

Alaska Region discussion of fishery impacts from 2013 BOF proposals

Proposal 43: All groundfish GHL set at 25% of Central GOA ABC for non-pelagic trawl vessels <= 58 ft combined for areas: Prince William Sound outside, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik. The proposal includes 100% observer coverage.

The BOF will address the Western GOA part of the proposal at a later date.

The proposal would allocate 25% of the CGOA ABC for all groundfish species. It is not clear what impact this proposal would have on species that are allocated on a GOA-wide basis without a specific allocation in the Central GOA. These include Atka mackerel, octopuses, sculpins, sharks, other skates, and squids. We assume that these species would not be allocated.

The proposal refers to closing these trawl fisheries on a bycatch limit, but there is no bycatch limit specified in the proposal.

1. Proposal 43 would require decreases in the TACs since the Council and NMFS set TACs less than the ABCs to account for GHLS. NMFS would need to monitor the GHL catch to monitor the annual catch limits for federal ABCs and overfishing levels. This proposal for non-pelagic trawl gear would decrease TACs for species harvested by vessels using hook-and-line gear including IFQ sablefish and incidental catch of species in the IFQ sablefish targets. Some groundfish species are not open for directed fishing because the ABCs/TACs are not large enough for the potential effort and may only support incidental catch amounts in other fisheries. Reducing the TACs by 25% may result in TACs being exceeded earlier in the year which may result in NMFS prohibiting retention of these species with low ABCs/TACs.
 - a. In 2013, these species were set equal to the ABC in the Western and Central GOA: pollock, sablefish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, shorttraker rockfish, rougheyeye rockfish, dusky rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, other rockfish, big skate, longnose skate.
 - b. In 2013, these species were set equal to ABC Gulf-wide: other skates, sharks, squids, octopus.
2. Reduces allocations for the Central Rockfish and IFQ sablefish catch share programs..
3. Reduces sideboard limits for AFA catcher vessels, Crab sideboarded vessels, and Amendment 80 and Central GOA catcher/processors.
4. It may require re-consultation on Steller sea lion (SSL) protection measures to assess the impact of any increase in harvest in SSL areas closed by Federal regulation that would be allowed under this proposal. The Federal Steller sea lion measures close directed fishing for pollock and Pacific cod trawl fisheries on November 1. This proposal closes the fisheries on December 31 unless the TAC or bycatch limit is reached prior to December 31.
5. From 2003 through 2013 the main targeted trawl groundfish fisheries in state waters are for pollock and Pacific cod. There is some catch in shallow-water flatfish and arrowtooth flounder targets in State waters; however, the catch in each of these targets averages less than 150 mt per year from 2003 through 2013. Except for a seasonal opening on the west side of Kodiak and

Afognak Islands, all other State waters in these areas currently are closed to non-pelagic trawl gear.

Proposal 44: Pollock GHL set at 25% of Central GOA ABC for vessels \leq 58 ft using pelagic trawl, non-pelagic trawl, seine, or jig gear, in combined areas of Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Chignik. The proposal includes 100% observer coverage.

The BOF will address the Western GOA part of the proposal at a later date.

1. Would require a decrease in the TACs and seasonal apportionments. See the Tables 1 and 2 below.
2. It may require re-consultation on Steller sea lion (SSL) protection measures to assess the impact of any increase in harvest in SSL areas closed by Federal regulation that would be allowed under this proposal. Existing SSL protection measures allocate the pollock fishery by four seasons to distribute the directed fishery over time. Another SSL protection measure closes pollock directed fishing on November 1. It appear that this proposal would not establish seasonal closures and would close the fishery on December 31 unless the GHL has been reached.
3. Chinook salmon bycatch (PSC) limits apply in the Western and Central GOA pollock fisheries. The federal limits would not apply to the state GHL fisheries for pollock, and the proposal does not address whether Chinook salmon PSC limits would be part of the new GHL fisheries. Chinook salmon PSC may increase unless the state establishes Chinook salmon PSC limits.
4. Halibut bycatch (PSC) limits also apply to all trawl fisheries (including pollock). These federal limits would not apply to the state GHL fishery for pollock, and the proposal does not address whether halibut PSC limits would be part of the new GHL fisheries. Halibut PSC may increase unless the State establishes halibut PSC limits.
5. Reduces pollock sideboard limits for AFA catcher vessels.

Tables for Proposal 44 - Pollock GHLS set at 25% of Central GOA ABC

Table 1 - 2013 Status Quo Pollock OFLs, ABCs, and TACs					GHL = 25% of ABC	
Species	Area/District ¹	OFL	ABC	TAC	GHL	TAC minus GHL
Pollock ²	Shumagin (610)	n/a	28,072	28,072	N/A	28,072
	Chirikof (620)	n/a	51,443	51,443	12,861	38,582
	Kodiak (630)	n/a	27,372	27,372	6,843	20,529
	WYK (640)	n/a	3,385	3,385	846	2,539
Subtotal	W/C/WYK	150,817	110,272	110,272	27,568	89,722
	SEO (650)	14,366	10,774	10,774	-	10,774
Total		165,183	121,046	121,046	27,568	100,496

WYK – West Yakutat District, W/C/WYK – Western, Central, and West Yakutat District

Blue highlighted cells are the revised TACs and GHLS under proposal 44.

Proposal 45: Require 100% observer coverage in all trawl groundfish fisheries inside state waters in the Central GOA. The primary trawl fisheries in state waters are the parallel fisheries for pollock and Pacific cod.

1. Trawl catcher/processors are required to have 100% observer coverage, so this proposal does not apply to trawl catcher/processors.
2. Currently, the State does not have a groundfish observer program. The federal observer program applies to federally-permitted vessels in the federal or parallel fisheries. The current deployment of observers does not differ whether a vessel is fishing in federal or state waters in that fishery. Under the current deployment, if the State requires 100% observer coverage in state waters then a vessel could only fish in state waters if they were selected for observer coverage.
3. If 100% observer coverage was required in state waters then either this coverage would need to be incorporated into the current federal observer program or the State would need to establish its own program to provide observer for non-federally permitted vessels and for federally-permitted vessels not selected for observer coverage that fish in state waters. Each option has benefits and concerns related to many aspects including enforceability, funding, deployment, and data management. A combined observer program makes sense when reviewing the benefits of a collaborative state, federal, and IPHC electronic fish ticket program: improved data quality, more timely data for managers, and reduction of duplicative reporting of similar information to multiple agencies. Separate federal and state observer programs would need to be carefully developed to prevent one program from negatively influencing the other program.
4. Because NMFS provides stock assessment for most groundfish, any new state waters observer program would need to collect data compatible with data collected by the federal program to be used for both catch accounting and stock assessment.

BOF proposals for later meeting dates

Proposal 101: Closes Alitak Bay to all trawl fishing.

1. No impact to federal fisheries.

Proposal 102: Closes an undefined area of ADF&G's Kodiak area to non-pelagic trawl gear.

1. Impact on Federal fisheries depends on the exact area to be closed.

March 17 – 21, 2014

Proposal 342: Changes State Tanner crab GHL fishery start date from January 15 to January 3.

1. This may potentially encourage earlier participation in the Federal Western GOA pot Pacific cod fishery than in recent years. This would cause minimal Federal impact as NMFS should be able to react appropriately inseason.

Proposal 349: Changes the Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab fishery dates from August 15 – May 15 to May 15 – February 15.

1. The proposed dates do not match NMFS IFQ crab seasons. This change would require a revision to Federal crab fishing regulations, the dates of IFQ/IPQ applications, and may impact the ability to incorporate the most recent year of stock assessment data