in the Bering Sea to prevent exceeding the 541 mt trawl gear allocation of the TAC on May 18, 2017. The 2017 total catch was 347 mt, and 92% retained. Directed fishing is open for Amendment 80 cooperatives because their halibut PSC limit is not allocated by fishery. This is the first year since 2008 that NMFS has prohibited directed fishing.

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

Sector	2017				2016			
	A season allocation	Catch May 27	A season closed	# of vessels May 27	A season allocation	Catch May 28	A season closed	# of vessels May 28
Hook-and-line C/P	2,700	2,648	Apr 4	5	2,982	2,778	Jun 10	6
Hook-and-line CV	173	50	Jun 10	56	192	67	Mar 11	32
Jig	381	48	n/a	5	595	52	n/a	7
Pot CV/CP	4,904	5,159	Feb 16	35	5,417	5,754	Feb 19	36
Trawl CV	6,861	7,489	Mar 8	29	7,579	7,306	Mar 12	25
Trawl C/P	223	13	Jun 10	<3	246	45	Jun 10	<3
Total	15,242	15,407		130	17,011	16,002		108

Pacific cod - Central GOA

Sector	2017				2016			
	A season allocation	Catch May 27	A season closed	# of vessels May 27	A season allocation	Catch May 28	A season closed	# of vessels May 28
Hook-and-line C/P	1,347	1,213	Jun 10	7	1,504	594	Jun 10	5
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	3,056	1,821	Jun 10	84	2,411	2,040	Mar 11	88
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	1,840	462	Jun 10	91	1,354	719	Mar 11	125
Jig	199	17	n/a	20	422	266	n/a	52
Pot CV/CP	7,349	6,624	Jun 10	57	8,028	8,284	Mar 31	56
Trawl CV	5,433	3,020	Jun 10	47	7,738	5,373	May 19	50
Trawl C/P	657	71	Jan 20	<3	734	57	Jan 20	<3
Total	19,881	10,245		306	22,190	17,333		376

In 2017, NMFS reallocated 1,500 mt from the trawl CVs to pot CV/CPs and reopened pot gear April 6. In 2016, NMFS reallocated of 1,700 mt from hook-and-line CVs to pot CV/CP (1,500 mt) and Jig (200 mt). In 2016, pot CV/CP closed February 1 to March 12, jig closed March 1 to March 19.

Pollock

- All areas caught the A season TACs. For the B season, Areas 620 and 630 were open all season and Area 610 had 3 openings. In all areas, B season pollock remains unharvested and most of it rolls to the C season.

2017 Seasons	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	2,232	34,549	11,014	7,492 (annual)
A season catch	2,591	35,908	11,857	0
A season closure	January 29	February 28	February 19	n/a
B season allocation	2,232	39,420	6,143	n/a
B season catch	1,517	24,596	3,956	n/a
B season closure	May 31	May 31	May 31	n/a

Implementation of pot gear for IFQ sablefish fishery in the GOA

- Nineteen vessels have registered for 9,076 pot tags. Ten vessels have reported 183 mt of sablefish landings in the IFQ fishery using pot gear.

Salmon and Halibut PSC in the BSAI and GOA**Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries**

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
Year	2017		2016		2017		2016	
Amount	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	2,115	3.44%	1,245	2.27%	239	0.39%	415	0.76%
Non-CDQ	19,487	3.83%	15,573	3.33%	1,587	0.31%	3,350	0.75%
Total	21,602	3.78%	16,818	3.21%	1,826	0.32%	3,765	0.75%

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.**Salmon in the BSAI Non-Pollock Trawl Fisheries**

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
Year	2017		2016		2017		2016	
Amount	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹	#	Rate ¹
CDQ	765	6.30%	1,000	6.95%	0	0.00%	87	0.60%
A80	2,678	2.23%	5,571	3.79%	386	0.32%	620	0.42%
TLAS	1,679	2.13%	2,576	3.79%	19	0.02%	196	0.29%
Total	5,122	1.43%	9,147	3.99%	405	0.19%	903	0.39%

¹Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.**Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA**

- In 2017, Chinook salmon PSC is 9,575 salmon higher relative to PSC use in 2016. The Central GOA pollock and trawl CV non-Rockfish Program/non-pollock fisheries may reach their limits. NMFS will assess the potential for reallocations from other sectors.

Chinook Salmon	2017 Limit	2017 PSC (Rate ²)	2016 PSC (Rate ²)
Total	n/a	12,938 (15%)	3,363 (5%)
Western GOA pollock	6,684	606 (8%)	856 (11%)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	9,951 (52%)	2,420 (5%)
Western/Central trawl CV ¹	3,060	2,128 (76%)	19 (0%)
Central Rockfish CV	1,200	34 (0.8%)	57 (0.7%)
Western/Central trawl C/P ¹	4,080	219 (8%)	11 (0.5%)

¹Includes incentive buffers for 2017 Western/Central trawl CV limit (360 Chinook), and 2016 and 2017 Western/Central trawl CP limit (480 Chinook).

Non-Chinook Salmon	2017 PSC (Rate ²)	2016 PSC (Rate ²)
Total	320 (0.23%)	134 (0.11%)

²Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

Halibut Mortality Data in the BSAI and GOA

- In 2017 relative to 2016, the total halibut mortality is 311 mt lower in the BSAI by and 366 mt lower in the GOA. In the BSAI, the largest halibut mortality decreases are for Amendment 80 rock sole (254 mt) and trawl CV Pacific cod (44 mt) targets. The 2017 rock sole catch is also lower by 11,783 mt. In the GOA, the largest decreases are for the trawl CV Pacific cod (272 mt) and hook-and-line Pacific cod (116 mt) targets. The 2017 trawl CV Pacific cod catch is also lower by 3,071 mt.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2017			2016		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	1,043	626,360	0.10%	1,354	674,076	0.12%
Amendment 80	472	60,080	0.33%	732	78,763	0.48%
BSAI trawl limited access	444	438,890	0.08%	464	470,434	0.07%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	79	48,563	0.13%	90	51,514	0.15%
Non-trawl Other	1	0	0%	0	0	0%
CDQ	48	78,827	0.04%	68	73,365	0.05%
GOA Total	657	119,466	0.55%	1,023	105,582	0.94%
Trawl, Deep-water	435	13,006	3.34%	393	13,352	2.94%
Trawl, Shallow-water	114	94,200	0.12%	401	75,248	0.53%
Rockfish Program	12	4,220	0.28%	17	8,488	0.20%
Hook-and-line CP	22	4,358	0.50%	47	3,995	1.18%
Hook-and-line CV	74	3,682	2.01%	165	4,499	3.67%