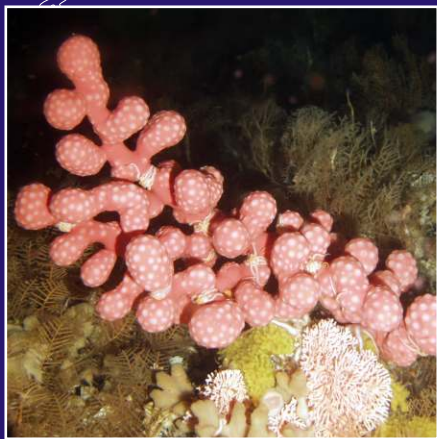
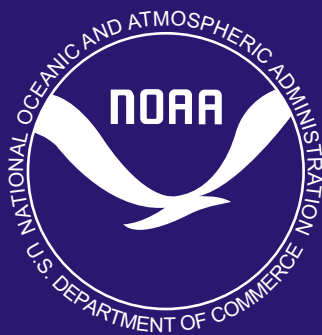


# ALASKA GROUND FISH FISHERIES

## FINAL PROGRAMMATIC SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



**United States Department of Commerce**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**National Marine Fisheries Service Alaska Region**

**June 2004**

**Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**  
**for the**  
**Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Implemented Under the Authority of the**  
***Fishery Management Plans for the Groundfish Fishery of the Gulf of Alaska***  
***and the Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area***

**June 2004**

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**Lead Agency:** USDC National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Alaska Region  
Juneau, Alaska, and Seattle, Washington

**Responsible Official:** James W. Balsiger, Administrator, Alaska Region  
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US Coast Guard

**Abstract:** The environmental impact statements for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Aleutian Islands groundfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) were prepared in 1978 and 1981, respectively. During the intervening years, numerous changes have occurred that warrant preparation of a Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS). These changes include the shift from primarily foreign fisheries to completely domestic fisheries; that the FMPs governing the fisheries have been amended numerous times; that new information is available about the ecosystem; that the science of fisheries management has progressed substantially; that public opinion about management of these fisheries has changed; and that several bird and marine mammal species have been listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. This PSEIS was prepared to establish a new baseline of environmental and economic information, bringing the federally managed groundfish fisheries into compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act as well as serve as the supporting document for the reauthorization of the Alaska groundfish fisheries. This PSEIS presents the impacts of groundfish fishing on the biological and economic environments that result from a broad array of policy-level programmatic fisheries management alternatives. Included in this final PSEIS is the recommended preferred alternative of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and its environmental consequences. Impacts are disclosed, both significantly beneficial and significantly adverse as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The preferred alternative is a new policy framework that represents a conservative, precautionary approach to ecosystem-based fisheries management, and communicates a policy direction for the future. The preferred alternative is a realistic and responsible approach that addresses and complies with the various goals, objectives and requirements of the

Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. A biological assessment on the preferred alternative was prepared according to procedures implementing the Endangered Species Act, and it is included in the PSEIS appendix.