



North Pacific Fishery Management Council Sets 2022 Groundfish Specifications

The [NPFMC](#) set total allowable catch (TAC) for Gulf of Alaska and BSAI Groundfish this week from acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations from the SSC.

The 2022 Pollock TAC for area 610 in the western Gulf set at 23,714mt, over 52 million lbs., an increase of 22% over the 2021 TAC.

Pacific cod TAC for the WGOA set at 6959mt (15.3 million lbs.) an increase of 19% over 2021. The 2022 State-waters Pcod guideline harvest level (GHL) is set at 30% of the WGOA ABC providing 5.5 million lbs. for the 2022 South Peninsula pot cod fishery, and 986,000 lbs. for State-waters jig gear.

Table 1. SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs and Council recommended TACs for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons)

Species	Area	2021			Catch 11/6/2021	2022			
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	2,643	n/a		n/a	3,327	n/a	
	W (610)	n/a	18,477	18,477	18,112	n/a	23,714	23,714	
	C (620)	n/a	54,870	54,870	52,432	n/a	69,250	69,250	
	C (630)	n/a	24,320	24,320	23,079	n/a	30,068	30,068	
	WYAK	n/a	5,412	5,412	5,145	n/a	6,722	6,722	
	Subtotal		123,455	105,722	103,079	98,768	154,983	133,081	129,754
	EYAK/SEO		13,531	10,148	10,148	1	15,150	11,363	11,363
Total		136,986	115,870	113,227	98,769	170,133	144,444	141,117	
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	7,986	5,590	3,792	n/a	9,942	6,959	
	C	n/a	13,656	10,242	8,258	n/a	19,752	14,814	
	E	n/a	1,985	1,489	222	n/a	3,117	2,338	
	Total		28,977	23,627	17,321	12,272	39,555	32,811	24,111
Sablefish	W	n/a	3,224	2,428	1,763	n/a	3,727	3,727	
	C	n/a	9,527	8,056	6,551	n/a	9,965	9,965	
	WYAK	n/a	3,451	2,929	2,188	n/a	3,437	3,437	
	SEO	n/a	5,273	4,579	3,613	n/a	5,665	5,665	
	GOA Total ¹		n/a	21,475	17,992	14,115	n/a	22,794	22,794
Alaska-wide OFL and ABC ²	AK Total		60,426	29,588	n/a	40,432	34,521	n/a	
Shallow-water Flatfish	W	n/a	24,151	13,250	26	n/a	21,256	13,250	
	C	n/a	28,082	28,082	1,654	n/a	25,305	25,305	
	WYAK	n/a	2,808	2,808	1	n/a	2,531	2,531	
	EYAK/SEO	n/a	1,123	1,123	1	n/a	1,518	1,518	
	Total		68,841	56,164	45,263	1,682	62,273	50,610	42,604
Deep-water Flatfish	W	n/a	225	225	1	n/a	256	256	
	C	n/a	1,914	1,914	79	n/a	2,139	2,139	
	WYAK	n/a	2,068	2,068	5	n/a	1,431	1,431	

2022 Eastern Bering Sea pollock TAC of 1,111,000 mt (2.4 billion lbs.) will be a 19 % decrease from the 2021 TAC. Bering Sea Pcod increased 18% to 136,466 mt (300 million lbs.). The Dutch Harbor Subdistrict State-waters Pcod fishery is set at 11% of the ABC this year for 37,196,000 lbs. for pot gear, 100,000 for jig.

Table 1. Council recommended TAC with SSC specified OFL, ABC for Groundfish in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands

Species	Area	2021			Catch as of 11/6/2021	2022		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,594,000	1,626,000	1,375,000	1,373,712	1,469,000	1,111,000	1,111,000
	AI	61,856	51,241	19,000	1,635	61,264	50,752	19,000
	Bogoslof	113,479	85,109	250	50	113,479	85,109	250
Pacific cod	BS	147,949	123,805	111,380	105,537	183,012	153,383	136,466
	AI	27,400	20,600	13,796	7,023	27,400	20,600	13,796
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	60,426	29,558			40,432	34,521	11,727
	BS	n/a	3,396	3,396	3,961		5,264	5,264
	AI	n/a	4,717	4,717	1,425		6,463	6,463
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	341,571	313,477	200,000	104,669	377,071	354,014	250,000

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Adopts Abundance Based Management of Bering Sea Halibut Prohibited Species Catch

The current discussion of halibut PSC began June 2015 in Sitka; countless Council staff hours over the past 6 years spent on the analysis of abundance-based management (ABM) of BSAI halibut. The December document for final action included 4 alternatives, with no action as the first alternative, preferred by some bycatch users. In the end Final Action on ABM was a hybrid between alternatives 3 & 4 in the final motion made by Deputy Commissioner Rachel Baker for the State.

The Council recommends the following preferred alternative. PSC limit is determined annually based on the most recent survey values. In the case of mid-year implementation, the PSC limit should be set using the most recent survey index values and applied to the lookup table in the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,571 mt (10% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,483 mt (15% below current)	1,571 mt (10% below current)
	Low < 8,000	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,483 mt (15% below current)

Alternative 3

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,745 mt (current limit)	2,007 mt (15% above current)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,309 mt (25% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	1,222 mt (30% below current)	1,309 mt (25% below current)

Alternative 4

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,222 mt (30% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,047 mt (40% below current)	1,222 mt (30% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	960 mt (45% below current)	1,047 mt (40% below current)

		EBS shelf trawl survey index (t)	
		Low < 150,000	High ≥ 150,000
IPHC setline survey index in Area 4ABCDE (WPUE)	High ≥ 11,000	1,745 mt (current limit)	1,745 mt (current limit)
	Medium 8,000 – 10,999	1,396 mt (20% below current)	1,571 mt (10% below current)
	Low 6,000-7,999	1,309 mt (25% below current)	1,396 mt (20% below current)
	Very Low < 6,000	1,134 mt (35% below current)	1,134 mt (35% below current)

In the NMFS seat at the Council virtual table via Adobe Connect, was Acting Regional Administrator Doug Mecum; the former Regional Administrator Dr. Jim Balsiger having recently retired.

The action is expected to hamper the Amendment 80 fleet in some years, but will hopefully help stabilize the fishery and eventually help the directed halibut fishery. BSAI halibut bycatch will be capped at current levels and in years of low abundance, halibut PSC limits are reduced. A main goal of the program is to keep the percentage of halibut PSC lower than the directed fishery harvest.

The vote on the motion for final action on BSAI Halibut ABM was 8 – 3.

- Voting in favor: Rachel Baker, Doug Mecum, Cora Campbell, Kenny Down, John Jensen, Nicole Kimball, Andy Mezirow and Simon Kinneen.
- Voting against: Steve Marx, Bill Tweit and Anne Vanderhoven.

Crab Bycatch

At the October meeting, the NPFMC received a request for emergency action to extend the Red King Crab Savings Area (RKCSA) that is off-limits to bottom trawls. Recent surveys forced the closure of the Bristol Bay Red King Crab (BBRKC) 2021/2022 season, the first time since 1996. The Council did not take action on RKCSA in December as most members felt the threshold for emergency action by the council had not been met, in particular the 3rd criteria that “*the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advance notice, public comment, and deliberative consideration of the impacts on participants to the same extent as would be expected under the normal rulemaking process.*” Council members did, however direct staff to pull the BBRKC discussion paper from the ‘batter’s box’ area of staff tasking limbo and move on a faster track, as staffing permits.

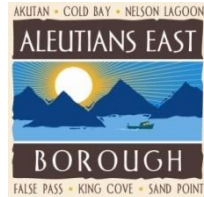
The December mostly bycatch Council agenda follows Governor Dunleavy establishing a [Bycatch Task Force](#) in November to tackle the issue. And the Alaska Congressional Delegation hosted a [Salmon Roundtable](#) last week in response to recent salmon declines around the state, but urged stakeholders ‘not to point fingers’ but advocated for research funds to better understand the problem and identify data gaps to help find solutions.

Board of Fish Update

At their recent meeting in Cordova, the Alaska Board of Fisheries discussed the March 2022 meeting scheduling of consideration of [Proposal 282](#), formerly ACR 7 submitted by a Chignik resident. At issue is the conflict that many South Peninsula salmon fishermen have between attending the March 11-18 meeting and participating in the 2022 State-waters South Peninsula Pacific cod pot fishery that opens March 7th. Board staff presented [RC 122](#) showing the overlap of salmon fishermen permits and State pot cod vessels, but the Board decided to leave the schedule as-is. Chignik area State-waters pot cod fishery opens March 1.

Proposal 282 as written would cut fishing hours in the Dolgoi area by 71% for set net fishermen in June and 66% for drift and seine fishermen. The proposal would cut the number of fishing hours for the Dolgoi area and the Shumagins Islands in July by 49%

for all gear types. The Aleutians East Borough welcomes all fishermen input as we prepare our response to this proposal at the March Statewide shellfish meeting. Board Proposals for the February 2023 Chignik/Alaska Peninsula/BSAI finfish meeting are due April 11, 2022.



AEB Fishermen's Winter Fisheries Meeting

Wednesday December 29, 2021 10AM

via Zoom/virtual meeting

Zoom meeting login information

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88493881623?pwd=cWw4WEg0amQwaFBTVlJvVlVpNHN1dz09>

or by phone: 1 253 215 8782

- Meeting ID: 884 9388 1623
- Passcode: 013171

Meeting scheduled to be broadcast live on local radio KSDP and at www.apradio.org

Agencies Representatives expected to be at this virtual meeting:

- U. S. Coast Guard, Kodiak.
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Kodiak.
- NMFS Alaska Region, Juneau.
- Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Seattle.
- North Pacific Observer Program & A.I.S. observer providers.
- Trawl EM EFP coordinators.
- NMFS Office of Law Enforcement
- International Pacific Halibut Commission

Aleutians East Borough Natural Resources Department will host the virtual meeting from the AEB Anchorage office conference room 3380 C Street – fishermen welcome.

For more information please contact Aleutians East Borough:

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