

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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MINUTES

206th Plenary Session
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
December 7 – 13, 2011, Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage

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Attachments:

1. Public Attendance Register
2. Time Log
3. AP Minutes
4. SSC Minutes
5. Salmon FMP Motion
6. GOA TACs
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8. List of AP, SSC, and Committee Appointments
9. Newsletter

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APPROVED: 

DATE: 2/6/2012

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Anchorage, Alaska at the Hilton Hotel during December, 2011. The following Council, SSC and AP members, and NPFMC staff attended the meetings.

Council Members

Eric Olson, Chair
Dave Benson, Vice Chair
Sam Cotten
Duncan Fields
Dave Hanson
John Henderschedt

Roy Hyder
Dan Hull
Cora Campbell/Dave Bedford
Jim Balsiger
Bill Tweit
CAPT Greg Sanial/LT Tony Keene

NPFMC Staff

Gail Bendixen
Jane DiCosimo
Diana Evans
Mark Fina
Nicole Kimball
Peggy Kircher
Jon McCracken

Sarah Melton
Chris Oliver
Maria Shawback
Diana Stram
David Witherell

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Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC met from December 5-7, 2011 at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska.

Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Farron Wallace, Vice Chair
Wash. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Robert Clark
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kathy Kuletz
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Jim Murphy
University of Alaska Anchorage

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kate Reedy-Maschner
Idaho State University

Ray Webster
International Halibut Commission

Doug Woodby
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Members absent were:

Vacant
Oregon Dept. Fish and Wildlife

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Advisory Panel

The AP met from December 5-8, at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska.

Kurt Cochran
Craig Cross
John Crowley
Julianne Curry
Jerry Downing
Tom Enlow
Tim Evers

Jeff Favour
Becca Robbins Gisclair
Jan Jacobs
Bob Jacobson
Alexus Kwachka
Chuck McCallum
Matt Moir

Theresa Peterson
Ed Poulsen
Neil Rodriguez
Lori Swanson
Anne Vanderhoeven
Ernie Weiss

Appendix I contains the public sign in register and a time log of Council proceedings, including those providing reports and public comment during the meeting.

Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting from October, 2011. Motion passed unanimously.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Olson called the meeting to order at approximately 8:04 am on Wednesday, December 7, 2011.

Mr. Bill Tweit participated in the entire meeting in place of Phil Anderson, WDF Director.

AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the change of taking the USCG report as the first item on the agenda.

B. REPORTS

The Council received the following reports: Executive Director's Report (B-1); NMFS Management Report (B-2); ADF&G Report (B-3); USCG Report (B-5); USFWS report (B-6); and Protected Species Report (B-7).

USCG Report

Lt. Tony Keene of the USCG provided the Coast Guard Enforcement Report after which RADM Tom Ostebo addressed the Council and reiterated the Coast Guard's commitment to fisheries and vigorous enforcement during a time of constrained budgets. He also updated the Council on the status of the Coast Guard's four ice breakers, noting one is in the process of being decommissioned, and another will be ready for deployment in 2013, however it will mostly be used in Antarctica.

Executive Director's Report:

Chris Oliver reviewed his written report. He mentioned items that would be upcoming in February, such as revision of the SOPPs, procedures relating to late comments, and comments via email. He also reviewed meetings he has attended since the September Council meeting, noting that he testified recently at a hearing of the House Natural Resources Committee on reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and remarked that copies of his comments, along with the bills are included in the packet, and that the Council should keep a close watch on changes that may occur. Mr. Oliver noted he would also be keeping the Council updated on coastal spatial marine planning as activities and meetings occur. Among the upcoming meetings he highlighted are the crab modeling workshop and the halibut bycatch/harvest strategy workshop. There was brief discussion regarding the halibut workshop and based on prior discussion, he noted that the IPHC staff agreed that the workshop would be helpful to explain how migration and growth are considered in the overall halibut harvest strategy and how halibut bycatch factors into that strategy. It was generally agreed that the Council would discuss timing and agenda of this issue during staff tasking, and after public comment. Mr. Oliver noted that he would be discussing timing and content of the workshop with IPHC staff later that evening, and would have more information by the time the Council discusses this agenda item during Staff Tasking.

Mr. Oliver discussed a few informational items which may affect how the Council begins analysis on amendments to the ACL requirements to address uncertainty as required, and how studies may affect management decisions.

Mr. Oliver brought attention to letters exchanged with the Congressional delegation on a variety of issues, briefly reviewed NOAA's enforcement priorities, and noted there is training available via the Fisheries Forum. Glenn Merrill briefed the Council on meetings of the US Baseline committee, and Mr. Merrill

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noted that NMFS will be producing new charts for mariners of the 8 areas that the Baseline Committee has reviewed. Mr. Oliver reviewed the rest of his written report, and reviewed additional Council logistics for the week ahead.

NMFS Management Report

Glenn Merrill briefed the Council on the status of FMP amendments and progress since the last Council meeting. Mary Furuness gave the end of the year in-season management report, and Jon Kurland briefed the Council on current habitat issues. There were brief questions of clarification from the Council members.

ADF&G Report

Karla Bush (ADF&G) provided the Council with a review of the State fisheries of interest to the Council and answered general questions from the Council Members.

NOAA Enforcement

Sherri Meyers gave the NOAA Enforcement report, updating the Council on staffing issues as well as an update on the recent seizure of the international vessel Bangun Perkasa. She answered questions regarding NOAA's enforcement priorities, and noted that existing staff will be working on marine mammal issues, but staffing will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

USFW Report

Denny Lassuy gave the USFW Report, outlining the ESA Candidate species and the status of the Pacific walrus and Short-tailed Albatross. Douglas Burn of USFW gave an update on the status of Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Protected Resources Report

Dr. Doug Demaster (AFSC) gave a report on the Steller sea lion research to date and answered questions from the Council. Steve MacLean reviewed the remainder of the report, updating the Council on ringed seals, Cook Inlet beluga whales, short-tailed albatross, and the State vs. Lubenchenko lawsuit regarding parallel fisheries. Kaja Brooks answered brief questions regarding the delisting of the Eastern distinct population segment of the Steller sea lion.

Mr. Maclean reviewed the new statement of work for the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) process for a review of the BSAI/GOA groundfish biological opinion, and answered questions from the Council. He also reviewed the format and content of the CIE report, as well as the new Terms of Reference.

Public comment was taken on all B agenda items.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Enforcement Priorities

Mr. Hyder noted that the Council should respond and comment on NOAA's enforcement priorities, and express support and concern for NOAA Enforcement Personnel and the new requirements which would have NOAA officers expand compliance assisted activities. He noted that the extra requirements would

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cause undue burden on the agency which is already facing a 30% vacancy rate. It was generally agreed that the Council would draft a letter in support.

Bering Sea Research Foundation request

The Chairman noted that the Chris Oliver would be working with the Crab Plan Team and chairman on recommendations to improve transparency and general understanding of the Crab Plan Team process. It was generally agreed that the Executive Director would review the list of recommendations to the Council in February.

Essential Fish Habitat

Mr. Tweit thanked Mr. Kurland of NMFS Habitat division, and noted the Council should develop a criteria with which to judge habitat proposals. It was briefly discussed and agreed that NMFS staff would poll other Councils and other NMFS Habitat offices to survey what criteria is being used currently, and would report back to the Council in February.

Protected Resources Report

Mr. Tweit spoke about various SSL issue, including scheduled oral arguments in the State vs NMFS over the 2010 BiOp, which will be held later in December. He noted that the Council may gain insight into what sort of information should be in an scientific review. He suggested delaying final approval of the TOR until the Council has a chance to find out the results of the current hearing. There was brief discussion, and there was no objection to delaying the action on the SSL the TOR, and adding on the agenda for the February meeting.

Halibut workshop

Chris Oliver noted that suggestions have been made for the workshop and that it has grown from a smaller workshop to a broader "symposium." Mr. Oliver, and IHPC staff have discussed content and agenda and noted that the topics selected will be extremely helpful in understanding the bycatch estimates and how that factors into the overall harvest strategy that the IPHC uses. The Council discussed various aspects of the proposed workshop. Mr. Henderschedt noted his concern that Council needs to understand the conservation implications of actions taken on halibut bycatch, and is in favor of many of the topics which discuss ecology and conservation. Mr. Balsiger noted that much of what can be planned has to do with scheduling and timing along with staff support and prior agency commitments, but if all the items can be coordinated, it is a very worthwhile effort. There was lengthy discussion noting the necessity of the workshop and timing. It was generally agreed that the Council needs to take action on halibut PSC issues, but the workshop may not be able to happen before that item is scheduled. Chairman Olsen stated that the Council has a framework for the workshop, and that he is comfortable moving the workshop to an April date if it will help the IPHC and other staffs compile a more comprehensive event. He noted further discussion will continue under the staff tasking agenda item.

Legal issues regarding previous actions: Control Date for hired skippers.

Mr. Henderschedt noted there was a legal issue regarding a control date in a letter from Fishing Vessel Owners' Association, and wanted to know the most efficient place to correct a problem once it has been identified.

Ms. Smoker noted that after the Council takes action, Council staff and NMFS staff update the analytical document, prepare the proposed rule, notice of availability and transmittal memos in a package before submitted in a draft form for the Council's office review by the Executive Director and Chairman, (or whatever was determined at the time final action was taken). NOAA GC has to "clear" the package, which involves legal sufficiency of the action before it is submitted to the Council, then the Secretary of Commerce. Ms. Smoker noted NOAA GC had not identified legal issues with the control date, but will

be watching the package as it progresses through the process. If there is a legal problem, it will be evaluated depending on the nature of the problem, and removal of the controversial issue can take place while the rest of the amendment can stand. Ms. Smoker stated that NOAA GC does have the letter, and will review the issue at hand. Mr. Hanson, as parliamentarian, noted that the Council could rescind a previous action and change the date, or the Council can wait until NOAA GC and the courts have made a decision, and then amend a previous action, even if only a date change, if necessary. In order to comply with notice requirements, it was agreed to discuss this issue in Staff Tasking.

C-1 Management of Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod jig fishery

BACKGROUND

In 2009, the Council adopted Amendment 83 to the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Groundfish FMP, establishing separate sector allocations for Pacific cod. The Council also tasked staff to evaluate options for revising management of the cod jig fisheries to increase entry-level opportunities. In 2010, the Council initiated an analysis of alternative management measures intended to ensure full access by the jig fleet to harvest both State and Federal jig allocations: a “reverse parallel fishery,” which would open Federal waters to jig gear concurrent with the State guideline harvest level (GHL) fishery.

In April 2011, the Council reviewed an analysis of the reverse parallel fishery concept. The Council recommended changing the B season opening date for jig gear to June 10, or after the State GHL jig fishery closed, to provide a year-round Pacific cod fishery. The A season would open January 1 and close when the A season jig allocation is reached or on March 15, whichever occurs first. The Council also chose to postpone further action until after the Board of Fisheries (Board) had an opportunity to comment and take action during its meeting in October 2011.

The Council’s recommendations, however, did not account for the different regulatory triggers that open the State waters GHL fishery in each of the State management areas and were not sufficiently clear in regards to opening the Federal B season, mentioning only one GHL season closure as the trigger. There are, however, different GHL closure dates for each of the State management areas depending on the harvest rate and overall GHL available to jig gear. In its draft Amendment 83 rule implementing the sector allocations, NMFS chose not include the Council’s March 15 deadline and instead proposed that the Federal fishery close when the total allowable catch (TAC) is harvested or on June 10, whichever occurs first, with the intent to provide a seamless Federal jig fishery while providing the Board the flexibility necessary to open and close the GHL and State parallel fisheries in each State management area.

In October 2011, the Council requested that the Board consider options to provide jig fishing opportunities concurrently in State and Federal waters, as proposed under NMFS’ draft Amendment 83 rule, when State regulations allow and where practical to implement. At its Pacific cod regulatory meeting, the Board recommended regulations for each State management area that were generally consistent with Council recommendations, synchronized to the extent practicable GHL season opening and closing dates with the Federal jig seasons proposed under NMFS’ draft rule, and chose not to recommend a March 15 closure date for the Federal A season. No changes are thus necessary to the proposed regulations implementing the jig A and B season start dates in the final Amendment 83 rule.

Actions taken by the Board and the implementation of Amendment 83 jig season dates will provide the jig fleet the ability to harvest Pacific cod concurrently in State and Federal waters. Specifically, jig vessels will be able to harvest in a parallel fishery concurrent with the Federal fishery. Jig operators will also have the ability to concurrently harvest in Pacific cod in the State GHL fishery and Federal waters, provided

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sufficient GHL and TAC allocations are available.

At this meeting the Council will review the report on GOA Pacific cod jig fishery management may want take no action or reschedule the issue for further discussion after sector allocations are implemented and after the next Joint Protocol Committee meeting.

Sarah Melton gave the staff report on this agenda item and Glenn Merrill answered questions on this issue. Becca Robbins-Gisclair gave the AP report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Dersham moved that the reverse parallel fishery concept, as well as the gear on board issue be added to the agenda of the Joint Protocol meeting on March 19, along with any additional information NOAA GC or NMFS may have. Additionally, he moved that the Council take no further action until the Council can have the report from the Joint Protocol Committee at the April meeting.

He spoke to his motion noting that the Council has had more information regarding the joint parallel fishery concept than the Board of Fisheries, and noted the best course of action is to get all parties involved on the same page and up to speed on the management of the jig fishery. Ms. Smoker noted that in addition to in-season management issues, there may be legal issues that need to be examined further depending on what direction the Council chooses to take with regard to the reverse parallel fishery concept.

The motion passed without objection.

C-2 Salmon FMP

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, the Council reviewed an Initial Review draft analysis on alternatives and options to revise and update the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and chose Alternative 3 as its Preferred Preliminary Alternative (PPA). The Council's PPA excludes from the FMP's scope three historical net commercial salmon fishing areas and the sport fishery in the West Area EEZ (west of Cape Suckling).

The PPA maintains the prohibition on commercial salmon fishing in the West Area EEZ that remains under the scope of the FMP. The FMP would remain in effect in the East Area EEZ. The Council's PPA retains the State's deferred management authority for commercial and sport salmon fisheries in the East Area (i.e., Southeast Alaska), and expressly defers management of commercial and sport salmon fisheries in the West Area EEZ to the State.

At Initial Review, the Council also recommended adopting new FMP provisions including: management and policy objectives, stock status determination criteria, optimum yield, and the Federal review of State management measures for the East Area EEZ fisheries.

At this meeting the Council will review the final analysis on the Salmon FMP and may wish to take final action to approve the analysis and adopt the revised FMP.

Gretchen Harrington gave the staff report on this issue and answered questions from the Council. Becca Robbins-Gisclair gave the AP report, and public comment was heard.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. Campbell handed out a written motion, included as **ATTACHMENT 5**, which was seconded by Mr. Hull. Ms. Campbell spoke to her motion. She noted that in making the choice of selecting Alternative 3 as the Council's preferred preliminary alternative, it confirms the scope of the Salmon FMP. It also allows continued management of salmon stocks throughout its range and is consistent with National Standard 3.

Ms. Campbell also noted she modified the problem statement by taking the second paragraph out because it was direction to staff. Mr. Dersham commented that by selecting Alternative 3, the current salmon management structure is maintained as closely as possible, and as Ms. Campbell noted, it is consistent with NS 3 – managing salmon stocks as a unit. He brought specific attention to the fact that all three traditional net areas are removed from the FMP as the Council finds there is no need for federal conservation and management in these areas because the State already adequately manages those salmon fisheries. He noted that commercial and sport salmon fishermen will continue to be registered with the State. Mr. Dersham also pointed out that consistent with NS 7, not every fishery needs management under an FMP, and removing the three traditional commercial net fishing areas does not change the importance of these fisheries. Status quo is not an option and the motion clearly reflects the Council's desire to continue to have the State manage the salmon fisheries in these areas.

Mr. Balsiger s thanked Ms. Campbell for the motion and noted that the FMP is necessary in the East area due to obligations under ESA and the Pacific Salmon Treaty, but that it is different in traditional areas. He noted that the State's escapement based management regime is consistent with NS1 and the OY definitions in the draft FMP achieve the MSAs objectives for OY.

Mr. Hull spoke in support of the motion and addressed comments heard in public testimony. He noted that while there was concern about maintaining federal oversight and an appeal process, but the analysis points out the problems with federal only management, particularly with the required ACLs, and not being able to vary from the set management strategy. He reiterated that the state proposed management system is preferable.

Mr. Tweit noted his support of the motion. He stated that salmon should be managed differently than all other species because of the overlap in the different agencies, and that states need to harmonize their management network. Alternative 3 represents the best strategy.

Mr. Fields spoke in favor of the motion, noting his agreement with the other Council members. Mr. Cotten also spoke in favor, and noted he cannot support any additional oversight.

Mr. Tweit moved to amend, which was seconded, that the Council deems proposed regulations that clearly and directly flow from the provisions of this motion to be necessary and appropriate in accordance with section 303(c), and therefore the Council authorizes the Executive Director and the Chairman to review the draft proposed regulations when provided by NMFS to ensure that the proposed regulations to be submitted to the Secretary under section 303(c) are consistent with these instructions. The amendment passed without objection.

The main motion passed without objection by roll call vote.

C-3 (a) GOA Specifications

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council makes final recommendations on groundfish and bycatch specifications as listed above to manage the 2012 and 2013 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries.

GOA SAFE Document

The groundfish Plan Teams met in Seattle November 14-18, 2011 to prepare the final SAFE reports and to review the status of groundfish stocks. The GOA SAFE report forms the basis for the recommended GOA groundfish specifications for the 2012 and 2013 fishing years. Note that there are three volumes to the SAFE report: a stock assessment volume, a fishery evaluation volume ("economic SAFE"), and an ecosystems considerations volume. The introduction to the GOA SAFE report was mailed to the Council and Advisory Panel in late November 2011. The full GOA SAFE report, the economic SAFE report and the ecosystem considerations volume were mailed to the SSC.

Two year OFL and ABC Determinations

Amendment 48/48 to the GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs, implemented in 2005, removed the requirement for annual assessments of rockfishes, flatfish, and Atka mackerel since new survey data were unavailable in alternating years. Full assessments were provided in 2011 to coincide with new survey data available from the 2011 GOA trawl and longline surveys.

The 2013 ABC and OFL values recommended in next year's SAFE report are likely to differ from this year's projections for 2013 because data from 2013 surveys are anticipated and a re-evaluation on the status of stocks will improve on the current available information for recommendations.

ABCs, TACs, and Apportionments

At this meeting, the Council will establish final catch specifications for the 2012 and 2013 fisheries. The SSC and AP recommendations will be provided to the Council during the meeting.

TAC Considerations for State Pacific Cod Fishery

Since 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals of not more than 25% of the Federal P. cod TAC from the state parallel fisheries.

Prohibited Species Catch Limits

In the GOA, Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits are established for halibut. Since 1995, total halibut PSC limits for all fisheries and gear types have totaled 2,300 t. This cap was reduced from 2,750 t after the sablefish IFQ fishery was exempted from the halibut PSC requirements in 1995.

Diana Stram and Jim Ianelli gave the staff report on this agenda item. Pat Livingston gave the SSC report, Becca Robbins Gisclair gave the AP report, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved to adopt final GOA groundfish specifications for 2012-2013 OFLs, ABCs and TACs as outlined in the attached table. (ATTACHMENT 6) Further, he recommends the Council recommends that sharks, octopus and squid be put on bycatch-only status for 2012 as recommended by the Plan Team, and that the Council adopt the GOA halibut PSC apportionments

for 2012-2013 (ATTACHMENT 7). Lastly, he recommended the Council approve the GOA Groundfish SAFE report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benson. Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion, noting that the specification and stock assessment process for this year has gone smoothly, and noted that the SSC concurred. In public testimony, he noted that industry recommended TACs lower than the ABCs to provide a clear an estimate of what the harvest will be in 2012. He thanked the plan teams for their work, and noted that halibut information should start to be included in the stock assessment process. He also noted that attention should be paid on how incidental catch and bycatch that occurs in the halibut fishery and is supportive in finding the funding for studies. Mr. Fields noted his concern about the PSC allocation of halibut in the GOA, but overall the specifications process indicate healthy GOA fisheries. Mr. Cotten indicated his concern with increased TACs on flatfish, with a concern of halibut bycatch. Mr. Hull thanked Mr. Tweit for his request of including more information on halibut in the SAFE ecosystem and economic chapters. **Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.**

C-3 (b) BSAI Groundfish SAFE Report and 2012/2013 harvest specifications

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the Council will adopt the BSAI SAFE Report and final recommendations on groundfish harvest specifications and PSC limits to manage the 2012 and 2013 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish fisheries. Upon publication in the Federal Register, the final 2012 specifications will replace the specifications adopted last year for 2012 fisheries.

BSAI SAFE Report. The BSAI Groundfish Plan Team met in Seattle on November 14-18, 2011 to prepare the BSAI Groundfish SAFE report. The SAFE report forms the basis for BSAI groundfish harvest specifications for the next two fishing years. The introduction to the BSAI SAFE report was mailed to the Council and Advisory Panel on November 23, 2011; it summarizes the Plan Team recommendations for each stock/complex. The full report, including the Economic SAFE report and Ecosystems Considerations chapter, was distributed to the SSC and is available through the Council website. The Council will review and adopt the full report at this meeting.

ABCs, TACs, and Apportionments The sum of the recommended ABCs for 2012 and 2013 are 2.51 million t and 2.64 million t, respectively. These are 20,000 t less than and 110,000 t more than the sum of the 2011 ABCs (2.53 million t), indicating relative stability in 2012, after a rebound in stock status in 2011 that followed declines in 2009 and 2010. Total BSAI catches through November 5, 2011 totaled 1,778,959 t (89 percent of total TACs and OY). The status of BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. Nearly all stocks are above B_{MSY} or its proxy of $B_{35\%}$. Many stocks are rebounding due to increased recent recruitments.

Adopt prohibited species catch limits for Pacific halibut, crab, and herring: Beginning in 2008, the head and gut trawl catcher/processor sector, which targets flatfish, Pacific cod, Pacific ocean perch, and Atka mackerel, was allocated groundfish TACs and PSC limits and members of the "Amendment 80" sector were allowed to join a cooperative to manage its allocations. Regulations require that crab and halibut trawl PSC limits be apportioned between the BSAI trawl limited access and Amendment 80 sectors after subtraction of prohibited species quota (PSQ) reserves. Crab and halibut trawl PSC limits assigned to the Amendment 80 sector is then sub-allocated to Amendment 80 cooperatives as PSC cooperative quota.

Seasonal apportionment of PSC limits The Council may also seasonally apportion the PSC limit allowances.

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Jane DiCosimo, Mike Sigler and Jim Ianelli gave the staff report on this agenda item. The SSC gave their report on this (and the remainder of the minutes) and Becca Robbins Gisclair gave the AP report. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, the Council approve BSAI SAFE and the final BSAI groundfish harvest specs for 2012 and 2013 as recommended by the SSC, and that it adopt the TACs as presented in the industry handout, and the PSC catch limits and seasonal apportionments of halibut, red king crab, tanner crab, and opilio crab and herring to target fishery categories, as shown in the PSC tables in the AP report. (ATTACHMENT 3) As part of the motion, Mr. Henderschedt noted how the numbers proposed vary from the AP recommendations:

**EBS Pollock: AP recommended 1,205,600T, and Council 1.2T
BOG Pollock: AP recommended 200T, Council 500T
YFS AP recommended 199,000T; Council 202,000 tons,
Rocksole 84,100 AP recommendation; Council 87000T
N Rockfish: 5000T AP recommendation; Council 4000T
Skate: 25,000 AP recommendation; Council 24,700T
Total adds up to 2mmt tons.**

Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, noting all TACs are at or below the SSC's recommendations of ABC, and the TACs in the motion provide best opportunity to achieve OY while avoiding overfishing and staying under cap. The TACs for the non-targeted species are set at or above the target species 2011 catch.

Mr. Henderschedt went on to address the pollock TAC, noting that the Council has a high quality stock assessment process, and that although there has been much debate, the Plan Teams are comfortable with the pollock assessment. He reminded the Council that all parties are working toward the same objective: to find the right level of ABC. He valued the work of the Plan Teams and the SSC, and that the work of those bodies are a major component to the successful management of our marine resources, as is the fact that fishermen are engaged and involved in the Council process. He cautioned the Council to avoid substituting its judgment for judgment of the scientists, and noted that NS guidelines are there to avoid that when setting a TAC which would result in exceeding an ABC, and noted that he is recommending the TAC for EBS Pollock at 1.2mmt, which is slightly below recommended ABC by the SSC. He is balancing the needs of all the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands fisheries in a best way to achieve OY.

Finally, Mr. Henderschedt thanked Dr. Ianelli for reaching out to the industry to get its input, and that their voices will be valuable in the process.

Mr. Benson moved to change EBS Pollock to 1.088mmt. It was seconded by Mr. Dersham. Mr. Benson spoke to his motion, noting that this is an unusual year. He briefly discussed the SSC comments and noted that there have been concerns with compromising one year class. He thanked the skippers for their public comments.

There was lengthy discussion. Mr. Dersham supported the motion, specifically noting that he has taken into account the public comment. Mr. Hyder noted he is supporting the motion as well, citing the number being supported by science, and remarked that the Council is not bound to take the recommendations of the SSC, particularly when on the precautionary side of the issue. Chairman Olson noted that although Chinook salmon savings may be apparent with the motion, he will agree with the SSC and does not

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support the motion. Mr. Bedford noted he is not supporting the amendment, and that the participation of the public is very important, and while there may be Chinook bycatch, it will be constrained by regulatory measures the Council has already put in place. Mr. Henderschedt noted he will not be supporting the amendment, and that the Council has an obligation to respond to the best available scientific information.

Mr. Hull noted that he will be opposing the amendment, and that the difference between the two numbers does not have an effect on the reproductive health of the stock. Mr. Merrill noted that he would also be voting against the motion, and stated that it was noteworthy that the industry as a whole agreed on the 1.2mmt number. Mr. Fields remarked that although he understands the science, he has to take into account the public comment and has some hesitancy on the 2008 year class. He will be supporting the amendment.

Ms. Smoker clarified that the Council was discussing TAC recommendations not ABC recommendations and that the ABC has already been recommended to the Council from the SSC, the Council may recommend TAC at or below this level.

There was continued discussion, and Mr. Benson thanked everyone for the debate, and that the Council may have benefitted from having this discussion earlier. **A vote on the amendment failed 4/7, with Benson, Hyder, Fields, and Dersham voting in favor.**

Mr. Cotten moved, which was seconded, to shift 14,000mt from pollock to cod, which would result in a total of 1,186,000 mt and 275,000 mt for cod. Mr. Cotten noted this is an allocation issue and although the industry is not united on this shift, he noted that the cod would be available should the Pollock numbers need to be adjusted.

Mr. Henderschedt moved to amend Mr. Cotten's motion by changing Pcod to 270,000, which would leave pollock at 1.19mmt. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Dersham noted he would be opposing Mr. Cotten's motion, remarking that the place for allocation discussions is not in the TAC setting process. Mr. Fields stated his support of the motion because of the reduction of pollock. **The amendment failed 6/5, with Fields, Cotten, Benson, Hyder and Tweit voting in favor.**

Mr. Henderschedt briefly noted his appreciation for the debate and that it is indicative of a healthy public process and peer review. There was general agreement from the Council members about the positive nature of the debate. **Motion passed 8/3, with Benson, Fields and Hyder voting in opposition.**

Mr. Hull requested additional information from staff on plans to solicit feedback from pollock participants. Council staff indicated that Dr. Ianelli is continuing to communicate with skippers on fishing conditions. How this information can be best be incorporated to help focus research questions is continuing to be developed.

Senator Begich

Alaska's Senator Mark Begich addressed the Council, discussing issues of importance to Alaska and Alaska's fisheries. He noted that resolving complex fishery management issues is a vital part of maintaining sustainable fisheries, and lauded the Council process in Alaska as a model for other Councils. Senator Begich cited the importance of the seafood industry and all the economic impact it has throughout the region. He briefly discussed budget issues, and emphasized the importance of maintaining resources for stock assessments and research, and safety and enforcement. He noted that there is a great interest in

Alaska's Arctic and continued research and data collection in the area. Senator Begich answered questions from Council members. He briefly discussed the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, and issues related to the North Pacific that are on the horizon, and that he would be looking for input from the Council as these issues develop.

C-4 Crab Management

Mark Fina reviewed the agenda item and gave a brief report on all C-4 items. It was agreed that each item would be discussed separately, and public comment would follow each issue. Mark Fina gave the AP report and public comment was taken. The SSC did not discuss this issue.

BACKGROUND

At its December 2010 meeting, the Council received a five year review of the crab rationalization program. On reviewing the report, the Council concluded that many aspects of the program are working well. Participants have adapted to the complexity of the program and safety goals continue to be achieved under the program. Despite these successes, the Council acknowledged that other aspects of the program may require additional consideration, including crew compensation, leasing practices, entry opportunities, and the arbitration system. The Council acknowledged that it would like additional time to evaluate the five year review and assess testimony prior to determining whether action is needed to address these concerns. The Council requested that, in the intervening time, stakeholders work to develop measures to address aspects of the program that have created these concerns. At this meeting, the Council will consider stakeholder proposed measures and whether to develop an amendment package to address these stated concerns. The items included under (a) (i.e., crew compensation, active participation, and excessive lease rates) will be considered as an agenda item, as those factors interact.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

C-4 (a) Crew compensation/active participation/excessive lease rates

Ms. Campbell made the following motion, which was seconded by Mr. Hull: The Council adopts the following problem statement and alternatives for analysis.

Problem statement:

The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Crab Rationalization Program is a comprehensive approach to rationalize an overcapitalized fishery. Conservation, safety, and efficiency goals have largely been met under the program. Provisions that allow for absentee ownership of crab harvest shares support long-term investment by persons or corporations with little or no involvement in the prosecution of the fisheries and limits the amount of quota available for active participants. This action is intended to ensure that ownership of quota transitions to persons who are actively involved in the prosecution of the fisheries.

Alternative 1: No action

No action, status quo.

Alternative 2: Active Participation - Eligibility criteria for purchase of owner shares

To be eligible to purchase CVO or CPO QS, the QS holder or an individual that is at least a 10, 20, or 33% (options) share holder when the QS is held by a partnership or corporation must meet one of the following requirements:

- a. hold 5, 10, or 20% (options) ownership of a vessel with participation in a rationalized Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab fishery in any of the previous 4 seasons or**
- b. provide documentation of participation as a captain or crew in a rationalized crab fishery (verified by a signature on a fish ticket or crew members' affidavit) for at least 1, 2, or 4 (options) fishing trips in a rationalized Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab fishery in any of the 3 or 4 (options) previous seasons.**

In addition, the Council requests a discussion paper that examines options for requiring all cooperatives to adopt 'best practices' in their cooperative agreements. Best practices could include:

- Minimum crew pay standards such as a minimum threshold of gross vessel revenue for crew compensation.**
- Maximum lease rate caps.**
- Maximum amount of lease rates that may be charged against crew compensation.**
- Provisions to promote quota share ownership among crew and active participants.**

Ms. Campbell spoke to her motion noting her appreciation for the effort the working group has put into addressing the concerns of the Council after the 5 year review of the Crab Rationalization Program. She also thanked the public for their comment, and pointed out there are still some questions about the details and effectiveness of the solutions proposed. She noted this motion can be a framework for active participation, and that it's important for the Council to examine a regulatory mechanism to require active participation, as there are many different ideas as to what it means. Ms. Campbell spoke to her concern of the industry to maintain voluntary lease agreements, and would like to have a discussion to provide a regulatory structure for co-ops to achieve these goals. Ms. Campbell answered questions of clarification from the Councilmembers.

Mr. Fields moved to substitute "Permanently transfer and retain" CVO or CPO QS instead of "purchase." The motion was seconded by Mr. Cotten. He spoke to his motion noting the language would specifically cover other kinds of transfers (medical and administrative transfers.) It was clarified it only applies to purchases and not to current owners. There was general discussion on how the amendment would apply to probate, and the distinction between purchase and permanent transfer, and the necessity of the words, "and retain." It was noted that the document would

The motion passed 6/5 with Henderschedt, Hyder, Tweit, Merrill, and Benson voting against.

Mr. Fields moved to amend the language in sub-paragraph A, "in any previous 2-4 seasons" instead of any previous 4 seasons to establish a range of considerations for the analysis. The amendment was seconded by Mr. Cotten. Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that this makes the timeline similar with the language in the vessel paragraph. Additionally, he noted that since the amendment was about active participation, tying the timeframe for ownership interest to the purchase of quota would be more informational if there was a wider range of years. **The motion passed 7/4, with Henderschedt, Tweit, Merrill, and Dersham voting against.**

Mr. Tweit moves to bifurcate the motion into two parts: the discussion paper and the analysis of elements and options. It was seconded by Mr. Cotten. Mr. Tweit noted that the analysis of the elements and options would shape the discussion paper. There was brief discussion, and Mr. Fields noted that while the Council has had these items agended for a while, there is no need to bifurcate. Mr. Olson

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noted it may speed up the process if the action was not bifurcated. **The motion failed 4/7, with Henderschedt, Tweit, Benson, and Hyder voting in favor.**

Mr. Fields moved to amend, in Alternative 2 – amendment to insert subparagraph C to read; “active participation eligibility applies to all CVO and CPO QS holders in a range of 5-20 years after implementation.” Mr. Cotten seconded the amendment. Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that after hearing public testimony and comments, that this amendment would examine a reasonable timeframe to move the industry towards active participation, and at some point have all the industry on a level playing field. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding requirements of ownership and participation. There was concern there will be disruption of business models. Chairman Olson noted he would be opposing the amendment, although the Council may address this issue at a later date. **The motion failed 2/9 with Fields and Cotten in support of the motion.**

Mr. Tweit moved to amend text in the problem statement to substitute “provisions” for “best practices.” Additionally, he moved to provide a statement of intent: “to promote quota acquisition by crew and active participants and promote equitable crew compensation packages.” Mr. Fields seconded the amendment. Mr. Tweit spoke to his amendment, noting that the word “provisions” provides more legal flexibility, and the intent provides clarification. There was general discussion on what should be included in the discussion paper, and Mr. Olson cautioned the Council about adding specifics to include at an early stage. **The amendment passed without objection.**

Mr. Cotten requested an examination of a depreciation schedule or other ways to prove ownership on a vessel. Mr. Fields urged staff to include the issues associated with crew compensation.

Discussion continued on the amended main motion. Mr. Henderschedt thanked the Commissioner for the main motion, but noted he would be voting against it, because he does not think the Council should take up a program the industry would be able to do on their own. He noted his concern with the Council’s direct involvement with crew compensation, but that we should remain fair and equitable. Mr. Hyder noted his concurrence, and that industry stakeholders have been developing a program and the Council should let it continue. Mr. Fields noted he views the Council partnering with the industry, and appreciates the work that the stakeholders have done.

Mr. Merrill noted his opposition, and does not believe it is necessary to have an analysis for the active participation portion. He reminded the Council that rationalization currently gives industry a lot of tools to use to address ownership, and that NMFS could better address issues collaboratively with the industry rather than through regulations.

Ms. Campbell stressed the need to address active participation so industry can proceed in a clear direction. Speaking to the discussion paper, she noted the Council can provide a regulatory structure for the industry which would allow the industry address the Council’s concerns better than they could on their own. Mr. Cotten noted his support, and thanked the industry for their work.

Mr. Hull noted the industry is expected to maintain voluntary lease agreements, and the Council will address problems as they arise. He thanked those involved, and hopes to move forward constructively. Mr. Tweit addressed his concern that the specificity is too narrowly drawn, and will oppose the final motion.

The amended main motion passed 6/5, with Hyder, Tweit, Merrill, Benson, and Henderschedt voting against.

Mr. Henderschedt referred to Mr. Suryan's testimony which pointed out the value of a trendline. There was brief discussion and it was agreed to review this issue during the staff tasking agenda item.

C-4 (b) Binding Arbitration Program

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded by Mr. Benson, that the Council for a workgroup to explore different means to establish a Golden King Crab price formula. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion, understanding that the Council may not be the best for this venue, but a committee of specialists may be the way to get the best formula, and that the Council has an obligation to have a functioning binding arbitration system. He noted that he envisions the group made up of objective experts: economists, arbitrators, etc. There was brief discussion, and the **motion passed 9/2 with Hyder and Merrill in opposition.**

Mr. Henderschedt moved, which was seconded, to task staff to develop a discussion paper regarding lengthy season arbitration provisions in the crab program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benson. Mr. Henderschedt spoke to his motion noting the paper should review the agency interpretation and implementation of the season agreement provision; discuss how/why it's used and frequency of use, timing of arbitration and discuss the effects on the arbitration process and business operations. He noted that the purpose of this paper is for the Council to be educated on the arbitration process.

Mr. Fields moved to amend to add a discussion relative to publication of arbitration decisions and allowing either side to trigger arbitration process. The motion to amend was seconded. There was brief discussion, and Mr. Henderschedt noted his discomfort with expanding the focus of the discussion paper. **The motion passed 9/2, with Hyder and Henderschedt in opposition.**

The amended main motion passes with Mr. Hyder opposing.

C-4 (c) Community Issues/ ROFR

Mark Fina gave the staff report on this issue, and reviewed the discussion paper. Becca Robbins Gisclair gave the AP report, and public comment was taken.

BACKGROUND

Under the crab rationalization program, a community that meets certain thresholds for historical processing received rights of first refusal on transfers of processing shares derived from processing that occurred in that community. Over the course of several meetings, the Council has considered an action to amend the rights of first refusal to make those rights more effective. At its February 2011 meeting, the Council elected to delay further action on the amendment package to allow stakeholders to continue to develop solutions to issues with the rights of first refusal. At this meeting, the Council intends to review the current purpose and need statement and alternatives, as well as consider stakeholder suggestions that could improve the effectiveness of the rights of first refusal. To assist the Council, a brief discussion paper includes the purpose and need statement, the alternatives, and a brief discussion of notices and information concerning the state of rights (including whether rights are triggered and whether rights have lapsed). The discussion of notices and information is included at the suggestion of stakeholders, and is intended to assist stakeholders and the Council in considering whether addition notification requirements could improve the effectiveness of the rights.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Cotten motion moved the following, which was seconded:

Include an alternative in the amendment package to require PQS holders to provide the following notices:

- 1) To the right holder, a notice of all transfers of IPQ or PQS that are subject to the right (regardless of whether the PQS holder believes the right applies to the transfer) *(as a required contract provision)*;
- 2) To NMFS as a part of any application to transfer PQS subject to the right to any party other than the right holder, either:
 - a. A certification of the transferor of the PQS that the right holder was provided with 90 days' notice of the right and did not exercise the right during that period (in which case the PQS may transfer and the right will no longer apply); or
 - b. A certification of the new PQS holder and the right holder that a contract has been entered establishing the right with respect to the new PQS holder or that the right holder has elected to waive the right with respect to the new holder.
- 3) To NMFS, as a part of the annual application for IPQ (and copied to the right holder), a statement as to whether the right has lapsed as a result of use of the IPQ outside of the community for 3 consecutive years; and
- 4) To the right holder annually, the location of use of IPQ that are subject to a right and whether the IPQ were processed by the PQS holder *(as a required contract provision)*.

Labeling changes to alternatives under Action 2 shown in bold:

Action 2: Increase community protections by removing the ROFR lapse provisions.

Alternative 1 – status quo

- Option 1a: Maintain current provision under which the right lapses, if IPQ are used outside the community of the entity holding the right for three consecutive years.
- Option 1b: Maintain current provision, which allows rights to lapse, if the PQS is sold in a sale subject to the right (and the entity holding the right fails to exercise the right).

Alternative 2 – Strengthen community protections under circumstances where ROFR may lapse.

- Option 2a: Require parties to rights of first refusal contracts to remove the provision that rights lapse, if the IPQ are used outside the community for a period of three consecutive years.
- Option 2b: Require that any person holding PQS that met landing thresholds qualifying a community entity for a right of first refusal on program implementation to maintain a contract providing that right at all times.

[May choose (a) or (b) or both.]

Mr. Cotten spoke to his motion, noting that while these problems have been identified and there is concern that timing was not immediate, the Council is very aware of the points listed in the motion, and that it will help prevent problems in future. He expressed his hope that the document would progress past the initial review state.

Motion passed without objection.

C-5 Freezer Longline Vessel Replacement

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, the Council tasked staff to prepare an analysis on vessel replacement provisions for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) freezer longliner fleet. The request originated from an industry proposal that would allow smaller freezer longline vessels to be rebuilt or replaced with larger vessels to improve safety, fuel efficiency, resource utilization, and economic efficiency.

Subsequently, the staff has prepared a draft analysis for initial review at this meeting. The Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (RIR/IRFA) provides an analysis of a proposed modification to the maximum length overall (MLOA) of the License Limitation Program (LLP) license assigned to the freezer longline vessels to accommodate larger replacement vessels. The proposed action would also allow freezer longline replacement vessels that (1) exceed 165 feet in length, or (2) more than 750 gross tons, or (3) with engines capable of producing more than 3,000 shaft horsepower to enter the groundfish fishery. Coast Guard regulation 46 U.S.C. 12106(c)(6) limit vessels greater than the above limits from entering fisheries unless the vessel carried a fisheries endorsement prior to September 25, 1997 or the Council has recommended and the Secretary of Commerce has approved a conservation and management measure to allow the vessel to be used in fisheries under its authority.

Jon McCracken reviewed his report on this agenda item, and Cmdr. Woodley and Dr. Jennifer Lincoln gave a report on the safety aspects of freezer longline vessel replacement. Becca Robbins Gisclair gave the AP report, the SSC had given its report on this agenda item earlier, and public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved the following draft problem statement and alternatives as revised:

Problem Statement

Vessel length restrictions included with LLP licenses and the AFA, established to maintain fleet capacity, inhibit the BSAI freezer longline fleet from replacing or rebuilding their vessels. Modifying or removing vessel length restrictions for BSAI freezer longline vessels to allow owners to rebuild or replace their vessels with larger vessels would allow for improved vessel safety, meet international class and loadline requirements that would allow a broader range of onboard processing options, or otherwise improve the economic efficiency of their vessels.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action. Under this alternative, the BSAI Pacific cod hook and line catcher processor vessel length, horsepower, and tonnage restrictions currently in place would continue to apply.

Alternative 2: For those LLP licenses with catcher processor and hook-and-line Pacific cod endorsements for the BS or AI with an MLOA of less than 150', increase the MLOA of the LLP license 20 percent not to exceed a MLOA of 150'.

Suboption 2.1: Any vessel replaced under this program would **not** be eligible to be designated on an FFP or an LLP.

Suboption 2.2: Replaced vessels may **not** be used to replace other BSAI hook and line catcher processor vessels.

Alternative 3: The MLOA requirements on LLP licenses with catcher processor and hook-and-line Pacific cod endorsements for the BS or AI would not apply and the Council recommends that vessels named on these LLP licenses be authorized for use in the EEZ under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which is intended to clarify that these vessels are eligible to receive a certificate of documentation consistent with 46 U.S.C. 12102(c) and MARAD regulations at 46 C.F.R.356.47.

Suboption 3.1: Any vessel replaced under this program would not be eligible to be designated on an FFP or an LLP.

Suboption 3.2: Replaced vessels may not be used to replace other BSAI hook and line catcher processor vessels.

Suboption 3.3: Any replacement vessel may not exceed 220 feet.

Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion, urging the Council to ensure revisions to decision packet materials contain adequate impacts to other fisheries and gears, as well as seabird bycatch. The analysis should address the SSC's comments as appropriate. Mr. Tweit noted that the Council may need to add to the motion to include a statement in regard to safety. He mentioned we need to give the industry all the tools to compete in a global market, but that we need to examine the impacts on other areas.

There were brief questions of clarification for the maker of the motion, and for staff. Mr. Henderschedt suggested the implications of 2.1 and 2.2 be clarified, and that there be an additional evaluation of the monitoring and enforcement requirements associated with ensuring compliance with those suboptions. Mr. Tweit also requested an expansion of the existing Council actions that provide the effective sideboards.

Mr. Fields moved to amend to add a suboption 3.4 under Alternative 3, and was seconded by Mr. Benson: "The MLOA required on LLP licenses for CP and Pot cod endorsements for BS or AI would continue to apply when the LLP is used in the BSAI pot cod fishery."

Mr. Fields spoke to his motion, noting that with the MLOA actions are specific to the pot cod fishery and the analysis should explore impacts to remaining participants in the pot cod fishery.

The amendment passed without objection.

Mr. Benson requested staff to examine potential spillover effects, not only in the GOA, but specifically BS turbot and ATF fisheries. Mr. Hull requested the change in table 2.9 regarding the WGOA hook and line CPs and to expand the discussion quantifying the harvesting capacity of vessels currently eligible to fish.

The amended main motion passes without objection.

C-6 Halibut Management

C-6 (a) 2012 Management Measures

BACKGROUND

In October 2011 NMFS staff informed the Council that final regulations to implement the Council's October 2008 preferred alternative for a Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) would not occur prior to the International Pacific Halibut Commission's (IPHC) 2012 Annual Meeting. Instead NMFS staff suggested

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that the Council recommend management measures at this meeting to the IPHC for implementation of revised regulations under its authority in 2012. For Area 2C, the range of alternatives under consideration for 2012 is limited by the 1-fish bag limit, which is implemented under NMFS regulations, and there is insufficient time in which to revise those regulations through a regulatory amendment process.

Jane DiCosimo and Scott Meyer gave staff reports on this agenda item. Gregg Williams of the IPHC was available to answer questions. Becca Robbins Gisclair gave the AP report, and the SSC did not address this issue. Public comment was taken.

At this time, the Council noted they were behind on the agenda. **Mr. Hull moved, which was seconded, to drop the D-1 agenda items:**

- (a) Review Bering Sea Habitat Conservation Area boundary.**
- (b) Discussion paper on GOA Chinook salmon bycatch in all fisheries.**
- (c) Discussion paper on GOA Pacific Cod A-season opening dates.**
- (e) Establishing a CQE Program in Area 4b; final action.**

There was a brief discussion of the motion, noting that these actions may be taken up at the February meeting. **The motion passed without objection.**

COUNCIL DISCUSSION /ACTION

Ed Dersham moved the following charter halibut management measures in Areas 2C and 3A for consideration by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (in 2012) based on their staff recommendations regarding total CEY:

Area 2C (GHL = 931,000 lbs):

1 fish reverse slot limit of ≤ 45 inches – ≥ 68 inches

Area 3A (GHL = 3.103 million lbs):

Status quo of 2 fish/day of any size

The motion was seconded, and Mr. Dersham spoke to his motion noting that the numbers are relatively conservative and assumes the higher harvest level, and assumes the 20% highgrading, which create two buffers and which predicts a harvest below the GHL, creating an additional buffer.

He thanked the public for their comments. He noted that there are reasonable ways to measure the halibut with minimal impact, and that these numbers should keep the fleet within its GHLs. Mr. Dersham answered a few questions of clarification. There was brief discussion regarding enforcement, and it was generally agreed that the discussion of releasing a fish in the water will come up at the IPHC, and they would put it into regulation if necessary.

Mr. Cotten moved to amend, which was seconded, in Area 3A, he recommended a prohibition of skipper and crew harvest in June, July and August. He spoke to his motion, noting that it wouldn't affect a business plan or clients' plans but it would give further assurance that the GHL wouldn't be exceeded.

Mr. Fields noted his support for the amendment, noting that it is a small step and would send a signal to the industry. Mr. Henderschedt noted he will not be supporting the amendment, noting that Mr. Dersham did not include action in 3A, and that there is no scientific reason to take that action. Ms. Campbell noted

that this is an additional restriction that is not needed. Mr. Hull pointed out that the Commissioner has authority to make an executive order, should that action be necessary.

The motion failed 4/7 with Cotten, Fields, Hyder and Olson voting in favor.

Mr. Tweit thanked the State for the materials to make the decisions. He spoke in favor of the reverse slot limit, and modeling slot limits as well as approximate sizes. It speaks well to the majority of Area 2C charter sector as the sector preferred that actions be equal across the board.

The amended main motion passed without objection.

Dr. Balsiger thanked the staff, specifically Scott Meyer, who put a lot of time into this issue.

C-6 (b) Charter Management Implementation Committee Report

BACKGROUND

In June 2011, the Council formed a new Charter Management Implementation Committee to discuss issues and recommend alternative management measures for the charter halibut sector in times of low abundance. Proposed measures would be intended to reduce uncertainty and mitigate negative economic impacts of the currently proposed management measure (i.e., one fish of a maximum size using the hybrid approach) under Tier 1 of the CSP. The committee met on October 26, 2011 and developed recommendations for managing charter halibut fisheries in 2012, under the CSP, and long term solutions. The committee will meet immediately prior to the Council meeting to review the ADF&G discussion paper and make its final recommendations on 2012 management measures for 2012. The Council will consider committee recommendations and decide on a course of action for a potential trailing amendment to the CSP.

Jane DiCosimo gave the staff report on this issue. Neither the AP nor the SSC had this item on its agenda.

C-6 (c) Catch Sharing Plan

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, NMFS informed the Council that a preliminary review of public comments received on the proposed CSP raised issues that may require additional input from the Council before NMFS can proceed to a final rule. NMFS provided a report on specific topics of concern for this meeting. The report organizes the CSP issues into the following categories:

- 1. Issues for which NMFS is requesting policy guidance and additional input from the Council;*
- 2. Technical corrections and clarifications to the CSP analysis document and responses to comments that can be addressed by Council staff with little or no direction from the Council; and*
- 3. Issues for which NMFS is requesting Council prioritization of staff resources to develop supplemental discussion and/or analysis to respond to public comments and potentially for addition to the CSP analysis document.*

At this meeting the Council will decide on a course of action to respond to the NMFS request for assistance.

Jane DiCosimo and Rachael Baker (NMFS) gave the staff report on this agenda item. Neither the AP nor the SSC had this item on its agenda. Public comment was taken and both C6 (b) and C-6 (c).

COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

Mr. Tweit moved, which was seconded, the following problem statement and motion:

The Council continues to support implementation of the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) as the best approach to resolve longstanding allocation and management issues between the commercial and charter halibut sectors, as currently identified in the CSP Problem Statement.

The Council also recognizes that there are deficiencies in the current analysis that must be addressed before implementation can take place. Additionally, since 2008, changes in halibut management and the condition of the halibut stock have occurred, which will impact the effective implementation of the CSP as envisioned by the Council.

Motion:

The Council provides the following policy guidance to NMFS on issues raised during the public comment period on the Halibut CSP Proposed Rule.

Comment 1: At this time the Council continues to support implementation of the CSP concurrently in Areas 2C and 3A. Supplemental analysis of and revisions to the CSP being requested in this motion are applicable to both management areas.

Comment 2: The Council agrees with NMFS' suggested response regarding the proposed method to adjust charter harvest estimates from the ADF&G mail survey using the non-GAF proportion of charter harvest reported in logbooks under the CSP.

Comment 3: The Council recommends using Method 3 to convert IFQ to GAF and for calculating an average GAF weight.

Comment 4: The Council recommends that the provision allowing charter operators to return GAF to an IFQ holder at any time during the season be removed from the CSP and that CSP retain the mandatory return date.

Comment 5: The Council agrees with NMFS' suggested response regarding the rationale for believing that charter overages and underages will balance out over time.

Comment 6: The Council agrees with NMFS' suggested response regarding the rationale for the range of +/- 3.5% around the harvest projections.

The Council requests additional analysis and revisions to the Halibut CSP that more specifically address a variety of public comments as outlined in the NMFS CSP report:

- **Add a description of the status quo GHM allocations, such as a table of the stair step GHMs under different Total Area CEYs, and a comparison of the way in which annual allocations are made to the charter sector under both the GHM and the CSP.**
- **Revise the analysis so that it incorporates allocations at lower levels of abundance, and assesses the economic impacts, to the extent practicable, of the full range of allocations. Data from recent years should be used to determine what the charter and commercial allocations would have been under the CSP, and what management measures would have been in place.**
- **Add other indices to the analysis to describe the economic condition of the charter and commercial sectors over the last ten years. Examples for a typical charter and longline**

business in 2C and 3A could be provided. For the commercial sector, examples could include changes in QS prices and annual QS value, ex-vessel prices, and annual revenue. Consider differences between vessel classes, when QS was bought, etc. For the charter sector it could include permit prices (minimal data), number of trips and clients, and annual revenue.

- Review the IPHC process described in the CSP for deducting removals prior to applying the allocation percentages to the combined commercial/charter catch limit. The halibut charter stakeholder committee discussed “separate accountability”, in which each sector would be held accountable for its wastage of halibut. The CSP analysis currently deducts wastage in the commercial sector BEFORE the allocation percentages are applied. In 2011 the IPHC began deducting O26/U32 BAWM before setting catch limits, and this has allocative implications for 2C and 3A. Wastage estimates for the charter sector are not currently available, and so no deductions are made.
- Review the management matrix to determine whether management measures and the data employed are still appropriate in each tier given current charter harvests relative to combined fishery CEY, particularly in Area 3A.

The Council also seeks additional revisions to the Halibut CSP analysis to address the technical comments as outlined in the NMFS CSP report. This is a comprehensive list and it is understood that staff will work to address each of these points, to the extent practicable, in the next version of the Halibut CSP analysis.

With the direction provided above, the Council seeks to address the primary comments and concerns as outlined in the NMFS CSP Report and identified in public comment. It is the Council’s intent to review the additions and revisions to the modified Halibut CSP analysis in a subsequent meeting in order to determine what, if any, additional changes are necessary in order for the CSP to meet Council objectives. The Council also requests feedback from NMFS as to whether the additions and revisions to the CSP result in the need for a new proposed rule, so that the Council may establish a timeline for implementing the CSP.

Given the myriad of components involved in commercial and charter halibut management, the Council recognizes that there are management options available that were not included as part of the original Halibut CSP action. It is not the wish of the Council to delay implementation of the Halibut CSP any further than necessary. As such, the Council is asking for initiation of a discussion paper analyzing the following for potential use in future halibut management:

- The use of ADF&G logbooks for official harvest reporting
- Annual limits allowing for the retention of at least one fish of any size
- Restricting captain and crew retention of fish
- Trip limits, reverse slot limits, and two fish of a maximum size
- The use of a common pool purchase of QS by the charter sector
- Long-term management measures under Tier 1 of the CSP as identified in the Charter Halibut Implementation Committee Report

It is intended for this discussion paper to be reviewed by the Council following its review of the modified Halibut CSP. New and revised information received from review of the modified CSP will serve to refine the above discussion paper recognizing that full development of this discussion paper may be difficult until such information is received. At the time of review, the Council could determine whether to fold any of these new elements into the modified CSP and let others follow as a trailing amendment.

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Mr. Tweit spoke to his motion, noting that the Council remains committed to implementing a CSP for Area 2C and 3A in partnership with ADF&G and NMFS. He noted his appreciation to those who worked on the prior CSP. He noted there are many factors which need to be examined, such as an economic downturn, the sudden and large shift in size at age of halibut, the Council's implementing changes in the charter sector, and data from the logbook program. Mr. Tweit recommended to implement the plan at the same time over both 2C and 3A areas. He noted it's not practical to request GAF and non-GAF through a mail survey, and he noted that GAF accounting would require coordination with IPHC and NMFS to determine poundage vs. length for reporting. Mr. Tweit noted the Council's projection methods will improve and can be close to the target harvest range. He answered questions of clarification from the Council members, more so on how the Council could manage a trailing amendment and timing of implementation. There was discussion regarding timing of the package and subsequent implementation, and Mr. Merrill noted that it would be optimistic that the final rule would be developed in time for the 2013 fishery if final action is taken in April.

Discussion continued regarding a roadmap to implementation, as it was unanimously agreed that the CSP be implemented in an expedient fashion. It was also agreed that the discussion paper would follow and some of the items would be reviewed by the Charter Implementation Committee.

Mr. Fields moved, which was seconded, to substitute the word SUBSEQUENT for "trailing." He spoke to his motion, underscoring that the CSP should move ahead without waiting for a "trailing" amendment. There was brief discussion, and **Mr. Fields withdrew the amendment with the concurrence of the second.**

Mr. Hull spoke to the final motion. He noted that it will be difficult to move forward trying to address difficult and significant issues, while making it expedient as possible. He remarked that because of the differing and changing parts of the motion, solutions will get more difficult and complicated, and the Council should re-assess and do its best to move forward and he will be supporting the motion. Mr. Dersham concurred, and reminded the Council he does not have a desire to delay the implementation and hopes it can happen by 2013, but if it doesn't, the GHF will be in place.

Mr. Fields noted that there will be increasing inequity as stocks decline, and that CEY is not an equitable tool to determine GHF; there must be a CSP in place. Mr. Fields is concerned that the study paper, with the additional items, will derail implementation for 2013.

There were a few questions of clarification regarding the Guided Angler Fish program (GAF), and the policy guidance to NMFS. It was generally agreed that NMFS and General Counsel will review options which are logical outgrowths of the original motion, and make a determination on which may require more review.

The amended main motion passed without objection.

Mr. Balsiger thanked the people in the room, the committee, and the staff of all the agencies. Mr. Tweit remarked he wanted to flag for discussion the pool purchase and re-allocation during staff tasking.

Mr. Hanson clarified that the matrix that should be in the analysis is the one that is currently in the analysis as part of the CSP. As part of staff review, the staff can examine other matrices.

D-1 (d) Halibut Mortality on Trawlers EFP

BACKGROUND

NMFS recently received an application from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC) for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to allow operators of non-pelagic trawl vessels to assess the operational feasibility of reducing halibut mortality in fisheries for flatfish by removing and releasing halibut from a codend on deck of a catcher/processor. The applicant developed the EFP application in cooperation with NMFS staff, and in October the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) found the EFP application constitutes a valid fishing experiment appropriate for further consideration. The study conducted under this EFP would begin in early April 2012 and continue until the end of September 2012, when a sufficient number of halibut have been sampled and assessed for condition and likelihood of survival. The EFP would allow seven AKSC non-pelagic trawl vessels to sort halibut removed from a codend on the deck of the vessel and release those fish back into the water after sampling halibut for length and condition using IPHC halibut mortality assessment methods. The EFP is intended to provide operators of non-pelagic trawl vessels with new information for reducing halibut mortality in trawl fisheries by evaluating various fishing and handling practices. At this meeting the Council will choose to approve or deny this application.

Sarah Melton introduced the agenda item, and John Gauvin and Jason Anderson gave the presentation. The AP report was given, and the SSC had given its report earlier. Public comment was taken.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Mr. Cotten moved that the Council approve the EFP application. The motion was seconded. Mr. Cotten spoke to his motion regarding Mr. DeMaster's letter regarding concern of the departure of protocol. Mr. Balsiger noted that regardless of the success of the EFP, there will still need to be changes in the accounting system. There were brief questions for staff, and Mr. Henderschedt noted that the Halibut EFP was a well-developed and structured experiment.

The motion passed without objection.

D-2 Staff Tasking

Chris Oliver briefly reviewed the background items included for this agenda item. Dr. Diana Stram reviewed the current suite of alternatives for the Pribilof Islands Blue King Crab Rebuilding plan. She noted that the Council will be hearing public comment on this issue, and was looking for direction in relation to new information. Mr. Oliver updated the Council on items that will be addressed under this agenda item, and reviewed the three meeting outlook.

Halibut Workshop

Mr. Oliver noted that he had met with the IPHC to review the parameters and the agenda of the workshop, and noted that it has grown from 8 presentations to about 15. He reviewed some of the workshop titles, noting some had fallen out because they were not relevant, but many topics were close to what was suggested in public comment. He noted that a general date suggested would be April 24, 25, in Seattle.

Mr. Fields brought up a request from public comment to address other gear on jig vessels. There was brief discussion with general agreement to revisit after public comment on all the staff tasking items.

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Vessel Monitoring System

Mr. Hyder and Mr. Keene both suggested a higher priority on a VMS review, and Lt Keene offered the USCG assistance in whatever way with VMS.

Halibut CSP

Mr. Fields requested an update report in February on the status of items the Council has requested action on from the agencies. It was decided to include under the B reports at the February 2012 meeting.

Public comment was taken on all D-2 items. Mr. Williams of the IPHC updated the Council, and reminded those present that the IPHCs annual meeting is set for the last week in January in Anchorage, and invited everyone to attend. He noted that among the items on the agenda are sport charter management in Area 2C.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Three Mile Line

Mr. Oliver noted that NMFS will draft a letter shortly, and he would get copies to the Council members.

Enforcement Committee

Mr. Hyder noted that the Council should comment on NOAA Law Enforcement draft priorities paper, and particularly the regional priorities. He stressed we should note that because of our staffing vacancies in the Alaska region, the marine mammal and tourism industry monitoring enforcement portion of enforcement should not be required.

Mr. Hyder also discussed VMS, and noted that the VMS discussion paper come back to the Council in April, and prior be made available to the IFQ Committee for review, and the Enforcement Committee would take it up at their regularly scheduled meeting in April 2012.

Crab Crew Shares

Mr. Henderschedt noted that Tom Suryan had presented public testimony and would like to incorporate updated EDR data into the portion of the 5 year review that addresses crew and crew compensation. The intent is to capture response of the fleet to the Council's initiatives, and note that the Council will be paying attention to trends.

Pribilof Islands Blue King Crab

Mr. Henderschedt noted that he supports scheduling final action for April 2012, and is aware that there may be some data challenges. Knowing that, he requested an update from staff at the February Council meeting. . Additionally, he suggested that based on current information, the affected fisheries are the YFS trawl fishery, the Pcod pot fishery, and the Pcod hook and line fishery. In February, the Council can review the way the other fisheries may fall out and can discuss accordingly. Mr. Henderschedt noted his concern regarding the conversion of crab PSC numbers to weight, and how that conversion will impact rebuilding plans and requested the discussion paper, or update in February, cover the problems that may occur.

Mr. Henderschedt also noted that specifying rollover mechanics, clarifying existing options for increased observer coverage, whole haul sampling, seasonal release of PIBKC and discard mortality rates be incorporated as described into the scope of the analysis. There was general discussion regarding the areas under consideration and the observed bycatch outside of those areas. Mr. Henderschedt noted that because there is not a clear direction to industry as to which fisheries

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are going to be included and what areas are likely to be closed, it will make decisions more complicated, both for analysts and for the public. The Council should have an in-depth discussion in February regarding all of these issues before scheduling final action in April. There was brief discussion, and general agreement around the table to review and modify the PPA as necessary in February, and to re-assess the timing for final action at that meeting.

Golden King Crab Price Formation Workgroup

Mr. Fields will chair the workgroup, and the Council will solicit names for appointment to the Committee which will consider development of a process for the price formula for the golden king crab fishery.

Legal opinion on halibut issues

Mr. Tweit requested the Council draft a letter to NMFS GC requesting its assistance on whether or not a regional fishing association will be able to meet the following criteria:

First, a single entity formed to hold guided sector allocation in trust for guided recreational anglers in 2c and 3a. Second, that they be the only entity authorized to actually purchase IFQ for use in that trust, and operate under bylaws reviewed by the Council. Third, operate on a non-profit basis only, and lastly, recommend management measures to the Council. Mr. Tweit noted that he is only requesting assistance to determine if this is a reasonable path to pursue at this point. Mr. Lepore of NOAA GC commented that there is a process for this kind of activity, and bylaws will have to be consistent with other established entities. He noted that the funding aspect is the most difficult to assess, and that there is no authority for that and must come from congress. Mr. Tweit noted the letter from NOAA GC would be extremely helpful and it was generally agreed that the Council will draft such a letter.

Other Gear on Jig Vessels

Mr. Fields noted that in order for the Council to be prepared for the Joint Protocol Committee meeting in March, he requested an initial discussion paper on this issue be developed. There was concern that the Enforcement Committee should discuss this issue before the Council views it. There was general concurrence that once the discussion paper is drafted by staff, the Enforcement Committee will review it for that meeting.

Final action on GOA Halibut PSC

Mr. Oliver would like to delay final action for June, which will give the Council an opportunity to revisit the issue in April, along with the benefit of the Halibut Bycatch Workshop. Mr. Cotten, Mr. Fields, and Mr. Hull noted their concern with a delayed action. Mr. Olson thanked the Council for their discussion, and noted that initial review will happen in February, and at that time the Council can review timing on this issue.

Observer Advisory Committee

Mr. Hull noted that the OAC does not have a meeting any time soon, but that there have been nominations for the vacant seat, and it was agreed that an appointment will be made in February.

Mr. Henderschedt highlighted the Bering Sea Freezer Longliner cod sideboards, and would like to see the Council take that up in October.

Mr. Cotten noted the ROFR workgroup may be finished with their work in time to add to an earlier agenda. Mr. Olson noted that for future scheduling.

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Mr. Fields agreed with Mr. Henderschedt on the cod sideboard issue. He also noted his concerns with the use of Greenland turbot by different fleets and has encouraged the industry to work together and bring something to the Council in February.

Chairman Olson read the names of the SSC, AP, and Committees that were appointed. He thanked the Council for their work, and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 on December 13, 2011.

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET
December, 2011 **N.P.F.M.C. MEETING**

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
Jeanne Henson	NMFS
Frank Kelly	City of U/A Alaska
Todd Loomis	Cascade Fishing, Inc.
JOE PLESKI	TRIDENT
Susan Robinson	Fishermen's First
ARMY THOMPSON	Alaska Crab Coalition
GLENN REES	PSPA
Schanna Thoma	US Senate Mark Begich
R.E. MERCHANT	UCLDA
Roland Mear	UCLDA
Kris Norosz	Teicle Seafoods
MIKE LACHENO	TRIDENT
Brent Paylor	Commercial Pollock Fisherman
FLOD SMITH	POLLOCK FISHERMAN
Patricke Brown	Cod fisherman
Mila Szymanski	KFI
Bill Orr	Equique US ^{Bill's Fish Company}
BRENT PAINE	UCB

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET
December, 2011 **N.P.F.M.C. MEETING**

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
Don Rivard	USFWS
Michael Lake	AUI
Tim Carroll	SALTWATER INC.
CRAIG CROSS	ASF
Paul Mac Gray	At-Sea Processors Assn.
Stephen Tauken	Groundswell Fisheries Movement
SHAWN C. DOCHTERMAN	CREWMAN'S ASSOCIATION
Heather McLarty	McLarty & Assoc, Juneau AK
Jackie Dragon	Greenpeace
FLOD SMITH	POLLOCK SKIPPER
Pat Hardina	Iceberg Seafoods, Inc.
CRAIG LOWENBERG	ICE/KDO
Joe Bersch	PPLP
Elizabeth Wiley	WESTWARD
Jeff Stephan	UFMA
Mark Scher	Young de Normandie
TOM ENLOW	UNI SEA
Tom Suryan	SEA

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET

December, 2011 N.P.F.M.C. MEETING

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
John Stackton	Seafood, Co.
Dick Tremaine	Sio Alaska Corp
Becca Robbins Gisclair	Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assoc
Neil Rodriguez	COASTAL VILLAGES
Ernie Weiss	Alert. and East Borough
Phillip Lestankof	CBSEA
Tyson Kade	VNF
Kenneth Simpson	Halibut Coalition
Marcus Alton	Westman Fishme
BRUCE CABRYS	3A HALIBUT longline
Gary Wall	3A Halibut fisherman
Linda Kozek	Kozek & Assoc.
SINCLAIR WILT	ALYESKA SEAFOODS INC
Carolyn Nichols	2C-3A Halibut fisher
Earl Constock	Recreational halibut
Andy Neeson	Seward Chgo Association
Nancy Hillstrand	Pioneer Alaska Fisheries
Daniel Donich	Daniel's Personalized Guide Serv.

MEETING ATTENDEE SIGN-IN SHEET
December, 2011 **N.P.F.M.C. MEETING**

PLEASE REGISTER ATTENDANCE FOR MEETING RECORDS

PLEASE PRINT - THANK YOU!

NAME	AFFILIATION
SHAWN GRIGGS	HOLMES WEGOLE BARCOTT
MARK GLEASON	ALASKA BEARING SEA CRABBERS
Charles Clement	SELF
Ken L. Larson	PWSCBA
Joe Childers	E F C
Bob Linville	small boat IFQ fisherman
Andrew Jansen	Alaska Journal of Commerce
Kathy Hansen	SEAFSA
Vicki VanWc	ADF G
Lu Dochtermann	FIN STORMBIRD & NORTH ADWANT

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Eric A. Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



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FINAL ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES North Pacific Fishery Management Council December 5-8, 2011 Anchorage, Alaska

The following (19) members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Kurt Cochran
Craig Cross
John Crowley
Julianne Curry
Jerry Downing
Tom Enlow
Tim Evers

Jeff Farvour
Becca Robbins Gisclair
Jan Jacobs
Bob Jacobson
Alexus Kwachka
Chuck McCallum
Matt Moir

Theresa Peterson
Ed Poulsen
Neil Rodriguez
Anne Vanderhoeven
Ernie Weiss

Absent: Lori Swanson

Minutes of the October (September) 2011 meeting were approved.

C-1 Pacific Cod Jig Fishery Management

The AP recommends that the Council continue to pursue clarity of legal authority and management issues for a reverse parallel fishery management for the jig sector for the March joint protocol meeting. The AP further recommends the Council take management of the jig sector back up in June in Kodiak. *Motion passed 18-0.*

C-2 Salmon FMP

The AP recommends that the Council adopt Alternative 3 for final action. *Motion passed 18-1.*

C-3(a) GOA Groundfish Harvest Specifications/SAFE

The AP recommends the Council adopt final GOA groundfish specifications for 2012-2013 OFLs, ABCs and TACs as outlined in the attached table. The AP further recommends that sharks, octopus and squid be put on bycatch-only status for 2012 as recommended by the Plan Team. *Motion passed 17-0.*

The AP recommends that the Council adopt the GOA halibut PSC apportionments for 2012-2013 as shown on page 3 of agenda item C-3(a). *Motion passed 19-0.*

The AP recommends that the Council approve the GOA Groundfish SAFE report. *Motion passed 19-0.*

C-3(b) BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications/SAFE

The AP recommends that the Council approve the BSAI Groundfish SAFE report. *Motion passed 18-0.*

The AP recommends that the Council approve the BSAI PSC bycatch allowances and seasonal apportionments for each sector shown in attached Tables 8(a), 8(b), 8(c) and 8(d). *Motion passed 18-0.*

The AP recommends the Council adopt final BSAI groundfish specifications for 2012-2013 OFLs, ABCs and TACs as outlined in the attached table. *Motion passed 18-1.*

An amendment to reduce the pollock TAC to 1.088 million metric tons for the EBS failed 5-14.

Minority Report: A minority of the AP supported an amendment to reduce the pollock TAC to 1.088 million tons. The minority felt that public testimony comments from some members of industry and written comments from fishermen to go with a lower TAC combined with the recommendation from the stock assessment author supported taking a precautionary approach and choosing the lower TAC. The minority felt that setting the TAC too high could result in extensive fishing in October when Chinook salmon bycatch tends to be high (as happened this year). These factors combine to suggest a precautionary approach to setting the pollock TAC.

Signed by: Becca Robbins Gisclair, Chuck McCallum, Ernie Weiss, Julianne Curry, Alexis Kwachka

C-4(a) Crab - Crew compensation/active participation/excessive lease rates

The Advisory Panel commends the crab cooperatives, their members and their representatives for their earnest good faith response to the Council's concerns regarding lease rates, crew compensation and active participation.

The AP encourages all crab cooperatives to arrange annual third party surveys of crab cooperative members regarding lease rates and crew compensation practices, and to submit the aggregated results of those surveys to the Council on an annual basis. The AP recommends that the Council take no action to address BS/AI crab fishery lease rates and crab fishery crewmember employment and compensation practices at this time.

The AP encourages all crab cooperatives to adopt a quota share right of first offer agreement along the lines of the draft agreement being developed by Inter-Cooperative Exchange, under which crab crewmembers and persons holding an ownership in an active Alaska fishing, tendering or fisheries support vessel receive preferential opportunities to acquire crab quota shares. The AP encourages each crab cooperative that adopts a right of first offer agreement to submit that agreement, as adopted or amended, to the Council on an annual basis. The AP believes no further action on the active participation issue is necessary at this time.

Motion passed 11-7 with 1 abstention.

Minority Report: The undersigned minority is highly supportive of efforts by the crab industry to address issues concerning crew compensation, active participation, and excessive lease rates. However, the minority felt that the prevailing motion did not adequately address those issues. Although the industry-generated voluntary quota lease rate cap in 2011 was met with a high compliance rate by participating cooperative (co-op) members the minority remains concerned that a voluntary measure does not go far enough to address issues with the crab program. While a voluntary measure may provide flexibility, it provides no guarantee to the Council or impacted stakeholders that these measures will continue or will see a higher compliance rate. Further, the Right of First Offer provisions depends on the availability of quota for sale to meet the goals for active participation, and there are no assurances that sufficient quota will in fact be for sale to meet this goal.

Signed by: Jeff Farvor, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Theresa Peterson, Alexis Kwachka, Chuck McCallum, Julianne Curry, Tim Evers.

C-4(c) Community issues/ROFR

The AP recommends that the Council move the community protections package forward with the changes noted below.

Include an alternative in the amendment package to require PQS holders to provide the following notices:

- 1) To the right holder, a notice of all transfers of IPQ or PQS that are subject to the right (regardless of whether the PQS holder believes the right applies to the transfer) (*as a required contract provision*);
- 2) To NMFS as a part of any application to transfer PQS subject to the right to any party other than the right holder, either:
 - a. A certification of the transferor of the PQS that the right holder was provided with 90 days notice of the right and did not exercise the right during that period (in which case the PQS may transfer and the right will no longer apply); or
 - b. A certification of the new PQS holder and the right holder that a contract has been entered establishing the right with respect to the new PQS holder or that the right holder has elected to waive the right with respect to the new holder.
- 3) To NMFS, as a part of the annual application for IPQ (and copied to the right holder), a statement as to whether the right has lapsed as a result of use of the IPQ outside of the community for 3 consecutive years; and
- 4) To the right holder annually, the location of use of IPQ that are subject to a right and whether the IPQ were processed by the PQS holder (*as a required contract provision*).

Labeling changes to alternatives under Action 2 shown in bold:

Action 2: Increase community protections by removing the ROFR lapse provisions.

Alternative 1 – status quo

Option 1a: Maintain current provision under which the right lapses, if IPQ are used outside the community of the entity holding the right for three consecutive years.

Option 1b: Maintain current provision, which allows rights to lapse, if the PQS is sold in a sale subject to the right (and the entity holding the right fails to exercise the right).

Alternative 2 – Strengthen community protections under circumstances where ROFR may lapse.

Option 2a: Require parties to rights of first refusal contracts to remove the provision that rights lapse, if the IPQ are used outside the community for a period of three consecutive years.

Option 2b: Require that any person holding PQS that met landing thresholds qualifying a community entity for a right of first refusal on program implementation to maintain a contract providing that right at all times.

[May choose (a) or (b) or both.]

Further, the AP recommends that the Council request the stakeholder committee meets and comes up with a final recommendation in April.

Motion passed 19-0.

C-5 Freezer Longline Vessel Replacement

The AP recommends the Council adopt the following draft problem statement and alternatives as revised):

Problem Statement

~~Allowing for Pacific cod hook and line catcher/processor vessel owners to rebuild or replace their vessels would allow for improved vessel safety, meet international class and loadline requirements that would allow a broader range of onboard processing options, or otherwise improve the economic efficiency of their vessels~~

Vessel length restrictions included with LLP licenses and the AFA, established to maintain fleet capacity, inhibit the BSAI freezer longline fleet from replacing or rebuilding their vessels. Modifying or removing vessel length restrictions for BSAI freezer longline vessels to allow owners to rebuild or replace their vessels with larger vessels would allow for improved vessel safety, meet international class and loadline requirements that would allow a broader range of onboard processing options, or otherwise improve the economic efficiency of their vessels.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action. Under this alternative, the BSAI Pacific cod hook and line catcher processor vessel length, horsepower, and tonnage restrictions currently in place would continue to apply.

Alternative 2: ~~The owner of a BSAI Pacific cod hook and line catcher processor vessel may rebuild that vessel or replace that vessel with another vessel for any purpose. A rebuilt or replaced vessel may have a length overall 20% greater than the original qualifying BSAI Pacific cod hook and line catcher processor it replaces. A rebuilt or replaced vessel cannot exceed 150 feet LOA if the (License Limitation Program) LLP license assigned to that vessel, at the time of rebuilding or replacing, is less than 150 feet MLOA. Rebuilt or replaced vessels assigned LLP licenses with an MLOA greater than 150 feet MLOA would be limited to the length limitation on the LLP.~~

Alternative 2: For those LLP licenses with catcher processor and hook-and-line Pacific cod endorsements for the BS or AI with an MLOA of less than 150', increase the MLOA of the LLP license 20 percent not to exceed a MLOA of 150'.

Suboption 2.1: Any vessel replaced under this program would **not** be eligible to be designated on an FFP or an LLP.

Suboption 2.2: Replaced vessels may **not** be used to replace other BSAI hook and line catcher processor vessels.

~~Alternative 3: No length restriction on rebuild and replacement vessels. The MLOA requirements on LLP licenses assigned to a BSAI Pacific cod hook and line catcher processor vessel would not apply.~~

Alternative 3: The MLOA requirements on LLP licenses with catcher processor and hook-and-line Pacific cod endorsements for the BS or AI would not apply and the Council recommends that vessels named on these LLP licenses be authorized for use in the EEZ

under the jurisdiction of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which is intended to clarify that these vessels are eligible to receive a certificate of documentation consistent with 46 U.S.C. 12102(c) and MARAD regulations at 46 C.F.R.356.47.

Suboption 3.1: Any vessel replaced under this program would **not** be eligible to be designated on an FFP or an LLP.

Suboption 3.2: Replaced vessels may **not** be used to replace other BSAI hook and line catcher processor vessels.

Motion passed 19-0.

D-1(a) Review Bering Sea Habitat Conservation Area boundary.

The AP recommends that the Council postpone discussion on this item until April 2012.

Motion passed 17-0.

D-1(b) Discussion paper on GOA Chinook salmon bycatch in all fisheries

The AP recommends that the Council move forward with a catch share program for pollock and non-pollock trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska, and that the Council appoint a stakeholder committee to develop options and alternatives. *Motion passed 11-8.*

A motion to recommend the Council move this amendment package forward with the following change: delete Alternative 3, failed 8-11.

The AP recommends that the Council set a control date for the catch share program of the end of this December 2011 Council meeting. *Motion passed 16-3.*

Minority Report: A minority of the AP did not support the motion to move forward with a catch share program for all trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. The minority felt that while rationalization may be an appropriate management tool to explore to address the many bycatch issues in the Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries, this significant action should be introduced on its own via staff tasking rather than tied to the Chinook salmon bycatch issue. The minority felt that by putting forward a GOA trawl catch share program on its own merits through staff tasking rather than this "back door" approach would more adequately put the public on notice and allow opportunity for comment before the Council initiates any discussion on the topic.

The same minority supported a motion to recommend the Council move this amendment package forward with the deletion of Alternative 3. The minority felt that while a catch share program may provide a long-term solution to the GOA Chinook salmon bycatch problem, it will take a long time to implement and it is appropriate to move forward with the current amendment package to explore a hard cap for the non-pollock fishery and full retention in all fisheries as shorter-term measures. Moving this amendment package forward would provide protections for struggling GOA stocks of Chinook salmon while a catch share program is explored and developed.

Signed by: Becca Robbins Gisclair, Ernie Weiss, Julianne Curry, Alexis Kwachka, Tim Evers, Jeff Favour, Theresa Peterson, Chuck McCallum

D-1(c) Discussion paper on GOA Pacific Cod A-season opening dates

Due to the uncertainties of the soon to be implemented sector split of Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska, the myriad of management and conservation issues identified in the discussion paper, and public testimony, the AP recommends the Council take no action at this time. *Motion passed 14-2.*

D-1(d) Review/approve halibut mortality on trawlers EFP

The AP recommends that the Council approve this EFP application. *Motion passed 17-0.*

D-1(e) Establishing a CQE Program in Area 4b

The AP recommends the Council select the PPA for final action with the following change:

In Component 5, under Use Restrictions: Revise Option 2, sub-option to read:
Suboption: Suspend the 150-sea days requirement to lease IFQ from the CQE, for Adak residents only, for a period of 5 years after implementation.

Motion passed 18-0.

A motion to recommend the Council approve Option 1 under use restrictions (lease to Adak residents only) instead of Option 2 with a sub-option that reads: "Suspend the 150-sea days requirement to lease IFQ from the CQE, for Adak residents only, for a period of 5 years after implementation," failed 6-12.

Minority Report: The minority felt the residency requirement was a fundamental component of providing significant community opportunity in a CQE and the benefit should stay with those residing in the community. The relaxed sea time would provide the opportunity for Adak residents without sea time to access the quota. Signed by: Theresa Peterson, Matt Moir, Jeff Favour, Julianne Curry, Alexis Kwachka, Ernie Weiss.

The AP recommends the Council bring back the analysis to allow D class quota to be fished up as C class quota in Area 4A and 4B for Council action. *Motion passed 12-6.*

Minority Report: The undersigned minority does not support resurrecting the analysis to "allow D shares to be fished up to C shares in areas 4A and 4B for council action".

Public testimony from ACDC (Adak) requested that D class halibut quota remain restricted to being fished only on D class vessels to preserve entry level opportunity. Furthermore, D class halibut quota was earned on D class vessels, is typically less expensive than C, B or A quota and is often a way for those who wish to enter the halibut fishery to get started. Allowing D class halibut quota to be fished up will basically eliminate the D class fishery, which may drive up the price of D class quota, create further barriers to entering the halibut fishery and compromise the integrity of the Halibut/Sablefish IFQ program.

The Halibut /Sablefish fishing season is nearly 8 months long which allows vessels adequate time for weather windows to fish safely in 4B. D class Halibut quota is 3% of the total halibut quota share in 4B and 4B now has two processors that buy halibut.

Signed by: Julianne Curry, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Jeff Favour, Alexis Kwachka

D-2 Staff Tasking

The AP recommends that the Council meet with the IPHC to determine if low coast-wide abundance warrants consideration of reductions in bag limits for the non-guided sport harvest. This motion does not anticipate applying an allocation to the non-guided sport harvest. *Motion passed 14-2.*

The AP recommends that the Council continue to coordinate with enforcement and the State of Alaska with regard to the definition of a non-guided halibut charter trip in reference to the letter from the National Park Service, dated November 29, 2011, and in the notebooks under agenda item C-6 supplemental. *Motion passed 16-0.*

The AP recommends that the Council request expanding the Pribilof Islands blue king crab rebuilding plan to include additional analysis on rollovers, whole haul sampling, and 100% observer coverage, as stated in the letter from Marine Conservation Alliance, dated November 29, 2011 and in the notebooks under agenda item D-2 supplemental. *Motion passed 15-0.*

The AP recommends the Council continue to encourage NPRB and NMFS AFSC in their efforts to develop and review survey data necessary to assist in preventing ACL's for non-target species from constraining other target species fisheries, in particular, development of discard mortality rates of non-target species. *Motion passed 16-0.*

Draft Gulf of Alaska SSC and AP recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 (revised 12-8-11).

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W(610)		30,270	30,270		32,816	32,816
	C(620)		45,808	45,808		49,662	49,662
	C(630)		26,348	26,348		28,565	28,565
	WYAK (640)		3,244	3,244		3,517	3,517
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	155,402	114,560	114,560
	SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	169,768	125,334	125,334
Pacific cod	W		28,032	21,024		29,120	21,840
	C		56,940	42,705		59,150	44,363
	E		2,628	1,971		2,730	2,047
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	108,000	91,000	68,250
Sablefish	W		1,780	1,780		1,757	1,757
	C		5,760	5,760		5,686	5,686
	WYK		2,247	2,247		2,219	2,219
	SEO		3,173	3,173		3,132	3,132
	E subtoal		5,420	5,420		5,350	5,350
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	15,129	12,794	12,794
Shallow water flatfish	W		21,994	13,250		20,171	13,250
	C		22,910	18,000		21,012	18,000
	WYAK		4,307	4,307		3,950	3,950
	SEO		1,472	1,472		1,350	1,350
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	56,781	46,483	36,550
Deep water flatfish	W		176	176		176	176
	C		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	SEO		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307	1,307		1,283	1,283
	C		6,412	6,412		6,291	6,291
	WYAK		836	836		821	821
	SEO		1,057	1,057		1,037	1,037
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	12,326	9,432	9,432
Arrowtooth flounder	W		27,495	14,500		27,386	14,500
	C		143,162	75,000		142,591	75,000
	WYAK		21,159	6,900		21,074	6,900
	SEO		21,066	6,900		20,982	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	249,066	212,033	103,300
Flathead sole	W		15,300	8,650		15,518	8,650
	C		25,838	15,400		26,205	15,400
	WYAK		4,558	4,558		4,623	4,623
	SEO		1,711	1,711		1,735	1,735
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	60,219	48,081	30,408

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,364	2,050	2,050
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	12,662	10,985	10,985
	WYAK		1,692	1,692		1,650	1,650
	SEO		1,861	1,861		1,815	1,815
	E (subtotal)	4,095	3,553	3,553	3,995	3,465	3,465
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	19,021	16,500	16,500
Northern rockfish	W		2,156	2,156		2,017	2,017
	C		3,351	3,351		3,136	3,136
	E		0	0		0	0
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	6,152	5,153	5,153
Shorthead	W		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Other slope rockfish	W		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230		230	230
	SEO		3,165	200		3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080
	Pelagic shelf rockfish (Dusky)	W		409	409		381
C		3,849	3,849		3,581	3,581	
WYAK		542	542		504	504	
SEO		318	318		296	296	
Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	5,822	4,762	4,762	
Rougheye	W		80	80		82	82
	C		850	850		861	861
	E		293	293		297	297
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	1,492	1,240	1,240
Demersal shelf rockfish	SEO	467	293	293	467	293	293
Thornyhead rockfish	W		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Atka mackerel	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big skate	W		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose skate	W		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Octopuses	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Sculpins	GW	7,641	5,731	5,731	7,641	5,731	5,731
Total	GOA	747,780	606,048	438,159	756,621	612,506	447,752

TABLE 8a-FINAL 2012 AND 2013 APPORTIONMENT OF PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES TO NON-TRAWL GEAR, THE CDQ PROGRAM, AMENDMENT 80, AND THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTORS

PSC species	Total non-trawl PSC	Non-trawl PSC remaining after CDQ	Total trawl PSC	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ	CDQ PSQ reserve ¹	Amendment 80 sector ²	BSAI trawl limited access fishery
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	900	832	3,675	3,349	393	2,325	875
Herring (mt) BSAI	n/a	n/a	2,094	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1 ¹	n/a	n/a	97,000	86,621	10,379	43,293	26,489
C. opilio (animals) COBLZ ²	n/a	n/a	7,029,520	6,277,361	752,159	3,085,323	2,017,544
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 1 ²	n/a	n/a	980,000	875,140	104,860	368,521	411,228
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 2	n/a	n/a	2,970,000	2,652,210	317,790	627,778	1,241,500

¹Section 679.21(e)(3)(i)(A)(2) allocates 326 mt of the trawl halibut mortality limit and § 679.21(e)(4)(i)(A) allocates 7.5 percent, or 67 mt, of the non-trawl halibut mortality limit as the PSQ reserve for use by the groundfish CDQ program. The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

² The Amendment 80 program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits by 150 mt for halibut mortality and 20 percent for crab PSC. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

³ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of zones.

⁴ Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 8b-FINAL 2012 AND 2013 HERRING AND RED KING CRAB SAVINGS SUBAREA PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH ALLOWANCES FOR ALL TRAWL SECTORS

Fishery Categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	179	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ¹	31	n/a
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ²	15	n/a
Rockfish	11	n/a
Pacific cod	31	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	1,600	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ³	227	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ³	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,094	97,000

¹“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

²“Arrowtooth flounder” for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

³ Pollock other than pelagic trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.

⁴“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes sculpins, sharks, skates, and octopuses.

⁵In December 2010 the Council recommended that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

⁶ Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 8c–FINAL 2012 AND 2013 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR THE BSAI TRAWL LIMITED ACCESS SECTOR

BSAI trawl limited access fisheries	Prohibited species and area ¹				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<u>C. opilio</u> (animals) COBLZ	<u>C. bairdi</u> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	167	23,338	1,901,193	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish ²	0	0	0	0	0
Turbot/arrowtooth/sablefish ³	0	0	0	0	0
Rockfish April 15 - December 31	5	0	3,232	0	1,000
Pacific cod	453	2,954	80,799	60,000	50,000
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species	250	197	32,320	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access PSC	875	26,489	2,017,544	411,228	1,241,500

¹ Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

² “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, yellowfin sole, Kamchatka flounder, and arrowtooth flounder.

³ Arrowtooth flounder for PSC monitoring includes Kamchatka flounder.

⁴ “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes sculpins, sharks, skates, and octopuses.

⁵ Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

TABLE 8d–FINAL 2012 AND 2013 PROHIBITED SPECIES BYCATCH ALLOWANCES FOR NON-TRAWL FISHERIES

Non-trawl fisheries	Catcher/processor	Catcher vessel
Pacific cod-Total	760	15
January 1 - June 10	455	10
June 10 - August 15	190	3
August 15 - December 31	115	2
Other non-trawl-Total		58
May 1 - December 31		58
Groundfish pot and jig		Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line		Exempt
Total non-trawl PSC		833

¹ Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

DRAFT BSAI SSC and AP Recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013. December 7, 2011

Species	Area	2011			11/5/2011	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,450,000	1,270,000	1,252,000	1,197,578	2,474,000	1,220,000	1,205,600	2,840,000	1,360,000	1,205,600
	AI	44,500	36,700	19,000	1,162	39,600	32,500	19,000	42,900	35,200	19,000
	Bogoslof	22,000	156	150	140	22,000	16,500	200	22,000	16,500	200
Pacific cod	BSAI	272,000	235,000	227,950	202,785	369,000	314,000	261,000	374,000	319,000	261,000
Sablefish	BS	3,360	2,850	2,850	668	2,640	2,230	2,230	2,610	2,200	2,200
	AI	2,250	1,900	1,900	950	2,430	2,050	2,050	2,400	2,020	2,020
	Total	5,610	4,750	4,750	1,618	5,070	4,280	4,280	5,010	4,220	4,220
Atka mackerel	EAI/BS	n/a	40,300	40,300	40,833	n/a	38,500	38,500	n/a	31,700	31,700
	CAI	n/a	24,000	11,280	10,714	n/a	22,900	10,763	n/a	18,900	8,883
	WAI	n/a	21,000	1,500	205	n/a	20,000	1,500	n/a	16,500	1,500
	Total	101,000	85,300	53,080	51,752	96,500	81,400	50,763	78,300	67,100	42,083
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	262,000	239,000	196,000	141,399	222,000	203,000	199,000	226,000	207,000	199,000
Rock sole	BSAI	248,000	224,000	85,000	60,292	231,000	208,000	84,100	217,000	196,000	84,100
Greenland turbot	EBS	n/a	4,590	3,500	2,979	n/a	7,230	6,230	n/a	6,010	6,010
	AI	n/a	1,550	1,550	514	n/a	2,430	2,430	n/a	2,020	2,020
	Total	7,220	6,140	5,050	3,493	11,700	9,660	8,660	9,700	8,030	8,030
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	186,000	153,000	25,900	19,600	181,000	150,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	23,600	17,700	17,700	9,242	24,800	18,600	17,700	24,800	18,600	17,700
Flathead sole	BSAI	83,300	69,300	41,548	13,080	84,500	70,400	34,134	83,100	69,200	34,134
Other flatfish	BSAI	19,500	14,500	3,000	3,116	17,100	12,700	3,200	17,100	12,700	3,200
Alaska plaice	BSAI	79,100	65,100	16,000	22,471	64,600	53,400	24,000	65,000	54,000	24,000
Pacific Ocean perch	EBS	n/a	5,710	5,710	2,053	n/a	5,710	5,710	n/a	6,540	5,710
	EAI	n/a	5,660	5,660	5,094	n/a	5,620	5,620	n/a	6,440	5,620
	CAI	n/a	4,960	4,960	4,768	n/a	4,990	4,990	n/a	5,710	4,990
	WAI	n/a	8,370	8,370	8,181	n/a	8,380	8,380	n/a	9,610	8,380
	Total	36,300	24,700	24,700	20,096	35,000	24,700	24,700	33,700	28,300	24,700
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,600	8,670	4,000	2,644	10,500	8,610	5,000	10,400	8,490	5,000
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	275	524	393	393	524	393	393
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfishes	EBS/EAI	n/a	234	234	75	n/a	231	231	n/a	241	231
	CAI/WAI	n/a	220	220	78	n/a	244	244	n/a	258	244
	Total	549	454	454	153	576	475	475	605	499	475
Other rockfish	EBS	n/a	710	500	274	n/a	710	500	n/a	710	500
	AI	n/a	570	500	610	n/a	570	570	n/a	570	570
	Total	1,700	1,280	1,000	884	1,700	1,280	1,070	1,700	1,280	1,070
Squids	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	325	2,620	1,970	425	2,620	1,970	425
Skates	BSAI	37,800	31,500	16,500	21,034	39,100	32,600	25,000	38,300	32,000	25,000
Sharks	BSAI	1,360	1,020	50	162	1,360	1,020	200	1,360	1,020	200
Octopuses	BSAI	528	396	150	563	3,450	2,590	900	3,450	2,590	900
Sculpins	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	5,095	58,300	43,700	5,200	58,300	43,700	5,200
Total	BSAI	3,954,111	2,534,729	2,000,000	1,778,959	3,996,000	2,511,778	2,000,000	4,341,869	2,639,792	1,990,630

Final 2011 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs from 2011-2012 final harvest specifications.

The "other species" category was removed in 2011 and replaced with separate categories for skates, sharks, octopuses, and sculpins.

1/ 2013 TACs equal 2012 TACS except reduced to not exceed SSCs.

2/ Central Aleutian Island Atka mackerel can not be more than 47% of the ABC.

**DRAFT
REPORT
of the
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE
to the
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 5th –December 7th, 2011**

The SSC met from December 5th through December 7th, 2011 at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage Alaska.

Members present were:

Pat Livingston, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Farron Wallace, Vice Chair
Wash. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Robert Clark
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kathy Kuletz
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Jim Murphy
University of Alaska Anchorage

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kate Reedy-Maschner
Idaho State University

Ray Webster
International Halibut Commission

Doug Woodby
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Members absent were:

Vacant
Oregon Dept. Fish and Wildlife

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

The SSC would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to Doug Woodby who, after serving on the SSC for 8 years will be retiring from ADFG.

Miscellaneous issues addressed

EFP catches

The GOA Plan Team requested that the SSC comment on the method for incorporating anticipated EFP and SRP catches into stock assessments. The Plan Team understanding was that EFP and SRP fish catch could be accounted for in mortality prior to determining ABC. However, upon discussion with NMFS-AKR staff at the SSC meeting, it seems that this change will not make a difference in the manner in which EFP and SRP requests are considered by NMFS-AKR. The FMP suggests that the proposed EFP and SRP catches be compared with the approved ABC (ACL) and TACs set for the stock. If there appears to be sufficient buffer between the catch usually attained under the TAC for the species and the ABC (ACL), then an EFP or SRP would typically be approved. Thus, it appears that the main need at present is for historical total catches, including those from EFP and SRPs, to be incorporated into stock assessments in order to properly evaluate stock productivity. The SSC heard that NMFS-AKR is planning to provide a white paper at the next Council meeting that summarizes approaches taken in other regions with respect to EFP and SRP catches under the ACL provisions of the Magnuson Act. The SSC looks forward to receiving the report.

Halibut PSC Limits

The SSC received information from Jane DiCosimo (NPFMC) regarding the Plan Team comments on the planned halibut PSC action being considered by the Council and also on the structure of a halibut workshop to be conducted later this year. Public testimony on those issues was provided by Julie Bonney (Alaska Groundfish Data Bank) and Bob Alverson (Fishing Vessel Owners Association). The SSC provided no additional comments or recommendations on these items.

C-3 (a,b) GOA and BSAI specifications and SAFE report

The SSC received a presentation by Grant Thompson (NMFS-AFSC) and Mike Sigler (NMFS-AFSC) on Plan Team recommendations for BSAI groundfish OFL and ABC. Grant Thompson also provided Pacific cod stock assessments for both the GOA and the BSAI, and Jim Ianelli (NMFS-AFSC) presented the BSAI pollock stock assessment. Gulf of Alaska Plan Team recommendations were summarized by Diana Stram (NPFMC) and Jim Ianelli.

General SSC SAFE comments

SSC is pleased to see that many assessment authors have examined retrospective bias in the assessment and encourages the authors and Plan Team to determine guidelines for how to best evaluate and present retrospective patterns associated with estimates of biomass and recruitment. We recommend that all assessment authors (Tier 3 and higher) bring retrospective analyses forward in next year's assessments.

The SSC concurs with the Plan Teams recommendation that the authors consider issues for sablefish where there may be overlap between the catch-in-areas and halibut fishery incidental catch estimation (HFICE) estimates. In general, for all species, it would be good to understand the unaccounted-for catches and the degree of overlap between the CAS and HFICE estimates and to discuss this at the Plan Team next September.

The SSC reviewed the SAFE chapters and received a report from the Plan Teams with respect to status determinations for BSAI and GOA groundfish. **The SSC accepts the status determination therein, which indicated that no stock was subject to overfishing in 2010. Also, in reviewing the status of stocks with reliable biomass reference points (all Tier 3 and above stocks and rex sole), the SSC concurs that these stocks are not overfished or approaching an overfished condition.**

Comments on GOA and BSAI Flatfish

The SSC understands that CIE reviews are being considered for some flatfish stocks in spring 2012. For the GOA, two of the SSC's recommended priorities are the new northern and southern rock sole assessment and the current Dover sole assessment. The rock sole assessments are a priority because the assessment model is new and still under refinement. Therefore, expert CIE reviews could be invaluable at this juncture. The Dover sole assessment is a priority because of the recent failure of the model to converge to a global maximum and rejection of the existing model for this year's assessment. Resolution of these model convergence issues for the Dover sole model is a high priority before to next year's assessment, if possible. A third priority for the GOA is the rex sole assessment, which is difficult owing to the lack of a directed fishery. For the BSAI, the SSC's recommended priorities for CIE reviews are yellowfin sole, northern rock sole, and Greenland turbot. Some of the issues to address include growth, as well as attempts to incorporate environmental variability.

Table 1. Gulf of Alaska groundfish 2011 - 2013 OFLs and ABCs, 2011 TACs, and 2011 catches in metric tons (reported through November 5th, 2011). Where SSC recommendations differ from the BSAI Plan Team recommendations are marked in **bold**.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2011				2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	W (61)		27,031	27,031	20,639		30,270		32,816
	C (62)		37,365	37,365	37,126		45,808		49,662
	C (63)		20,235	20,235	19,769		26,348		28,565
	WYAK		2,339	2,339	2,271		3,244		3,517
	Subtotal	118,030	86,970	86,970	79,805	143,716	105,670	155,402	114,560
	EYAK/SEO	12,326	9,245	9,245		14,366	10,774	14,366	10,774
	Total	130,356	96,215	96,215	79,805	158,082	116,444	169,768	125,334
Pacific Cod	W		30,380	22,785	22,104		28,032		29,120
	C		53,816	40,362	36,023		56,940		59,150
	E		2,604	1,953	709		2,628		2,730
	Total	102,600	86,800	65,100	58,836	104,000	87,600	108,000	91,000
Sablefish	W		1,620	1,620	1,390		1,780		1,757
	C		4,740	4,740	4,799		5,760		5,686
	WYAK		1,990	1,990	1,876		2,247		2,219
	SEO		2,940	2,940	2,992		3,173		3,132
	Total	13,340	11,290	11,290	11,057	15,330	12,960	15,129	12,794
Shallow-water flatfish	W		23,681	4,500	124		21,994		20,171
	C		29,999	13,000	3,819		22,910		21,012
	WYAK		1,228	1,228			4,307		3,950
	EYAK/SEO		1,334	1,334	2		1,472		1,350
	Total	67,768	56,242	20,062	3,945	61,681	50,683	56,781	46,483
Deep-water Flatfish	W		529	529	12		176		176
	C		2,919	2,919	440		2,308		2,308
	WYAK		2,083	2,083	7		1,581		1,581
	EYAK/SEO		774	774	1		1,061		1,061
	Total	7,823	6,305	6,305	460	6,834	5,126	6,834	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,516	1,517	131		1,307		1,283
	C		6,293	6,294	2,721		6,412		6,291
	WYAK		868	868	1		836		821
	EYAK/SEO		888	889			1,057		1,037
	Total	12,499	9,565	9,568	2,853	12,561	9,612	12,326	9,432
Arrowtooth Flounder	W		34,317	8,000	1,700		27,495		27,386
	C		144,559	30,000	27,787		143,162		142,591
	WYAK		22,551	2,500	146		21,159		21,074
	EYAK/SEO		11,723	2,500	70		21,066		20,982
	Total	251,068	213,150	43,000	29,703	250,100	212,882	249,066	212,033
Flathead Sole	W		17,442	2,000	393		15,300		15,518
	C		28,104	5,000	2,278		25,838		26,205
	WYAK		2,064	2,064			4,558		4,623
	EYAK/SEO		1,523	1,523			1,711		1,735
	Total	61,412	49,133	10,587	2,671	59,380	47,407	60,219	48,081

Table 1. continued.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2011				2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific ocean perch	W	3,221	2,798	2,798	1,818	2,423	2,102	2,364	2,050
	C	11,948	10,379	10,379	10,408	12,980	11,263	12,662	10,985
	WYAK		1,937	1,937	1,870		1,692		1,650
	SEO		1,883	1,883			1,861		1,815
	E(subtotal)	4,397	3,820	3,820		4,095	3,553	3,995	3,465
Total	19,566	16,997	16,997	14,096	19,498	16,918	19,021	16,500	
Northern rockfish ³	W		2,573	2,573	1,742		2,156		2,017
	C		2,281	2,281	1,653		3,351		3,136
	E								
Total	5,784	4,854	4,854	3,395	6,574	5,507	6,152	5,153	
Shortraker	W		134	134	81		104		104
	C		325	325	236		452		452
	E		455	455	230		525		525
	Total	1,219	914	914	547	1,441	1,081	1,441	1,081
Other rockfish (previously "Other slope")	W		212	212	300		44		44
	C		507	507	351		606		606
	WYAK		276	276	187		230		230
	EYAK/SEO		2,757	200	30		3,165		3,165
	Total	4,881	3,752	1,195	868	5,305	4,045	5,305	4,045
Dusky rockfish (previously "pelagic shelf rockfish")	W		611	611	367		409		381
	C		3,052	3,052	2,089		3,849		3,581
	WYAK		407	407	58		542		504
	EYAK/SEO		684	684	1		318		296
	Total	5,570	4,754	4,754	2,515	6,257	5,118	5,822	4,762
Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish	W		81	81	28		80		82
	C		868	868	364		850		861
	E		363	363	146		293		297
	Total	1,579	1,312	1,312	538	1,472	1,223	1,492	1,240
Demersal rockfish	Total	479	300	300	82	467	293	467	293
Thornyhead Rockfish	W		425	425	151		150		150
	C		637	637	295		766		766
	E		708	708	163		749		749
	Total	2,360	1,770	1,770	609	2,220	1,665	2,220	1,665
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,613	6,200	4,700	6,200	4,700
Big Skate	W		598	598	69		469		469
	C		2,049	2,049	1,949		1,793		1,793
	E		681	681	98		1,505		1,505
	Total	4,438	3,328	3,328	2,116	5,023	3,767	5,023	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		81	81	48		70		70
	C		2,009	2,009	792		1,879		1,879
	E		762	762	64		676		676
	Total	3,803	2,852	2,852	904	3,500	2,625	3,500	2,625
Other skates	Total	2,791	2,093	2,093	996	2,706	2,030	2,706	2,030
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,148	229	1,530	1,148	1,530	1,148
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,263	6,197	6,197	510	8,037	6,028	8,037	6,028
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,273	954	954	748	1,941	1,455	1,941	1,455
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,328	5,496	5,496	648	7,641	5,731	7,641	5,731
Total		723,930	590,121	318,291	219,744	747,780	606,048	756,621	612,506

¹ The ABC for other rockfish in the Western and Central GOA is combined for management purposes.

Table 2. SSC recommendations for BSAI Groundfish 2011-2012 OFLs and ABCs shown with the 2010 OFL, ABC, TAC, and Catch amounts in metric tons (2010 catches through November 5 from AKR Catch Accounting including CDQ). SSC recommendations did not differ from the BSAI Plan Team recommendations.

Table 1. BSAI Groundfish Plan Team Recommendations for Final OFLs and ABCs (mt) for 2012 and 2013.									
Species	Area	2011		11/05/2011		2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	EBS	2,450,000	1,270,000	1,252,000	1,197,578	2,474,000	1,220,000	2,840,000	1,360,000
	AI	44,500	36,700	19,000	1,162	39,600	32,500	42,900	35,200
	Bogoslof	22,000	156	150	140	22,000	16,500	22,000	16,500
Pacific cod	BSAI	272,000	235,000	227,950	202,785	369,000	314,000	374,000	319,000
Sablefish	BS	3,360	2,850	2,850	668	2,640	2,230	2,610	2,200
	AI	2,250	1,900	1,900	950	2,430	2,050	2,400	2,020
	Total	5,610	4,750	4,750	1,618	5,070	4,280	5,010	4,220
Atka mackerel	EAI/BS	n/a	40,300	40,300	40,833	n/a	38,500	n/a	31,700
	CAI	n/a	24,000	11,280	10,714	n/a	22,900	n/a	18,900
	WAI	n/a	21,000	1,500	205	n/a	20,000	n/a	16,500
	Total	101,000	85,300	53,080	51,752	96,500	81,400	78,300	67,100
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	262,000	239,000	196,000	141,399	222,000	203,000	226,000	207,000
Rock sole	BSAI	248,000	224,000	85,000	60,292	231,000	208,000	217,000	196,000
Greenland turbot	EBS	n/a	4,590	3,500	2,979	n/a	7,230	n/a	6,010
	AI	n/a	1,550	1,550	514	n/a	2,430	n/a	2,020
	Total	7,220	6,140	5,050	3,493	11,700	9,660	9,700	8,030
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	186,000	153,000	25,900	19,600	181,000	150,000	186,000	152,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	23,600	17,700	17,700	9,242	24,800	18,600	24,800	18,600
Flathead sole	BSAI	83,300	69,300	41,548	13,080	84,500	70,400	83,100	69,200
Other flatfish	BSAI	19,500	14,500	3,000	3,116	17,100	12,700	17,100	12,700
Alaska plaice	BSAI	79,100	65,100	16,000	22,471	64,600	53,400	65,000	54,000
Pacific Ocean perch	EBS	n/a	5,710	5,710	2,053	n/a	5,710	n/a	6,540
	EAI	n/a	5,660	5,660	5,094	n/a	5,620	n/a	6,440
	CAI	n/a	4,960	4,960	4,768	n/a	4,990	n/a	5,710
	WAI	n/a	8,370	8,370	8,181	n/a	8,380	n/a	9,610
	Total	36,300	24,700	24,700	20,096	35,000	24,700	33,700	28,300
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,600	8,670	4,000	2,644	10,500	8,610	10,400	8,490
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	275	524	393	524	393
Blackspotted and Rougheye	EBS/EAI	n/a	234	234	75	n/a	231	n/a	241
	CAI/WAI	n/a	220	220	78	n/a	244	n/a	258
Rockfishes	Total	549	454	454	153	576	475	605	499
Other rockfish	EBS	n/a	710	500	274	n/a	710	n/a	710
	AI	n/a	570	500	610	n/a	570	n/a	570
	Total	1,700	1,280	1,000	884	1,700	1,280	1,700	1,280
Squids	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	325	2,620	1,970	2,620	1,970
Skates	BSAI	37,800	31,500	16,500	21,034	39,100	32,600	38,300	32,000
Sharks	BSAI	1,360	1,020	50	162	1,360	1,020	1,360	1,020
Octopuses	BSAI	528	396	150	563	3,450	2,590	3,450	2,590
Sculpins	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	5,095	58,300	43,700	58,300	43,700
Total	BSAI	3,954,111	2,534,729	2,000,000	1,778,959	3,996,000	2,511,778	4,341,869	2,639,792

Final 2011 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs from 2011-2012 final harvest specifications

The "other species" category was removed in 2011 and replaced with separate categories for skates, sharks, octopuses, and sculpins

Pacific cod

Since last year's assessment, the Pacific cod models underwent a CIE review and, as in 2010, model proposals from stakeholder were considered. These were reviewed by the Joint Plan Team in May/September and by the SSC in June/October to reduce the numerous recommendations from the CIE review, Plan Teams, SSC, and the public to a more manageable set of five models that were brought forward in this year's assessment.

The SSC appreciates the tremendous work that went into improvements to the Pacific cod model in recent years and thanks the author for clearly laying out the recent history of the assessment models. For next year's assessment cycle in both areas, the SSC supports the current protocol of vetting models through a public process and selecting a limited set of models to bring forward. We agree with a recommendation from the CIE review that the number of explorations and new model configurations for upcoming assessments should be reduced to allow for a thorough evaluation of the performance of the current model over several assessment cycles.

The author proposed seven model evaluation criteria; 1) fitting the age composition data (unanimous CIE recommendation), 2) internal estimation of aging error bias (much more efficient), 3) correspondence between the model-estimated mean size-at-age and the empirical survey mean size-at-age of the first three modes of the average survey size composition, 4) correspondence of the product of survey catchability and survey selectivity (for the 61 to 80 cm size range) from the model and the value of 0.92 estimated by Nichol et al. (2007), 5) accounting for full variability in the observed length-at-age among individuals and years, 6) low temporal variability in survey selectivity and catchability, and 7) reasonable retrospective behavior. The Plan Team endorsed, and **the SSC concurs, with these selection criteria, which are a distillation of past preferences and recommendations from the Plan Teams, CIE reviewers, the public, and the SSC.**

One of the largest sources of uncertainty in both assessments remains the catchability of Pacific cod in the survey. **The SSC strongly supports proposed research on the vertical distribution of Pacific cod relative to the EBS bottom trawl and comparisons between the EBS and GOA trawl gear.**

Other comments that pertain to both areas:

- The SSC notes that weight-at-age in both regions was lowest in May-Aug. or Sept.-Oct. and highest in Jan.-Feb. These patterns seem somewhat counter-intuitive and we encourage the authors to evaluate biological basis for these patterns.
- The recommended models for both regions estimate ageing bias as a linear function of age, but the estimated patterns in bias by age differs by region increasing from approximately 0.34 at the youngest age to 0.85 at the oldest age in the BSAI assessment (model 3b), but decreases from 0.36 to 0 at the oldest age in the GOA assessment (model 3).

BSAI Pacific cod

Public testimony was provided by Kenny Down (Freezer Longline Coalition), who urged the SSC to continue the current protocol of vetting models in a public process. The FLC supports continued work on determining catchability and supports selection of model 3b and the associated ABC for 2012.

For this year's assessment, the 2010 preferred model, as accepted by the SSC in December 2010, was updated with new data and was used as the base model for 2011 as requested by the SSC. Other models were used to explore a number of incremental changes to the base model and their consequences. The author and the Plan Team recommend model 3b, which includes the following features: 1) Natural mortality is fixed at $M = 0.34$, 2) pre-1982 trawl survey data were excluded, 3) ageing bias is estimated internally as a linear function of age (previously, bias was fixed at 0.4 across ages), 4) commercial length composition data are fitted with length-specific selectivities by fishery, estimated in

blocks of years, 5) Trawl survey age composition data are fitted with age-specific selectivities, 6) catchability is fixed at 0.77 based on limited tagging experiments, 7) standard deviations of length-at-age are estimated internally as a linear function of length-at-age, and 8) mean length-at-age data are not included in the likelihood. In addition, a number of other, sensible changes were made as previously reviewed and recommended by the Plan Team and the SSC.

Survey biomass increased substantially between 2009 and 2010 and showed a moderate increase in 2011. All model-based estimates of total biomass have been increasing for the last three years and are expected to increase further due to above-average recruitment in 2006, 2008, and possibly in 2010, although the 2010 estimate is highly uncertain and has only been observed once in the survey.

Based on the proposed selection criteria, model 3b was the clear choice. Model diagnostics and a comparison of likelihoods suggest that model 3b provides a reasonable fit overall and the best fit to the age composition data. **The SSC agrees with the author and Plan Team to use model 3b for stock status determinations in 2012, and sees no compelling reason to reduce the ABC from the maximum permissible value under Tier 3a as summarized below in metric tons:**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific cod	BSAI	369,000	314,000	374,000	319,000

The SSC requested in its December 2010 minutes that a separate assessment for the AI be brought forward because of concerns over diverging trends in the biomass estimates for the AI and EBS. In response, the author provided a Tier-5 assessment for AI cod as an appendix to the current assessment. The author plans to develop an age-structured model for the Aleutians in 2012. We look forward to reviewing a preliminary model in October 2012.

GOA Pacific cod

No public testimony was provided specific to the GOA assessment, but see the above BSAI cod section above for general testimony on the cod assessments. The current GOA assessment was updated with new survey and commercial data series for CPUE, catch at age, and catch at length. The 2011 bottom trawl survey estimated a 33 % decrease in abundance over the 2009 survey estimate, but this was still a 199% increase from the 2007 estimate.

Models considered for the GOA cod assessment were similar to those for the BSAI assessment. The 2010 preferred model, as accepted by the SSC in December 2010, was updated with new data and was used as the base model for 2011 (model 1). Other models (models 3, 3b, and 4) were similar to the corresponding models for the BSAI and included the following features: 1) model 3 included internal estimation of the aging bias as a linear function of age, a modification of the L1 parameter in the length-at-age equation to correspond to the age of age 1 fish at the time of the survey, and external estimation of the variability in length-at-age, 2) model 3b was similar to model 3 but estimated variability in length at age internally, was not fit to the mean size at age data, fixed the selectivity and catchability for the 27cm-plus size classes in the trawl survey to be constant over time, and used a normal prior distribution for the catchability deviations in the sub-27 cm size class, and 3) model 4 was similar to model 3b but excluded all age composition data and constrained the pre-1977 mean recruitment to be less than the post-1976 mean recruitment. In addition, a number of other sensible changes were made as previously reviewed and recommended by the Plan Teams and the SSC.

Because no model met all of the selection criteria, the criteria were prioritized with the highest priority placed on criteria 1-4. The author recommended model 3 because of the good fit to the age composition data, estimating ageing bias internally, a good match between estimated and observed size modes at ages

1 and 3, and a good fit to the Nichol et al. (2007) estimate of the product of survey catchability and selectivity. The Plan Team agreed with the author's choice and also noted that the retrospective patterns indicate that inclusion of additional data tends to decrease estimates of abundance, which supports models with a higher level of survey catchability, such as models 1 and 3.

Based on these considerations, model diagnostics, and an examination of the likelihood components, **the SSC accepts the Plan Team's and the authors' preferred model (model 3), Tier 3a designation, and the 2012/13 ABC and OFLs shown below in metric tons.** With respect to area apportionments, the SSC requested in December 2010 that the simple Kalman filter approach, which has been used to estimate the proportions of Pacific cod biomass in the EBS and AI since 2004, be applied to the GOA as well. We heard that a special working group intends to review and standardize approaches to area apportionments across stock assessments to improve consistency. Until the group makes its recommendations, the SSC endorses the status quo method for area apportionments based on the three most recent surveys, resulting in area apportionments of 32% Western, 65% Central, and 3% Eastern:

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific Cod	W		28,032		29,120
	C		56,940		59,150
	E		2,628		2,730
	Total	104,000	87,600	108,000	91,000

The SSC raised two concerns about the current model. First, authors' use of jitter runs is intended to ensure that the model converges to a global minimum of the objective function. We note that of the 50 runs included in the final jitter runs (Fig.2.12), no two model runs resulted in same estimates for any of the models except model 3b and that the objective value function (on the log-likelihood scale) differs substantially among runs. This suggests that there is still considerable uncertainty about whether the model has converged to the "best" solution. The SSC suggests that a further reduction in the number of parameters may be warranted to improve convergence. Secondly, based on the preferred model (model 3), the estimated fishing mortalities have exceeded F_{ABC} in the past 5 years (F_{OFL} in 2 years), suggesting that additional scrutiny for this stock may be warranted. However, current stock status indicates an increasing biomass trend supported by several years of above-average recruitment. Therefore the SSC concurs that a reduction from the maximum permissible ABC is not warranted at this time.

GOA – BSAI Sablefish

Bob Alverson (Fishing Vessel Owners Association) gave public testimony indicating the need to place a high priority on sablefish ageing.

The assessment was updated with several new sources of fishery and survey data. Time trends in the fishery abundance index and the trawl survey biomass index decreased while the longline survey index continued to increase. The SSC encourages the authors to examine trends to discern the cause for these differences.

Two strong year classes, 1997 and 2000 are now supporting the stock. A higher than average number of age 3 sablefish (sizes 41-49 cm) was observed in the size compositions for both the trawl and longline survey and indicates an above average 2008 year class. The authors reported that a continued investigation into recruitment processes and ecosystem influences (e.g., environmental variables and the Gulf of Alaska Project) is underway. The SSC looks forward to receiving updates on the progress of this

research effort. In particular, the SSC would be interested in new information that would inform our understanding of the spawner recruit relationship for sablefish.

The author plans to refine the survey index model to address whale depredation in the 2012 assessment model and may potentially include gully abundance data and other covariates. The SSC agrees that these would be important new improvements to the assessment model.

The SSC thanks the authors for their effort to update the tagging data for BSAI/GOA sablefish. The SSC agrees with the author that this data supports the continuation of single stock management. The SSC continues to encourage the development of a spatial assessment model for research purposes. When developing this model, the authors may wish to consider updated tagging results from tags released off the coast of Canada and along the US west coast.

SSC appreciates receiving the author's analysis of differences between gully stations and slope stations in the longline survey and evaluation of the IPHC surveys were investigated. Gully and slope station trends are similar, except that gullies are more variable and with a slight delay in tracking of year classes in the slope stations in more recent years.

This year the author updated the previously approved split-sex stock assessment model. The fit to the domestic longline survey RPN and longline fishery RPW appears to balance different trajectories between the two data sources. SSC encourages authors to attempt to explain differences.

The author reported that the retrospective pattern detected in previous assessments has apparently dissipated since last year suggesting that recent data has moderated previous patterns. The author's presented an alternative retrospective analysis. The ABCs from 2003-2011 from the retrospective analysis are similar to those that were historically specified but were a little lower in 2003 and 2004.

The SSC appreciates the author's attention to methods to incorporate their best estimate of total landings that will occur for the entire year. For this year's catch, the sablefish authors used the estimated seasonal ratio of past catches and TAC to project ABCs. **The SSC agrees with the author's use of this new method for estimating catch for the ending year used in the assessment.** Nearly all sablefish were caught by October resulting in a relatively low expansion factor for this year's catch. For projected catches, the average ratio of catch/TAC was 0.8 for sablefish. These catch estimates were used to project biomass.

The SSC agrees with the joint Groundfish Plan Teams and the authors' recommended 2012 ABC of 17,240 t and 2013 ABC of 17,019 t (combined BSAI and GOA). Projected female spawning biomass was 101,325, which is 37% of $B_{100\%}$. The stock is slightly below the estimate of $B_{40\%}$ (108,574 t), placing this stock in Tier 3b. The authors' recommended ABC and OFL are set at the maximum permissible levels under the NPFMC harvest strategy. **The SSC agrees that this stock falls in Tier 3b and accepts the Plan Team recommendations for ABC and OFL in 2012 and 2013.** The GOA and BSAI Plan Teams accepted the author's recommendation for 2012 area apportionments based on a 5-year exponential weighting of the survey and fishery abundance indices. **The SSC also agrees with this approach and recommends the following area apportionments expressed in metric tons below.**

Sablefish GOA

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sablefish	W		1780		1,757
	C		5,760		5,686
	WYAK		2,247		2,219
	SEO		3,173		3,132
	Total	15,330	12,960	15,129	12,794

Sablefish BSAI

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sablefish	BS	2,640	2,230	2,610	2,200
	AI	2,430	2,050	2,400	2,020
	Total	5,070	4,280	5,010	4,220

GOA Walleye Pollock

There was no public testimony. This stock assessment is a routine update of last year's. The stock assessment model is the same with new data brought into the assessment. There was no new Shelikof Strait winter hydroacoustic survey this year. There will be a CIE review in 2012.

The stock assessment showed evidence of an increase in biomass and resulted in a 22% increase in ABC. The harvest recommendation has conservatism built into it: catchability q is set to 1 although the stock assessment model suggests a lower value, and the "constant buffer" harvest control rule is less than the maximum permissible.

Because spawning biomass is slightly below $B_{40\%}$, the SSC places the stock in Tier 3b. The SSC agrees with the projected ABC and OFL levels in metric tons by area as summarized below (after subtracting 2,770t pollock GHF for Prince William Sound). For area EYAK/SEO, the calculations are done using Tier 5 methodology based on natural mortality and the increased survey biomass from the bottom trawl survey in 2011.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	W (61)		30,270		32,816
	C (62)		45,808		49,662
	C (63)		26,348		28,565
	WYAK		3,244		3,517
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	155,402	114,560
	EYAK/SEO	14,366	10,774	14,336	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	169,768	125,334

The SSC would like to see in the next SAFE a description of the GHF setting process in Prince William Sound. The SSC would also like to see a discussion of how many years should be used in the area

apportionments. The SSC concurred with the Plan Team that the stock structure template be applied in advance of the CIE review next year and whether this could lead to an improved assessment of the Eastern Gulf in particular.

GOA Atka Mackerel

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and stock assessment authors that the estimates of survey biomass continue to be unreliable for Atka mackerel in the Gulf of Alaska, and that **harvest specifications should remain under Tier 6, with OFL and ABC for both 2012 and 2013 as shown below in metric tons.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	6,200	4,700

Despite this high variability, the survey biomass estimates have been consistently high over the past four biennial surveys, ranging from 82,000 t to 135,000 t.

The SAFE document provides a total catch of 1,613 t through November 5, 2011, which was 81% of the TAC. We reiterate our request for the catch estimates to be extrapolated through the end of the calendar year, given the recent history of TAC overages.

GOA Flatfish

Shallow-water Flatfish Complex

The shallow-water flatfish complex includes northern rock sole, southern rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, sand sole, and Alaska plaice. All but the first two species are assessed using Tier 5. Previously, northern and southern rock sole had been assessed using Tier 4. The current shallow-water flatfish assessment includes an appendix with a Tier 3a assessment for northern and southern rock sole. The SSC reviewed a preliminary version of this new rock sole assessment in October 2010. All assessments were updated with the NMFS bottom trawl survey results for 2011.

The SSC appreciates the advancement of the assessment model for northern and southern rock sole, which represents a significant advancement in the assessment of these species. The SSC has a number of recommendations concerning this Tier 3 assessment. First, the SSC recommendations from the October 2010 meeting, summarized here (see SSC report for October 2010 for complete recommendations) should be formally addressed:

- Clarify recruitment definition
- Discuss more carefully the diagnostics for model fits (e.g., length at age) and whether there is evidence for changes in growth or whether small sample sizes require data weighting
- Provide information, if any, on age validation for northern and southern rock sole
- Consider whether spatial patterns in northern versus southern rock sole can be used to hindcast the classifications of historical data on unknown rock sole

To these, the SSC now adds the following comments:

- Clearly describe the seven alternative models.
- The table split between p. 452 and p. 453 requires clearer column headings to be interpretable.
- Provide graphs and tables to support the model evaluation criteria. For instance, plot the model and survey biomass estimates on the same plot. Point to these figures and tables when reporting on the bases for model selection and when evaluating the model for potential biases.

- In the current model, recruitment was taken as an average level unrelated to stock size for both species. Consider attempting to fit stock-recruit relationships to these data. At a minimum, plot stock versus recruit data.

The SSC also endorses the suite of model recommendations offered by the Plan Team from their November 2011 meeting, including consideration to set separate specifications for northern and southern rock sole next year.

The assessment authors and Plan Team recommend ABCs and OFLs for 2012 and 2013 using the new Tier 3 assessment for northern and southern rock sole and Tier 5 for all other species in this complex. The SSC endorses these recommendations.

Deepwater Flatfish Complex

The deepwater flatfish complex includes Dover sole, Greenland turbot and deepsea sole. The biomass of this assemblage is dominated by Dover sole. As a result of a new Markov Chain Monte Carlo analysis of posterior uncertainties associated with the estimated parameters, it became clear that the 2009 assessment model did not converge properly. As a result, biomass estimates from this model were deemed to be unreliable and the model requires further evaluation. The assessment authors and Plan Team recommended moving Dover sole from Tier 3 to Tier 5 until these issues can be resolved. The SSC concurs with this approach.

The Plan Team offered other recommended changes in the model for next year's assessment including new selectivity curves and re-estimation of natural mortality, given an updated estimate of maximum age. The SSC supports this Plan Team advice.

The SSC appreciates the authors' response to prior SSC comments and looks forward to additional progress on the issues raised previously. In addition, the SSC noted that fish size composition was not included in the model because of small sample sizes and also that fishery age compositions were lacking. The SSC encourages the author to endeavor to determine whether and how these sampling deficiencies can be overcome.

Rex Sole

The rex sole assessment model is identical to the 2009 version of this model. It has been updated with fishery catch and length composition data, NMFS trawl survey biomass and length composition data, and two additional years of survey age compositions.

The SSC appreciates the authors' responses to previous comments and looks forward to analysis of new growth data that may influence the assessment and may shed light on stock structure. Ultimately, if growth data point toward more than one GOA stock, then the approved stock separation template should be applied in the future for a more complete evaluation of stock structure.

The SSC also looks forward to the incorporation of new fishery age composition data into the assessment model. The SSC supports the authors' expressed intentions to explore length-based approaches to survey and fishery selectivity, as well as alternative forms of the selectivity curve and exploration of potential environmental effects on recruitment. In this vein, environmental effects (e.g., temperature) on survey catchability might also be considered, as was done for several flatfish stocks in the Bering Sea.

As in past assessments of rex sole, the Plan Team and SSC noted that a reliable estimate of biomass is available from the assessment model, but reliable estimates of $F_{40\%}$ and $F_{35\%}$ are not. The calculations for

OFL and ABC for rex sole use the Tier 5 formulas applied to the estimate of biomass from the assessment model. The SSC continues to endorse this approach.

Arrowtooth Flounder

The assessment model for arrowtooth flounder is essentially identical to that used in 2009, except that survey and fishery data were updated and a constraint on the last three years of recruitment was removed. This assessment includes some excellent ecosystem information and the SSC appreciates the thoroughness of this section.

As pointed out by the Plan Team, the SSC requests the authors to project catches to the end of the most recent year for use of total catch estimates in the model. Also, the SSC requests that the authors provide some justification for using $q = 1.0$ instead of the estimates from Somerton.

The authors and Plan Team recommend use of Tier 3a for the setting of ABCs and OFLs and the SSC endorses this approach.

Flathead Sole

The flathead sole assessment model is identical to that used in 2009, except for the incorporation of updated data on fishery catch and length compositions, NMFS trawl survey biomass and length compositions, and survey age compositions for two additional years. The SSC appreciates the authors' responses to previous SSC comments. The SSC looks forward to graphs allowing comparisons of model fits, as well as future model developments to incorporate ADF&G survey data.

The SSC supports the authors' plans to estimate new age-length transition matrices with newly available age data. The authors expressed a need for more age samples from both the survey and the fishery and the SSC encourages the authors to determine whether this is feasible and the steps needed to secure them. The Plan Team suggested that an annual progression of year classes is not evident from age composition data. The SSC asks the authors to consider whether an analysis of aging error would be timely either by the AFSC's Age and Growth Program or internal to the model or both.

The SSC supports the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations to set ABC and OFL for 2012 and 2013 based on Tier 3a criteria.

SSC Recommendations for Flatfish ABCs and OFLs and Area Apportionments

The SSC recommendations for GOA flatfish ABCs and OFLs and their area apportionments for 2012 and 2013 in metric tons are:

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shallow- Water Flatfish	W		21,994		20,171
	C		22,910		21,012
	WYAK		4,307		3,950
	EYAK/SEO		1,472		1,350
	Total	61,681	50,683	56,781	46,483
Deep- Water Flatfish	W		176		176
	C		2,308		2,308
	WYAK		1,581		1,581
	EYAK/SEO		1,061		1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	6,834	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307		1,283
	C		6,412		6,291
	WYAK		836		821
	EYAK/SEO		1,057		1,037
	Total	12,561	9,612	12,326	9,432
Arrowtooth Flounder	W		27,495		27,386
	C		143,162		142,591
	WYAK		21,159		21,074
	EYAK/SEO		21,066		20,982
	Total	250,100	212,882	249,066	212,033
Flathead Sole	W		15,300		15,518
	C		25,838		26,205
	WYAK		4,558		4,623
	EYAK/SEO		1,711		1,735
	Total	59,380	47,407	60,219	48,081

GOA Rockfish

Pacific ocean perch

The Pacific ocean perch stock assessment is based on the same model as in the previous assessment cycle (2009) with three time blocks for estimating fishery selectivity. Changes to input data include new biomass estimates from the 2011 survey, 2009 survey and 2010 fishery age compositions, a revised 2010 catch estimate, and new 2011 catch estimate. The authors also implemented extrapolation of the 2011 catch to the entire year.

The stock assessment authors addressed previous comments made by the SSC to examine and report on bycatch rates before and after implementation of the Rockfish Pilot Program, explain the methodology used for area apportionments (weighted average of three most recent survey biomass estimates), justify different values for survey catchability for the various stocks of rockfish, including POP, and documented all non-commercial removals in a separate appendix to the SAFE.

The SSC looks forward to a review of the stock structure template applied to POP in the GOA, as well as an examination of growth data, age and length bins (including the plus group), and fishery spatial patterns during the next assessment cycle.

The SSC accepts the recommendations of the Plan Team and the assessment authors that the stock is to be managed in Tier 3a with the current female spawning biomass level greater than B40%. The SSC agrees with the authors and Plan Team recommendations for OFL and ABC for 2012 and 2013. The SSC agrees with the area apportionments of ABC and OFL for both years to the Western, Central and Eastern areas, as well as the eastern GOA split of the ABC's to the West Yakutat and Southeast Outside areas as given in the table below (amounts are in metric tons).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific	W	2,423	2,102	2,364	2,050
Ocean	C	12,980	11,263	12,662	10,985
Perch	WYAK		1,692		1,650
	SEO		1,861		1,815
	E(subtotal)	4,095	3,553	3,995	3,465
	Total	19,498	16,918	19,021	16,500

Northern Rockfish

Three configurations of the model used in 2009 were evaluated for use in 2011. The first of these (model 1) simply used updated data, including new data from the biennial survey conducted in 2011. The second model configuration (model 2) internally estimated the maturity schedule using data taken from two recent studies that appear to give different results. By estimating the maturity schedule from these two data sets within the model results in a fuller expression of uncertainty than had the maturity schedule been estimated outside the model. The third model configuration (model 3) used the internally estimated maturity schedule and assessed extending the plus age groups for survey and fishery data in the model from 23+ to 33+ years. The two changes implemented in model 3 resulted in better fits to the fishery and survey age compositions than models 1 and 2, leading the authors and Plan Team to recommend model 3 for assessment advice for 2012. **The SSC agrees with the recommendation to use model 3.**

The stock assessment authors addressed previous comments made by the SSC to examine and report on bycatch rates before and after implementation of the Rockfish Pilot Program, explain the methodology used for area apportionments (weighted average of three most recent survey biomass estimates), justify different values for survey catchability for the various stocks of rockfish, including Northern Rockfish, and documented all non-commercial removals in a separate appendix to the SAFE.

The SSC also looks forward to an update of weight-at-age, length and age transition matrices, ageing error matrix, and length bins for fishery length compositions during the next assessment cycle. The SSC supports the inclusion of the maturity data within the model to estimate an intermediate maturity schedule as an interim solution to dealing with two conflicting studies. However, we encourage the authors to further explore the reasons for differences seen between the two studies of maturity that formed the basis of the estimated maturity schedule in the model.

The SSC agrees with continued management under Tier 3a as recommended by the authors and Plan Team. We agree with the recommendations for OFL and ABC for 2012 and 2013 (expressed in metric tons below), as well as the geographic apportionment of the ABC levels to the Central and Western Gulf areas for those years, and the small Eastern Gulf apportionment, which is to be combined with the ABC for Other Rockfish in both years (so does not appear in the table below).

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rockfish	W		2,156		2,017
	C		3,351		3,136
	E				
	Total	6,574	5,507	6,152	5,153

Shorthead

This year shorthead was assessed as a separate species. In previous years shorthead were considered as part of the “Other Slope Rockfish” assessment.

The assessment was updated with the biomass estimate from the 2011 trawl survey. The trawl survey biomass estimate is the highest in the time series. The estimate had the highest observed CV and wide confidence intervals, in part because of two large hauls.

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and Authors recommendation for continuation of Tier 5 management for this stock. Exploitable biomass is 48,048 t which is approximately an 18% increase from the 2009 assessment. The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and Authors recommendation to apportion the ABC to the Western, Central, and Eastern Gulf of Alaska using a 4:6:9 weighting scheme. The SSC notes that methods to estimate area apportionments for shorthead will be considered in a report from the Plan Team workgroup will present in September 2012.

SSC accepts the Plan Team recommendations for ABC and OFL in 2011 and 2012, expressed below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shorthead	W		104		104
	C		452		452
	E		525		525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,441	1,081

Other rockfish (Combination of Slope rockfish and Pelagic shelf complex species)

The other rockfish complex was created in 2011 for harvest specifications beginning in 2012, and is formed by adding widow and yellowtail rockfish to the former “other slope rockfish” complex. The other slope rockfish complex includes 17 species.

The assessment incorporated new biomass estimates from the 2011 NMFS bottom trawl survey. Some stocks exhibited changes in biomass that are larger than expected for a relatively long-lived species. For example the SSC’s previous concern regarding the status of silvergray rockfish was appeased by a 10-fold increase in abundance over the 2009 estimate. In contrast, the 2011 trawl biomass estimate for harlequin rockfish, which is predominantly an Alaskan species, remained at low levels. Part of the explanation for these shifts may be that these species are at the edge of their ranges. Shifts in distribution may move species into or out of the survey area in the eastern Gulf. High CV’s in the survey may also occur for species of this complex that exhibit patchy distributions.

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and author’s Tier designation for this species complex. The components of the aggregate ABC and OFL are estimated by Tier 5 methods with the exception of sharpchin rockfish, for which Tier 4 methods are applied. **The SSC agrees with the author’s new estimate of natural mortality for harlequin rockfish, increasing from 0.06 in previous assessments to 0.09. The SSC agrees with the author’s method of estimating reference points for the various species and summing them to obtain the complex-level ABC and OFL. The ABC and OFL recommendations are seen below and reported in metric tons.**

Assemblage /Stock	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other Rockfish	W		44		44
	C		606		606
	WYAK		230		230
	EYAK/SEO		3,165		3,165
	Total	5,305	4,045	5,305	4,045

The SSC discussed the Plan Team’s proposal to change the method for apportioning the ABC among subareas. Under the current method, the ABC is partitioned using the 4:6:9 weighting scheme for the most recent three surveys. The Plan Team was concerned that the current method of partitioning ABCs among subareas would result in an ABC of 44 t in the western GOA, a decline from the current ABC of 212 t for the other slope rockfish complex for this area. The Plan Team recommended combining the area ABC for the western and central areas (totaling 650 t) to provide some measure of spatial apportionment yet not restrict target fisheries based upon relatively uncertain recent survey estimates of spatial distributions. **After consulting with Plan Team members and Regional Office staff it became clear that harlequin rockfish are currently discarded at a high rate and therefore, maintaining the existing area partition method would not result in additional regulatory discards. Based on this input, the SSC did not recommend a change to the previously approved method for partitioning the ABC.**

The SSC supports the Plan Team request for a productivity-susceptibility analysis for the Other Rockfish complex. The SSC also encourages the authors to examine the relationship between environmental conditions and the distribution and abundance of silvergray rockfish and harlequin rockfish because the trawl survey data suggests that these stocks may move in and out of the GOA in response to changing conditions.

Dusky rockfish

This year dusky rockfish was assessed as a separate species. Dusky rockfish had been previously managed as part of the pelagic-shelf rockfish complex, along with widow rockfish and yellowtail rockfish. The latter two species will be moved to the new “other rockfish” complex beginning in 2012, resulting in single-species management for dusky rockfish.

Updates for the model include incorporation of new maturity-at-age data, and evaluation of the functional form of the fishery and survey selectivity curves.

Three models were considered:

- 1) Model 1 is the 2009 model;
- 2) Model 2 estimates the maturity curve within the model based upon data from two field studies; and
- 3) Model 3 is identical to Model 2 except that it estimates logistic fishery and survey selectivity curves rather than separate selectivity parameters for each age.

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and author’s recommendation to select model 3 as the basis for estimation of this year’s ABC and OFL. Model 3 allows internal estimation of the maturity curve. This approach is desirable because it allow estimate of uncertainty in the maturity schedule. Results from model 3 showed the age at 50% maturity from model 3 was approximately 10 years, a decline from the value of approximately 11 years used in previous assessments. This resulted in an increase in the recommended F_{OFL} and F_{ABC} . The SSC asks the author to consider whether this downward adjustment in the age at 50% maturity is warranted.

In response to SSC comments, the authors updated the length-weight relationship and size-age transition matrix to include data through 2007 to fully utilize the best available information. The SSC agrees with the Plan Team and the author’s conclusion that available information for this stock places it in Tier 3a. The increase in ABC is attributable to both changes in age at maturity estimates and to a 15% increase in the trawl survey biomass estimate in 2011 from 2009. The SSC agrees with the author and the Plan Team’s recommendation to estimate area apportionments using the 4:6:9 weighting of the 2007, 2009, and 2011 trawl surveys. The corresponding reference values for dusky rockfish are summarized in the following table in metric tons.

Assemblage /Stock	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Dusky rockfish	W		409		381
	C		3,849		3,581
	WYAK		542		504
	EYAK/SEO		318		296
	Total	6,257	5118	5,822	4,762

Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish

The Rougheye/Blackspotted (RE/BS) rockfish assessment was updated with 2010 catch, and an estimate of 2011 catch (using standardized approach presented by Dana), age data (2009), 2011 trawl survey biomass, longline survey 2010-2011 RPW, and 2010-2011 length composition. There is some evidence of a strong 2000 year-class.

Fishery catch increased 60% but still remains only 40% of TAC. Harvest of RE/BS occurs as bycatch in other fisheries. In response to SSC comments the author examined bycatch and found that most catches were part of normal operations. There was no evidence of topping off in the POP fishery. The authors found that bycatch was related to tow depth, with deeper hauls catching more shortraker rockfish and sablefish than RE/BS.

Surveys are showing different trajectories. Trawl survey estimates are going down while longline RPW are increasing. SSC supports the Plan Team recommendation for the author to continue to investigate difference in the longline and trawl survey to help understand the different trends.

In response to SSC comments the authors commented on the veracity of model based estimates of trawl survey catchability. The authors reported that the model based estimate of survey catchability is 1.42 compared with a submersible observations in a 2006 analysis and yielded a catchability of 0.85. The SSC encourages the author to report on the evidence to support the current model based estimate given the discrepancy between experimental and model based estimates of catchability.

The model structure was unchanged from last year, but updated with new trawl survey data. Problems with misclassification of RE and BS continue to exist. This misclassification is part of the rationale to assess the two species as a complex.

The SSC agrees with the author and the Plan Team that RE/BS are in Tier 3A. The SSC supported the Plan Team and author’s recommended ABC and OFL shown in the table below in metric tons. The author projected ABCs and OFLs for 2012 and 2013 using estimated catch of 525 t for 2011 and projected catch of 355 t for 2012 based on realized catches from 2008-2010. The SSC agrees with the author’s proposed method of calculating these catches. The SSC appreciates the author’s summary of the stock structure shown in the appendix of the SAFE.

Assemblage /Stock	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Rougeye/ Black-Spotted rockfish	W		80		82
	C		850		861
	E		293		297
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,492	1,240

Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)

Demersal shelf rockfish biomass is estimated from a habitat-based stock assessment focused on yelloweye rockfish densities estimated from visual line transects conducted from submersibles. A 2011 submersible survey was not conducted, but is planned for 2012. New information for the biomass projections are average weights and catches from the Southeast Outside Subdistrict (SEO). Exploitable biomass for 2012 (14,307 t) decreased slightly from 2011 (14,395 t).

As in previous assessments, the SSC agrees with the authors and Plan Team to apply precautionary measures in establishing allowable harvests, including: 1) using the 90% lower confidence bound, and 2) using a harvest rate lower than maximum under Tier 4 by applying $F=M=0.02$ to survey biomass. The SSC agrees with the resulting OFL and ABC for 2012 and 2013, expressed in metric tons in the table below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Demersal rockfish	Total	467	293	467	293

The SSC wishes to thank the stock assessment authors for the additional information provided in this year’s SAFE regarding the confidence intervals for catches in the recreational fisheries.

The SSC is encouraged to hear that a new survey is planned for 2012, and expresses its concern that adequate resources be devoted to assessing the stock on an ongoing basis so as to maintain a consistent series of densities in future years. We are also encouraged that there will be a comparison of the submersible survey with an ROV survey to potentially enable a less expensive and readily available alternative to the submersible survey. An optimal situation for this assessment would be to periodically conduct a district-wide survey in a single assessment year to help inform density estimates in specific subdistricts in other assessment years. We note that the Plan Team had an initial look at and offered some recommendations to the assessment authors on an age structured model for this stock. The SSC looks forward to reviewing this model in the next assessment cycle, if available.

Thornyhead Rockfish

Assessment of this stock continued as reviewed in 2009 with an update in biomass from the 2011 survey. The 2011 survey did not sample the 701-1000m depth stratum, so two alternative calculations of OFL and ABC were offered by the assessment authors. The first alternative used the biomass calculation directly

from the survey with no adjustment for depths not surveyed. The second alternative adjusted the 2011 survey biomass by area to account for the depths not surveyed. The Plan Team recommended and the SSC concurs on the use of the adjusted survey biomass estimate for 2011 in the second alternative to calculate OFL and ABC. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team recommendations and continues to support the Tier 5 calculations. The SSC also concurs with the Plan Team recommendations for 2012/13 ABCs, OFLs, and area apportionments expressed in metric tons in the table below.**

Stock/ Assemblage	2012			2013	
	Area	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Thornyhead	W		150		150
Rockfish	C		766		766
	E		749		749
	Total	2,220	1,665	2,220	1,665

Sharks

There were no changes in the approach used in this year’s assessment. GOA sharks are currently managed using a Tier 5 approach for spiny dogfish, in which a three-year running average of survey biomass estimates are used as minimum biomass estimates of dogfish abundance, and other sharks are managed using a Tier 6 approach based on average catch over 1997 – 2007. Updated data from the NMFS trawl and longline surveys and IPHC longline surveys were included. The SSC appreciates the assessment authors’ responsiveness to SSC comments on last year’s assessment.

A new demographic model of spiny dogfish was recently published in a peer-reviewed journal (Tribuzio and Kruse 2011). The assessment authors indicated that they intend to compare results from this demographic modeling analysis with results from planned biomass dynamic models and length-based models. The SSC encourages these efforts and urges the authors to incorporate these models into an improved stock assessment for spiny dogfish in the near future.

The current assessment includes an appendix with estimates of non-commercial shark catches (e.g., research, subsistence, personal use, recreational, and exempted fishing permits) and halibut fishery incidental catch estimates (HFICE). The assessment authors are also working with ADF&G to develop methods similar to HFICE to estimate shark bycatch in state groundfish fisheries (e.g., state waters Pacific cod fishery).

The goal is to incorporate best estimates of total shark catch from all sources in the annual assessment, including OFL and ABC determinations. The main hurdle is to establish the degree to which these additional incidental catch estimates duplicate any shark bycatch records in the Catch in Areas (CIA) database. A second issue is that the present HFICE estimates do not consider the effect of different timing of the IPHC survey and halibut fishery on shark bycatch rates. Once these issues have been satisfactorily resolved, the SSC recommends that total shark catches should be incorporated into the historical catch estimates and OFL/ABC determinations. This is an important issue, as HFICE estimates approach current ABCs.

The SSC supports the recommendations of the assessment authors and Plan Team regarding the 2012 and 2013 ABC and OFL for GOA sharks in metric tons:

Stock/ Assemblage	2012			2013	
	Area	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sharks	GOA-wide	8,037	6,028	8,037	6,028

GOA Skates

There were no changes to the assessment methods this year, although biomass estimates and length composition data from the 2011 GOA bottom trawl survey and fishery length composition data from 2010 were added to the assessment.

The 2011 survey biomass estimates for longnose skates and for many of the *Bathyraja* skates are down relative to the 2009 estimates. The 2011 biomass estimate for big skates shows an apparent increase from 2009, largely due to a single large survey catch in the eastern GOA.

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team determinations of separate Gulf-wide OFLs for big skates, longnose skates, and other skates based on an estimate of natural mortality equal to 0.10 for all skates applied to area-specific average biomass from the most recent three GOA trawl surveys to estimate the ABCs. The SSC also agrees with the area apportionments of ABCs to the Western, Central, and Eastern Gulf areas for big and longnose skates and the OFLs and ABCs are presented in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Big Skate	W		469		469
	C		1,793		1,793
	E		1,505		1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	5,023	3,767
Longnose Skate	W		70		70
	C		1,879		1,879
	E		676		676
	Total	3,500	2,625	3,500	2,625
Other skates	Total	2,706	2,030	2,706	2,030

GOA Sculpins

There were no changes to Tier 5 assessment method used last year, but 2011 data have been added along with biomass estimates and length compositions from the 2011 Gulf of Alaska survey.

The sculpin complex mortality rate is based on a biomass-weighted average of the instantaneous mortality rates for the four most abundant sculpins in the GOA; bigmouth, great, plain, and yellow Irish lord sculpins from the 2011 survey. As a result, the sculpin complex M was calculated as 0.22.

The SSC agrees with the use of the four most recent survey biomass estimates, and the calculation of a weighted average M (= 0.22) based on the four most abundant sculpin species captured in the NMFS bottom trawl survey. The SSC supports Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendations for 2012 and 2013, applied Gulf-wide for sculpins, as given in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,641	5,731	7,641	5,731

The Plan Team recommendation for authors to examine different number of years and weighting schemes used for species managed in Tier 5.

GOA Squid

There were no changes to modified Tier 6 assessment method used in 2011.

The SSC agrees with the recommendation for a modified Tier 6 approach, with OFL for 2012 and 2013 based on maximum catch in the time period 1997-2007, and with ABC = 75% of the OFLs in each year, as shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Squid	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,530	1,148

GOA Octopus

There were no changes in assessment method for GOA octopus this year. The modified Tier 6 approach involves averaging biomass estimates from the last three bottom trawl surveys in 2007, 2009 and 2011. This approach recognizes that the catch history is not appropriate for tier 6 management, and that the biomass estimates and M estimates are not sufficient for a Tier 5 approach. The author has also developed a method for estimating total mortality based on predation by Pacific cod in the BSAI. The SSC agrees with the Plan Team that this approach be developed further for application and consideration for GOA octopus in 2012.

The SSC accepts the Plan Team recommendation for a modified Tier 6 approach with OFL in both 2012 and 2013, and ABC = 75% of that value, applied Gulf-wide as shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Octopus	GOA-wide	1,941	1,455	1,941	1,455

BSAI SAFE and Harvest Specifications for 2011/12

EBS Walleye Pollock

Public testimony: Jon Warrenchuk (Oceana) was concerned that the stock assessment model is not providing good estimates and does not take into account cod predation, warranting further conservatism in ABC. Jackie Dragon (Greenpeace) agreed, noting the difficulty some harvesters had in finding pollock in the latter part of the B season and arguing that pollock are needed for the ecosystem (e.g., fur seals). Joe Plesha (Trident Seafoods) stated that 60,000 t of pollock quota went unharvested because harvesters could not find fish in the B season. Ed Richardson (Pollock Conservation Cooperative) supported the Plan Team ABC recommendation of 1.22 million t, felt that the stock assessment data and model were reasonable, and noted that the additional reduction was needed in ABC, which was recommended by the stock assessment author. He reasoned that cod and pollock have synchrony in year class strength and the 2008 year-class of Pacific cod is expected to be good. Brent Paine (United Catcher Boats) also supported the Plan Team recommendation and suggested that the reason fish were left unharvested was due to harvesters attempting to avoid chum and Chinook salmon. Donna Parker (Arctic Storm) also argued against a reduction in ABC and felt that the best estimate should be used for 2008 year-class strength rather than replacing it by average year-class strength.

The condition of the pollock resource in 2011 remained above the MSY level but recent biomass and year-class strength was revised downward compared to last year. It reached its lowest level in 2008 but

increased sharply thereafter and is expected to continue increasing. Chum salmon bycatch was relatively high despite several hotspot closures. Bycatch per unit effort was also high, suggesting the increase was at least partially due to higher chum salmon abundance in the area.

Examination of environmental information suggested that 2011 was a warmer year relative to the recent cold period, suggesting that pollock may have moved farther north into Russian waters and/or the northern U.S. portion of the Bering Sea. This dispersal may partially explain why some harvesters had difficulty finding fish during the B season. Besides possible changes in distribution, no additional ecosystem concerns were identified that would require additional precaution.

The stock assessment authors were responsive to previous Plan Team and SSC suggestions. Retrospective analyses were conducted, and a workshop is planned to examine spawner-recruit relationships. The authors made use of an acoustic index from bottom trawl survey vessels, known as acoustic vessels of opportunity (AOV).

The SSC continues to place pollock in Tier 1a, which leads to a maximum permissible ABC of 2.20 million t. The corresponding OFL from the control rule is 2.47 million t. The SSC also agrees with the authors and Plan Team on the validity of the stock assessment model and its population estimates (except as noted below).

The authors and the Plan Team had slightly different reductions from maximum permissible ABC. The Plan Team used the same approach as it used last year: keeping the five-year average exploitation rate constant. The authors recommended keeping the 5 year average exploitation rate and replaced the 2008 estimate of year-class strength with the long-term average. **The SSC agrees with the Plan Team to use the best estimate of 2008 year-class strength**, because the 2008 year-class has been observed by the hydro-acoustic survey, the bottom trawl survey, and AOV surveys for three years, and these data sources tend to confirm that the 2008 year-class is relatively large. **This results in the following ABC's and OFL's for 2012 and 2013 in metric tons:**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2011		2012	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	EBS	2,470,000	1,220,000	2,840,000	1,360,000

Due to several uncertainties, the SSC agrees with the authors and the Plan Team that there is solid justification for reducing the recommended ABC from the maximum permissible. The retrospective downward adjustment from last year's assessment raises the possibility that further downward adjustments could occur. The age composition is concentrated into two primary ages and the projected future increases rely on the 2008 year-class being strong. The lack of knowledge about pollock movement means that the low CPUE that the vessels reported for the B season could be due to either movement or mortality or both. Even though a reduction in ABC is being made, there is uncertainty as to whether the adjustment is sufficiently large enough. The author mentioned that he plans to examine alternative harvest strategies in the upcoming year. The SSC is supportive of this plan and note if the 5 year average F should not be interpreted as an endorsement or adoption of this approach for long term management of this stock.

Aleutian Islands Walleye Pollock

There is no new information for Aleutian Islands walleye pollock, except for updated catch. A stock assessment model has been used by the authors, Plan Team, and SSC to evaluate stock status and determine ABC and OFL. New this year is the use of a generalized additive model with weight-at-age

data with the purpose of filling in missing data. The population increased until about 2006 and has then decreased gradually due to lack of strong recruitment. The natural mortality estimate was slightly lower than last year (down from 0.20 to 0.19).

The SSC continues to place AI pollock into Tier 3b. The SSC recommends using maximum permissible ABC and OFL using the Tier 3b formulae. This leads to the following 2012 and 2013 ABC's and OFL's in metric tons:

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
AI Pollock	AI	39,600	32,500	42,900	35,200

Bogoslof Walleye Pollock

The 2009 Bogoslof pollock acoustic-trawl survey resulted in a biomass estimate of 110,000 t, the lowest estimate on record (dating back to 1988). There has not been a more recent survey.

The Plan Team evaluated alternative approaches for setting ABC and OFL. Because there has not been a single strong year-class since 1988, the SSC reluctantly abandons its target biomass level of 2,000,000 t. **Instead, it adopts a traditional Tier 5 approach using $M=0.2$, as recommended by the Plan Team. This results in the following OFL and ABC's in metric tons.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Bogoslof Pollock	Bogoslof	22,000	16,500	22,000	16,500

BSAI Atka mackerel

There was no 2011 Aleutian Islands bottom trawl survey, so the only new data incorporated in the assessment were fishery data, and this included 2011 catch, as well as 2010 data for age composition, catch at age, and weight at age. The Executive Summary, as well as the footnote to Table 17.1, indicate that the projected total catch for 2011 was considered in the assessment, as requested in general comments by the SSC in December 2010. However, a statement on page 1089 suggests that only partial year catches were included for this year. We suspect that this was a mistake, perhaps carried forward from the prior year's SAFE, but we seek clarification.

The stock assessment model was unchanged from last year, except that a second model (Model 2) was developed using a random walk in survey catchability. Model 2 was developed in an attempt to reduce the lack of fit between survey biomass and model biomass for the past four survey years, as noted by the SSC in December 2010. The SSC appreciates this effort. We agree with the authors and Plan Team recommendation to continue to rely on Model 1 because the improvement in fit with model 2 was minor (Figure 17.16).

The SSC agrees with continued management under Tier 3a, and supports the OFL and ABC recommendations for 2012 and 2013, with area apportionments of the ABCs as shown metric tons in the table below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Atka Mackerel	EAI/BS		38,500		31,700
	CAI		22,900		18,900
	WAI		20,000		16,500
	Total	96,500	81,400	78,300	67,100

BSAI Flatfish

The Plan Team proposed scheduling the assessments for some BSAI flatfish species to an every-other-year cycle. The SSC supports this proposal.

Yellowfin Sole

Four alternative models for weight-at-age were examined. A model that uses the annual survey weight-at-age data as true values was recommended, although the SSC considers this to be a placeholder for this year. The SSC supports the Plan Team's suggestion of examining simpler or non-parametric alternative growth models instead of the other models (Models 2 and 3) considered this year.

The SSC agrees with the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations for management under Tier 3a and OFLs and ABCs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	222,000	203,000	226,000	207,000

Greenland Turbot

The authors considered an alternative to last year's model, in which male natural mortality was estimated internally. The authors recommended keeping the fixed male mortality model for this year, considering a change to the alternative to be premature. **SSC notes its support for an Eastern Bering Sea slope survey in 2012 for surveying this stock.**

The SSC agrees with the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations for management under Tier 3a and OFLs and ABCs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Greenland turbot	BS		7,230		6,010
	AI		2,430		2,020
	Total	11,700	9,660	9,700	8,030

Arrowtooth Flounder

There were no model changes this year, although the Plan Team recommended examining a model that estimated male natural mortality internally for next year.

The SSC supports the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations for management under Tier 3a and ABCs and OFLs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	181,000	150,000	186,000	152,000

Kamchatka Flounder

This species is now separated from the arrowtooth/Kamchatka flounder complex of which it was a part prior to 2011. This species is currently in Tier 5, but an age-structured model is being developed, and the SSC looks forward to seeing results from this when they become available.

The SSC agrees with the authors' and Plan Team's recommendation for management under Tier 5 and OFLs and ABCs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	24,800	18,600	24,800	18,600

Northern Rock Sole

The preferred assessment model was unchanged from last year, although a set of alternatives was explored. One of these was a model that expressed survey catchability (q) as a function of annual average bottom water temperature. Although there was evidence for such a relationship, the estimated mean value of q for this model was considered unrealistically high. The SSC suggests exploring an alternative formulation of this model that allows q to be a function of bottom temperature while constraining q to realistic values.

SSC also recommends that in the future, time series data for southern rock sole catches in the BSAI region be presented in this report. **The SSC endorses the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations for management under Tier 1a and OFLs and ABCs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rock sole	BSAI	231,000	208,000	217,000	196,000

Flathead Sole

Some progress was reported on improving understanding of the Bering flounder component of the complex, with the publication of a paper on maturity. The preferred model for this year's assessment remains unchanged from last year. This model was selected instead of the fitted stock recruitment model, which the SSC notes seems inconsistent with what is done in other stocks when a stock recruitment model is available.

The SSC supports the authors' and Plan Team's recommendations for management under Tier 3a and ABCs and OFLs for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Flathead sole	BSAI	84,500	70,400	83,100	69,200

Alaska Plaice

In 2010, survey catchability, q , was adjusted downwards to 1.0, from 1.2 in previous assessments, in an attempt to account for the large additional biomass found in the northern Bering Sea survey that took place for the first time last year. The Plan Team recommended a return to $q=1.2$ for this year's assessment. The SSC supports this change: no significant commercial catch occurs in the northern Bering Sea, and the assessment is effectively of the southern portion of the stock.

The SSC supports the Plan Team's Tier 3a and ABC and OFL recommendations for 2012 and 2013 using the model with $q=1.2$, given in metric tons below.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Alaska plaice	BSAI	64,600	53,400	65,000	54,000

Other Flatfish

Apart from some data updates, there were no changes to this year's assessment. **The SSC supports the recommended Tier 5 and ABC and OFL determinations of the authors and Plan Team for 2012 and 2013 expressed in metric tons below.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,100	12,700	17,100	12,700

BSAI Rockfish

Pacific Ocean Perch (POP)

A straightforward update of the assessment and a short executive summary was presented because the Aleutian Islands survey was not conducted this year. Catch data were updated and the projection model was run using results from the starting point of the 2010 assessment model. The area apportionment was updated and changed slightly.

The SSC agrees with Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendations. This stock qualifies for management under Tier 3a and the 2012 and 2013 ABCs and OFLs are below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific ocean perch	EBS		5,710		6,540
	EAI		5,620		6,440
	CAI		4,990		5,710
	WAI		8,380		9,610
BSAI	Total	35,000	24,700	33,700	28,300

Northern Rockfish

A straightforward update of the assessment and a short executive summary was presented because the Aleutian Islands survey was not conducted this year. Catch data were updated and the projection model was run using results from the starting point of the 2010 assessment model.

The SSC agrees with Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendation. This stock qualifies for management under Tier 3a and the resulting ABCs and OFLs are below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,500	8,610	10,400	8,490

Shortraker Rockfish

A straightforward update of the assessment and a short executive summary was presented because the Aleutian Islands survey was not conducted this year. Catch data were updated.

The SSC agrees with Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendation. This stock qualifies for management under Tier 3a and the resulting ABCs and OFLs are tabled below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	524	393

Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish Complex

A straightforward update of the assessment was presented and a short executive summary because the Aleutian Islands survey was not conducted this year. Catch data were updated and the projection model was run using results from the starting point of the 2010 assessment model. The SSC requests that authors include an update on species identification issues, and if possible, species composition among areas during the next assessment cycle.

The SSC agrees with Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendation and area splits for ABC and the resulting ABCs and OFLs are below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Blackspotted/ Rougheye	EBS/EAI		231		241
	CAI/WAI		244		258
BSAI	Total	576	475	605	499

Other Rockfish Complex

A straightforward update of the assessment and a short executive summary was presented because the Aleutian Islands survey was not conducted this year. Catch data were updated.

The SSC agrees with Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendations that this stock qualifies for management under Tier 5, the resulting ABCs and OFLs are shown below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Other rockfish	BS		710		710
	AI		570		570
	Total	1,700	1,280	1,700	1,280

BSAI Sharks

BSAI sharks are a Tier 6 complex in which OFL is based on maximum historical catch over 1997 – 2007 and ABC is 75% of OFL. For the current assessment, the catch time series was updated to reflect any changes that may have occurred in the Catch in Areas (CIA) database. No changes in historical shark catches resulted. The SSC appreciates the authors’ responses to previous comments.

The assessment includes an appendix with estimates of non-commercial shark catches (e.g., research, subsistence, personal use, recreational, and exempted fishing permits) and halibut fishery incidental catch estimates (HFICE). The assessment authors are also working with ADFG to develop methods similar to HFICE to estimate shark bycatch in state groundfish fisheries (e.g., state waters Pacific cod fishery).

As with GOA sharks, the goal is to incorporate best estimates of total shark catch from all sources in the annual assessment, including OFL and ABC determinations. The main hurdle is to establish the degree to which these additional incidental catch estimates duplicate any shark bycatch records in the CIA database. The BSAI Groundfish Plan Team remarked that the overlap is likely to be minimal. In any case, once any such duplication has been estimated and addressed, the SSC recommends that total shark catches should be incorporated into the historical catch estimates and OFL/ABC determinations.

For the current assessment, the SSC supports the assessment authors’ and Plan Team’s recommended ABCs and OFLs of 1,360 t for both 2012 and 2013, based on Tier 6 using maximum catch (t), which remain unchanged from last year’s assessment shown below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	1,360	1,020

BSAI Skates

With passage of Amendment 96 to the BSAI Fishery Management Plan this year, which separated the “other species” complex into constituent groups, the Plan Team presented recommendations to the SSC for OFLs and ABCs specific to BSAI skates. **The SSC agrees with the BSAI Plan Team that biomass estimates are reliable for skates in the BSAI, and notes that the biomass trend for BSAI skates has been stable. The SSC agrees with the estimate of OFLs and ABCs, shown below in metric tons, for Alaska skates under Tier 3a combined with all other skates under Tier 5, based on a natural mortality rate of 0.10 and biomass estimated as the average of the three most recent surveys.**

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Skate	BSAI	39,100	32,600	38,300	32,000

BSAI Sculpins

This is an off-year for the BSAI sculpins assessment and therefore only an executive summary was prepared. The only change in this year’s assessment was the addition of 2010 catch. Although an EBS shelf survey occurred in 2011, the data were not included in the executive summary. Plan Team’s recommendation is to rollover last year’s harvest specifications for 2012 and 2013.

The SSC agrees with the BSAI Plan Team recommendations and supports the estimate of OFLs and ABCs for under Tier 5, as shown in the table below (metric tons), based on species-specific ABC's summed to a total for the group.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Sculpin	BSAI	58,300	43,700	58,300	43,700

BSAI Squid

This is an off-year for the squid assessment and therefore only an executive summary was prepared. The author included new information in the assessment that described the seasonal pattern of incidental squid catches.

The SSC agrees with continuation of Tier 6 management for this complex, with OFL set equal to the average catch from 1978-1995, with ABC set equal to 75% of the OFL, as shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Squids	BSAI	2,620	1,970	2,620	1,970

BSAI Octopus

The SSC received public testimony from Kenny Down (Freezer Longline Coalition) in support of the Plan Team recommendations. Jon Warrenchuck (Oceana) also supported Plan Team OFL and ABC recommendations, but expressed concerned about potential for a directed fishery on this important prey species.

The Plan Team supported the author's predation-based estimate of octopus mortality from 1984-2008 survey data of Pacific cod diets as an alternate Tier 6 estimate. The Plan Team discussed the appropriateness of this approach and concluded that cod were a better sampler of octopuses than the survey and therefore represented an improved estimate of minimum biomass. The Plan Team thought that, in the case of BSAI octopus, the estimate resulting from the predation-based approach should be conservative.

The SSC notes that estimates derived from the survey and consumption are both highly uncertain and should only be considered until more reliable estimates of biomass can be attained. The SSC would like encourage development of alternative approaches or a survey.

The SSC requests the authors investigate:

- Spatial and temporal patterns in consumption
- Compare size modes in cod compared to what is captured in the fishery
- Provide details on stomach contents
- Analysis of the AI Pacific cod diet
- Contrast observed consumption rates with cod abundance
- Consider information from other surveys and spatial-temporal catch patterns in the Pot fishery.

The SSC also supports the Plan Team request for discussion of the data needed for a discard mortality rate analysis and additional research to estimate rates of non-spawning mortality and discard mortality. The SSC notes that results from a recent tag and release study by Reid Brewer suggest mark recapture methods may be useful for abundance estimation and mortality estimation.

The SSC agrees with the Plan Team recommendation to calculate the OFL and ABC using the authors consumption approach, and OFL and ABC's are shown in the table below in metric tons.

Stock/ Assemblage	Area	2012		2013	
		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	3,450	2,590

Groundfish SAFE Appendices

GOA – BSAI Grenadiers (currently outside the FMP)

Grenadiers remain as “nonspecified” by the Council; hence they are not assigned levels of OFL, ABC, or TAC. We anticipate seeing a discussion paper in April on the future treatment of grenadiers within the management system. In anticipation of potential future specification as “in the fishery”, the authors continue to prepare estimates of reference points for both the GOA and BSAI based on giant grenadiers, which are the predominant grenadier species caught in the North Pacific. The SSC continues to support moving grenadiers into the FMP, noting that biomass estimates appear reliable and that the Tier 5 estimates would be appropriate.

In 2010, we requested further work on the AI grenadier reference points. The authors have provided a description of the several approaches they are now working on, which is to be presented at the September 2012 Plan Team meeting. The SSC looks forward to seeing the results of those analyses.

GOA – BSAI Forage fish

Since 2011, forage fish have been designated as an Ecosystem Component group and thus they are outside the stock specification process. The last full report on forage fish was in 2008. Trawl survey GOA biomass estimates (2009 and 2011) and incidental catch in the GOA groundfish fisheries (2009, 2010, 2011), were included in the report tables, but no analyses were presented and this is again an abbreviated report.

As in previous SAFE reports, the authors acknowledge the lack of good survey data for forage fish and suggest the GOA Integrated Ecosystem Research Project (IERP), with field work occurring in 2011 and 2013, will provide new information. The SSC reiterates the need to integrate related studies and implementation of long-term survey capabilities to improve our knowledge of forage fish abundance, distribution, and ecology. The lack of useful data and the lack of substantive analyses of existing data, remain hindrances to meaningful integration of forage fish into ecosystem management. For example, BEST/BSIERP program has demonstrated that the NOAA acoustic survey data could be used to examine indices of abundance and distribution for species such as capelin and euphausiids. The SSC also encourages efforts to include forage fish sampling from BASIS surveys.

The authors plan to include retrospective analysis of forage fish data when the GOA-IERP data is available, but it is not clear how this will be done, given the acknowledged lack of reliable historic data. Eulachon is an exception, and the SSC suggests investigating the possibility of using eulachon as an indicator species for components of the forage fish complex. Additionally, high incidental catches of eulachon occurred in 2005 and 2008 and have been low since: Perhaps the authors can relate these fluctuations to oceanographic or zooplankton indices. The SSC continues to encourage tracking of

developments in the southern eulachon DPS that might inform management actions for eulachon and other key forage species in Alaska, particularly given the importance of these species to seabird and mammal species that are endangered, threatened, or of management concern.

The authors refer to anecdotal evidence that fishermen avoid areas of high eulachon bycatch to avoid overage penalties (p. 1514), but it is not clear what this evidence is and the argument seems weak. Given that the incidental catch of forage fish appears not to be a conservation issue for the forage fish complex, the report could focus on the impacts of changes to forage fish on apex predators.

Data on forage fish might be improved by comparing NOAA sampling to other indices, such as seabird diet, to determine how various methods might be used or combined to improve monitoring and integration of data on forage species into ecosystem management. The SSC notes that the biomass estimates for forage fish reported in Table 2 (p.1518) are orders of magnitude lower than those estimated from ecosystem models (2008 report, Table 6). The underlying causes of this discrepancy, as well as the high variation in biomass estimates, were not addressed in 2008 or any subsequent updates. The SSC requests that the differences be addressed in the upcoming full report. The SSC looks forward to seeing a full report that includes GOA-IERP data and that incorporates some of these SSC suggestions.

Economics SAFE

The SSC wishes to express its profound appreciation to Mr. Terry Hiatt, (NMFS-AFSC) upon the announcement of his imminent retirement, for his important and sustained contribution to the Council's analyses in management and stewardship of the living marine resources of the North Pacific and Bering Sea.

The SSC appreciates the efforts to expand the Economic SAFE to include a descriptive narrative that accompanies the tables in the document. However, the Economic SAFE documents would benefit from more focused emphasis upon changes that the authors believe deserve particular attention (e.g., methodological changes in interpreting or presenting data results, significant departures from patterns or trends experienced in recent periods). Effectively highlighting such key aspects of the expected economic performance measures could facilitate efficient utilization of the increasingly complex and extensive Economic SAFE chapters. To a large extent, a narrative that simply mentions the existence of a table or just reports values contained in the tables is unnecessary. Examples of sections that are probably superfluous include:

- Page 9, paragraph 2 which simply mentions the existence of Tables 20 and 21 without any useful narrative. Likewise for page 9, paragraph 4, which does no more than mention the presence of Tables 23 and 24.
- Page 10, first two paragraphs (Tables 30 through 34).

Some parts of the document identify important trends and include useful discussions of likely causes. For example, the last paragraph of page 7 (Table 11) notes the large increase in PSC of 'other' king crab in 2007, describes the declining trend since 2007, and discusses likely factors contributing to these trends. Simply mentioning inclusion of tables is not helpful. Elsewhere, the uneven treatment of material is likely a product of multiple contributing authors. Selection of a single editor, responsible for checking consistency and relevancy of commentary, could potentially solve this problem.

The SSC appreciates and supports efforts to develop market indices, which will be useful in identifying trends. In the future, the SSC hopes that these indices will be accompanied by a focused narrative identifying and discussing key trends. For example, page 103, paragraph one, mentions the "precipitous decline in aggregate prices," but does not have any information on underlying causes or speculation about whether the trend is likely to continue.

In specific cases, when there are meaningful changes in the methodology employed, these should be mentioned in the abstract and introduction, explained in sufficient detail in the narrative, and noted at the end of each affected table. The narrative should include a discussion of how changes in methodology affect the ability to compare results with tables from previous SAFEs that used the old methodology. In the first year of a new approach, the document would also benefit from a supplemental table that shows what the values would have been, using the superseded methodology.

In February 2011, the SSC received a presentation by anthropologists from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center on the development of indices of community involvement in fisheries and community resilience. The index-based approach tracking economic parameter performance of the groundfish fisheries, included in the current Economic SAFEs, could serve as a model for comparable analysis of social indicators such as community dependency, sociocultural attributes, and resilience. These indicators would strengthen understanding of the human environment and how human communities would be expected to respond to fishery induced change. The SSC believes future Groundfish SAFE documents would benefit from greater integration, including consideration of social impacts and trends. With two anthropologists cited as SAFE authors, the goal should be progress towards comprehensive social status and trend assessments, fully integrated into the respective SAFE documents.

The SSC appreciates the careful and accurate treatment of Prohibited Species Catch removals associated with groundfish fisheries in the North Pacific and Bering Sea within the Economic SAFE. Other sections of the SAFE documents lag behind the Economic SAFE in this respect.

Following are some minor editorial notes:

- There are some cases in which the order of the narrative does not align with table sequence. For example, on page 10, Table 30 is discussed after Tables 31 through 35.
- Avoid contractions and/or the use of uncommon nomenclature in technical writing (e.g., \$6.1 thousand, \$.0061 million, when the common expression \$6,100 suffices.)
- The authors should be consistent when presenting revenue, value, or price data to correctly identify the market level and valuation estimator (e.g., ex vessel-first wholesale-consumer market, gross revenue-net receipts).
- The SSC review revealed an arithmetic error in the BSAI SAFE Economic Summary section, page 14. The same section employs nomenclature that, if read literally, is contradictory (i.e., algebraically and grammatically, the negative of a negative is a positive). A careful proof-read would be recommended. The SSC will forward editorial suggestions directly to the authors.
- In the tables presenting market indices, it would be very helpful if the vertical axis which shows the index were the same throughout all sub-graphs in the figure (e.g., Figure 3). Without comparable unit scales, appraisals of trends across sub-graph plots can be problematic.
- In the tables presenting market indices, the acronyms for each species should be defined (or simply spell out the commonly used names).

C-3 Ecosystem Considerations

The SSC commends the Ecosystem editors and contributors for continued improvement and for their responsiveness to SSC comments. The Eastern Bering Sea (EBS) and Aleutian Islands (AI) (new) Report Cards and the Hot Topics sections highlight interesting changes and are informative. It might be preferable to move the Hot Topics section to the report card, as it is short and provides information of immediate concern. The SSC looks forward to the preparation of a Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Report Card.

These report card and hot topics sections would be even more useful if there was a short set of paragraphs that synthesized the views of the authors and Plan Teams as to the management implications of any findings.

The Ecosystem Trends section was succinct and useful. The listing of critical information gaps and research needs for each region will be helpful for the assembly of the Research Priorities report later in the year. New indices include EBS phytoplankton biomass and size structure, GOA Chlorophyll a, Icy Strait zooplankton trends, forecasts for SE Alaska pink salmon harvests, EBS slope groundfish and invertebrate community biodiversity, a multivariate seabird index for the EBS, and an index of Alaska-wide community regime shifts. The new seabird index shows some interesting results that may be useful in future ecosystem evaluations.

The executive summaries were useful, but ordering the indicators and key points from physical through consumers in a way that aligns them with the trophic structure would improve readability. In addition, some consistency in order of the indicators across regions would be appreciated.

The SSC also appreciates the attempt (page 58) to test predictions made in the December 2010 Ecosystem Considerations chapter. In the future, it would be useful to denote all predictions in the chapter in bold, and then systematically test which ones were accurate the following year. Those predictions that prove reliable could then be moved into the individual species' assessments.

The sections on community trends in school enrollments and population size were informative. The SSC suggests adding information on trends in employment or wage-paying jobs and average wages. Because of their importance, sections on school enrollments should be separate paragraphs at the end of each ecoregion discussion. It is also possible that these socio-economic indices should be in the Economic SAFE.

The SSC had some concern over the baseline dataset used when reporting anomalies, especially physical anomalies. Currently, the baseline period differs by parameter, and the time frame used to define the baseline is not always clear and often not legible in the figures. This makes it difficult to compare responses across variables directly. Please show the baseline over which the anomalies are determined and attempt to standardize to the extent practicable.

Leading indicators should provide predictive value and they should integrate upwards to predicted impacts on commercially important species and species of conservation concern. The SSC encourages a rigorous evaluation of which indicators provide good insight into ecosystem status. An example of an indicator with too little data to be a useful leading indicator at present is the analysis of AI tufted puffin chick diets. Those indicators that cannot be updated in a timely fashion, preferably up to the summer before the SAFE document preparation may be more appropriately raised in the section on key data gaps.

The authors recognize the need for improved data on forage species, and the SSC reiterates its concern that lack of data on forage fish, particularly myctophids, sand lance, and squid, continues to limit the evaluation of potential changes to these important prey groups for apex fish, seabird and marine mammal predators. Equally important is the lack of data on prey species during fall, specifically euphausiid abundance and distribution. The SSC encourages efforts to incorporate forage fish sampling and acoustic surveys for euphausiids during the fall BASIS surveys.

There seems to be disagreement between the ecosystem SAFE and the forage fish chapter about the underlying reliability and utility of CPUE and stock assessment for the various forage species.

Clarification of CPUE data origin (trawl, acoustic, seabird) and the limitations of these sources should be included, and some effort made to coordinate data with the authors in charge of the forage fish chapter.

Relative to marine mammals, this document seems overly focused on northern fur seals and Steller sea lions, with no mention made of recent changes in the conservation status of walrus (recently listed as a candidate species under ESA), spotted seals (the Southern Distinct Population Segment recently listed as threatened) or the pending resolution of conservation status of other ice seal species, not to mention small, piscivorous cetaceans. Many of these species rely heavily on large zooplankton, forage fish species, euphausiids, and juvenile cod/groundfishes, and their population distributions and foraging behaviors are influenced by many of the physical variables mentioned in the Ecosystem Considerations chapter. There is a need to encapsulate fully the ecosystem considerations relative to these stocks. Inclusion of ice seals and walrus in the Bering Sea Ecosystem Chapter is particularly important, as these are food resources for many coastal communities, and changes in their status may influence human behavior.

A number of specific questions, minor edits and comments have been provided to the editor.

General Comments:

- It would be very helpful if all place names mentioned in the text were also displayed on a map.
- All figure legends, especially internal legends, need to be checked for readability at the size found in a printed document. Likewise, when possible, figures should be intelligible in a black and white printed version.
- It would help the SSC if tables and figures in the PowerPoint presentations include document page numbers to facilitate finding the originals.
- When feasible, the SSC would like to have the editor of the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter provide the presentation to the SSC so that questions can be answered in depth and so that the editor can have a better understanding of the comments of the SSC.

C-5 Initial Review Freezer Longline vessel replacement

The SSC received a presentation of the subject RIR/IRFA from Jon McCracken (NPFMC). Public testimony was offered by Kenny Down, Freezer Longline Coalition.

The question before the SSC on this agenda item is whether this document is a sufficiently complete analysis of the proposed action (i.e., amending the BSAI Groundfish FMP to permit Freezer Longline Vessel Replacement). The requirement of this document is to reasonably inform the public of the Council's purpose and need for this action (i.e., problem statement and rationale), the possible alternative means the Council believes hold some prospect or promise of resolving this problem, the costs and benefits that may reasonably be expected to derive from the amendment, the direct and indirect impacts that may be anticipated to accompany this Council action, and the distribution of these impacts across sectors, communities, and regions of those impacts. The information presented in the draft and articulated in the staff presentation strongly suggests that these requirements have not been met.

While the proposed action to amend the FMP is represented as necessary to allow freezer longline vessel owners to replace their vessels, that ability already exists without any Council action. It appears the current License Limitation Program (LLP) contains provisions that set out a "Maximum Length Over All" (MLOA) cap on vessels that may be used in association with the LLP held by the owner. This is a different issue from that identified as the subject of this action, namely vessel replacement.

If the conditions that motivated the Council's original decision on the current MLOA provision have changed (i.e., the Purpose and Need for an MLOA no longer applies), the Council would need to articulate the ways in which their original action now imposes unnecessary and undesirable burdens upon

the LLP participants and identify potential alternative means by which the FMP amendment may achieve the action's objectives.

The draft document asserts that the proposed alternatives have no effect individually or cumulatively on the human environment. Therefore there is no need to prepare an Environmental Assessment. However, the SSC identified a number of aspects on the human environment that might be impacted by the action. This includes impacts to captains, crews, communities, ports and processors that may occur because larger, more efficient vessels with new capabilities and capacities will presumably require crew size and composition changes; result in fewer port calls; extend trip duration; among other changes. **There are implications for the human environment that should be more carefully explored before concluding that the action meets the criteria for a categorical exemption from NEPA.**

Although one rationale given for the proposed action is improvement in economic efficiency, the document provides no information on the extent of these potential impacts. Examples could include development of markets for ancillary products (e.g., cod heads), expansion into production of alternative "primary product" forms (e.g., fillets) resulting in competition with other fisheries for market share, changes in crew compensation and formulation.

The ability of larger, more capable vessels to exploit new and more remote locations should be treated. It would be useful to consider what the biological and ecological impacts of greater mobility and reduced discarding would have on the environment.

The SSC recommends that the Initial Review Draft of the FMP Amendment to allow BSAI Freezer Longline Vessel Replacement not be released for public review. Given the substantive changes required for this document, the SSC notes that it would be difficult for the public to have a meaningful opportunity to review and comment on the document if the Council intends to compress initial review and final action into a single meeting. The SSC requests that, should an Initial Review Draft EA/RIR/IRFA for an action to suspend or revoke the LLP MLOA be prepared, we have an opportunity to review and comment on its adequacy for release for public review.

D-1(d) Halibut EFP

John Gauvin from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (ASC) gave a presentation supporting an application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for methods of reducing halibut bycatch on Amendment 80 vessels through modifications to fishing and catch handling practices.

The proposed study follows a smaller project undertaken in 2009. That project used three vessels operating in relatively good fishing conditions in areas of high halibut density to test the feasibility of the proposed changes. In particular, halibut were sorted on deck to minimize the amount of time they spent on the vessel, and thereby reduce mortality. This contrasts with current requirements that all fish be dumped in the stern tank to ensure availability for observer sampling, which can result in halibut remaining on deck for several hours. The results of the 2009 EFP were presented, which found that deck sorting led to a large reduction in mortality rate.

The new proposal intends to expand on the 2009 study by including a wider range of vessels operating in a variety of conditions with different target fisheries. As such, it will lead to a more realistic understanding of how the proposed changes to fishing (shorter tows) and catch handling will work in practice compared to the 2009 study.

In the 2009 study, the goal was to measure and assess all halibut for viability. The new proposal will use a subsampling design in which a random sample of halibut will be selected for assessment at a rate of 1 in

5. Compared to the 2009 study, the reduced sampling fraction will allow halibut to be returned to the water more quickly on average, and lead to further reductions in mortality. The sampling rate was chosen after an analysis of the data from the earlier study, and the SSC commends the ASC and their contracted statistician for the rigorousness of the analysis. The SSC supports this design, and agrees that it should avoid any issues of sampling bias that could result from anticipation of the next fish to sample.

The SSC finds this to be a very well designed project with the potential for important results regarding methods to reduce halibut bycatch on Amendment 80 vessels. **Therefore, the SSC recommends approval of the EFP.** The SSC also recommends the examination of safety issues that may arise from modifications to vessels to accommodate deck sorting.

**C-2 Salmon FMP motion
December 8, 2011**

The Council adopts the following motion and amended problem statement for final action.

Problem Statement:

Although the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's *Fishery Management Plan for the Salmon Fisheries in the EEZ off the Coast of Alaska* (Salmon FMP) has been amended nine times in the last two decades, no comprehensive consideration of management strategy or scope of coverage has occurred since 1990. State fisheries regulations and Federal and international laws affecting Alaska salmon have changed since 1990 and the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act (MSA) expanded the requirements for FMPs. The Council recognizes that the Salmon FMP is vague with respect to management authority for the three directed commercial salmon fisheries that occur in the EEZ west of Cape Suckling. The Salmon FMP must be updated in order to comply with the current MSA requirements, and it should be amended to more clearly reflect the Council's desires with regard to the State of Alaska continued management authority over commercial fisheries in the West Area EEZ, the Southeast Alaska (SEAK) commercial troll fishery, and the sport fishery.

~~Updating the Salmon FMP in the West Area EEZ to include pre-season stock status determination criteria and exploitation rate based annual catch limits through the Council process as described in NS1 Guidelines would not be appropriate for Alaska salmon fisheries given the unique characteristics of salmon biology, the state's escapement based management strategy for salmon, and current state abundance based inseason management approaches which have been applied for many years and historically have sustained high yields. The same concerns would apply in establishing annual catch limits in SEAK. The distinction between the East and West Area EEZ's needs to be retained due to Pacific Salmon Treaty and Endangered Species Act issues associated with the SEAK salmon fisheries.~~

Motion:

The Council's salmon management policy is to facilitate State of Alaska salmon management in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and all other applicable federal law. Under this policy, the Council has identified six management objectives to guide salmon management under the FMP. These six objectives, as currently laid out in the analysis and working draft FMP, accurately reflect Council intent towards achieving this policy.

To reflect this policy and objectives, the Council adopts Alternative 3 to modify the Federal Salmon FMP to specifically exclude the three historical net commercial salmon fishing areas and the sport salmon fishery from the West Area EEZ. The FMP would prohibit commercial salmon fisheries in the modified West Area and would continue to delegate management authority to the State of Alaska for the directed commercial salmon troll fishery and the sport salmon fishery in the East Area EEZ.

Under Alternative 3, the Council adopts the following FMP provisions to comply with the MSA and to ensure that all management measures will be based on the best scientific information available.

Status Determination Criteria (SDC)

The FMP maintains the current SDC for the East Area. The FMP implements State escapement goal management as an alternative approach for the West Area, recognizing that the FMP prohibits fishing in the West Area so that the State can manage the salmon fisheries in adjacent State waters and the traditional net fishing areas in EEZ waters.

Annual Catch Limits (ACLs)

Chinook salmon stocks in the East Area fall under the MSA exception to ACLs for stocks managed under an international fisheries agreement, the Pacific Salmon Treaty. For the remaining salmon stocks caught in the troll fishery in the East Area, the Council proposes using the State's scientifically-based management program, which is based on spawning escapement goals and inseason management, as an alternative approach to address the MSA's annual catch limit requirement and comply with National Standard 1.

The EA provides the rationale for this approach and its consistency with the MSA.

Optimum Yield

Optimum yield (OY) in the East Area is based on the MSY established in the SDC. OY for Chinook salmon is the portion of the all-gear catch limit allocated to troll gear. OY for remaining stocks caught in the troll fishery is the fishery's annual catch which, when combined with the catch from all other fisheries, results in a post-harvest run size equal to the MSY escapement goal for each indicator stock.

The directed harvest OY is zero in the West Area. There has been no commercial salmon harvest from the West Area in nearly 60 years, outside of the three traditional areas. This OY recognizes the lack of social or economic dependence on commercial salmon harvest from the West Area, that salmon are fully utilized by State managed fisheries, and that the State manages fisheries based on the best available information using the State's escapement goal management system.

Peer Review Process

The FMP establishes the State's peer review process as the Council's peer review process for purposes of developing fishing level recommendations and providing the Council with scientific information on the salmon fisheries under the FMP.

Fishery Impact Statement and State Management Compliance with the MSA and FMP

The Council has reviewed all the information provided by the State in the Fishery Impact Statement regarding its salmon fisheries and bycatch management measures and finds that the Fishery Impact Statement addresses the MSA information requirements and that the State bycatch measures meet MSA requirements and the FMP's management objectives.

Process for Federal Review of State Management Measures

The FMP establishes the process, as described in Chapter 9 of the working draft FMP, for federal review of State salmon management measures applicable in the East Area.

Limited Entry

There is not a continued need for federal salmon limited entry permits in the East Area and therefore this action removes that provision from the FMP.

Draft Gulf of Alaska SSC and AP recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 (revised 12-8-11).

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W(610)		30,270	30,270		32,816	32,816
	C(620)		45,808	45,808		49,662	49,662
	C(630)		26,348	26,348		28,565	28,565
	WYAK (640)		3,244	3,244		3,517	3,517
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	155,402	114,560	114,560
	SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	169,768	125,334	125,334
Pacific cod	W		28,032	21,024		29,120	21,840
	C		56,940	42,705		59,150	44,363
	E		2,628	1,971		2,730	2,047
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	108,000	91,000	68,250
Sablefish	W		1,780	1,780		1,757	1,757
	C		5,760	5,760		5,686	5,686
	WYK		2,247	2,247		2,219	2,219
	SEO		3,173	3,173		3,132	3,132
	E subtoal		5,420	5,420		5,350	5,350
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	15,129	12,794	12,794
Shallow water flatfish	W		21,994	13,250		20,171	13,250
	C		22,910	18,000		21,012	18,000
	WYAK		4,307	4,307		3,950	3,950
	SEO		1,472	1,472		1,350	1,350
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	56,781	46,483	36,550
Deep water flatfish	W		176	176		176	176
	C		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	SEO		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307	1,307		1,283	1,283
	C		6,412	6,412		6,291	6,291
	WYAK		836	836		821	821
	SEO		1,057	1,057		1,037	1,037
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	12,326	9,432	9,432
Arrowtooth flounder	W		27,495	14,500		27,386	14,500
	C		143,162	75,000		142,591	75,000
	WYAK		21,159	6,900		21,074	6,900
	SEO		21,066	6,900		20,982	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	249,066	212,033	103,300
Flathead sole	W		15,300	8,650		15,518	8,650
	C		25,838	15,400		26,205	15,400
	WYAK		4,558	4,558		4,623	4,623
	SEO		1,711	1,711		1,735	1,735
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	60,219	48,081	30,408

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,364	2,050	2,050
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	12,662	10,985	10,985
	WYAK		1,692	1,692		1,650	1,650
	SEO		1,861	1,861		1,815	1,815
	E (subtotal)	4,095	3,553	3,553	3,995	3,465	3,465
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	19,021	16,500	16,500
Northern rockfish	W		2,156	2,156		2,017	2,017
	C		3,351	3,351		3,136	3,136
	E		0	0		0	0
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	6,152	5,153	5,153
Shorthead	W		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Other slope rockfish	W		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230		230	230
	SEO		3,165	200		3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080
	Pelagic shelf rockfish (Dusky)	W		409	409		381
C		3,849	3,849		3,581	3,581	
WYAK		542	542		504	504	
SEO		318	318		296	296	
Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	5,822	4,762	4,762	
Rougheye	W		80	80		82	82
	C		850	850		861	861
	E		293	293		297	297
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	1,492	1,240	1,240
Demersal shelf rockfish	SEO	467	293	293	467	293	293
Thornyhead rockfish	W		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Atka mackerel	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big skate	W		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose skate	W		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Octopuses	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Sculpins	GW	7,641	5,731	5,731	7,641	5,731	5,731
Total	GOA	747,780	606,048	438,159	756,621	612,506	447,752

TAC Considerations for State Pacific Cod Fishery

Since 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals of not more than 25% of the Federal P. cod TAC from the state parallel fisheries. The relative percentage in the Central GOA was increased by the Board of Fisheries in March 2005 from 24.25 in 2004 to 25% while the relative percentage in the Eastern GOA was increased to 25% in 2010. Using the area apportionments of the 2012 and 2013 P. cod ABC recommended by the Plan Team, the Federal TAC for P. cod would be adjusted as listed below.

Plan Team recommended 2012 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, and resulting TACs and state Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) (t).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	28,032	56,940	2,628	87,600
State GHL	7,008	14,235	657	21,900
(%)	25	25	25	25
Federal TAC	21,024	42,705	1,971	65,700

Plan Team recommended 2013 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, and resulting TACs and state Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) (t).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	29,120	59,150	2,730	91,000
State GHL	7,280	14,787	683	22,750
(%)	25	25	25	25
Federal TAC	21,840	44,363	2,047	68,250

Prohibited Species Catch Limits

In the GOA, Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits are established for halibut. Since 1995, total halibut PSC limits for all fisheries and gear types have totaled 2,300 t. This cap was reduced from 2,750 t after the sablefish IFQ fishery was exempted from the halibut PSC requirements in 1995. The halibut PSC apportionments recommended based upon the 2010 apportionments for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries are shown below.

GOA Pacific halibut PSC Limits

2012-2013 Trawl		2012-2013 Hook and Line		
Jan 20 - Apr 1	550 t	1st trimester	Jan 1 - Jun 10	250 t
Apr 1 - Jul 1	400 t	2nd trimester	Jun 10 - Sep 1	5 t
Jul 1 - Sep 1	600 t	3rd trimester	Sept 1 - Dec 31	35 t
Sept 1 - Oct 1	150 t			
Oct 1 - Dec 31	300 t	DSR	Jan 1 - Dec 31	10 t
TOTAL	2,000 t			300 t

Trawl fishery categories			
Season	Shallow Water	Deep Water	Total
Jan 1 - Apr 1	450 t	100 t	550 t
Apr 1 - Jul 1	100 t	300 t	400 t
Jul 1 - Sep 1	200 t	400 t	600 t
Sept 1 - Oct 1	150 t	any rollover	150 t
Oct 1 - Dec 31	<i>no apportionment</i>		300 t
TOTAL	900 t	800 t	2,000 t

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Robert Clark – Fisheries Science – ADF&G
Alison Dauble – Fishery/Biology – Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Anne Hollowed – Stock Assessment – AK Fishery Science Center
George Hunt – Seabirds/Ecology/Ecosystems – UW School of Aquatic & Fisheries Sciences
Gordon Kruse – Pop Dynamics, Fishery Biology – UAF School of Fisheries & Ocean Science
Kathy Kuletz – Seabird/Ecology – US Fish & Wildlife
Pat Livingston – Ecosystem Studies/Stock Assessment AK Fishery Science Center
Seth Macinko – Socio-Economics – Univ. of Rhode Island – Dept. of Marine Affairs
Franz Mueter – Ecosystem Studies/Ecology – UAF School of Fisheries & Ocean Science
Terrance Quinn II – Stock Assessment/Population Dynamics – UAF School of Fisheries & Ocean Science
Kate Reedy-Mashner – Anthropology – Idaho State University
James Murphy – Economics – University of Alaska
Lew Queirolo – Fishery Economics – AK Fishery Science Center
Farron Wallace – Stock Assessment/Fishery Biology – Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Raymond Webster – Stock Assessments/Fishery Biology - IPHC
Vacant ADF&G seat to be filled early 2012

AP

Kurt Cochran	Crag Lowenberg
Craig Cross	Chuck McCallum
John Crowley	Matt Moir
Julianne Curry	Andy Mezirow (one year appointment)
Jerry Downing	Theresa Peterson
Tom Enlow	Ed Poulsen
Tim Evers	Neil Rodriguez
Jeff Farvour	Lori Swanson
Rebecca Gisclair	Anne Vanderhoeven
Jan Jacobs	Ernie Wiess
Alexus Kwachka	

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News & Notes

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2011

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: John Crowley, Jerry Downing, Jeff Favour, Chuck McCallum, Theresa Peterson, Ernie Weiss, and Lori Swanson. Additionally, the AP welcomes two new members: Craig Lowenberg of Oregon who was appointed for the remainder of Bob Jacobson's term, and Andy Mezirow, on a special one-year appointment to address charter halibut issues. The Council also appointed a new SSC member, Alison Dauble from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Many thanks to the retiring members for their service: Doug Woodby of the SSC and Bob Jacobson of the AP.

A full list of AP, SSC, and Council members and their contact information and terms is available on our website.



Doug Woodby received plaque from Eric Olson and Chris Oliver



BSAI Crab

At its December 2011 meeting, the Council considered three crab rationalization program agenda items. Under each of the items, the Council had requested that stakeholders work to develop solutions to concerns expressed by the Council at previous meetings. The first item included several overlapping concerns related to **active participation requirements, high lease rates, limited entry opportunities, and crew compensation**. These issues were identified by the Council as areas of possible concern in the deliberations following presentation of the five-year review of the program in December of 2011. After hearing from stakeholders and the public, the Council elected to advance alternatives for analysis that would require persons acquiring quota share (QS) to meet minimum requirements for active participation in the rationalized crab fisheries. Under the proposed alternatives, active participation requirements could be satisfied by the QS holder either maintaining a minimum ownership interest in a vessel or a minimum participation as a crewmember. In addition, the Council requested staff to prepare a discussion paper examining the potential for cooperatives to develop provisions that would establish minimum crew compensation standards, maximum lease rates, maximum lease charges or deductions against crew compensation, and measures to promote quota share ownership by crew and active participants in the fisheries.

The Council also considered stakeholder comments concerning the performance of the **binding arbitration** system, which is used to settle price harvester/processor disputes for individual fishing quota (IFQ) landings that must be delivered to holders of individual processing quota (IPQ). Based on the concerns raised by stakeholders, the Council

requested the chair to appoint a workgroup to consider development of a process for the price formula for the golden king crab fishery. **Letters of nomination will be accepted at the Council office until January 10.** Under the arbitration system that price formula is used to inform negotiations and the application of the arbitration standard to specific price disputes. The Council's action is in response to the disproportionate amount of testimony from stakeholders concerning the equity and fairness of the formula in the golden king crab fishery. The Council also asked staff to prepare a discussion paper concerning three other aspects of the arbitration system: 1) the lengthy season approach to arbitration and its effects, 2) the potential for publishing arbitration findings, and 3) the potential for allowing either side to initiate arbitration proceedings.

The Council also reviewed its pending action to modify **community provisions, including rights of first refusal** on processor quota shares (PQS). The Council had requested that stakeholders consider issues that arise under the proposed actions, including revisions to the timeline for exercise of rights, the removal of terms under which the right lapses, applying the right to only to processor shares (rather than processor shares and other assets in the transaction), and prohibiting the use of IPQ outside of the community benefiting from the right of first refusal without the consent of that community. In response to testimony, the Council made minor technical revisions to one alternative concerning the lapse of rights and added an action that would require PQS holders to provide certain notices to right holders and NMFS to ensure that right holders and the agency are informed concerning the status of rights and whether those rights have been triggered. Staff contact on all crab issues is Mark Fina.

EFH Consultation

The Council received a report from Jon Kurland, head of the NMFS Alaska Region Habitat Conservation Division, on the NMFS Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation process. The agency has a responsibility, under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, to provide consultation on the actions (fishing and non-fishing) of Federal agencies which may adversely affect EFH. The Council also has a statutory obligation to comment on such actions in some instances. As the report indicates, the agency annually reviews in the range of 100-200 Federal actions to determine whether they may adversely affect EFH, and NMFS habitat staff provide input both during early scoping and project design, and more formally during the consultation process, to provide suggestions for avoiding and/or minimizing impacts to EFH.

Under current practice, NMFS notifies the Council, or Council staff, of a pending action that may affect habitats of direct concern to the Council. The report lists recent examples where such coordination has resulted in Council involvement. Staff contact is Diana Evans. The complete written report is available at www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/habitat

Senator Begich addressed the Council

Alaska's Senator Mark Begich addressed the Council Friday afternoon and discussed issues of importance to Alaska and Alaska's fisheries. He noted that resolving complex fishery management issues is a vital part of maintaining sustainable fisheries, and lauded the Council process in Alaska as a model for other Councils. Senator Begich cited the importance of the seafood industry and all the economic impact it has throughout the region. In discussing budget issues in Washington, he emphasized the importance of maintaining resources for stock assessments and research, and safety and enforcement. He noted that there is a great interest in Alaska's Arctic and continued research and data collection in the area.

Senator Begich answered questions from Council members on funding issues for the Observer Program, seafood marketing, and Alaska's fishing industry representation on Fishery and Ocean-related panels and committees. He briefly discussed

the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, and issues related to the North Pacific that are on the horizon, and that he would be looking for input from the Council as these issues develop.

Halibut EFP

At this meeting, the Council reviewed and approved the application from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to allow operators of non-pelagic trawl vessels to assess the operational feasibility of reducing halibut mortality in fisheries for flatfish by removing and releasing halibut from a codend on deck of a catcher/processor. The study conducted under this EFP will begin in early April 2012 and continue until the end of September 2012, and will allow seven non-pelagic trawl vessels to sort halibut on deck and release those fish back into the water after sampling for length and condition using IPHC halibut mortality assessment methods. The EFP application was developed in cooperation with NMFS and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.



Freezer longline Vessel Replacement

In December, the Council reviewed the initial review draft of a proposed regulatory amendment that would allow BSAI freezer longline vessels to be replaced with larger vessels. Benefits of vessel replacement for the BSAI freezer longline fleet could include vessel safety, improved harvesting and processing efficiency, fuel efficiency, and resource utilization.

At its December meeting, the Council modified the problem statement to better reflect the proposed action. The revised problem statement follows:

Vessel length restrictions included with LLP licenses and the AFA, established to maintain fleet capacity, inhibit the BSAI freezer longline fleet from replacing or rebuilding their vessels. Modifying or removing vessel length restrictions for BSAI freezer longline vessels to allow owners to rebuild or replace their vessels with larger vessels would allow for improved vessel safety, meet international class and loadline requirements that would allow a broader range of onboard processing options, and improve the economic efficiency of their vessels.

The Council also modified the alternatives. Alternative 2 was revised so as to modify the MLOA of the BSAI freezer longline LLP licenses to allow for some increase in vessel length, but only for the those LLP licenses with an MLOA of less than 150'. Alternative 3, which eliminates the MLOA for BSAI freezer longline LLP licenses, was adjusted to include a Council recommendation that BSAI freezer longline vessels be authorized for use in the North Pacific to receive a certification of documentation. The American Fisheries Act limits vessels that: (1) exceed 165 feet in length, or (2) exceed 750 gross tons, or (3) have engines capable of producing more than 3,000 shaft horsepower from entering the North Pacific groundfish fisheries unless the vessel carried a fisheries endorsement prior to September 25, 1997 or the Council has recommended and the Secretary of Commerce has approved a conservation and management measure to allow the vessel to be used in fisheries under its authority.

The Council also added two new options under Alternative 3. The first option would limit any replaced BSAI freezer longline vessel to no greater than 220' LOA. The second option would maintain the current MLOA restriction freezer longline LLP

licenses with a pot cod endorsement when fishing in the BS or AI pot cod fishery.

Finally, the Council requested that the analysis be revised per Council and SSC comments and come back to the Council for final action in April 2012.

A copy of the final motion is posted on the Council web site. Staff contact is Jon McCracken.

Salmon FMP

The Council took final action to revise and update the Salmon FMP by adopting Alternative 3, which modifies the FMP's West Area to exclude from its scope of coverage the sport fishery and three traditional net commercial salmon fishing areas: Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and South Alaska Peninsula. Commercial salmon fishing in the modified West Area will continue to be prohibited. The FMP will delegate management authority to the State for the sport and directed commercial salmon troll fisheries in the East Area. The FMP will otherwise remain in effect in the East and modified West Areas.

The Council's action reflects its policy to facilitate State salmon management in accordance with applicable federal and international law and the six management objectives laid out in the revised FMP.

The Council also adopted specific FMP provisions, summarized as follows:

- Maintain the current status determination criteria in the East Area and use State escapement goal management as an alternative approach in the modified West Area;
- Establish annual catch limits using State salmon management as an alternative approach;
- Established optimum yield in the East Area and set optimum yield in the modified West Area equal to zero;
- Remove federal salmon limited entry permits in the East Area;
- Establish that the State will directly provide scientific information and fishing level recommendations to the Council;
- Adopt a fishery impact statement to addresses Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements;
- Establish a process for federal review of State management measures applicable in the East Area.

Staff contact is Sarah Melton.

Upcoming Meetings in 2012

Crab Modeling Workshop:
Bering Sea Tanner crab and Aleutian Islands golden king crab. January 9-13, 2012
AFSC, Seattle

International Pacific Halibut Commission, Annual meeting:
January 23-26, 2012
Anchorage

Council Coordination Committee, Interim meeting:
January 25-26, 2012
Washington, DC

Ecosystem Committee:
January 31, 2012
Seattle (T)

Joint Protocol Committee:
March 19, 2012
Hilton, Anchorage

Charter Management Implementation Committee:
late February to review discussion paper of proposed CSP management measures during times of low abundance

Scallop Plan Team:
February 27, 2012
Old Federal Bldg, Anchorage

Commercial IFQ Implementation Committee:
March/April to review VMS discussion paper

Crab Plan Team:
May 7-11, 2012
Anchorage (location TBD)

2012-13 GOA Groundfish Specifications

The Council approved the Gulf of Alaska Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report and recommended final catch specifications for the 2012 and 2013 groundfish fisheries. As part of the Plan Team presentations and Council deliberations, the updated ecosystem and economics SAFE report sections were presented. New components of the economic section included graphical presentations of fishery products by species, gear, and sector. The ecosystem section included results from the newly formed Aleutian Islands ecosystem team to highlight key indicators from that region.

NMFS conducted a summer bottom-trawl survey in the Gulf of Alaska this year, so full assessments were presented for all 22 stocks and stock complexes under the GOA FMP. Proposed and final specifications were established for a period of up to two years. This required specifying OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2012 and 2013.

The sum of the ABCs increased by 3% (15,927 t) compared with last year. This was primarily driven by increases in pollock 20,229 t (21%) and sablefish 1,670 t (15%). Based on projections, ABC levels for groundfish (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 Prince William Sound pollock GHF was increased from 1,650 t to 2,770 t and this amount was deducted from the central and western pollock ABC prior to apportionments.

The abundances of Pacific cod, sablefish, flathead sole, arrowtooth flounder, northern and southern rocksole, Pacific ocean perch, rougheye and blackspotted rockfish, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish are above B_{MSY} . The abundance of pollock is below B_{MSY} (see figure). 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.

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 C GOA), flathead sole (W and C GOA), arrowtooth flounder (GOA wide) and other rockfish (EYAK/SEO). For those fisheries, the TAC was 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 be placed on bycatch-only status due to concerns about reliability of biomass estimates (for both) and potentially under estimation of incidental catch in halibut fisheries (sharks) for those stocks.

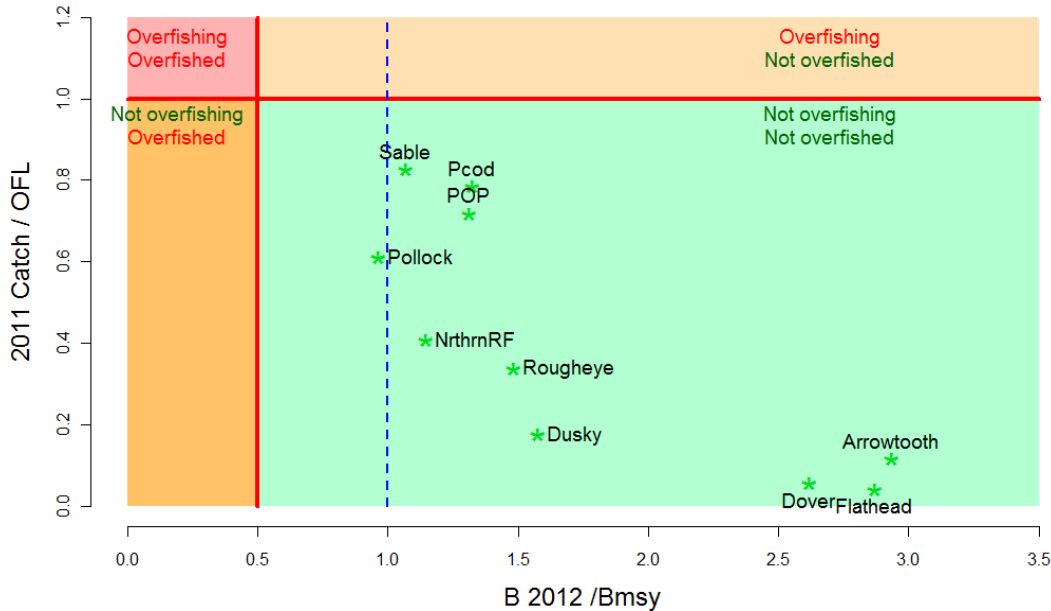
Prohibited Species Catch Limits:

The Council adopted halibut prohibited species catch limits, by season and gear apportionment for 2012-2013, and further specified 2012 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 to be implemented in 2012. The PSC numbers and seasonal apportionments are available on the website.

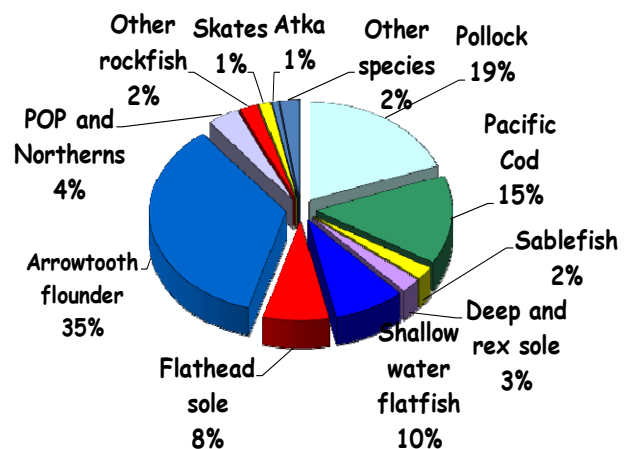
The Council recommended OFLs, ABCs and TACs for 2012 and 2013, the SAFE Report for GOA groundfish, the Ecosystem Considerations Chapter and the Economic SAFE report. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Additional information on the summary of GOA groundfish stocks may be viewed at www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm.

Summary status of age-structured GOA species relative to 2011 catch levels (vertical axis) and projected 2012 spawning biomass relative to B_{msy} levels. Note that the 2011 MSY level is defined as the 2011 catch at F_{OFL} .



2012 Allowable Biological Catches (ABCs) for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish (Percent of Total ABC)



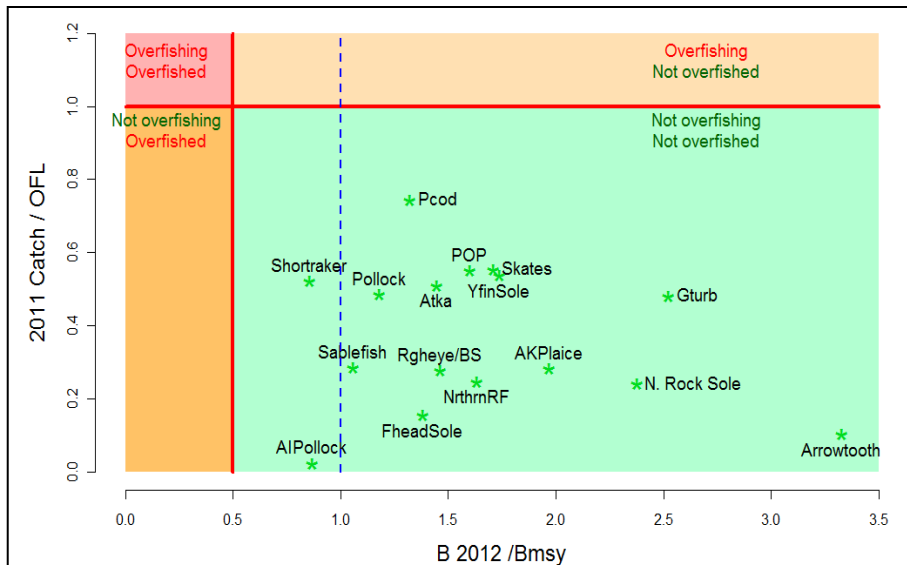
2012-13 BSAI Groundfish Specifications

The Council adopted annual catch limits based on recommendations from its advisory committees. The sum of the total allowable catches (TACs) for all groundfish is 2,000,000 mt. The TACs were set below the sum of the recommended ABCs for 2012 and 2013 (2.51 million t and 2.64 million t, respectively). The 2012 and 2013 groundfish harvest specifications are posted on the Council website and included in this newsletter.

The status of BSAI groundfish stocks continues to appear favorable. Many stocks are rebounding due to increased recruitment. Nearly all stocks are projected to be above a benchmark that identifies the stocks above the biomass (total weight of fish) that can support harvest of the maximum sustainable yield in 2012.

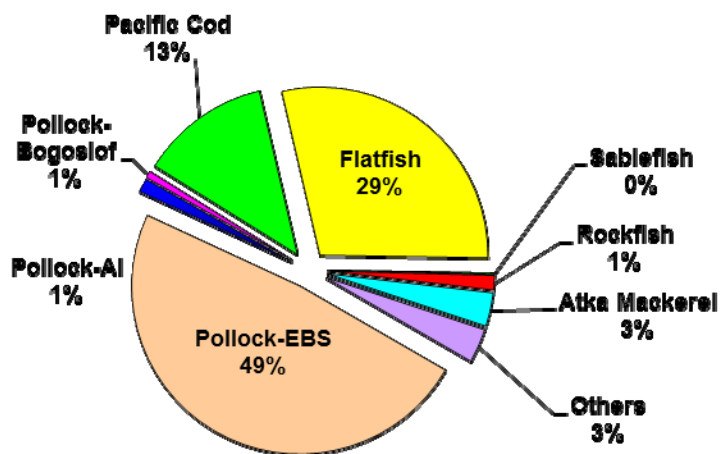
The sum of the biomasses for 2012 (19.4 million t) is down approximately 6 percent compared to 2011 (20.6 million t). Pollock and Pacific cod biomasses are increasing after a period of decline. Flatfishes generally are trending upwards.

Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information.



Summary status of age-structured BSAI species as measured by 2011 catch level relative to OFL (vertical axis) and projected 2012 spawning biomass relative to B_{MSY} .

2012 Allowable Biological Catches (ABCs) for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish (Percent of Total ABC)



Dr. Loh-lee Low retired from the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team after serving as its first and only chairman for more than 30 years. Jane DiCosimo awarded him a plaque of recognition for his exemplary service to fisheries management, on behalf of the Council. Looking on are new BSAI Plan Team co-chairs, Dr. Grant Thompson and Dr. Mike Sigler.



GOA Pacific cod Jig

The Council received a report on management of the GOA Pacific cod jig fishery and moved to discuss developments in management of the fishery at the next Joint Protocol Committee meeting in March 2012. Staff presented a report summarizing recent actions taken by the Council, the Board of Fisheries, and NMFS to ensure that operators using jig gear would have the most access to Federal TAC and State GHL Pacific cod allocations in the GOA. Recent Board actions and the jig season dates established under NMFS' final rule on the GOA sector split will allow harvest of GOA Pacific cod concurrently in both State and Federal waters. Jig vessels will be able to harvest in the State waters parallel fishery concurrent with the Federal fishery. Jig operators will also be able to concurrently harvest in the State GHL fishery and in Federal waters, if there is sufficient GHL and TAC available.

The Council postponed taking further action on management of the jig fishery until after the Joint Protocol Committee has met and reported back to the Council on the legal authority and management issues that could arise under implementation of a reverse parallel fishery, which could provide harvest opportunities in Federal waters for jig vessels when GHL is available but the Federal TAC has been taken. Under a reverse parallel fishery, jig operators could have year-round access to Federal waters. Catches in Federal waters would accrue to the State jig GHL, which is currently 25% of the GOA Pacific cod. The Committee will also look at the possibility of limiting the use of any other gear type on board a vessel while jig fishing in the Federal jig fishery and the reverse parallel fishery. Staff contact is Sarah Melton.

Charter Halibut Management

It was a big week for charter halibut management issues before the Council. The Council received agency staff reports on proposed commercial catch limits and charter guidelines harvest levels (GHL), implementation issues related to the Council's October 2008 preferred alternative for a Halibut Commercial and Charter Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2C and Area 3A, and committee recommendations for potential changes to CSP management measures during times of low abundance.

2012 For Area 2C the Council recommended one fish ≤ 45 inches or ≥ 68 inches ("U45/068") based on an increased GHL from 788,000 lb in 2011 to 931,000 lb in 2012. This "reverse slot limit" would allow the retention of halibut approximately ≤ 32 lb and ≥ 123 lb (dressed weight). For Area 3A the Council recommended status quo (2 fish of any size) based on a decreased GHL from 3.651 Mlb in 2011 to 3.103 Mlb in 2012. The IPHC will consider the Council recommendations at its January 2012 meeting in Anchorage.

Catch Sharing Plan The Council unanimously stated that it continues to support implementation of the CSP as the best approach to resolving longstanding allocation and management issues between the commercial and charter halibut sectors, as currently identified in the CSP Problem Statement. The Council also recognized that there are deficiencies in the current analysis that must be addressed before implementation can take place. Additionally, since 2008, changes in halibut management and the condition of the halibut stock have occurred, which will impact the effective implementation of the CSP as envisioned by the Council.

The Council provided needed clarifications to six main issues that were raised in public comment to the proposed rule. The Council requested additional analysis and revisions to the Halibut CSP that more specifically address a variety of public comments as outlined in the NMFS CSP report. More detail can be found in the motion posted on the Council website. The Council intends to review the supplemental analysis in April 2012 in order to determine what, if any, additional changes are necessary in order for the CSP to meet Council objectives. The Council also

requested a report from NMFS by that meeting as to whether the additions and revisions to the CSP result in the need for a new proposed rule, so that the Council may establish a timeline for implementing the CSP.

Given the myriad of components involved in commercial and charter halibut management, the Council recognized that there are management options available that were not included as part of the Halibut CSP preferred alternative. It is not the wish of the Council to delay implementation of the Halibut CSP any further than necessary. As such, the Council requested a discussion paper analyzing the following for potential use in future halibut management:

- The use of ADF&G logbooks for official harvest reporting
- Annual limits allowing for the retention of at least one fish of any size
- Restricting captain and crew retention of fish
- Trip limits, reverse slot limits, and two fish of a maximum size
- The use of a common pool purchase of QS by the charter sector
- Long-term management measures under Tier 1 of the CSP as identified in the Charter Halibut Implementation Committee Report

A draft analysis of the first four bullets (above) prepared by ADF&G will be reviewed during the next meeting of the Charter Management Implementation Committee. A discussion paper will incorporate that analysis and committee recommendations, along with a discussion of the remaining two bullets (above) and information from the supplemental analysis (described above), as is available at the time of completion of the paper, for Council review in April 2012. At that meeting the Council could determine whether to fold any of these new elements into a modified CSP or let others follow as a trailing amendment.

The Council also will request legal guidance on whether the charter sector may create a single entity (e.g., regional fishing association) that would hold the sector's allocation in trust for the benefit of all guided anglers. And the Council appointed Gary Ault, Inlet Charters Across Alaska Adventures in Homer, as a new member to the Charter Management Implementation Committee and Andy Mezirow, Crackerjack Sportfishing Charters in Seward, for a special one-year appointment to the Advisory Panel. Contact Jane DiCosimo for more information on halibut management.

BSAI/GOA Groundfish BiOp

The Council reviewed the draft Statement of Work (SOW) and Terms of Reference (TOR) for a review of the Final BSAI/GOA Groundfish Biological Opinion by the Center for Independent Experts (CIE). The draft SOW and TOR call for a two-chapter review of the BiOp. Under the draft SOW and TOR, Chapter 1 would be a “desk review” of the BiOp, and reviewers would be asked to:

- Evaluate the rationale developed, and the subsequent findings regarding factors potentially affecting Steller sea lion population status, vital rates, critical habitat, risk of extinction, and recovery including in particular the findings regarding the effects of fisheries on Steller sea lion population status, vital rates and critical habitat;
- evaluate the quality and completeness of the scientific and commercial information used in the BiOp, and to identify if the analysis is comprehensive or if there are relevant scientific or commercial data or information that was not used in the analysis;
- evaluate the scientific basis for the nutritional stress findings of the BiOp, and the strength of the linkages among fish biomass estimates, fishery removals, Steller sea lion reproductive rates, and recovery of the western Distinct Population Segment (WDPS), and whether the BiOp accurately evaluates the inter-relationships between Steller sea lion population status and trends, foraging ecology, and groundfish fisheries effects across broad geographic and temporal scales;
- evaluate whether there is any additional literature, assessments, or analyses that should have been considered in the BiOp;
- evaluate whether the findings of the BiOp are contradicted by any scientific information (available up to the close of the public comment period 9/3/2010) that were included in or omitted from the BiOp;
- and assess the scientific record to determine whether adequate consideration was given to the likelihood that factors other than fishing are negatively affecting the population status, critical habitat or recovery of the WDPS, including predation, changes in the ecosystem/carrying capacity, emigration, exposure to contaminants, or other factors.

For Chapter 2, reviewers would convene as a panel to hold a one-day meeting in Alaska to receive presentations from experts from environmental organizations, fishing industry, and affected communities. Reviewers would be asked to consider all available information available up to the

date of the Panel meeting, and would be asked, as practicable, to:

- reexamine the Final BiOp, its scientific record, and any new information and provide additional commentary on the findings they made in Chapter 1, and reevaluate the scientific basis for the conclusions of the Final BiOp, including the linkages among reproductive rates, nutritional stress, fishery removals, and the recovery of the WDPS;
- evaluate the utility of the RPA for an adaptive management experiment, metrics identified in the BiOp (e.g., trends in SSL abundance, trends in Atka mackerel biomass, etc.) and suggest other metrics not described in the BiOp that could be used to evaluate the efficacy of the RPA in ensuring the groundfish fisheries are not likely to adversely affect the survival and recovery of the WDPS.

Given that oral arguments in the State of Alaska’s lawsuit against NMFS over the 2010 BiOp are scheduled for 12/21/2011, and the likelihood that relevant questions will be raised at that hearing, the Council elected to table the discussion of the Statement of Work and Terms of Reference until the February, 2012 Council meeting in Seattle, WA. Staff contact is Steve MacLean.

Pribilof Island Blue King Crab Rebuilding

The Council reviewed new information regarding the development of the Pribilof Island blue king crab rebuilding plan. Additional information that was requested for the analysis includes specification of rollovers amongst sectors, increasing observer coverage, whole haul sampling for blue king crab, seasonal releases of a fishery-level bycatch cap and discard mortality rates applied in-season. The Council requested an update on the analysis in February, with specific information on the conversion of PSC weight to numbers and how this might impact implementation of the rebuilding plan, any additional catch accounting/qualified fisheries issues that might arise as well as further information on the surveyed stock distribution and process for modifying the Pribilof Island District boundaries if necessary. The Council may wish to modify alternatives further at the February Council meeting. Final action is currently scheduled for April 2012. Staff contact is Diana Stram.

Staff Tasking

During the staff tasking agenda item, the Council discussed priorities relative to existing projects, new projects, and projects previously tasked but not yet initiated. These priorities are reflected in the revised 3-meeting outlook. The Council also requested staff send a comment letter to NOAA enforcement relative to the draft FY 2012 enforcement priorities, noting that the Council did not consider enhanced enforcement of marine mammal watching regulations as a priority relative to other enforcement activities in the Alaska region. The Council requested that another letter be sent to NOAA General Counsel requesting legal advice relative to establishing regional fishing associations for guided angler fish for use on charter halibut vessels. Staff contact is Dave Witherell.

DRAFT NPFMC THREE-MEETING OUTLOOK - updated 12/19/11

January 30 - February 7, 2012 Seattle, WA	March 26 - April 3, 2012 Anchorage, AK	June 4 - 12, 2012 Kodiak, AK
<p>SOPP: Review and Approve SSL CIE: Review Terms of Reference EFH Consultation Process: Update BSIERP Report IPHC Report Halibut CSP: Update</p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: Initial Review</p> <p>GOA Pollock D-season: Discussion paper</p> <p>CQE in Area 4B: Final Action</p> <p>BSAI Flatfish specification flexibility: Discussion Paper</p> <p>GOA Chinook Bycatch All Trawl Fisheries: Discussion Paper</p> <p>GOA Flatfish Trawl Sweep Modifications: Initial Review</p> <p>AFA Vessel Replacement GOA Sideboards: Discussion Paper</p> <p>BSAI Crab ROFR Workgroup: Report; action as necessary (T) BSAI Crab EDR Revisions: Final Action</p> <p>Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: Update; action as necessary BSAI Tanner Crab rebuilding plan: Preliminary Review BSAI Crab Model Workshop Report: SSC only</p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: Initial Review</p> <p>BBRKC spawning area/fishery effects: Updated Disc paper (T)</p> <p>Groundfish PSEIS: Discuss schedule</p> <p>2012-2015 Deep Sea Coral Research: Report</p>	<p>AFA Pollock Cooperative and IPA Reports Amendment 80 Cooperative Reports CGOA Rockfish Cooperative Reports</p> <p>Halibut CSP: Review and action as necessary</p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: Final Action (T) GOA Pacific cod A-season opening dates: Discussion paper P.Cod Jig Management: Review Progress Limit Other Gear on Jig Vessels: Discussion Paper</p> <p>Northern Bering Sea Research: Discussion paper</p> <p>BS Habitat Conservation Area Boundary: Review</p> <p>BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch: Initial Review</p> <p>GOA Flatfish Trawl Sweep Modifications: Final Action</p> <p>FLL Vessel Replacement: Initial Review/ Final Action</p> <p>Scallop SAFE: Approve harvest specifications</p> <p>Pribilof BKC Rebuilding Plan: Final Action</p> <p>HAPC - Skate sites: Final Action</p> <p>VMS Use and Requirements: Discussion paper</p> <p>Grenadiers: Discussion paper</p>	<p>Halibut workshop report: Review</p> <p>GOA Halibut PSC: Final Action (T)</p> <p>Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Leasing prohibition: Discussion paper</p> <p>Halibut/sablefish IFQ changes: Discussion paper (T)</p> <p>BSAI Crab ROFR: Initial Review BSAI Crab active participation requirements: Initial Review BSAI Crab Cooperative Provisions for Crew : Discussion paper BSAI Crab Binding Arbitration - GKC: Workgroup report Binding Arbitration Issues (lengthy season, publishing decisions, IPQ Initiation): Discussion Paper</p> <p>Revise BS FLL GOA cod sideboards: Discussion paper (T)</p> <p>BSAI Greenland turbot allocation: Discussion paper (T)</p> <p>Crab Plan Team Report: Set Catch Specifications for 4 stocks BSAI Tanner Crab rebuilding plan: Initial Review</p>
ITEMS BELOW FOR FUTURE MEETINGS		
<p>Crab PSC numbers to weight: Discussion paper Crab bycatch limits in BSAI groundfish fisheries: Disc paper AI P.cod Processing Sideboards: Initial Review BSAI halibut PSC limit: Discussion paper GOA comprehensive halibut bycatch amendments: Disc paper 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
 EFP - Exempted Fishing Permit
 EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
 EFH - Essential Fish Habitat
 FLL - Freezer longliners
 GOA - Gulf of Alaska

GKC - Golden King Crab
 GHLL - 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

January 30-February 7, 2012 - Renaissance Hotel, Seattle
 March 26-April 3, 2012 - Hilton Hotel, Anchorage
 June 4-12, 2012 - Best Western, Kodiak
 October 1-9, 2012 - Hilton Hotel, Anchorage
 December 3-11, 2012 - Anchorage
 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
(T) Tentatively scheduled

DRAFT NPFMC Recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish (December 10, 2011).

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,474,000	1,220,000	1,200,000	2,840,000	1,360,000	1,201,900
	AI	39,600	32,500	19,000	42,900	35,200	19,000
	Bogoslof	22,000	16,500	500	22,000	16,500	500
Pacific cod	BSAI	369,000	314,000	261,000	374,000	319,000	262,900
Sablefish	BSAI	5,070	4,280	4,280	5,010	4,220	4,220
	BS	2,640	2,230	2,230	2,610	2,200	2,200
	AI	2,430	2,050	2,050	2,400	2,020	2,020
Atka mackerel	Total	96,500	81,400	50,763	78,300	67,100	42,083
	EAI/BS		38,500	38,500		31,700	31,700
	CAI		22,900	10,763		18,900	8,883
	WAI		20,000	1,500		16,500	1,500
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	222,000	203,000	202,000	226,000	207,000	203,900
Rock sole	BSAI	231,000	208,000	87,000	217,000	196,000	87,000
Greenland turbot	Total	11,700	9,660	8,660	9,700	8,030	8,030
	BS		7,230	6,230		6,010	6,010
	AI		2,430	2,430		2,020	2,020
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	181,000	150,000	25,000	186,000	152,000	25,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	24,800	18,600	17,700	24,800	18,600	17,700
Flathead sole	BSAI	84,500	70,400	34,134	83,100	69,200	34,134
Alaska plaice	BSAI	64,600	53,400	24,000	65,000	54,000	24,000
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,100	12,700	3,200	17,100	12,700	3,200
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	35,000	24,700	24,700	33,700	28,300	28,300
	BS		5,710	5,710		6,540	6,540
	EAI		5,620	5,620		6,440	6,440
	CAI		4,990	4,990		5,710	5,710
	WAI		8,380	8,380		9,610	9,610
Northern rockfish	BSAI	10,500	8,610	4,700	10,400	8,490	4,700
Blackspotted/Rougheye	BSAI	576	475	475	605	499	499
	EBS/EAI		231	231		241	241
	CAI/WAI		244	244		258	258
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	524	393	393	524	393	393
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,700	1,280	1,070	1,700	1,280	1,070
	BS		710	500		710	500
	AI		570	570		570	570
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	425	2,620	1,970	425
Skate	BSAI	39,100	32,600	24,700	38,300	32,000	24,746
Shark	BSAI	1,360	1,020	200	1,360	1,020	200
Octopus	BSAI	3,450	2,590	900	3,450	2,590	900
Sculpin	BSAI	58,300	43,700	5,200	58,300	43,700	5,200
Total	BSAI	3,996,000	2,511,778	2,000,000	4,341,869	2,639,792	2,000,000

DRAFT NPFMC Recommendations for Final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs (mt) for 2012 and 2013 for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish (December 9, 2011).

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	W(610)		30,270	30,270		32,816	32,816
	C(620)		45,808	45,808		49,662	49,662
	C(630)		26,348	26,348		28,565	28,565
	WYAK (640)		3,244	3,244		3,517	3,517
	Subtotal	143,716	105,670	105,670	155,402	114,560	114,560
	SEO	14,366	10,774	10,774	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	158,082	116,444	116,444	169,768	125,334	125,334
Pacific cod	W		28,032	21,024		29,120	21,840
	C		56,940	42,705		59,150	44,363
	E		2,628	1,971		2,730	2,047
	Total	104,000	87,600	65,700	108,000	91,000	68,250
Sablefish	W		1,780	1,780		1,757	1,757
	C		5,760	5,760		5,686	5,686
	WYK		2,247	2,247		2,219	2,219
	SEO		3,173	3,173		3,132	3,132
	E subtoal		5,420	5,420		5,350	5,350
	Total	15,330	12,960	12,960	15,129	12,794	12,794
Shallow water flatfish	W		21,994	13,250		20,171	13,250
	C		22,910	18,000		21,012	18,000
	WYAK		4,307	4,307		3,950	3,950
	SEO		1,472	1,472		1,350	1,350
	Total	61,681	50,683	37,029	56,781	46,483	36,550
Deep water flatfish	W		176	176		176	176
	C		2,308	2,308		2,308	2,308
	WYAK		1,581	1,581		1,581	1,581
	SEO		1,061	1,061		1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W		1,307	1,307		1,283	1,283
	C		6,412	6,412		6,291	6,291
	WYAK		836	836		821	821
	SEO		1,057	1,057		1,037	1,037
	Total	12,561	9,612	9,612	12,326	9,432	9,432
Arrowtooth flounder	W		27,495	14,500		27,386	14,500
	C		143,162	75,000		142,591	75,000
	WYAK		21,159	6,900		21,074	6,900
	SEO		21,066	6,900		20,982	6,900
	Total	250,100	212,882	103,300	249,066	212,033	103,300
Flathead sole	W		15,300	8,650		15,518	8,650
	C		25,838	15,400		26,205	15,400
	WYAK		4,558	4,558		4,623	4,623
	SEO		1,711	1,711		1,735	1,735
	Total	59,380	47,407	30,319	60,219	48,081	30,408

Species	Area	2012			2013		
		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pacific ocean perch	W	2,423	2,102	2,102	2,364	2,050	2,050
	C	12,980	11,263	11,263	12,662	10,985	10,985
	WYAK		1,692	1,692		1,650	1,650
	SEO		1,861	1,861		1,815	1,815
	E (subtotal)	4,095	3,553	3,553	3,995	3,465	3,465
	Total	19,498	16,918	16,918	19,021	16,500	16,500
Northern rockfish	W		2,156	2,156		2,017	2,017
	C		3,351	3,351		3,136	3,136
	E		0	0		0	0
	Total	6,574	5,507	5,507	6,152	5,153	5,153
Shortraker	W		104	104		104	104
	C		452	452		452	452
	E		525	525		525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081	1,441	1,081	1,081
Other slope rockfish	W		44	44		44	44
	C		606	606		606	606
	WYAK		230	230		230	230
	SEO		3,165	200		3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080	5,305	4,045	1,080
Pelagic shelf rockfish (Dusky)	W		409	409		381	381
	C		3,849	3,849		3,581	3,581
	WYAK		542	542		504	504
	SEO		318	318		296	296
	Total	6,257	5,118	5,118	5,822	4,762	4,762
Rougheye	W		80	80		82	82
	C		850	850		861	861
	E		293	293		297	297
	Total	1,472	1,223	1,223	1,492	1,240	1,240
Demersal shelf rockfish Thornyhead rockfish	SEO	467	293	293	467	293	293
	W		150	150		150	150
	C		766	766		766	766
	E		749	749		749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665	2,220	1,665	1,665
Atka mackerel Big skate	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000	6,200	4,700	2,000
	W		469	469		469	469
	C		1,793	1,793		1,793	1,793
	E		1,505	1,505		1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767	5,023	3,767	3,767
Longnose skate	W		70	70		70	70
	C		1,879	1,879		1,879	1,879
	E		676	676		676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030	2,706	2,030	2,030
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148	1,530	1,148	1,148
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028	8,037	6,028	6,028
Octopuses	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455	1,941	1,455	1,455
Sculpins	GW	7,641	5,731	5,731	7,641	5,731	5,731
Total	GOA	747,780	606,048	438,159	756,621	612,506	447,752