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# News & Notes

## North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2012



## Council Recognition

Three long-time NOAA Fisheries employees who are retiring and leaving the Council process were recognized at the December Council meeting. Ken Hansen, Assistant Special Agent in charge of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, was awarded the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award. Hansen has had a long and close involvement in the fishing industry in Alaska, and has been described as "not your ordinary law enforcement officer."

Sherrie Tinsley Meyers, Special Agent in charge, also from NOAA's office of Law Enforcement, was recognized for her work with the Council and her involvement in law enforcement. Jesse Gharrett, the head of National Marine Fisheries Restricted Access Management Division, will be retiring after 37 years. Gharrett is an expert on limited access programs, and her expertise will be missed.

We wish them all luck in their future endeavors, and thank them for their stewardship in managing Alaska's resources.



Ken Hansen recognized by Eric Olson, NPFMC Chairman.

## GOA Chinook Bycatch

The Council reviewed an initial analysis of alternatives to establish a hard cap for Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) taken in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) non-pollock trawl fisheries. The Council expanded the apportionment options for the PSC limit available under Alternative 2, and requested additional analysis to reflect the varying level of monitoring tools available among different user groups within the GOA trawl fleet.

The Council added the following options for the apportionment of a Chinook salmon PSC limit:

- a direct apportionment of Chinook PSC to the Central GOA Rockfish Program,
- a limit on the proportion of the PSC limit that can be used in the first half of the year, and
- an option to base apportionment among sectors on proportion of historic groundfish harvest.

The Council also limited, to some extent, how options will be evaluated in combination, acknowledging that the creation of very small PSC allowances poses an inseason management challenge for some sectors. The Council motion, with the complete suite of alternatives, is available on the Council website.

The Council also noted that obtaining information on stock of origin of Chinook salmon caught as bycatch in the non-pollock trawl fisheries is a high priority, and asked the agency to assess, by sector and fishery, any changes to monitoring requirements or sampling design that might be

possible in order to successfully implement a full retention requirement for Chinook salmon PSC. Other areas where the Council asked for additional analysis are referenced in the motion, available on the Council website.

A revised draft of the analysis will be released in preparation for Council final action on this issue in either April or June of 2013. Staff contacts are Diana Evans and Sam Cunningham.

## Round Island Transit Corridor

The Council received a brief discussion paper outlining preliminary information for establishing a transit corridor through the Round Island walrus protection area. The Council originally directed staff to prepare an analysis to allow transit of vessels with FFPs to transit the walrus protection area while tendering herring for the Togiak area herring fishery. During investigations, staff learned of additional information that may impact the scope of the analysis. The discussion paper requested input from the Council on whether they wished to expand the initial scope of the analysis to include passage of vessels other than those tendering herring (e.g., Amendment 80 vessels delivering yellowfin sole) through the Round Island area, or to include a transit corridor through the walrus protection area around Cape Peirce. The Purpose and Need statement, along with the alternatives, are posted on the Council's website. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

## EFH Consultation

At the December meeting, NMFS provided a report on essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation actions in which they have been engaged. This is the first such report since the Council adopted its formal EFH consultation policy in April, in response to which the agency will provide regular reports to the Council.

The report also includes a discussion of future actions of possible interest to the Council, and identifies that input from the Council would be appreciated on proposed Norton Sound mining operations and implications for red king crab. The Council tasked their Ecosystem Committee with considering this issue at their next meeting. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

## PSEIS SIR

The Council concurred with staff's proposed approach for developing the Supplemental Information Report (SIR) for the 2004 *Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (PSEIS). The SIR will focus on re-evaluating the conclusions of the PSEIS in the light of new information and new analytical methods, to determine whether the 2004 conclusions continue to be valid. Under a tentative timeline outlined in the staff discussion paper, a draft SIR could be ready for Council review late in 2013. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

## Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS

At the December 2012 Council meeting, the Council received an update on progress made of the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS, and forwarded alternatives to NMFS SF for evaluation in the EIS. Staff from NMFS, Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division summarized the Scoping Report for the Council. The scoping period for the EIS closed on October 15, 2012. The Scoping Report was submitted to the Council on November 19, 2012. The Scoping Report is posted on the NMFS AKR website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/sslpm/eis/default.htm>.

The Chairman and Council staff for the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee presented two draft alternatives for consideration in the 2012 Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures EIS. The Council passed a motion that edited those alternatives, and presented a third alternative for evaluation by NMFS. The motion reads:

- 1. The Council acknowledges NMFS' efforts to produce the EIS consistent with the court order and timelines approved therein, fully incorporating the findings of both independent reviews, and providing full analysis of all relevant issues,*
- 2. The Council expects the EIS to state how alternatives considered and decisions based on it will or will not achieve the requirements of other environmental laws.*
- 3. The Council expects the EIS process will result in reconsultation on a package of fishery measures that, when compared to the 2010 BiOp, better balance the need to protect Steller sea lion populations in the central and western AI, the needs of the groundfish fisheries and fishery dependent communities, using the best scientific information as a foundation, including the results of the peer-review process.*
- 4. The Council forwards the two alternatives developed by the SSLMC for analysis in the EIS, with the following modifications:*
  - a. In Alternative 1, strike language for Pacific cod Area 542/541 starting with "Option 1: Limit to HAL..." and ending with "Option 2: Include Mothership participation".*
  - b. In Alternative 2, strike language for Pacific cod area 543 starting with "Option 1: Limit to HAL..." and ending with "Option 2: Include Mothership participation".*

*In addition, the Council moves a third alternative which consists of the regulations and RPAs for Atka mackerel and Pacific cod in place prior to adoption of the 2011 Interim Final Rule, adjusted to take into account changes in fishery management that have occurred since 2003 (e.g., Amendment 80, etc.), and for walleye pollock, includes the measures contained in SSLMC Alternative 2 to allow a fishery in areas 543, 542, 541.*

The full alternatives, including detailed maps of proposed open areas, are posted on the Council website. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

## Council Appointments

Appointments to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel were made at the December meeting. The Council announced the following reappointments for three-year terms to the Advisory Panel: Joel Peterson, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Anne Vanderhoeven, Craig Lowenberg and Andy Mezirow. Tim Evers was appointed for a one year term to address charter halibut issues. Additionally, the AP welcomes two new members: John Gruver, of United Catcher Boats and Mitch Kilborn of International Seafoods of Alaska, in Kodiak. The AP membership also includes Kurt Cochran, John Crowley, Jerry Downing, Tom Enlow, Jeff Farvour, Alexis Kwachka, Bryan Lynch, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Ed Poulsen, Neil Rodriguez, Ernie Weiss, and Lori Swanson. Many thanks to Jan Jacobs and Matt Moir, retiring members of the AP, for their service.

The Council also re-appointed the SSC members for another year term. SSC membership includes Dr. Jennifer Burns, Dr. Henry Cheng, Bob Clark, Alison Dauble, Sherri Dressel, Dr. Anne Hollowed, Dr. George Hunt, Dr. Gordon Kruse, Dr. Kathy Kuletz, Pat Livingston, Dr. Seth Macinko, Dr. Steve Martell, Dr. Franz Mueter, Dr. Jim Murphy, Lew Queirolo, Dr. Terry Quinn, Dr. Kate Reedy-Maschner, and Farron Wallace.

Additionally, the Council appointed Dr. Ian Stewart to replace Steven Hare on the GOA Groundfish Plan Team, and made two appointments to the Crab Plan Team: Dr. Buck Stockhausen, who replaced Lou Rugalo, and Dr. Martin Dorn. We look forward to working with them in the future.

# Observer Program

At the December meeting, the Council reiterated its support for the restructured Observer Program, and the 2013 observer annual deployment plan (ADP), including the deployment of observers on vessels in the trip selection and vessel selection pools, as well as the 2013 electronic monitoring (EM) pilot project. The Council received an update from NMFS on changes the agency has made to the 2013 ADP, based on the Council's recommendations in October 2012:

- Vessels selected for observer coverage in the vessel selection pool will now be selected for a 2-month period of coverage, as opposed to a 3-month period.
- Instead of assigning a uniform ~13% coverage rate for vessels in the vessel selection pool and trips in the trip selection pool, the ADP has been revised to assign a higher rate of coverage to trips in the trip selection pool (anticipated to be approximately 14-15%). As a consequence, the coverage rate in the vessel selection pool will reduce to approximately 11%.

At the Council's request, NMFS has also been working with industry to accommodate requests for voluntary 100% observer coverage in some fisheries that currently fall within the partial observer coverage category.

The Council requested that in April 2013 the agency

bring back a framework for analyzing several of the key issues that the Council has already identified for discussion in the first year program review scheduled in June 2013. These issues are listed in full in the motion posted on the Council website. The April framework will provide an opportunity for the Council and the public to comment on the proposed data and methodology to be used for these evaluations, prior to the June report. The Council also requested a framework or outline to be presented on the EM Strategic Plan in April, which would include the identification of alternative approaches to achieving the Council's EM objectives.

Additionally, the Council asked staff to develop a discussion paper to explore cost savings and efficiencies that may be obtained by use of a third party entity, for example the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSFMC), to solicit and contract with observer and/or EM providers, and to interface with the industry and the agency in the management of the Observer Program.

Finally, the Council noted appreciation for NMFS' clarifications on the program, in response to Council, State, and stakeholder requests, many of which have been addressed in outreach materials, including a Frequently Asked Questions document, and at outreach events. Information is accessible from the NMFS observer webpage (<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/>). Staff contact is Diana Evans.

# VMS

At this meeting, the Council reviewed a revised discussion paper on the use of, and requirements for, Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) in the North Pacific fisheries, and in other regions of the U.S. With respect to expanding the program to vessels that are not currently required to operate VMS, the Council passed a motion to take no further action until the Alaska Fisheries Science Center has provided information and results from the deployment of electronic monitoring (EM) under the new Observer Program in 2013. For those vessels that carry EM and already carry VMS, the agency plans to compare the effectiveness, reliability, and costs of both technologies, with results likely available by early 2014. The Council also plans to review the strategic plan for developing EM at the June 2013 meeting. Much of the Council's discussion focused on whether there are alternatives to VMS that could meet the Council's management and enforcement objectives, and which should be further investigated. The Council indicated they anticipate that a discussion of these tools will be included in the EM strategic plan.

On a related issue, the Council also considered the paper's evaluation of how advanced features of VMS are being utilized in other regions. The Council recommended that the Enforcement Committee assess the utility of features such as geo-fencing, increased polling rates, and declarations of species, gear, and area, for improving enforcement efforts and efficiency for vessels already subject to VMS requirements. The committee will provide implementation recommendations to the Council. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

# Upcoming Meetings in 2013

**Ecosystem Committee:**  
February 5, 2013

**Scallop Plan Team:** February 19-20 Kodiak

**Crab Modeling workshop** on AIGKC and NSRKC February 26-March 1, Anchorage

**Crab Plan Team:** April 30-May 3, Anchorage; September 17-20, Seattle

**Managing Our Nation's Fisheries:** May 7-9, Washington DC

**Groundfish Plan Teams:**  
September 10 - 13, 2013  
November 18 - 22, 2013

# PNCIAC Nominations

The Council is seeking nominations to the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee, PNCIAC. There are 13 seats available, and each member serves a two year term. Nominations are due by Friday, January 25, 2013.

# BSAI Harvest Specifications for 2013/2014

The Council adopted the BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and annual catch limits based on recommendations from its advisory committees. The sum of the total allowable catches (TACs) for all groundfish is 2 million mt. The TACs were set below the sum of the recommended ABCs for 2013 and 2014 are 2.64 million mt and 2.70 million mt, respectively. The Council raised the 2013 pollock TAC by about 4 percent to 1.247 million mt of 1.2 million mt from the TAC and harvests of 1.205 million mt in 2012. The 2013 Pacific cod TAC was set at 260,000 mt. *The Scientific and Statistical Committee advised the Council of its intent to recommend a split of the BSAI Pacific cod ABC (and thus the TAC) into separate BS and AI allocations next December for the 2014 fishing year, based on the best available scientific information at that time.* Such an action would have ramifications on Stellar sea lion (SSL) mitigation (see elsewhere in the newsletter for a discussion of the SSL Environmental Impact Statement).

Overall, the status of the BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. Nearly all stocks are above minimum stock size thresholds. The abundances of EBS pollock; Pacific cod; sablefish; all rockfishes managed under Tier 3; and all flatfishes managed under Tiers 1 or 3 are projected to be above the  $B_{MSY}$  or the  $B_{MSY}$  proxy of  $B_{35\%}$  in 2013. Two stocks are projected to be below  $B_{35\%}$  for 2013: AI pollock by about 2 percent, and Greenland turbot, by about 44 percent. Two stocks are projected to be below  $B_{40\%}$  for 2013: Sablefish, by about 9 percent and Atka mackerel, by about 7 percent.

The sum of the biomasses for 2013 (18.4 million mt) is 5 percent less than total biomasses reported for 2012 (19.3 million mt), following a six percent decline in total biomasses as reported in 2012 and 2011 (20.6 million mt). Pollock and Pacific cod biomasses were fairly flat at increased levels, after a period of decline. Pollock biomass was 8.34

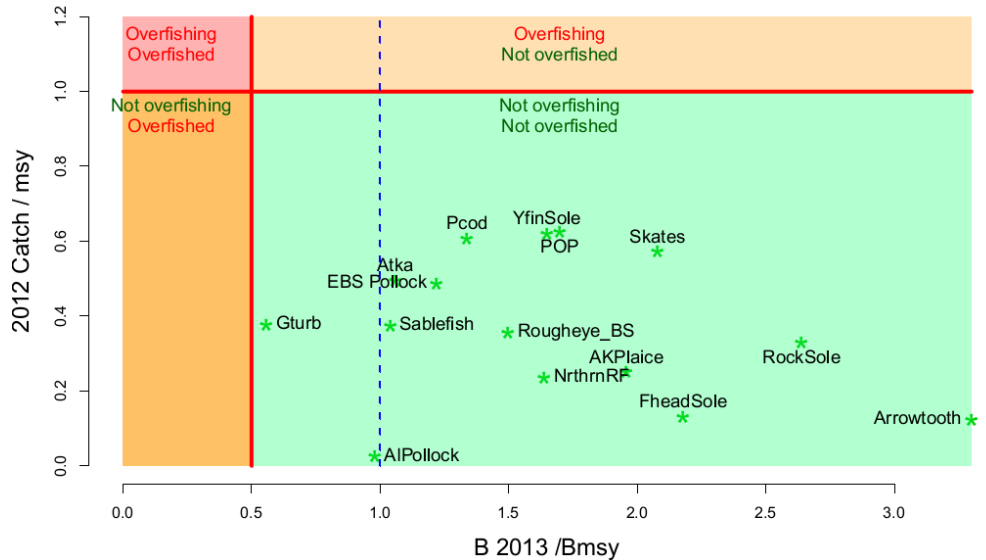
million mt for 2012, compared with 8.14 million mt for 2013. Pacific cod biomass was 1.62 million mt for 2012, compared with 1.51 million mt for 2013. Flatfish are generally increasing. Due to recent high recruitments however biomass of Greenland turbot is increasing from 69,000 mt in 2012 to 81,000 t in 2013, but is still much lower than its historic high of 494,000 mt in 1972. Biomass of Atka mackerel for 2013 is estimated at 289,000 mt, down 29 percent from 2012.

The Council also requested a briefing on how

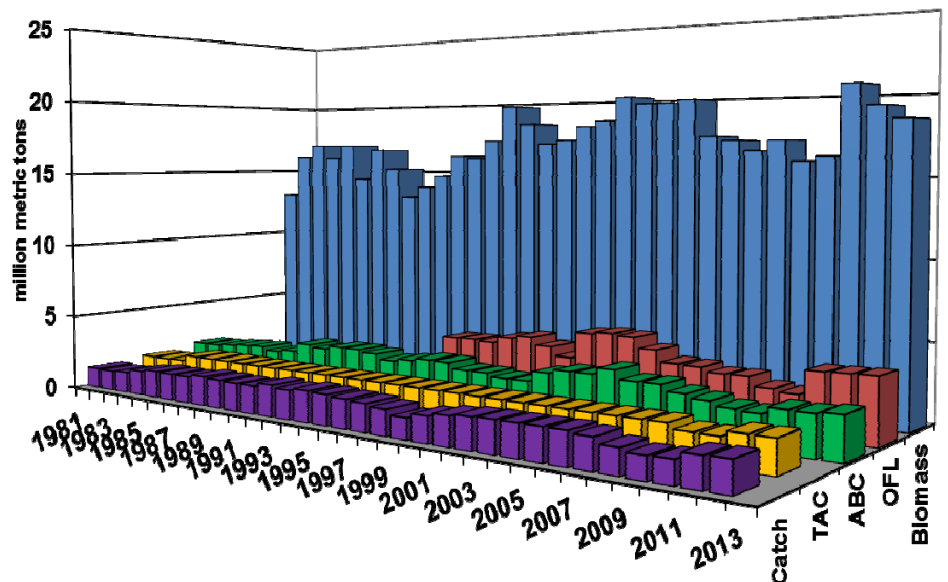
to proceed with splitting the sablefish TAC into IFQ and non-IFQ allocations to maximize sablefish harvest and possibly to reduce the halibut PSC associated with that fishery.

Final harvest specifications are posted on the Council website. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information on prohibited species catch limits and discard mortality rates adopted for the BSAI for 2013 and 2014.

## Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands



Summary status of age-structured BSAI species as measured by 2012 catch level relative to OFL (vertical axis) and projected 2013 spawning biomass relative to  $B_{MSY}$ .



BSAI Groundfish Biomass, Overfishing Level, Acceptable Biological Catch, and Total Allowable Catch. 1981-2013. and Catch. 1981-2013.

# 2013/2014 GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries. As part of the Plan Team presentations and Council deliberations, the updated ecosystem and economics SAFE report sections were presented. There was no survey in the GOA in 2012 thus most stock assessments are in an 'off-year' cycle and executive summaries of most stocks were provided for this assessment cycle. A full survey is planned for 2013 contingent upon sufficient federal funding.

The sum of the ABCs increased by 3% (15,927 t) compared with last year. This is primarily driven by increases in pollock 20,229 t (21%) and sablefish 1,670 t (15%). Based on projections, ABC levels roundfish (pollock, Pacific cod, and sablefish) are up by 22,699 t (12%) whereas flatfish declined by 8,685 t (-3%). Rockfish ABCs increased 3% (1,197 t) and the largest percentage increase was seen for octopus at 53% (501 t). Combined, the skates ABC increased by 2% (149 t).

The abundances of Pacific cod, sablefish, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder, northern and southern rocksole, Pacific ocean perch, roughey and blackspotted rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above  $B_{MSY}$ . The abundance of pollock is below  $B_{MSY}$  (see figure below). The target biomass levels for other deep-water flatfish (including Dover sole), other shallow-water flatfish, rex sole, shorttraker rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, other rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, Atka mackerel, skates, sculpins, squid, octopus, and sharks are unknown.

Previously the Pacific ocean perch stock had area-specific OFLs in the GOA. The OFLs in the WGOA and CGOA were combined for management purposes in 2013-2014 with a separate OFL continued in the EGOA where there is no fishing. The SSC concurred with recommendations of the GOA Plan Team that area-specific OFLs were no longer necessary for this stock but that consideration will continue to be given to re-establishing them depending upon new information on stock structure for POP in the future.

For most stocks the Council established TACs equal to ABCs with some exceptions. These exceptions include Pacific cod where the quota

was reduced 25% to account for removals in the state managed fishery, and those fisheries where the bycatch of other target species is a concern, specifically for shallow water flatfish (W and Central GOA), flathead sole (W and C GOA), arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and other rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC is set below the ABC. Atka mackerel was also established at levels to meet incidental catch needs in other fisheries only (no directed fishing is allowed). The Council requested that octopus and sharks continue to be placed on bycatch only status while requesting that the Agency consider allowing a directed fishery for sculpins. The Council requested staff come back with a discussion paper of issues related to opening up Big and Longnose skates to directed fishing in the EGOA but did not recommend a directed fishery go forward for them in 2013. Specifications for 2013-2014 are posted on the Council's website.

## Stock Structure:

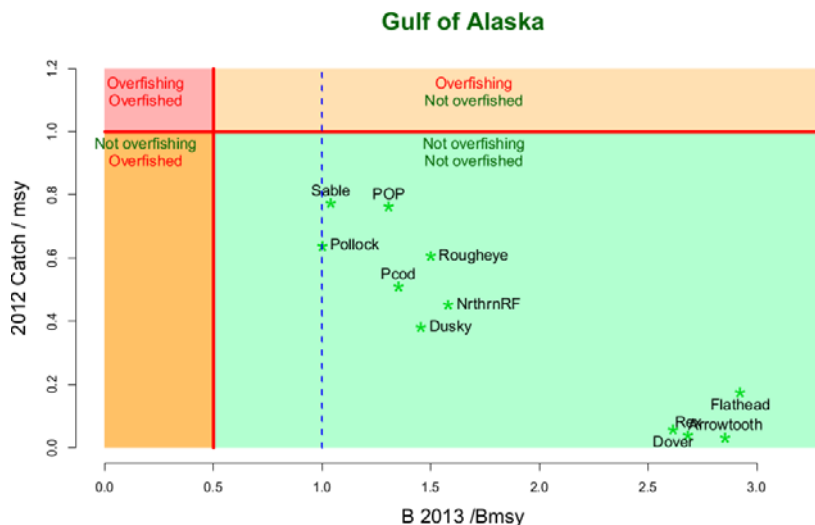
The Council recommended that staff work with the Plan Team chairs to develop an agenda and time frame for a public workshop on policy and management implications resulting from

stock structure determinations. A report to the Council on progress towards organizing this workshop was requested for February. The workshop is to be held sometime in 2013.

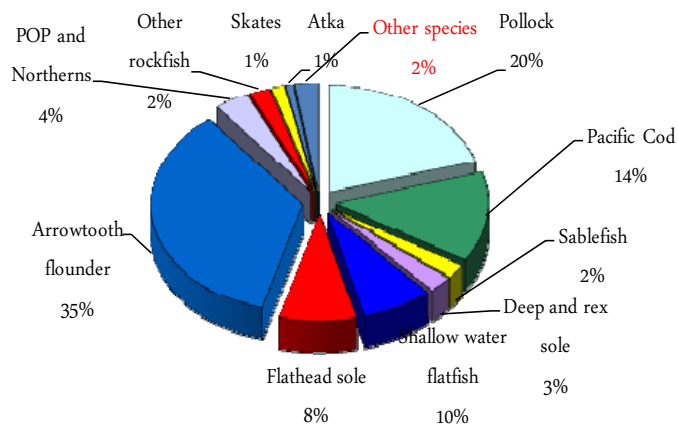
## Prohibited Species Catch Limits:

The Council adopted halibut prohibited species catch limits, by season and gear apportionment for 2013-2014 and further specified apportionments of the 'other hook and line fisheries' annual halibut PSC allowance between the hook-and-line gear catcher vessel and catcher/processor sectors following the Pacific cod sector split allocation implemented in 2012. The PSC numbers and seasonal apportionments are available on the website.

The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013 and 2014, the SAFE report for GOA groundfish, the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter and the Economic SAFE report. Additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at [www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm). Staff contact is Diana Stram



**Summary status of age-structured GOA species relative to 2012 catch levels (vertical axis) and projected 2013 spawning biomass relative to  $B_{msy}$  levels. Note that the 2012 MSY level is defined as the 2012 catch at  $F_{OFL}$ .**



**Percentage breakouts of 2012 ABCs by species and stock complexes.**

## Staff Tasking

During its Staff Tasking agenda item, the Council discussed several issues and took action on the following items (in addition to those noted elsewhere in the newsletter): (1) provided direction to the Ecosystem Committee for its next meeting; (2) passed motions regarding various aspects of the restructured observer program (see separate newsletter article); (3) requested discussion paper on possible separation of the Bering Sea sablefish TAC between IFQ and non-IFQ fisheries; (4) requested discussion paper on biological and management implications of a potential directed longline fishery for skates in the Eastern GOA; (5) put on hold an analysis of Greenland turbot sector allocations until results of the 2013 fishery become available; (6) provided direction on packaging and priorities for various halibut/sablefish IFQ program proposals; (7) provided direction to its Enforcement Committee to assess advanced aspects of VMS for vessels already subject to VMS requirements; (8) requested discussion paper on the implications of pending SSC advice to set separate ABCs in 2014 for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific cod, particularly in the context of current alternatives in the Steller sea lion EIS; (9) acknowledged that at the Council's February 2013 meeting, in the context of the Council's Central GOA trawl catch share initiative, the Council will consider related proposals, including proposals relevant to the Western GOA fisheries; and, (10) discussed the possibility of revisiting, sometime in 2013, a discussion paper on BSAI halibut PSC reductions.

## Halibut Management

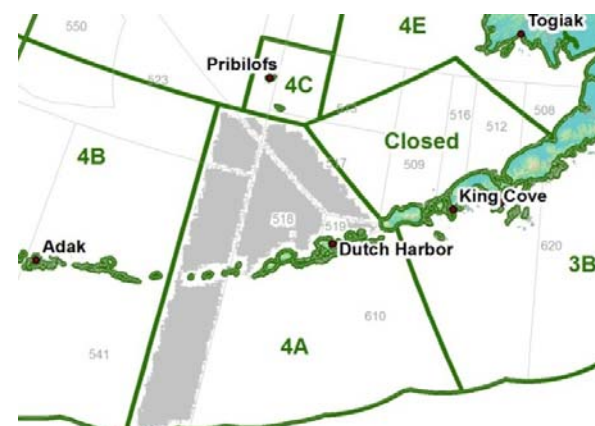
The Council adopted 2013 **annual management** measures based on an analysis by ADF&G and committee recommendations. The Council recommended the status quo for Area 2C and Area 3A. For Area 2C the Council recommended continuation of the one fish  $\leq 45$  inches or  $\geq 68$  inches ("U45068"). This "reverse slot limit" would continue to allow the retention of halibut approximately  $\leq 32$  lb and  $\geq 123$  lb (dressed weight). For Area 3A the Council recommended status quo (2 fish of any size). These measures are projected to keep charter halibut harvests below the guideline harvest levels expected to be in effect in 2013.

The Council also considered a proposal to the IPHC, which also would require Federal rulemaking if the IPHC redefined **legal gear to include (sablefish) pots** (single or longline) as legal gear in Area 4A. The result would only allow the use of sablefish pots fished in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands to retain only Area 4A halibut IFQs. The Council requested an expanded paper in 2013 to address four additional concerns listed below. The Council will send a letter to the IPHC to describe the Council's interest in, and further review of, the proposal.

1. Determine whether there is overlap in the spatial and/or temporal distribution of halibut longlining and sablefish pot fishing in the portion of Area 4A to which this proposal would apply.
2. Discuss the potential need for the following regulations:
  - a. Requiring the removal of sablefish pots from the fishing grounds upon completion of the harvest of the vessel's sablefish IFQ, and at the end of the season.
  - b. Requiring radar reflectors or other gear markers at both ends of a longline pot string.
  - c. Prohibiting "pot sharing" while pots are in the water.
  - d. Prohibiting the modification of sablefish pot tunnels.
3. Discuss the physical and market condition of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots.
4. Provide a discussion of the experiences and

lessons learned by the industry and managers in Areas 2A and 2B from allowing the retention of halibut incidentally caught in sablefish pots, including retention caps.

The Council reviewed its **halibut/sablefish priorities** for staff tasking. The Council affirmed that NMFS and Council staffs should place the highest priority on implementation of past actions. The second highest priority is on initial review/final action of a regulatory amendment to relieve a restriction on the number of IFQ blocks a CQE may hold and discussion papers that are scheduled for review in February 2013 on 1) IFQ leasing practices under the hired skipper provision and use of medical leases and 2) revising the Federal definition of a fishing guide. The third highest priority is on an expanded discussion paper of whether to allow Area 4A halibut IFQs to be retained in sablefish pots fished in the BSAI and a discussion paper on the potential for a Recreational Quota Entity program under a proposal for a common pool program that may be submitted to the Council for the April 2013 meeting, at the earliest. The next priority was identified for discussion papers on whether to allow the use of pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish IFQ program, which would advise a yet to be named gear committee, and a proposed increase in the cap on sablefish IFQ holdings. The Council took no action to develop a discussion paper to address unharvested halibut in Area 4C, at the request of the proposer, and on a proposal to allow ineligible family members to assist permitted subsistence halibut fishermen. All new proposals to amend the IFQ/CDQ/CQE programs will be held until the Council's next call for proposals. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.



# CQE Small Block Restriction

At the December meeting, the Council initiated an analysis to consider removing a current limitation restricting the purchase of small blocks of halibut and sablefish quota share by community quota entities (CQEs), under the GOA community quota share purchase program. Under the current program, GOA CQEs are restricted to purchasing blocks of shares of a minimum size that resulted in an equivalent of at least 5,000 pounds of IFQ, based on 1996 TACs. Note that there is no minimum size limit for purchasing halibut quota share in Area 3B, nor are there minimum size limits in place for the recently approved Adak CQE program, once it is implemented. The Council considered a staff discussion paper providing the context of CQE purchase restrictions, as well as the original rationale for implementing the small block restriction, before initiating the amendment analysis. The problem statement and alternatives to be evaluated are available on the Council website. Staff contact is Diana Evans.

# Chum salmon bycatch

The Council reviewed an updated analysis of the Chum salmon PSC management measures E/RIR/IRFA. This amendment package evaluates alternative chum salmon PSC measures in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. Measures under consideration include PSC limits which would close the fishery upon reaching the limit either until the end of July or for the remainder of the B-season, and bycatch management under a revised rolling hot spot (RHS) system (with or without additional triggered area closures). This is the third time that the Council has reviewed the analysis in order to best tailor alternatives to meet the Council's purpose and need. The Council's problem statement is shown below:

*Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards direct management Councils to balance achieving optimum yield with bycatch reduction as well as to minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. Non-Chinook salmon (primarily made up of chum salmon) prohibited species bycatch (PSC) in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery is of concern because chum salmon are an important stock for subsistence and commercial fisheries in Alaska. There is currently no limitation on the amount of non-Chinook PSC that can be taken in directed pollock trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea. The potential for high levels of chum salmon bycatch as well as long-term impacts of more moderate bycatch levels on conservation and abundance, may*

*have adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities.*

*Non-Chinook salmon PSC is managed under chum salmon savings areas and the voluntary Rolling Hotspot System (RHS). Hard caps, area closures, and possibly an enhanced RHS may be needed to ensure that non-Chinook PSC is limited and remains at a level that will minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. The Council should structure non-Chinook PSC management measures to provide incentive for the pollock trawl fleet to improve performance in avoiding non-Chinook salmon while achieving optimum yield from the directed fishery and objectives of the Amendment 91 Chinook salmon PSC management program. Non-Chinook salmon PSC reduction measures should focus, to the extent possible, on reducing impacts to Alaska chum salmon as a top priority.*

In developing this problem statement, the Council indicated the need to balance competing objectives including: 1) providing incentive to reduce chum salmon PSC to the extent practicable with priority within chum salmon measures placed on measures which reduce impacts to Alaska chum, 2) allowing for the pollock fishery to operate to achieve optimum yield, and 3) achieving the objectives of the current Chinook salmon PSC management program. Balancing these competing objectives has complicated developing appropriate management measures for chum salmon PSC. Analysis of the various alternatives indicates that most measures which balance OY from the pollock fishery with reduced chum salmon PSC do so at the risk of undermining reducing Chinook salmon PSC.

After consideration of the complicated suite of alternatives and the analysis of impacts, the Council elected to move the analysis to a different direction. The Council requested that the pollock industry give consideration to how they might incorporate an explicit chum salmon PSC avoidance program within their existing sector-specific Chinook salmon incentive program agreements (IPAs) with vessel-level accountability. In doing so, the Council recognized that this would delay selection of a preferred chum salmon management approach but indicated that the IPAs may provide the most adaptive, flexible forum for managing competing objectives in bycatch avoidance between Chinook salmon and chum salmon.

The Council indicated that these proposals would be presented to the Council no sooner than October 2013, and that upon review and public input the Council would then determine whether to further pursue this potential approach to meet the multiple objectives outlined in the problem statement. The Council may receive a progress report prior to October from the industry. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

# WGOA Trawl Fisheries

At the December meeting, the Council received testimony from participants in the Western Gulf trawl fishery requesting that the trawl fishery in that management area be included in any catch share program considered for the Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries. To date, the Council has suggested that the program would be limited to Central Gulf trawl fisheries. On hearing this testimony, the Council requested that participants in the Western Gulf trawl fisheries who support inclusion of those fisheries in the catch share program present the Council with elements and options appropriate for the Western Gulf fisheries at the February Council meeting. The Council suggested that specific elements should be developed for the Western Gulf to recognize the different fishery, regional, and community interests.

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2013-2014 and Council's adopted specifications for 2012.

Stock/ Assemblage	2012				2013			2014			
	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch <sup>1/</sup>	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W (61)	30,270	30,270	30,270	27,893		28,072	28,072		25,648	25,648
	C (62)	45,808	45,808	45,808	45,050		51,443	51,443		47,004	47,004
	C (63)	26,348	26,348	26,348	25,589		27,372	27,372		25,011	25,011
	WYAK	3,244	3,244	3,244	2,380		3,385	3,385		3,093	3,093
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	100,912	150,817	110,272	110,272	138,610	100,756	100,756
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774		14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	100,912	165,183	121,046	121,046	152,976	111,530	111,530	
Pacific Cod	W	28,032	21,024	21,024	17,703		28,280	21,210		29,470	22,103
	C	56,940	42,705	42,705	34,901		49,288	36,966		51,362	38,522
	E	2,628	1,971	1,971	338		3,232	2,424		3,368	2,526
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	52,942	97,200	80,800	60,600	101,100	84,200	63,150
Sablefish	W	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,390		1,750	1,750		1,641	1,641
	C	5,760	5,760	5,760	5,248		5,540	5,540		5,195	5,195
	WYAK	2,247	2,247	2,247	2,028		2,030	2,030		1,902	1,902
	SEO	3,176	3,176	3,176	3,188		3,190	3,190		2,993	2,993
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	11,854	14,780	12,510	12,510	13,871	11,731	11,731
Shallow-water Flatfish	W	21,994	13,250	13,250	153		19,489	13,250		18,033	13,250
	C	22,910	18,000	18,000	3,322		20,168	18,000		18,660	18,000
	WYAK	4,307	4,307	4,307			4,647	4,647		4,299	4,647
	EYAK/SEO	1,472	1,472	1,472			1,180	1,180		1,092	1,180
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	3,475	55,680	45,484	37,077	51,580	42,084	37,077
Deep-water Flatfish	W	176	176	176	8		176	176		176	176
	C	2,308	2,308	2,308	246		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK	1,581	1,581	1,581	5		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	EYAK/SEO	1,061	1,061	1,061	3		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	262	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex Sole	W	1,307	1,307	1,307	215		1,300	1,300		1,287	1,287
	C	6,412	6,412	6,412	1,972		6,376	6,376		6,310	6,310
	WYAK	836	836	836			832	832		823	1,041
	EYAK/SEO	1,057	1,057	1,057			1,052	1,052		1,040	822
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	2,187	12,492	9,560	9,560	12,362	9,460	9,460
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	27,495	14,500	14,500	1,331		27,181	14,500		26,970	14,500
	C	143,162	75,000	75,000	18,213		141,527	75,000		140,424	75,000
	WYAK	21,159	6,900	6,900	53		20,917	6,900		20,754	6,900
	EYAK/SEO	21,066	6,900	6,900	140		20,826	6,900		20,663	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	19,737	247,196	210,451	103,300	245,262	208,811	103,300
Flathead Sole	W	15,300	8,650	8,650	277		15,729	8,650		16,063	8,650
	C	25,838	15,400	15,400	1,613		26,563	15,400		27,126	15,400
	WYAK	4,558	4,558	4,558			4,686	4,686		4,785	4,785
	EYAK/SEO	1,711	1,711	1,711			1,760	1,760		1,797	1,797
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	1,890	61,036	48,738	30,496	62,296	49,771	30,632

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.



(GOA Groundfish Specifications table continued)

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012				2013			2014		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific Ocean Perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,452		2,040	2,040		2,005	2,005
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	10,741		10,926	10,926		10,740	10,740
	WYAK		1,692	1,692	1,682		1,641	1,641		1,613	1,613
	W/C/WYAK						16,838			16,555	
	SEO	4,095	1,861	1,861			2,081	1,805	1,805	2,046	1,775
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19,498</b>	<b>16,918</b>	<b>16,918</b>	<b>14,875</b>	<b>18,919</b>	<b>16,412</b>	<b>16,412</b>	<b>18,601</b>	<b>16,133</b>	<b>16,133</b>
Northern Rockfish	W		2,156	2,156	1,817		2,008	2,008		1,899	1,899
	C		3,351	3,351	3,210		3,122	3,122		2,951	2,951
	E										
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,574</b>	<b>5,507</b>	<b>5,507</b>	<b>5,027</b>	<b>6,124</b>	<b>5,130</b>	<b>5,130</b>	<b>5,791</b>	<b>4,850</b>	<b>4,850</b>
Shortraker Rockfish	W		104	104	110		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452	361		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525	402		525	525		525	525
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,081</b>
Dusky Rockfish	W		409	409	435		377	377		354	354
	C		3,849	3,849	3,558		3,533	3,533		3,317	3,317
	WYAK		542	542	2		495	495		465	465
	EYAK/SEO		318	318	6		295	295		277	277
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,257</b>	<b>5,118</b>	<b>5,118</b>	<b>4,001</b>	<b>5,746</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>5,395</b>	<b>4,413</b>	<b>4,413</b>
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W		80	80	39		81	81		83	83
	C		850	850	389		856	856		871	871
	E		293	293	236		295	295		300	300
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>1,508</b>	<b>1,254</b>	<b>1,254</b>
Demersal Rockfish	<b>Total</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		150	150	186		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766	340		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749	217		749	749		749	749
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>1,665</b>
Other Rockfish	W		44	44	255		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606	724		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230	37		230	230		230	230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165	200	24		3,165	200		3,165	200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,305</b>	<b>4,045</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>5,305</b>	<b>4,045</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>5,305</b>	<b>4,045</b>	<b>1,080</b>
Atka Mackerel	GOA-wide	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,187	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big Skate	W		469	469	60		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793	1,596		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505	38		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,023</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>1,694</b>	<b>5,023</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>5,023</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>3,767</b>
Longnose Skate	W		70	70	28		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879	656		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676	78		676	676		676	676
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,625</b>
Other Skates	GOA-wide	2,706	2,030	2,030	1,110	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	5,731	802	7,614	5,884	5,884	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	6,028	595	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,146	18	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,455	368	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>747,780</b>	<b>606,048</b>	<b>438,157</b>	<b>227,196</b>	<b>738,676</b>	<b>595,920</b>	<b>436,255</b>	<b>723,580</b>	<b>584,094</b>	<b>427,722</b>

1/ Catch reported through November 3, 2012.

NPFMC Council Motion 12/6/12 BSAI Specifications

Species	Area	2012			2013			2014		
		ABC	TAC	Catch 11/24/12	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	1,220,000	1,200,000	1,204,554	2,550,000	1,375,000	1,247,000	2,730,000	1,430,000	1,247,000
	AI	32,500	19,000	972	45,600	37,300	19,000	48,600	39,800	19,000
	Bogoslof	16,500	500	79	13,400	10,100	100	13,400	10,100	100
Pacific cod	BSAI	314,000	261,000	231,682	359,000	307,000	260,000	379,000	323,000	260,880
Sablefish	BSAI	4,280	4,280	1,940	4,400	3,720	3,720	4,130	3,490	3,490
	BS	2,230	2,230	738	1,870	1,580	1,580	1,760	1,480	1,480
	AI	2,050	2,050	1,202	2,530	2,140	2,140	2,370	2,010	2,010
Atka mackerel	Total	81,400	50,763	47,832	57,700	50,000	25,920	56,500	48,900	25,379
	EAI/BS	38,500	38,500	37,314		16,900	16,900		16,500	16,500
	CAI	22,900	10,763	10,323		16,000	7,520		15,700	7,379
	WAI	20,000	1,500	195		17,100	1,500		16,700	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	203,000	202,000	144,253	220,000	206,000	198,000	219,000	206,000	198,000
Rock sole	BSAI	208,000	87,000	75,896	241,000	214,000	92,380	229,000	204,000	92,000
Greenland turbot	Total	9,660	8,660	4,662	2,540	2,060	2,060	3,270	2,650	2,650
	BS	7,230	6,230	3,005		1,610	1,610		2,070	2,070
	AI	2,430	2,430	1,657		450	450		580	580
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	150,000	25,000	22,535	186,000	152,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	18,600	17,700	9,629	16,300	12,200	10,000	16,300	12,200	10,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	70,400	34,134	11,281	81,500	67,900	22,699	80,100	66,700	22,543
Alaska plaice	BSAI	53,400	24,000	16,445	67,000	55,200	20,000	60,200	55,800	20,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	12,700	3,200	3,517	17,800	13,300	3,500	17,800	13,300	4,000
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	24,700	24,700	24,147	41,900	35,100	35,100	39,500	33,100	33,100
	BS	5,710	5,710	5,590		8,130	8,130		7,680	7,680
	EAI	5,620	5,620	5,519		9,790	9,790		9,240	9,240
	CAI	4,990	4,990	4,798		6,980	6,980		6,590	6,590
	WAI	8,380	8,380	8,240		10,200	10,200		9,590	9,590
Northern rockfish	BSAI	8,610	4,700	2,478	12,200	9,850	3,000	12,000	9,320	3,000
Blackspotted/Roughy	BSAI	576	475	208	462	378	378	524	429	429
	EBS/EAI		231	77		169	169		189	189
	CAI/WAI		244	131		209	209		240	240
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	393	393	342	493	370	370	493	370	370
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,280	1,070	942	1,540	1,160	873	1,540	1,160	1,159
	BS	710	500	208		686	400		686	686
	AI	570	570	734		473	473		473	473
Squid	BSAI	1,970	425	691	2,620	1,970	700	2,620	1,970	700
Skate	BSAI	32,600	24,700	23,291	45,800	38,800	24,000	44,100	37,300	25,000
Shark	BSAI	1,020	200	91	1,360	1,020	100	1,360	1,020	100
Octopus	BSAI	2,590	900	133	3,450	2,590	500	3,450	2,590	500
Sculpin	BSAI	43,700	5,200	5,585	56,400	42,300	5,600	56,400	42,300	5,600
Total	BSAI	2,511,303	2,000,000	1,833,185	4,028,465	2,639,317	2,000,000	4,205,287	2,697,498	2,000,000

**DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 1/8/13**

February 4-12, 2013 Portland, OR	April 1-9, 2013 Anchorage, AK	June 3-11, 2013 Juneau, AK
<p>Deep Sea Coral Strategic Plan; ESA listing: <b>NOAA Report</b>                      IPHC Report: <b>Action as necessary</b>                      SSL EIS: <b>Action as necessary</b>                      AI Risk Assessment: <b>Report</b>                      Observer Program: <b>Update and action as necessary</b>                      Stock Structure Workshop: Update on planning</p> <p>Definition of Fishing Guide: <b>Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>CGOA Trawl Economic Data Collection: <b>Discussion paper</b>                      CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>Crab bycatch limits in BSAI groundfish fisheries: <b>Disc paper</b>                      BSAI Crab ROFR: <b>Final Action</b>                      BSAI Crab active participation requirements: <b>Initial Review</b>                      BSAI Crab Cooperative Provisions for Crew : <b>Discussion paper</b></p> <p>GOA P cod sideboards for FLL: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>BSAI Flatfish Specification Flexibility: <b>Initial Review (T)</b></p> <p>BBRKC spawning area/fishery effects: <b>Updated Discussion paper</b></p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: <b>Final Action</b></p>	<p>AFA Coop Reports; ICA report: Action as Necessary                      Observer Program: <b>Update; 3rd Party discussion paper</b>                      SSL EIS: <b>Initial Review, Select PPA</b></p> <p>BS and AI P. cod ABC/TAC split: <b>Updated Discussion Paper</b></p> <p>Retention of 4A halibut in BSAI sablefish pots: Expanded Disc Paper</p> <p>BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch: <b>Industry Progress Report</b>                      GOA Chinook Bycatch non-pollock trawl fisheries: <b>Final Action (T)</b>                      Salmon Bycatch Genetics: Update                      CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: <b>Action as necessary</b></p> <p>Crab modeling report: SSC only</p> <p>BSAI Crab active participation requirements: <b>Final Action</b>                      Scallop SAFE and harvest specifications: <b>Review and Approve</b></p> <p>GOA P cod sideboards for FLL: <b>Final Action</b>                      AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>Round Island Transit: <b>Initial Review</b></p> <p>Grenadier management: <b>Initial Review (T)</b></p> <p>BSAI Flatfish Specification Flexibility: <b>Final Action (T)</b></p> <p>Research Priorities: SSC only</p>	<p>Observer Program: <b>Update and action as necessary</b>                      SSL EIS: <b>Progress Report</b></p> <p>CQE Small Blocks: <b>Initial Review/Final Action</b></p> <p>H/S IFQ Disc papers (GOA sablefish pots, sablefish A-share caps) <b>(T)</b>                      Halibut compensated reallocation pool: <b>Discussion Paper (T)</b>                      Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Leasing prohibition: <b>NMFS Disc. paper (T)</b></p> <p>CGOA Trawl Catch Shares: <b>Action as necessary</b></p> <p>BSAI Crab: <b>CPT report; OFL/ABC specifications for 4 stocks</b></p> <p>BS Canyons: Updated AFSC report; Fishing activities and management <b>discussion paper (T)</b></p> <p>Round Island Transit: <b>Final Action</b></p> <p>Grenadier management: <b>Final Action (T)</b></p> <p><b>ITEMS BELOW FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Crab PSC numbers to weight: <b>Discussion paper</b>                      Salmon EFH revisions: <b>Initial Review</b>                      BS Sablefish IFQ &amp; non-IFQ specifications: <b>Discussion Paper</b>                      BSAI Halibut PSC: <b>On Hold</b>                      EGOA skate fishery: <b>Discussion paper</b>                      Greenland Turbot allocation: <b>Initial Review</b>                      MPA Nominations: Discuss and consider nominations</p>

AI - Aleutian Islands  
 AFA - American Fisheries Act  
 BiOp - Biological Opinion  
 BSAI - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands  
 BKC - Blue King Crab  
 BOF - Board of Fisheries  
 CQE - Community Quota Entity  
 CDQ - Community Development Quota  
 EDR - Economic Data Reporting  
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat  
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit  
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement  
 FLL - Freezer longliners  
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska

GKC - Golden King Crab  
 GHF - Guideline Harvest Level  
 HAPC - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern  
 IFQ - Individual Fishing Quota  
 IBQ - Individual Bycatch Quota  
 MPA - Marine Protected Area  
 PSEIS - Programmatic Supplemental Impact Statement  
 PSC - Prohibited Species Catch  
 RKC - Red King Crab  
 ROFR - Right of First Refusal  
 SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee  
 SAFE - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation  
 SSL - Steller Sea Lion  
 TAC - Total Allowable Catch

**Future Meeting Dates and Locations**

February 4-12, 2013, Portland  
 April 1-9, 2013, Anchorage  
 June 3-11, 2013, Juneau  
 September 30-Oct 8, 2013 Anchorage  
 December 9-17, 2013, Anchorage  
 February 2-10, 2014, Seattle  
 April 7-15, 2014, Anchorage  
 June 2-10, 2014, Nome  
 October 6-14, 2014 Anchorage  
 December 8-16, 2014, Anchorage  
 February 2-10, 2015, Seattle

**(T) = Tentative**