

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

For 2006, the Chinook Salmon Savings Area limit is 29,000 salmon. During the 2005 A season 26,468 (non-CDQ) and (1,296) CDQ chinook salmon were taken. The 2006 chinook salmon catch of 7,342 salmon through January 28 is tracking higher than the 2005 rate of 5,236 salmon taken through January 29.

Catcher/processors

In 2006, 16 catcher/processors (c/ps) are targeting pollock (17 in 2005) and the fleet average for the first full week is 5,500 mt/day. The 2005 average for the A season was 4,870 mt/day.

Inshore processors

Currently, 49 catcher vessels are targeting pollock (56 in 2005). In 2006, for the first full week of the fishery the shoreside catch averages 4,100 mt/day. The 2005 daily rate for the first full week was 5,000 mt/day.

Motherships

All 3 motherships are currently active. The average for the 2006 A season was about 1,326 mt/day which was the same as 2005.

Flatfish

In 2006, the fishery started with 13 c/ps primarily targeting flatfish (12 in 2005). Most of the effort is targeting rock sole with roe. The catch through January 28, 2006, is 2,000 mt which compares to 1,800 mt through January 29, 2005. In 2005, the first seasonal trawl rock sole fishery opened on January 20 and closed on March 1 due to halibut mortality. Halibut mortality averaged about 10 mt per day for the first 4 weeks and then increased to about 22 mt per day in late February. As in 2005, the 2006 red king crab zone 1 limit is 197,000 crab. The rock sole/other flatfish/flathead sole target has a limit of 121,413 crab in 2006. Zone 1 remained open for the rock sole/other flatfish/flathead sole category in 2005. The red king crab savings subarea (RKCSS) limit is 42,495 under the final harvest specifications. As of January 28, 3,761 mt of red king crab has been taken inside the RKCSS. In 2005, the RKCSS closed on March 8 to non-pelagic trawl gear.

Atka mackerel

As in 2005, six c/ps registered for the 2006 A season harvest limitation area (HLA) fisheries in 543 and 542. NMFS closed the area 541/Bering Sea subarea fishery since the TAC only supports incidental catch amounts. The HLA fisheries started on January 22. The last HLA fishery closes February 21. Currently, most of the effort is in area 542 with 2,100 mt taken inside the HLA and 3,700 mt outside the HLA. In 2005, 99% of the 542 HLA and 20% of the 543 was taken in the HLA. In 2005, the entire area 542 closed on February 17 and area 543 on April 15.

Pacific cod

The hook-and-line, pot and jig fisheries started January 1. Trawl fisheries began January 20.

Hook-and-line C/Ps

As in the 2005 A season, 38 hook-and-line c/ps have checked into the Pacific cod fishery. Catch for 2006 is 24,350 mt through January 28. In 2005, the catch was 24,800 mt through January 29 and the A season closed on February 22. The 2006 A season TAC under the final specifications is 43,690 mt. At the current catch rates, the A season is expected to close the week of February 19 – 25.

Pot

The 2006 fishery for catcher vessels > 60 feet LOA closed on February 3 with 38 vessels taking about 8,200 mt. In 2005, the fishery closed on February 13 with 45 vessels taking about 8,000 mt. In 2006, most of the pot vessels started fishing Pacific cod and they are expected to switch to opilio crab after the Pacific cod closure or the Western GOA Pacific cod fishery. Currently no effort is showing up in the pot c/p fishery.

Trawl

About 24 trawl catcher vessels delivering shore side are targeting Pacific cod (14 in 2005). The total Pacific cod catch through January 28 is 4,000 mt (including pelagic gear and mothership effort). In 2005, the catch was 3,150 mt through January 29 and the A season closed on March 13. Three trawl c/ps are targeting Pacific cod.

Gulf of Alaska

Western GOA Pacific cod

In 2005, the A season fishery for inshore Pacific cod closed on February 24, taking about 10,000 mt. The inshore Pacific cod fishery in the Western GOA has taken about 1,700 mt through January 28. The 2006 A season TAC for the inshore component is 10,876 mt under the final specifications. NMFS set an incidental catch allowance (ICA) of 100 mt to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries and the remaining 10,776 mt as a directed fishing allowance (DFA). As of January 28, inshore deliveries total 1,720 mt. Pot gear has taken 97% and trawl gear 3% compared to the 2005 A season when pot gear took 52%, trawl gear 42%, and hook-and-line gear 5%. Some effort is showing up for the offshore fishery.

Central GOA Pacific cod

In 2005, the A season fishery for inshore Pacific cod closed on January 26, taking about 12,000 mt. The 2006 A season TAC under the final specifications for the inshore component is 15,339 mt, with an ICA of 2,000 mt and a DFA of 13,339 mt. As of January 28, inshore deliveries total 7,200 mt. Pot gear took 44%, trawl gear 22% and hook-and-line gear 34% compared to the 2005 A season when pot gear took 37%, trawl gear 36%, jig gear 1%, and hook-and-line gear 26%. No effort has shown up for the offshore component.

Pollock

Since the inception of a State managed pollock fishery in Prince William Sound (PWS) the GOA Plan Team has recommended that the guideline harvest level (GHL) for the pollock fishery in PWS be deducted from the ABC for pollock in the in the Western/Central/West Yakutat (W/C/WYK) areas. The Plan Team based its pollock ABC recommendation for the W/C/WYK Area on a pollock GHL for the PWS of 910 mt. Following the Council's December 2005 meeting the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) completed a new assessment of the pollock biomass in PWS. In a December 28, 2005 news release ADF&G announced a GHL of 3.64 million pounds (1,650 mt) for the 2006 PWS pollock fishery, a difference of 740 mt for the GHL already considered. NMFS is reducing the 2006 and 2007 ABCs for the pollock fishery in the W/C/WYK area by 740 mt from the Council's recommendation to be consistent with the conservation and management policies for pollock in the W/C/WYK. The Council recommended that the TAC for pollock in the W/C/WYK area be set equal to the ABC, therefore, NMFS is reducing the 2006 and 2007 TACs for pollock in the W/C/WYK area by 740 mt. The 2006 ABCs and TACs for pollock are now 28,918 mt for 610, 30,492 for 620, 18,448 mt for 630, and 1,792 mt for 640.

The pollock fisheries in areas 610, 620, and 630 opened January 20. The fishery in 610 closed after 2 days taking about 55% of the final A season TAC. NMFS reopened the fishery for 24 hours on January 26 and the A season TAC was reached. Currently, the trawl vessels have mostly agreed to wait to target pollock in the Central GOA. The A season pollock fishery in area 630 is expected to close 3 or 4 days after the Central GOA inshore Pacific cod fishery closes. The last couple of years fishing in area 620 has not accelerated until late February or early March.