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50 CFR Part 679

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2013 and 2014 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish; Final Rule

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 120918468–3111–02]

RIN 0648–XC254

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2013 and 2014 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule; closures.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, apportionments, and Pacific halibut prohibited species catch limits for the groundfish fishery of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to establish harvest limits for groundfish during the 2013 and 2014 fishing years and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the GOA. The intended effect of this action is to conserve and manage the groundfish resources in the GOA in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

DATES: Effective at 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), February 26, 2013, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2014.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the Final Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Record of Decision (ROD), Supplementary Information Report (SIR) to the EIS, and the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) prepared for this action are available from *http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov*. The final 2012 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for the groundfish resources of the GOA, dated November 2012, is available from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) at 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99510–2252, phone 907–271–2809, or from the Council's Web site at *http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obren Davis, 907–586–7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the GOA groundfish fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the GOA under the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP). The Council prepared the FMP under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* Regulations governing U.S. fisheries and implementing the FMP appear at 50 CFR parts 600, 679, and 680.

The FMP and its implementing regulations require NMFS, after consultation with the Council, to specify the total allowable catch (TAC) for each target species, the sum of which must be within the optimum yield (OY) range of 116,000 to 800,000 metric tons (mt). Section 679.20(c)(1) further requires NMFS to publish and solicit public comment on proposed annual TACs, Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits, and seasonal allowances of pollock and Pacific cod. Upon consideration of public comment received under § 679.20(c)(1), NMFS must publish notice of final harvest specifications for up to two fishing years as annual target TAC, per § 679.20(c)(3)(ii). The final harvest specifications set forth in Tables 1 through 31 of this document reflect the outcome of this process, as required at § 679.20(c).

The proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA and Pacific halibut PSC limits were published in the **Federal Register** on December 5, 2012 (77 FR 72297). Comments were invited and accepted through January 4, 2013. NMFS did not receive any comments on the proposed harvest specifications. In December 2012, NMFS consulted with the Council regarding the 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications. After considering public testimony, as well as biological and economic data that were available at the Council's December 2012 meeting, NMFS is implementing the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, as recommended by the Council. For 2013, the sum of the TAC amounts is 436,255 mt. For 2014, the sum of the TAC amounts is 427,772 mt.

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and TAC Specifications

In December 2012, the Council, its Advisory Panel (AP), and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), reviewed current biological and harvest information about the condition of groundfish stocks in the GOA. This information was compiled by the Council's GOA Plan Team and was presented in the draft 2012 SAFE report for the GOA groundfish fisheries, dated November 2012 (see **ADDRESSES**). The SAFE report contains a review of the latest scientific analyses and estimates of each species' biomass and other biological parameters, as well as summaries of the available information on the GOA ecosystem and the economic condition of the groundfish fisheries off Alaska. From these data and analyses, the Plan Team estimates an overfishing level (OFL) and ABC for each species or species group. The 2012 SAFE report was made available for public review during the public comment period for the proposed harvest specifications.

In previous years, the largest changes from the proposed to the final harvest specifications have been based on recent NMFS stock surveys, which provide updated estimates of stock biomass and spatial distribution, and changes to the models used for producing stock assessments. In October 2012, the Council also reviewed the proposed TACs recommended for several flatfish and other rockfish species, adjusting them downward from ABCs. At the November 2012 Plan Team meeting, NMFS scientists presented updated and new survey results, changes to stock assessment models, and accompanying stock assessment estimates for all groundfish species and species groups that are included in the final 2012 SAFE report. The SSC reviewed this information at the December 2012 Council meeting. Changes from the proposed to the final harvest specifications in 2013 and 2014 for newly assessed groundfish stocks are discussed below.

The final 2013 and 2014 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are based on the best available biological and socioeconomic information, including projected biomass trends, information on assumed distribution of stock biomass, and revised methods used to calculate stock biomass. The FMP specifies the formulas, or tiers, to be used to compute OFLs and ABCs. The formulas applicable to a particular stock or stock complex are determined by the level of reliable information available to fisheries scientists. This information is categorized into a successive series of six tiers to define OFL and ABC amounts, with tier 1 representing the highest level of information quality available and tier 6 representing the lowest level of information quality available. The Plan Team used the FMP tier structure to calculate OFL and ABC amounts for each groundfish species. The SSC adopted the final 2013 and 2014 OFLs and ABCs recommended by the Plan Team for all groundfish species.

The Council adopted the SSC's OFL and ABC recommendations and the AP's TAC recommendations. The final TAC recommendations were based on

the ABCs as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the sum of all TACs within the required OY range of 116,000 to 800,000 mt.

The Council recommended TACs for 2013 and 2014 that are equal to ABCs for pollock, sablefish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, shortraker rockfish, dusky rockfish, rougheye rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, ''other rockfish,'' big skates, longnose skates, other skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopuses in the Central, Western, and West Yakutat district of the GOA. The Council recommended TACs for 2013 and 2014 that are less than the ABCs for Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, ''other rockfish,'' and Atka mackerel in the Southeast Outside (SEO) District. The Pacific cod TACs are set to accommodate the State of Alaska's (State's) guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for Pacific cod so that the ABC is not exceeded. The shallow-water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, and flathead sole TACs are set to allow for increased harvest opportunities for these targets while conserving the halibut PSC limit for use in other, more fully utilized, fisheries. The ''other rockfish'' TAC in the SEO is set to reduce the amount of discards. The Atka mackerel TAC is set to accommodate incidental catch amounts in other fisheries.

The final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications approved by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) are unchanged from those recommended by the Council and are consistent with the preferred harvest strategy alternative in the EIS (see ADDRESSES). NMFS finds that the Council's recommended OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are consistent with the biological condition of the groundfish stocks as described in the final 2012 SAFE report. NMFS also finds that the Council's recommendations for OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are consistent with the biological condition of groundfish stocks as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the total TAC within the OY range. NMFS reviewed the Council's recommended TAC specifications and apportionments, and approves these harvest specifications under 50 CFR 679.20(c)(3)(ii). The apportionment of TAC amounts among gear types and sectors, processing sectors, and seasons is discussed below.

Tables 1 and 2 list the final 2013 and 2014 OFLs, ABCs, TACs, and area apportionments of groundfish in the GOA. The sums of the 2013 and 2014 ABCs are 595,920 mt and 584,094 mt, respectively, which are lower in 2013 and 2014 than the 2012 ABC sum of 606,048 mt (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012).

Specification and Apportionment of TAC Amounts

The ABC for the pollock stock in the combined Western, Central, and West Yakutat Regulatory Areas (W/C/WYK) has been decreased to account for the GHL established by the State for the Prince William Sound (PWS) pollock fishery. Based upon genetic studies, fisheries scientists believe that the pollock in PWS is not a separate stock from the combined W/C/WYK population. At the November 2012 Plan Team meeting, State fisheries managers recommended fixing the PWS GHL at 2.5 percent of the annual W/C/WYK pollock ABC. For 2013, this yields a PWS pollock GHL of 2,827 mt, an increase of 57 mt from the 2012 PWS GHL of 2,770 mt. For 2014, the PWS pollock GHL is 2,583 mt, a decrease from the 2012 PWS pollock GHL.

The apportionment of annual pollock TAC among the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA reflects the seasonal biomass distribution and is discussed in greater detail below. The annual pollock TAC in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA is apportioned among Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, and divided equally among each of the following four seasons: The A season (January 20 through March 10), the B season (March 10 through May 31), the C season (August 25 through October 1), and the D season (October 1 through November 1) (§ 679.23(d)(2)(i) through (iv), and § 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(A) through (B)). Tables 3 and 4 list the final 2013 and 2014 distribution of pollock in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA, and area and seasonal allowances of annual TAC.

The AP, SSC, and Council recommended apportionment of the ABC for Pacific cod in the GOA among regulatory areas based on the three most recent NMFS summer trawl surveys. The 2013 and 2014 Pacific cod TACs are affected by the State's fishery for Pacific cod in State waters in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas, as well as in PWS. The Plan Team, SSC, AP, and Council recommended that the sum of all State and Federal water Pacific cod removals from the GOA not exceed ABC recommendations. Accordingly, the Council reduced the 2013 and 2014 Pacific cod TACs in the Eastern, Central, and Western Regulatory Areas to account for State GHLs. Therefore, the 2013 Pacific cod TACs are less than the ABCs by the following amounts: (1) Eastern GOA, 808 mt; (2) Central GOA, 12,322 mt; and (3) Western GOA, 7,070 mt. The 2014 Pacific cod TACs are less than the ABCs by the following amounts: (1) Eastern GOA, 842 mt; (2) Central GOA, 12,840 mt; and (3) Western GOA, 7,367 mt. These amounts reflect the sum of the State's 2013 and 2014 GHLs in these areas, which are 25 percent of the Eastern, Central, and Western GOA ABCs, respectively.

NMFS establishes seasonal apportionments of the annual Pacific cod TAC in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas. Sixty percent of the annual TAC is apportioned to the A season for hook-and-line, pot, and jig gear from January 1 through June 10, and for trawl gear from January 20 through June 10. Forty percent of the annual TAC is apportioned to the B season for hook-and-line, pot, and jig gear from September 1 through December 31, and for trawl gear from September 1 through November 1 (§§ 679.23(d)(3) and 679.20(a)(12)). The Central and Western GOA Pacific cod TACs are allocated among various gear and operational sectors. The Pacific cod sector apportionments are discussed in detail in a subsequent section of this preamble.

The Council's recommendation for sablefish area apportionments takes into account the prohibition on the use of trawl gear in the SEO District of the Eastern Regulatory Area and makes available five percent of the combined Eastern Regulatory Area ABCs to trawl gear for use as incidental catch in other groundfish fisheries in the WYK District (§ 679.20(a)(4)(i)). Tables 7 and 8 list the final 2013 and 2014 allocations of sablefish TAC to hook-and-line and trawl gear in the GOA.

Halibut Prohibited Species Catch Limits Revisions

At its June 2012 meeting, the Council took final action to reduce halibut PSC limits in the GOA trawl and hook-and-line groundfish fisheries. The Council's preferred alternative for Amendment 95 to the GOA FMP would change the process for setting halibut PSC limits. Halibut PSC limits would be established in Federal regulations and would remain in effect until changed by a subsequent Council action to amend those regulations.

If approved by the Secretary, Amendment 95 would reduce the GOA halibut PSC limit for the groundfish trawl gear sector and groundfish catcher vessel (CV) hook-and-line gear sector by 15 percent. The Council's proposed reduction would be phased in over 3 years: 7 percent in year 1, 5 percent in year 2 (to 12 percent), and 3 percent in year 3 (for a total of 15 percent). The

Council's proposed reduction for the catcher/processor (C/P) hook-and-line gear sector would be 7 percent, which would be implemented in one step in year 1. The Council used 1,973 mt as the baseline for the proposed trawl halibut PSC limit reductions. This is based on a deduction of 27 mt from the 2,000 mt trawl halibut PSC limit, per halibut PSC limit reductions made in conjunction with the implementation of the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program in 2011 (76 FR 81248, December 27, 2011). The Council recommended that the first year of implementation would occur in 2014 and that all reductions would occur by 2016.

Changes From the Proposed 2013 and 2014 Harvest Specifications in the GOA

In October 2012, the Council's recommendations for the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications (77 FR 72297, December 5, 2012) were based largely on information contained in the final 2011 SAFE report for the GOA groundfish fisheries, dated November 2011 (see **ADDRESSES**). The Council proposed that the final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs established for the 2013 groundfish fisheries (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012) be used for the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, pending completion and review of the 2012 SAFE report at its December 2012 meeting.

As described previously, the SSC adopted the final 2013 and 2014 OFLs and ABCs recommended by the Plan Team. The Council adopted the SSC's OFL and ABC recommendations and the AP's TAC recommendations for 2013 and 2014. The final 2013 ABCs are higher than the 2013 ABCs published in the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications (77 FR 72297, December 5, 2012) for rex sole, flathead sole, demersal shelf rockfish, and sculpins. The final 2013 ABCs are lower than the proposed 2013 ABCs for pollock, Pacific cod, sablefish, shallow-water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, dusky rockfish, and rougheye rockfish. The final 2014 ABCs are higher than the proposed 2014 ABCs for rex sole, flathead sole, rougheye rockfish, demersal shelf rockfish, and sculpins. The final 2014 ABCs are lower than the proposed 2014 ABCs for pollock, Pacific cod, sablefish, shallow-water flatfish, arrowtooth flounder, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish. For the remaining target species, shortraker rockfish, thornyhead rockfish, ''other rockfish,'' Atka mackerel, skates, sharks, squids, and octopuses, the Council recommended, and the Secretary approved, final 2013 and 2014 ABCs that are the same as the proposed 2013 and 2014 ABCs.

Additional information explaining the changes between the proposed and final ABCs is included in the final 2012 SAFE report, which was not available when the Council made its proposed ABC and TAC recommendations in October 2012. At that time, the most recent stock assessment information was contained in the final 2011 SAFE report. The final 2012 SAFE report contains the best and most recent scientific information on the condition of the groundfish stocks, as previously discussed in this preamble, and is available for review (see **ADDRESSES**). The Council considered the final 2012 SAFE report in December 2012 when it made recommendations for the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications. In the GOA, the total final 2013 TAC amount is 436,255 mt, a decrease of 3 percent from the total proposed 2013 TAC amount of 447,752 mt. The total final 2014 TAC amount is 427,722 mt, a decrease of 4.5 percent from the total proposed 2014 TAC amount of 447,752 mt.

The largest individual TAC decrease was for Pacific cod, which changed eleven percent from the proposed 2013 TAC to the final 2013 TAC. This decrease was based on changes to the Pacific cod assessment method used by the stock assessment scientists, which established a lower Pacific cod ABC. The Pacific cod TAC was set equal to ABC, as were those for most other species. The Council recommended setting the TACs at amounts below ABCs for some species, including shallow-water flatfish, rex sole, flathead sole, and sculpins. The Council believed, and NMFS concurs, that setting TACs for these species equal to ABCs would not reflect anticipated harvest levels accurately, as the Council and NMFS expect halibut PSC limits to constrain these fisheries in 2013 and 2014. With the exception of Pacific cod, the percentage change to the final 2013 TAC from the proposed 2013 TAC is plus or minus five percent of the proposed TACs. These changes corresponded to associated changes in the ABCs, as recommended by the SSC, and to the TACs, as recommended by the AP, and Council. With respect to the 2014 TACs, the largest difference between the proposed TAC and final TAC was an 11 percent decrease in the pollock TAC. The percentage change to the final 2014 TAC from the proposed 2014 TAC for all other species ranged from plus three to minus eight percent of the proposed TACs.

Detailed information providing the basis for the changes described above is contained in the final 2012 SAFE report. The final TACs are based on the best scientific information available. These TACs are specified in compliance with the harvest strategy described in the proposed and final rules for the 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications. The changes in TACs between the proposed rule and this final rule are compared in the following table.

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Comparison of Proposed and Final 2013 and 2014 GOA Total Allowable Catch Limits
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percentage.)

Species	2013 and 2014 Proposed TAC	2013 Final TAC	2013 Final minus 2013 Proposed TAC	Percentage difference	2014 Final TAC	2014 Final minus 2014 Proposed TAC	Percentage difference	Principle reason for difference
Pollock	125,334	121,046	-4,288	-3%	111,530	-13,804	-11%	Biomass[1]
Pacific cod	68,250	60,600	-7,650	-11%	63,150	-5,100	-7%	Model[2]
Sablefish	12,794	12,510	-284	-2%	11,731	-1,063	-8%	Biomass
Shallow-water flatfish	36,550	37,077	527	1%	37,077	527	1%	Biomass
Deep-water flatfish	5,126	5,126	0	0%	5,126	0	0%	Not applicable
Rex sole	9,432	9,560	128	1%	9,460	28	0%	Biomass
Arrowtooth flounder	103,300	103,300	0	0%	103,300	0	0%	N/A
Flathead sole	30,408	30,496	88	0%	30,632	224	1%	Biomass
Pacific ocean perch	16,500	16,412	-88	-1%	16,133	-367	-2%	Biomass
Northern rockfish	5,153	5,130	-23	0%	4,850	-303	-6%	Biomass
Shortraker rockfish	1,081	1,081	0	0%	1,081	0	0%	N/A
Dusky rockfish	4,762	4,700	-62	-1%	4,413	-349	-7%	Biomass
Rougheye rockfish	1,240	1,232	-8	-1%	1,254	14	1%	Biomass
Demersal shelf rockfish	293	303	10	3%	303	10	3%	Biomass
Thornyhead rockfish	1,665	1,665	0	0%	1,665	0	0%	N/A
Other rockfish	1,080	1,080	0	0%	1,080	0	0%	N/A
Atka mackerel	2,000	2,000	0	0%	2,000	0	0%	N/A
Big skate	3,767	3,767	0	0%	3,767	0	0%	N/A
Longnose skates	2,625	2,625	0	0%	2,625	0	0%	N/A
Other skates	2,030	2,030	0	0%	2,030	0	0%	N/A
Squids	1,148	1,148	0	0%	1,148	0	0%	N/A
Sharks	6,028	6,028	0	0%	6,028	0	0%	N/A
Octopuses	1,455	1,455	0	0%	1,455	0	0%	N/A
Sculpins	5,731	5,884	153	3%	5,884	153	3%	Biomass
Total	447,752	436,255	-11,497	-3%	427,722	-20,030	-4.5%	N/A

[1] Biomass – Change in estimate of biomass
[2] Model – Change in assessment methodology

The final 2013 and 2014 TAC recommendations for the GOA are within the OY range established for the GOA and do not exceed the ABC for any species or species group. Tables 1 and 2 list the final OFL, ABC, and TAC amounts for GOA groundfish for 2013 and 2014, respectively.

Table 1. Final 2013 ABCs, TACs, and OFLs of Groundfish for the Western/Central/West Yakutat, Western, Central, Eastern Regulatory Areas, and in the West Yakutat, Southeast Outside, and Gulfwide Districts of the Gulf of Alaska (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Area[1]	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock[2]	Shumagin (610)	n/a	28,072	28,072
	Chirikof (620)	n/a	51,443	51,443
	Kodiak (630)	n/a	27,372	27,372
	WYK (640)	n/a	3,385	3,385
	W/C/WYK (subtotal)	150,817	110,272	110,272
	SEO (650)	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	165,183	121,046	121,046
Pacific cod[3]	W	n/a	28,280	21,210
	C	n/a	49,288	36,966
	E	n/a	3,232	2,424
	Total	97,200	80,800	60,600
Sablefish[4]	W	n/a	1,750	1,750
	C	n/a	5,540	5,540
	WYK	n/a	2,030	2,030
	SEO	n/a	3,190	3,190
	E (WYK and SEO) (subtotal)	n/a	5,220	5,220
	Total	14,780	12,510	12,510
Shallow-water flatfish[5]	W	n/a	19,489	13,250
	C	n/a	20,168	18,000
	WYK	n/a	4,647	4,647
	SEO	n/a	1,180	1,180
	Total	55,680	45,484	37,077
Deep-water flatfish[6]	W	n/a	176	176
	C	n/a	2,308	2,308
	WYK	n/a	1,581	1,581
	SEO	n/a	1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W	n/a	1,300	1,300
	C	n/a	6,376	6,376
	WYK	n/a	832	832
	SEO	n/a	1,052	1,052
	Total	12,492	9,560	9,560
Arrowtooth flounder	W	n/a	27,181	14,500
	C	n/a	141,527	75,000
	WYK	n/a	20,917	6,900
	SEO	n/a	20,826	6,900
	Total	247,196	210,451	103,300
Flathead sole	W	n/a	15,729	8,650

	C	n/a	26,563	15,400
	WYK	n/a	4,686	4,686
	SEO	n/a	1,760	1,760
	Total	61,036	48,738	30,496
Pacific ocean perch[7]	W	n/a	2,040	2,040
	C	n/a	10,926	10,926
	WYK	n/a	1,641	1,641
	W/C/WYK	16,838	n/a	n/a
	SEO	2,081	1,805	1,805
	Total	18,919	16,412	16,412
Northern rockfish[8]	W	n/a	2,008	2,008
	C	n/a	3,122	3,122
	E	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	6,124	5,130	5,130
Shortraker rockfish[9]	W	n/a	104	104
	C	n/a	452	452
	E	n/a	525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081
Dusky rockfish[10]	W	n/a	377	377
	C	n/a	3,533	3,533
	WYK	n/a	495	495
	SEO	n/a	295	295
	Total	5,746	4,700	4,700
Rougheye and Blackspotted rockfish[11]	W	n/a	81	81
	C	n/a	856	856
	E	n/a	295	295
	Total	1,482	1,232	1,232
Demersal shelf rockfish[12]	SEO	487	303	303
Thornyhead rockfish	W	n/a	150	150
	C	n/a	766	766
	E	n/a	749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665
Other rockfish[13, 14]	W	n/a	44	44
	C	n/a	606	606
	WYK	n/a	230	230
	SEO	n/a	3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080
Atka mackerel	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big skate[15]	W	n/a	469	469
	C	n/a	1,793	1,793
	E	n/a	1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767

Longnose skate[16]	W	n/a	70	70
	C	n/a	1,879	1,879
	E	n/a	676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates[17]	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GW	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455
Total		738,676	595,920	436,255

[1] Regulatory areas and districts are defined at § 679.2. (W=Western Gulf of Alaska; C=Central Gulf of Alaska; E=Eastern Gulf of Alaska; WYK=West Yakutat District; SEO=Southeast Outside District; GW=Gulf-wide).

[2] Pollock is apportioned in the Western/Central Regulatory Areas among three statistical areas. During the A season, the apportionment is based on an adjusted estimate of the relative distribution of pollock biomass of approximately 16 percent, 62 percent, and 22 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the B season, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 16 percent, 74 percent, and 10 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the C and D seasons, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 36 percent, 28 percent, and 35 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. Table 3 lists the final 2013 seasonal apportionments. In the West Yakutat and Southeast Outside Districts of the Eastern Regulatory Area, pollock is not divided into seasonal allowances.

[3] The annual Pacific cod TAC is apportioned 60 percent to the A season and 40 percent to the B season in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA. Pacific cod in the Eastern Regulatory Area is allocated 90 percent for processing by the inshore component and 10 percent for processing by the offshore component. Table 5 lists the final 2013 Pacific cod seasonal apportionments.

[4] Sablefish is allocated to trawl and hook-and-line gear in 2013. Table 7 lists the final 2013 allocations of sablefish TACs.

[5] "Shallow-water flatfish" means flatfish not including "deep-water flatfish," flathead sole, rex sole, or arrowtooth flounder.

[6] "Deep-water flatfish" means Dover sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, and deepsea sole.

[7] "Pacific ocean perch" means Sebastes alutus.

[8] "Northern rockfish" means Sebastes polyspinous. For management purposes the 2 mt apportionment of ABC to the WYK District of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska has been included in the other rockfish species group.

[9] "Shortraker rockfish" means Sebastes borealis.

[10] "Dusky rockfish" means Sebastes variabilis.

[11] "Rougheye rockfish" means Sebastes aleutianus (rougheye) and Sebastes melanostictus (blackspotted).

[12] "Demersal shelf rockfish" means Sebastes pinniger (canary), S. nebulosus (china), S. caurinus (copper), S. maliger (quillback), S. helvomaculatus (rosethorn), S. nigrocinctus (tiger), and S. ruberrimus (yelloweye).

[13] "Other rockfish" means Sebastes aurora (aurora), S. melanostomus (blackgill), S. paucispinis (bocaccio), S. goodei (chilipepper), S. crameri (darkblotch), S. elongatus (greenstriped), S. variegatus (harlequin), S. wilsoni (pygmy), S. babcocki (redbanded), S. proriger (redstripe), S. zacentrus (sharpchin), S. jordani (shortbelly), S. brevispinis (silvergrey), S. diploproa (splitnose), S. saxicola (stripetail), S. miniatus (vermilion), S. reedi (yellowmouth), S. entomelas (widow), and S. flavidus (yellowtail). In the Eastern GOA only, other rockfish also includes northern rockfish, S. polyspinous

[14] "Other rockfish" in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas and in the West Yakutat District means other rockfish and demersal shelf rockfish. The "other rockfish" species group in the SEO District only includes other rockfish.

[15] "Big skate" means Raja binoculata.

[16] "Longnose skate" means Raja rhina.

[17] "Other skates" means Bathyraja spp.

Table 2—Final 2014 ABCs, TACs, and OFLs of Groundfish for the Western/Central/West Yakutat, Western, Central, Eastern Regulatory Areas, and in the West Yakutat, Southeast Outside, and Gulfwide Districts of the Gulf of Alaska

(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Area[1]	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock[2]	Shumagin (610)	n/a	25,648	25,648
	Chirikof (620)	n/a	47,004	47,004
	Kodiak (630)	n/a	25,011	25,011
	WYK (640)	n/a	3,093	3,093
	W/C/WYK (subtotal)	138,610	100,756	100,756
	SEO (650)	14,366	10,774	10,774
	Total	152,976	111,530	111,530
Pacific cod[3]	W	n/a	29,470	22,103
	C	n/a	51,362	38,522
	E	n/a	3,368	2,526
	Total	101,100	84,200	63,150
Sablefish[4]	W	n/a	1,641	1,641
	C	n/a	5,195	5,195
	WYK	n/a	1,902	1,902
	SEO	n/a	2,993	2,993
	E (WYK and SEO) (subtotal)	n/a	4,895	4,895
	Total	13,871	11,731	11,731
Shallow-water flatfish[5]	W	n/a	18,033	13,250
	C	n/a	18,660	18,000
	WYK	n/a	4,299	4,647
	SEO	n/a	1,092	1,180
	Total	51,580	42,084	37,077
Deep-water flatfish[6]	W	n/a	176	176
	C	n/a	2,308	2,308
	WYK	n/a	1,581	1,581
	SEO	n/a	1,061	1,061
	Total	6,834	5,126	5,126
Rex sole	W	n/a	1,287	1,287
	C	n/a	6,310	6,310
	WYK	n/a	823	1,041
	SEO	n/a	1,040	822
	Total	12,362	9,460	9,460
Arrowtooth flounder	W	n/a	26,970	14,500
	C	n/a	140,424	75,000
	WYK	n/a	20,754	6,900
	SEO	n/a	20,663	6,900
	Total	245,262	208,811	103,300
Flathead sole	W	n/a	16,063	8,650

	C	n/a	27,126	15,400
	WYK	n/a	4,785	4,785
	SEO	n/a	1,797	1,797
	Total	62,296	49,771	30,632
Pacific ocean perch[7]	W	n/a	2,005	2,005
	C	n/a	10,740	10,740
	WYK	n/a	1,613	1,613
	W/C/WYK	16,555		
	SEO	2,046	1,775	1,775
	Total	18,601	16,133	16,133
Northern rockfish[8]	W	n/a	1,899	1,899
	C	n/a	2,951	2,951
	E	n/a		-
	Total	5,791	4,850	4,850
Shortraker rockfish[9]	W	n/a	104	104
	C	n/a	452	452
	E	n/a	525	525
	Total	1,441	1,081	1,081
Dusky rockfish[10]	W	n/a	354	354
	C	n/a	3,317	3,317
	WYK	n/a	465	465
	SEO	n/a	277	277
	Total	5,395	4,413	4,413
Rougheye and Blackspotted rockfish[11]	W	n/a	83	83
	C	n/a	871	871
	E	n/a	300	300
	Total	1,508	1,254	1,254
Demersal shelf rockfish[12]	SEO	487	303	303
Thornyhead rockfish	W	n/a	150	150
	C	n/a	766	766
	E	n/a	749	749
	Total	2,220	1,665	1,665
Other rockfish[13,14]	W	n/a	44	44
	C	n/a	606	606
	WYK	n/a	230	230
	SEO	n/a	3,165	200
	Total	5,305	4,045	1,080
Atka mackerel	GW	6,200	4,700	2,000
Big skate[15]	W	n/a	469	469
	C	n/a	1,793	1,793
	E	n/a	1,505	1,505
	Total	5,023	3,767	3,767

Longnose skate[16]	W	n/a	70	70
	C	n/a	1,879	1,879
	E	n/a	676	676
	Total	3,500	2,625	2,625
Other skates[17]	GW	2,706	2,030	2,030
Sculpins	GW	7,614	5,884	5,884
Sharks	GW	8,037	6,028	6,028
Squids	GW	1,530	1,148	1,148
Octopus	GW	1,941	1,455	1,455
Total		723,580	584,094	427,722

[1] Regulatory areas and districts are defined at § 679.2. (W=Western Gulf of Alaska; C=Central Gulf of Alaska; E=Eastern Gulf of Alaska; WYK=West Yakutat District; SEO=Southeast Outside District; GW=Gulf-wide).

[2] Pollock is apportioned in the Western/Central Regulatory Areas among three statistical areas. During the A season, the apportionment is based on an adjusted estimate of the relative distribution of pollock biomass of approximately 16 percent, 62 percent, and 22 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the B season, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 16 percent, 74 percent, and 10 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the C and D seasons, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 37 percent, 28 percent, and 35 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. Table 4 lists the final 2014 seasonal apportionments. In the West Yakutat and Southeast Outside Districts of the Eastern Regulatory Area, pollock is not divided into seasonal allowances.

[3] The annual Pacific cod TAC is apportioned 60 percent to the A season and 40 percent to the B season in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA. Pacific cod in the Eastern Regulatory Area is allocated 90 percent for processing by the inshore component and 10 percent for processing by the offshore component. Table 6 lists the final 2014 Pacific cod seasonal apportionments.

[4] Sablefish is only allocated to trawl gear for 2014. Table 8 lists the final 2014 allocation of sablefish TACs to trawl gear.

[5] "Shallow-water flatfish" means flatfish not including "deep-water flatfish," flathead sole, rex sole, or arrowtooth flounder.

[6] "Deep-water flatfish" means Dover sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, and deepsea sole.

[7] "Pacific ocean perch" means Sebastes alutus.

[8] "Northern rockfish" means Sebastes polyspinous. For management purposes the 2 mt apportionment of ABC to the WYK District of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska has been included in the other rockfish species group.

[9] "Shortraker rockfish" means Sebastes borealis.

[10] "Dusky rockfish" means Sebastes variabilis.

[11] "Rougheye rockfish" means Sebastes aleutianus (rougheye) and Sebastes melanostictus (blackspotted).

[12] "Demersal shelf rockfish" means Sebastes pinniger (canary), S. nebulosus (china), S. caurinus (copper), S. maliger (quillback), S. helvomaculatus (rosethorn), S. nigrocinctus (tiger), and S. ruberrimus (yelloweye).

[13] "Other rockfish" means Sebastes aurora (aurora), S. melanostomus (blackgill), S. paucispinis (bocaccio), S. goodei (chilipepper), S. crameri (darkblotch), S. elongatus (greenstriped), S. variegatus (harlequin), S. wilsoni (pygmy), S. babcocki (redbanded), S. proriger (redstripe), S. zacentrus (sharpchin), S. jordani (shortbelly), S. brevispinis (silvergrey), S. diploproa (splitnose), S. saxicola (stripetail), S. miniatus (vermilion), S. reedi (yellowmouth), S. entomelas (widow), and S. flavidus (yellowtail). In the Eastern GOA only, other rockfish also includes northern rockfish, S. polyspinous

[14] "Other rockfish" in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas and in the West Yakutat District means other rockfish and demersal shelf rockfish. The "other rockfish" species group in the SEO District only includes other rockfish.

[15] "Big skate" means Raja binoculata.

[16] "Longnose skate" means Raja rhina.

[17] "Other skates" means Bathyraja spp.

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Apportionment of Reserves

Section 679.20(b)(2) requires NMFS to set aside 20 percent of each TAC for pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish, sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses in reserves for possible apportionment at a later date during the fishing year. For 2013 and 2014, NMFS proposed reapportionment of all the reserves in the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications published in the **Federal Register** on December 5, 2012 (77 FR 72297). NMFS did not receive any public comments on the proposed reapportionments. For the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, NMFS reapportioned, as proposed, all the reserves for pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish, sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses. The TAC amounts shown in Tables 1 and 2 reflect reapportionment of reserve amounts for these species and species groups.

Apportionments of Pollock TAC Among Seasons and Regulatory Areas, and Allocations for Processing by Inshore and Offshore Components

In the GOA, pollock is apportioned by season and area, and is further allocated for processing by inshore and offshore components. Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(B), the annual pollock TAC specified for the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA is apportioned into four equal seasonal allowances of 25 percent. As established by § 679.23(d)(2)(i) through (iv), the A, B, C, and D season allowances are available from January 20 to March 10, March 10 to May 31, August 25 to October 1, and October 1 to November 1, respectively.

Pollock TACs in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA are apportioned among Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(A). In the A and B seasons, the apportionments are in proportion to the distribution of pollock biomass based on the four most recent NMFS winter surveys. In the C and D seasons, the apportionments are in proportion to the distribution of pollock biomass based on the four most recent NMFS summer surveys. However, for 2013 and 2014, the Council recommends, and NMFS approves, averaging the winter and summer distribution of pollock in the Central Regulatory Area for the A season instead of using the distribution based on only the winter surveys. The average is intended to reflect the migration patterns and distribution of pollock, and the performance of the fishery, in that area during the A season for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years. During the A season, the apportionment is based on an adjusted estimate of the relative distribution of pollock biomass of approximately 16 percent, 62 percent, and 22 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the B season, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 16 percent, 74 percent, and 10 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively. During the C and D seasons, the apportionment is based on the relative distribution of pollock biomass at 37 percent, 28 percent, and 35 percent in Statistical Areas 610, 620, and 630, respectively.

Within any fishing year, the amount by which a seasonal allowance is underharvested or overharvested may be added to, or subtracted from, subsequent seasonal allowances in a manner to be determined by the Regional Administrator (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(B)). The rollover amount is limited to 20 percent of the unharvested seasonal apportionment for the statistical area. Any unharvested pollock above the 20-percent limit could be further distributed to the other statistical areas, in proportion to the estimated biomass in the subsequent season in those statistical areas (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iv)(B)). The pollock TACs in the WYK and SEO District of 3,385 mt and 10,774 mt, respectively, in 2013, and 3,093 mt and10,774 mt, respectively, in 2014, are not allocated by season.

Section 679.20(a)(6)(i) requires the allocation of 100 percent of the pollock TAC in all regulatory areas and all seasonal allowances to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component after subtraction of amounts projected by the Regional Administrator to be caught by, or delivered to, the offshore component incidental to directed fishing for other groundfish species. Thus, the amount of pollock available for harvest by vessels harvesting pollock for processing by the offshore component is that amount that will be taken as incidental catch during directed fishing for groundfish species other than pollock, up to the maximum retainable amounts allowed by § 679.20(e) and (f). At this time, these incidental catch amounts of pollock are unknown and will be determined during the fishing year during the course of fishing activities by the offshore component.

Tables 3 and 4 list the final 2013 and 2014 seasonal biomass distribution of pollock in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas, area apportionments, and seasonal allowances. The amounts of pollock for processing by the inshore and offshore components are not shown.

Table 3. Final 2013 Distribution of Pollock in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas of the GOA; Seasonal Biomass Distribution, Area Apportionments; and Seasonal Allowances of Annual TAC
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.01.)

Season[1]	Shumagin (Area 610)		Chirikof (Area 620)		Kodiak (Area 630)		Total[2]
A (Jan 20-Mar 10)	4,292	(16.06%)	16,433	(61.50%)	5,998	(22.45%)	26,722
B (Mar 10-May 31)	4,292	(16.06%)	19,811	(74.14%)	2,618	(9.80%)	26,722
C (Aug 25-Oct 1)	9,744	(36.47%)	7,600	(28.44%)	9,378	(35.10%)	26,722
D (Oct 1-Nov 1)	9,744	(36.47%)	7,600	(28.44%)	9,378	(35.10%)	26,722
Annual Total	28,072		51,444		27,372		106,887

[1] As established by § 679.23(d)(2)(i) through (iv), the A, B, C, and D season allowances are available from January 20 to March 10, March 10 to May 31, August 25 to October 1, and October 1 to November 1, respectively. The amounts of pollock for processing by the inshore and offshore components are not shown in this table.
[2] The WYK and SEO District pollock TACs are not allocated by season and are not included in the total pollock TACs shown in this table.

Table 4. Final 2014 Distribution of Pollock in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas of the GOA; Seasonal Biomass Distribution, Area Apportionments; and Seasonal Allowances of Annual TAC
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.01.)

Season[1]	Shumagin (Area 610)		Chirikof (Area 620)		Kodiak (Area 630)		Total[2]
A (Jan 20-Mar 10)	3,921	(16.06%)	15,015	(61.50%)	5,481	(22.45%)	24,416
B (Mar 10-May 31)	3,920	(16.06%)	18,102	(74.14%)	2,393	(9.80%)	24,416
C (Aug 25-Oct 1)	8,903	(36.47%)	6,944	(28.44%)	8,568	(35.10%)	24,416
D (Oct 1-Nov 1)	8,903	(36.47%)	6,944	(28.44%)	8,568	(35.10%)	24,416
Annual Total	25,648		47,004		25,011		97,663

[1] As established by § 679.23(d)(2)(i) through (iv), the A, B, C, and D season allowances are available from January 20 to March 10, March 10 to May 31, August 25 to October 1, and October 1 to November 1, respectively. The amounts of pollock for processing by the inshore and offshore components are not shown in this table.
[2] The WYK and SEO District pollock TACs are not allocated by season and are not included in the total pollock TACs shown in this table.

Annual and Seasonal Apportionments of Pacific Cod TAC

Section 679.20(a)(12)(i) requires the allocation among gear and operational sectors of the Pacific cod TACs in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA. Section 679.20(a)(6)(ii) requires the allocation between the inshore and offshore components of the Pacific cod TACs in the Eastern Regulatory Area of the GOA. NMFS allocates the 2013 and 2014 Pacific cod TAC based on these sector allocations annually between the inshore and offshore components in the Eastern GOA; seasonally between vessels using jig gear, CVs less than 50 feet in length

overall using hook-and-line gear, CVs equal to or greater than 50 feet in length overall using hook-and-line gear, C/Ps using hook-and-line gear, CVs using trawl gear, C/Ps using trawl gear, and vessels using pot gear in the Central GOA; and seasonally between vessels using jig gear, CVs using hook-and-line gear, C/Ps using hook-and-line gear, CVs using trawl gear, and vessels using pot gear in the Western GOA. The overall seasonal apportionments in the Western and Central GOA are 60 percent of the annual TAC to the A season and 40 percent of the annual TAC to the B season.

Under § 679.20(a)(12)(ii), any overage or underage of the Pacific cod allowance from the A season will be subtracted from, or added to, the subsequent B season allowance. In addition, any portion of the hook-and-line, trawl, pot, or jig sector allocations that are determined by NMFS as likely to go unharvested by a sector may be reapportioned to other sectors for harvest during the remainder of the fishery year.

Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(12)(i), NMFS allocates the 2013 and 2014 Pacific cod TACs in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA. In accordance with the FMP, the annual jig sector allocations may increase to up to 6 percent of the annual Western and Central GOA Pacific cod TACs, depending on the annual performance of the jig sector (See Table 1 of Amendment 83 to the FMP for a detailed discussion of the jig sector allocation process (76 FR 74670, December 1, 2011)). NMFS is increasing the jig sector's Pacific cod allocation in the Western GOA to 2.5 percent of the annual Pacific cod TAC. This includes a base allocation of 1.5 percent and an additional 1.0 percent because this sector harvested greater than 90 percent of its initial 2012 allocation in the Western GOA. NMFS also is increasing the jig sector's Pacific cod allocation in the Central GOA to 2.0 percent of the annual Pacific cod TAC. This includes a base allocation of 1.0 percent and an additional 1.0 percent because this sector harvested greater than 90 percent of its initial 2012 allocation in the Central GOA. The jig sector allocations are further apportioned between the A (60 percent) and B (40 percent) season. The sector allocations based on gear type, operation type, and vessel length overall are allocated the remainder of the annual Pacific cod TAC in the Western and Central GOA. Tables 5 and 6 list the seasonal apportionments and allocations of the 2013 and 2014 Pacific cod TACs.

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Table 5. Final 2013 Seasonal Apportionments and Allocation of Pacific Cod Total Allowable Catch Amounts in the GOA; Allocations for the Western GOA and Central GOA Sectors and the Eastern GOA Inshore and Offshore Processing Components (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percentages to the nearest 0.01. Seasonal allowances may not total precisely to annual allocation amount.)

Regulatory area and sector	Annual allocation (mt)	A Season		B Season	
		Sector percentage of annual non-jig TAC	Seasonal allowances (mt)	Sector percentage of annual non-jig TAC	Seasonal allowances (mt)
Western GOA					
Jig (2.5 % of TAC)	530	N/A	318	N/A	212
Hook-and-line CV	290	0.70	145	0.70	145
Hook-and-line C/P	4,094	10.90	2,254	8.90	1,840
Trawl CV	7,941	27.70	5,728	10.70	2,213
Trawl C/P	496	0.90	186	1.50	310
All Pot CV and Pot C/P	7,859	19.80	4,095	18.20	3,764
Total	21,210	60.00	12,726	40.00	8,484
Central GOA					
Jig (2.0% of TAC)	739	N/A	444	N/A	296
Hook-and-line < 50 CV	5,290	9.32	3,375	5.29	1,915
Hook-and-line ≥ 50 CV	2,430	5.61	2,032	1.10	398
Hook-and-line C/P	1,849	4.11	1,488	1.00	361
Trawl CV[1]	15,065	21.14	7,657	20.45	7,408
Trawl C/P	1,521	2.00	726	2.19	795
All Pot CV and Pot C/P	10,073	17.83	6,459	9.97	3,614
Total	36,966	60.00	22,180	40.00	14,786
Eastern GOA		Inshore (90% of Annual TAC)		Offshore (10% of Annual TAC)	
	2,424		2,182		242

[1] Trawl vessels participating in Rockfish Program cooperatives receive 3.81 percent of the annual Central GOA TAC, which is deducted from the Trawl CV B season allowance (see Table 12).

Table 6. Final 2014 Seasonal Apportionments and Allocation of Pacific Cod Total Allowable Catch Amounts in the GOA; Allocations for the Western GOA and Central GOA Sectors and the Eastern GOA Inshore and Offshore Processing Components (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percentages to the nearest 0.01. Seasonal allowances may not total precisely to annual allocation amount.)

Regulatory area and sector	Annual allocation (mt)	A Season		B Season	
		Sector percentage of annual non-jig TAC	Seasonal allowances (mt)	Sector percentage of annual non-jig TAC	Seasonal allowances (mt)
Western GOA					
Jig (2.5 % of TAC)	553	N/A	332	N/A	221
Hook-and-line CV	302	0.70	151	0.70	151
Hook-and-line C/P	4,267	10.90	2,349	8.90	1,918
Trawl CV	8,275	27.70	5,969	10.70	2,306
Trawl C/P	517	0.90	194	1.50	323
All Pot CV and Pot C/P	8,189	19.80	4,267	18.20	3,922
Total	22,103	60.00	13,262	40.00	8,841
Central GOA					
Jig (2.0% of TAC)	770	N/A	462	N/A	308
Hook-and-line < 50 CV	5,513	9.32	3,517	5.29	1,996
Hook-and-line ≥ 50 CV	2,532	5.61	2,118	1.10	414
Hook-and-line C/P	1,927	4.11	1,550	1.00	377
Trawl CV[1]	15,698	21.14	7,979	20.45	7,720
Trawl C/P	1,585	2.00	756	2.19	828
All Pot CV and Pot C/P	10,497	17.83	6,731	9.97	3,766
Total	38,522	60.00	23,113	40.00	15,409
Eastern GOA		Inshore (90% of Annual TAC)		Offshore (10% of Annual TAC)	
	2,526		2,273		253

[1] Trawl vessels participating in Rockfish Program cooperatives receive 3.81 percent of the annual Central GOA TAC, which is deducted from the Trawl CV B season allowance (see Table13).

Allocations of the Sablefish TACs

Section 679.20(a)(4)(i) and (ii) require allocations of sablefish TACs for each of the regulatory areas and districts to hook-and-line and trawl gear. In the Western and Central Regulatory Areas, 80 percent of each TAC is allocated to hook-and-line gear, and 20 percent of each TAC is allocated to trawl gear. In the Eastern Regulatory Area, 95 percent of the TAC is allocated to hook-and-line gear, and 5 percent is allocated to trawl

gear. The trawl gear allocation in the Eastern Regulatory Area may only be used to support incidental catch of sablefish in directed fisheries for other target species (§ 679.20(a)(4)(i)).

In recognition of the prohibition against trawl gear in the SEO District of the Eastern Regulatory Area, the Council recommended and NMFS approves the allocation of 5 percent of the combined Eastern Regulatory Area sablefish TAC to trawl gear in the WYK District, making the remainder of the WYK sablefish TAC available to vessels using hook-and-line gear. NMFS allocates 100 percent of the sablefish TAC in the SEO District to vessels using hook-and-line gear. This recommendation results in a 2013 allocation of 261 mt to trawl gear and 1,769 mt to hook-and-line gear in the WYK District, a 2013 allocation of 3,190 mt to hook-and-line gear in the SEO District, and a 2014 allocation of 245 mt to trawl gear in the WYK District. Table 7 lists the allocations of the 2013 sablefish TACs to hook-and-line and trawl gear. Table 8 lists the allocations of the 2014 sablefish TACs to trawl gear.

The Council recommended that the hook-and-line sablefish TAC be established annually to ensure that this Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ) fishery is conducted concurrent with the halibut IFQ fishery and is based on recent sablefish survey information. The Council also recommended that only a trawl sablefish TAC be established for two years so that retention of incidental catch of sablefish by trawl gear could commence in January in the second year of the groundfish harvest specifications. Since there is an annual assessment for sablefish and the final harvest specifications are expected to be published before the IFQ season begins (typically, early March), the Council recommended that the hook-and-line sablefish TAC be set on an annual basis, rather than for two years, so that the best scientific information available could be considered in establishing the sablefish ABCs and TACs. With the exception of the trawl allocations that were provided to the Rockfish Program cooperatives, directed fishing for sablefish with trawl gear is closed during the fishing year. Also, fishing for groundfish with trawl gear is prohibited prior to January 20. Therefore, it is not likely that the sablefish allocation to trawl gear would be reached before the effective date of the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications.

Table 7. Final 2013 Sablefish TAC Specifications in the GOA and Allocations to Hook-and-Line and Trawl Gear
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Area/District	TAC	Hook-and-line allocation	Trawl allocation
Western	1,750	1,400	350
Central	5,540	4,432	1,108
West Yakutat[1]	2,030	1,769	261
Southeast Outside	3,190	3,190	0
Total	12,510	10,791	1,719

[1] The trawl allocation is based on allocating 5 percent of the combined Eastern Regulatory Area (West Yakutat and Southeast Outside combined) sablefish TAC to trawl gear in the West Yakutat District.

Table 8. Final 2014 Sablefish TAC Specifications in the GOA and Allocation to Trawl Gear[1]
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Area/District	TAC	Hook-and-line allocation	Trawl allocation
Western	1,641	n/a	328
Central	5,195	n/a	1,039
West Yakutat[2]	1,902	n/a	245
Southeast Outside	2,993	n/a	0
Total	11,731	n/a	1,612

[1] The Council recommended that harvest specifications for the hook-and-line gear sablefish Individual Fishing Quota fisheries be limited to 1 year.
[2] The trawl allocation is based on allocating 5 percent of the combined Eastern Regulatory Area (West Yakutat and Southeast Outside combined) sablefish TAC to trawl gear in the West Yakutat District.

Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)

The recommended 2013 and 2014 DSR TAC is 303 mt, and management of DSR is delegated to the State. In 2006, the Alaska Board of Fish allocated future SEO District DSR TACs between the commercial fishery (84 percent) and the sport fishery (16 percent) after deductions were made for anticipated subsistence harvests (7 mt). This results in 2013 and 2014 allocations of 255 mt

to the commercial fishery and 48 mt to the sport fishery.

The State deducts estimates of incidental catch of DSR in the commercial halibut fishery and test fishery mortality from the DSR commercial fishery allocation. In 2013, this resulted in 139 mt being available for the directed commercial DSR fishery apportioned between four outer coast areas. DSR harvest in the halibut fishery is linked to the annual halibut catch limits; therefore the State can only estimate potential DSR incidental catch in that fishery when those halibut catch limits are established by the IPHC. Federally-permitted CVs using hook-and-line or jig gear fishing for groundfish and Pacific halibut in the SEO District of the GOA are required to retain all DSR (§ 679.20(j)). The State announced the opening of directed fishing for DSR effective on January 30, 2013.

Apportionments to the Central GOA Rockfish Program

These final 2013 and 2014 groundfish harvest specifications for the GOA include the various fishery cooperative allocations and sideboard limitations established by the Central GOA Rockfish Program. Under the Rockfish Program, the primary rockfish species (Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, and dusky rockfish) are allocated to participants after deducting for incidental catch needs in other directed groundfish fisheries. Program participants are primarily trawl catcher vessels and trawl catcher/processors, with limited participation by vessels using longline gear.

The Rockfish Program assigns quota share and cooperative quota to participants for primary and secondary species, allows a participant holding a license limitation program (LLP) license with rockfish quota share to form a rockfish cooperative with other persons, and allows holders of C/P LLP licenses to opt-out of the fishery. The Rockfish Program also has an entry level fishery for rockfish primary species for vessels using longline gear. Additionally, the Rockfish Program continues to establish sideboard limits to restrict the ability of harvesters operating under the Rockfish Program to increase their participation in other, non-Rockfish Program fisheries. Besides groundfish species, the Rockfish Program allocates a portion of the halibut PSC limit from the third season deep-water species fishery allowance for the GOA trawl fisheries to Rockfish Program participants (§ 679.81(d)), which includes 117 mt to the CV sector and 74 mt to the C/P sector.

Section 679.81(a)(2)(ii) requires allocations of 5 mt of Pacific ocean perch, 5 mt of northern rockfish, and 30 mt of dusky rockfish to the entry level longline fishery in 2013 and 2014. The allocation for the entry level longline fishery would increase incrementally each year if the catch exceeds 90 percent of the allocation of a species. The incremental increase in the allocation would continue each year until it is the maximum percent of the TAC for that species. In 2012, the catch did not exceed 90 percent of any allocated rockfish species. Therefore, NMFS is not increasing the entry level longline fishery 2013 and 2014 allocations in the Central GOA. Longline gear includes hook-and-line, jig, troll, and handline gear. The remainder of the TACs for the rockfish primary species would be allocated to the CV and C/P cooperatives. Table 9 lists the allocations of the 2013 and initial 2014 TACs for each rockfish primary species to the entry level longline fishery, the incremental increase for future years, and the maximum percent of the TAC for the entry level longline fishery.

Table 9. Final 2013 and Initial 2014 Allocations of Rockfish to the Entry Level Longline Fishery in the Central Gulf of Alaska.

Rockfish primary species	2013 and 2014 allocations	Incremental increase in 2014 if ≥ 90% of 2013 allocation is harvested	Up to maximum % of TAC
Pacific ocean perch	5 metric tons	5 metric tons	1%
Northern rockfish	5 metric tons	5 metric tons	2%
Dusky rockfish	30 metric tons	20 metric tons	5%

Section 679.81(a)(2)(iii) requires allocations of the primary rockfish species among various components of the Rockfish Program. Tables 10 and 11 list the final 2013 and 2014 allocations of rockfish in the Central GOA to the entry level longline fishery and other participants in the Rockfish Program, which include CV and C/P cooperatives. NMFS also is setting aside incidental catch amounts (ICAs) for other directed fisheries in the Central GOA of 900 mt of Pacific ocean perch, 125 mt of northern rockfish, and 200 mt of dusky rockfish. These amounts are based on recent average incidental catches in the Central GOA by other groundfish fisheries.

Allocations between vessels belonging to CV or C/P cooperatives are not included in these final harvest specifications. Rockfish Program applications for CV cooperatives and C/P cooperatives are not due to NMFS until March 1 of each calendar year, thereby preventing NMFS from calculating 2013 and 2014 allocations in conjunction with these final harvest specifications. NMFS will post these allocations on the Alaska Region Web site at (*http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/default.htm*) when they become available after March 1.

Table 10. Final 2013 Allocations of Rockfish in the Central Gulf of Alaska to the Entry Level Longline Fishery and Other Participants in the Rockfish Program (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Rockfish Primary Species	TAC	Incidental catch allowance	TAC minus ICA	Allocation to the entry level longline[1] fishery	Allocation to other participants in the Rockfish Program[2]
Pacific ocean perch	10,926	900	10,026	5	10,021
Northern rockfish	3,122	125	2,997	5	2,992
Dusky rockfish	3,533	200	3,333	30	3,303
Total	17,581	1,225	16,356	40	16,316

[1] Longline gear includes hook-and-line, jig, troll, and handline gear.
[2] Other participants in the Rockfish Program include vessels in CV and C/P cooperatives.

Table 11. Final 2014 Allocations of Rockfish in the Central Gulf of Alaska to the Entry Level Longline Fishery and Other Participants in the Rockfish Program (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Rockfish Primary Species	TAC	Incidental catch allowance	TAC minus ICA	Allocation to the entry level longline[1] fishery	Allocation to other participants in the Rockfish Program [2]
Pacific ocean perch	10,740	900	9,840	5	9,835
Northern rockfish	2,951	125	2,826	5	2,821
Dusky rockfish	3,317	200	3,117	30	3,087
Total	17,008	1,225	15,783	40	15,743

[1] Longline gear includes hook-and-line, jig, troll, and handline gear.
[2] Other participants in the Rockfish Program include vessels in CV and C/P cooperatives.

Section 679.81(c) requires allocations of rockfish secondary species to CV and C/P cooperatives in the Central GOA. CV cooperatives receive allocations of Pacific cod, sablefish from the trawl gear allocation, and thornyhead rockfish. C/P cooperatives receive allocations of sablefish from the trawl allocation, rougheye rockfish, shortraker rockfish, and thornyhead rockfish. Tables 12 and 13 lists the apportionments of the 2013 and 2014 TACs of rockfish secondary species in the Central GOA to CV and C/P cooperatives.

Table 12. Final 2013 Apportionments of Rockfish Secondary Species in the Central GOA to Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Cooperatives (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Rockfish Secondary Species	Annual Central GOA TAC	Catcher vessel cooperatives		Catcher/Processor cooperatives	
		Percentage of TAC	Apportionment (mt)	Percentage of TAC	Apportionment (mt)
Pacific cod	36,966	3.81	1,408	N/A	N/A
Sablefish	5,540	6.78	376	3.51	194
Shortraker rockfish	452	N/A	N/A	40.00	181
Rougheye rockfish	856	N/A	N/A	58.87	504
Thornyhead rockfish	766	7.84	60	26.50	203

Table 13. Final 2014 Apportionments of Rockfish Secondary Species in the Central GOA to Catcher Vessel and Cather/Processor Cooperatives (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Rockfish Secondary Species	Annual Central GOA TAC	Catcher Vessel cooperatives		Catcher/Processor cooperatives	
		Percentage of TAC	Apportionment (mt)	Percentage of TAC	Apportionment (mt)
Pacific cod	38,522	3.81	1,468	N/A	N/A
Sablefish	5,195	6.78	352	3.51	182
Shortraker rockfish	452	N/A	N/A	40.00	181
Rougheye rockfish	871	N/A	N/A	58.87	513
Thornyhead rockfish	766	7.84	60	26.50	203

Halibut PSC Limits

Section 679.21(d) establishes the annual halibut PSC limit apportionments to trawl and hook-and-line gear, and authorizes the establishment of apportionments for pot gear. In December 2012, the Council recommended halibut PSC limits of 1,973 mt for trawl gear and 300 mt for hook-and-line gear for the 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries. As discussed previously in this preamble, at its June 2012 meeting the Council took action to further reduce the GOA halibut PSC limits. If approved and implemented by the Secretary, these reductions may lead to adjustments or reductions to the 2014 halibut PSC limits in this action at the beginning of 2014.

Ten mt of the hook-and-line limit is further allocated to the DSR fishery in the SEO District. The DSR fishery is defined at § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(A). This fishery has been apportioned 10 mt in recognition of its small-scale harvests of groundfish. Most vessels in the DSR fishery are less than 60 ft (18.3 m) length overall and have been exempt from observer coverage. Therefore, observer data are not available to verify actual bycatch amounts. NMFS estimates low halibut bycatch in the DSR fishery because (1) the duration of the DSR fisheries and the gear soak times are short; (2) the DSR fishery occurs in the winter when less overlap occurs in the distribution of DSR and halibut; and (3) the directed commercial DSR fishery has a low DSR TAC. Of the

300 mt TAC for DSR in 2012, 128 mt was available for the commercial fishery, of which 105 mt were harvested.

The FMP authorizes the Council to exempt specific gear from the halibut PSC limits. NMFS, after consultation with the Council, exempts pot gear, jig gear, and the sablefish IFQ hook-and-line gear fishery categories from the non-trawl halibut limit for 2013 and 2014. The Council recommended, and NMFS approves, these exemptions because (1) the pot gear fisheries have low annual halibut bycatch mortality; (2) IFQ program regulations prohibit discard of halibut if any halibut IFQ permit holder on board a catcher vessel holds unused halibut IFQ (§ 679.7(f)(11)); (3) sablefish IFQ fishermen typically hold halibut IFQ permits and are therefore required to retain the halibut they catch while fishing sablefish IFQ; and (4) NMFS estimates negligible halibut mortality for the jig gear fisheries. NMFS estimates that halibut mortality is negligible in the jig gear fisheries given the small amount of groundfish harvested by jig gear, the selective nature of jig gear, and the high survival rates of halibut caught and released with jig gear.

Section 679.21(d)(5) authorizes NMFS to seasonally apportion the halibut PSC limits after consultation with the Council. The FMP and regulations require the Council and NMFS to consider the following information in seasonally apportioning halibut PSC limits: (1) Seasonal distribution of halibut, (2) seasonal distribution of target groundfish species relative to halibut distribution, (3) expected halibut bycatch needs on a seasonal basis relative to changes in halibut biomass and expected catch of target groundfish species, (4) expected bycatch rates on a seasonal basis, (5) expected changes in directed groundfish fishing seasons, (6) expected actual start of fishing effort, and (7) economic effects of establishing seasonal halibut allocations on segments of the target groundfish industry. The Council obtained the information it considered when setting the halibut PSC limits from the 2012 SAFE report, NMFS catch data, State of Alaska catch data, IPHC stock assessment and mortality data, and public testimony. NMFS concurs with the Council's recommendations listed in Table 14, which shows the final 2013 and 2014 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments. Sections 679.21(d)(5)(iii) and (iv) specify that any underages or overages of a seasonal apportionment of a PSC limit will be deducted from or added to the next respective seasonal apportionment within the fishing year.

Table 14. Final 2013 and 2014 Pacific Halibut PSC Limits, Allowances, and Apportionments
(Values are in metric tons.)

Trawl gear			Hook-and-line gear[1]				
			Other than DSR			DSR	
Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Percent	Amount	Season	Amount
January 20 - April 1	27.5%	543	January 1 - June 10	86%	249	January 1 - December 31	10
April 1 - July 1	20%	395	June 10 - September 1	2%	6		
July 1 - September 1	30%	592	September 1 - December 31	12%	35		
September 1 - October 1	7.5%	148					
October 1 - December 31	15%	296					
Total		1,973			290		10

[1] The Pacific halibut PSC limit for hook-and-line gear is allocated to the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) fishery and fisheries other than DSR. The hook-and-line sablefish fishery is exempt from halibut PSC limits, as are pot and jig gear for all groundfish fisheries.

Section 679.21(d)(3)(ii) authorizes further apportionment of the trawl halibut PSC limit to trawl fishery categories. The annual apportionments are based on each category's proportional share of the anticipated halibut bycatch mortality during the fishing year and optimization of the total amount of groundfish harvest under the halibut PSC limit. The fishery categories for the trawl halibut PSC limits are (1) a deep-water species fishery, composed of sablefish, rockfish, deep-water flatfish, rex sole, and arrowtooth flounder; and (2) a shallow-water species fishery, composed of pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, skates, and ''other species'' (sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses) (§ 679.21(d)(3)(iii)). Table 15 lists the final 2013 and 2014 apportionments of Pacific halibut PSC trawl limits between the trawl gear deep-water and the shallow-water species fishery categories.

Table 28d to 50 CFR part 679 specifies the amount of halibut PSC that is assigned to the CV and C/P sectors that are participating in the Central GOA Rockfish Program. This includes 117 mt of halibut PSC to the CV sector and 74 mt of halibut PSC to the C/P sector. These amounts are allocated from the trawl deep-water species fishery's halibut PSC third seasonal apportionment.

Section 679.21(d)(5)(iii)(B) limits the amount of the halibut PSC limit allocated to Rockfish Program participants that could be re-apportioned to the general GOA trawl fisheries to no more than 55 percent of

the unused annual halibut PSC apportioned to Rockfish Program participants. The remainder of the unused Rockfish Program halibut PSC limit is unavailable for use by vessels directed fishing with trawl gear for the remainder of the fishing year.

Table 15. Final 2013 and 2014 Apportionment of Pacific Halibut PSC Trawl Limits Between the Trawl Gear Deep-Water Species Fishery and the Shallow-Water Species Fishery Categories
(Values are in metric tons)

Season	Shallow-water	Deep-water[1]	Total
January 20 - April 1	444	99	543
April 1 - July 1	99	296	395
July 1 - September 1	197	395	592
September 1 - October 1	148	Any remainder	148
Subtotal January 20 - October 1	888	789	1,677
October 1 - December 31[2]			296
Total			1,973

[1] Vessels participating in cooperatives in the Central GOA Rockfish Program will receive 191 mt of the third season (July 1 through September 1) deep-water species fishery halibut PSC apportionment.
[2] There is no apportionment between trawl shallow-water and deep-water species fishery categories during the fifth season (October 1 through December 31).

Section 679.21(d)(4) requires that the ''other than DSR'' halibut PSC apportionment to vessels using hook-and-line gear must be apportioned between CVs and C/Ps. NMFS must calculate the halibut PSC limit apportionments for the entire GOA to hook-and-line CVs and C/Ps in accordance with § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(B)(*1*) and (*2*) in conjunction with these harvest specifications. A comprehensive description and example of the calculations necessary to apportion the ''other than DSR'' hook-and-line halibut PSC limit between the hook-and-line CV and C/P sectors were included in the proposed rule to implement Amendment 83 (76 FR 44700, July 26, 2011) and is not repeated here.

For 2013 and 2014, NMFS is apportioning halibut PSC limits of 166 mt and 124 mt to the hook-and-line CV and hook-and-line C/P sectors, respectively. These amounts differ from the proposed halibut PSC limits of 174 mt and 117 mt, respectively. Pacific cod is apportioned among the management areas in the GOA based on the percentage of overall biomass per area, as calculated in the 2012 Pacific cod stock assessment. Updated information in the final 2012 SAFE report describes this distributional change, which is based on allocating ABC among regulatory areas on the basis of the three most recent stock surveys. The distribution of the total GOA Pacific cod ABC has changed to 35 percent Western GOA, 61 percent Central GOA, and 4 percent Eastern GOA. The corresponding TAC amounts are a component in the halibut PSC calculations made in accordance with § 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(B)(*1*) and (*2*). The net effect of the change in Pacific cod distribution across the GOA also affects the annual halibut PSC limit each hook-and-line sector receives.

In addition, these annual limits are divided into three seasonal apportionments, using seasonal percentages of 86 percent, 2 percent, and 12 percent. Table 16 lists the 2013 and 2014 annual and seasonal halibut PSC apportionments between the hook-and-line sectors in the GOA.

No later than November 1 of each year, NMFS would calculate the projected unused amount of halibut PSC limit by either of the hook-and-line sectors for the remainder of the year. The projected unused amount of halibut PSC limit would be made available to the other hook-and-line sector for the remainder of that fishing year if NMFS determines that an additional amount of halibut PSC is necessary for that sector to continue its directed fishing operations (§ 679.21(d)(4)(iii)(B)(*3*)).

Table 16. Final 2013 and 2014 Apportionments of the "other hook-and-line fisheries" Annual Halibut PSC Allowance between the Hook-and-Line Gear Catcher Vessel and Catcher/Processor Sectors.
(Values are in metric tons.)

"Other than DSR" allowance	Hook-and-line sector	Percent of annual amount	Sector annual amount	Season	Seasonal percentage	Sector seasonal amount
290	Catcher Vessel	57.3	166	January 1 - June 10	86	143
				June 10 - September 1	2	3
				September 1 - December 31	12	20
	Catcher/ Processor	42.7	124	January 1 - June 10	86	106
				June 10 - September 1	2	2
				September 1 - December 31	12	15

Estimated Halibut Bycatch in Prior Years

The best available information on estimated halibut bycatch consists of data collected by fisheries observers during 2012. The calculated halibut bycatch mortality by trawl and hook-and-line gear in 2012 is 1,723 mt and 182 mt, respectively, for a total halibut mortality of 1,905 mt.

Halibut bycatch restrictions seasonally constrained trawl gear fisheries during the 2012 fishing year. Table 17 lists the closure dates for fisheries that resulted from the attainment of seasonal or annual halibut PSC limits.

Table 17. 2012 Fishery Closures Due to Attainment of Pacific Halibut PSC Limits

Fishery category	Opening date	Closure date	Federal Register citation
Trawl Shallow-water, Amendment 80 vessels, season 1	January 20, 2012	February 24, 2012	77 FR 12213, February 29, 2012
Trawl Shallow-water,[1] season 1	January 20, 2012	March 26, 2012	77 FR 19146, March 30, 2012
Trawl Deep-water,[1] season 2	April 1, 2012	April 19, 2012	77 FR 24154, April 23, 2012
Trawl Shallow-water, season 2	April 1, 2012	May 31, 2012	77 FR 33103, June 5, 2012
Trawl Shallow-water, season 3	July 1, 2012	July 14, 2012	77 FR 42193, July 18, 2012
Trawl Shallow-water,[1] season 4	September 1, 2012	September 2, 2012	77 FR 54837, September 6, 2012
Hook-and-line gear, all sectors and targets[2]	January 1, 2012	Remains open	

[1] With the exception of vessels participating in the Central GOA Rockfish Program and vessels fishing for pollock using pelagic trawl gear.
[2] With the exception of the sablefish fishery which was open March 17, 2012, through November 7, 2012.

Current Estimates of Halibut Biomass and Stock Condition

The IPHC annually assesses the abundance and potential yield of the Pacific halibut using all available data from the commercial and sport fisheries, other removals, and scientific surveys. Additional information on the Pacific halibut stock assessment may be found in the IPHC's 2012 Pacific halibut stock assessment (December 2012), available on the IPHC Web site at *www.iphc.int*. The IPHC considered the 2012 Pacific halibut stock assessment at its January 2013 annual meeting when it set the

2013 commercial halibut fishery catch limits.

The halibut resource is fully utilized. Recent catches in the commercial halibut fisheries off Alaska have averaged 31,535 mt round weight per year (1994 through 2011). In January 2013, the IPHC recommended Alaska commercial catch limits totaling 13,910 mt round weight for 2013, a 10 percent decrease from 15,427 mt in 2012. Through December 31, 2012, commercial hook-and-line harvests of halibut off Alaska totaled 14,981 mt round weight.

The 2013 catch limit recommendations for Alaska decreased for each IPHC management area except Area 2C. For Area 3A, the catch limit decreased to 6,670 mt from 7,208 mt round weight in 2012; for Area 3B, the catch limit decreased to 2,594 mt from 3,066 mt in 2012; for Area 4A, the catch limit decreased to 806 mt from 948 mt in 2012; for Area 4B, the catch limit decreased to 877 mt from 1,130 mt in 2012; and for combined Areas CDE, the catch limit decreased to 1,167 mt from 1,491 mt in 2012. The only increase in catch limit recommendations in Alaska is for Area 2C, to 1,796 mt round weight from 1,587 mt round weight in 2012.

For more information, see the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications (77 FR 72297, December 5, 2012), which discusses the potential impacts of expected fishing for groundfish on halibut stocks, as well as methods available for reducing halibut bycatch in the groundfish fisheries.

Halibut Discard Mortality Rates

To monitor halibut bycatch mortality allowances and apportionments, the Regional Administrator uses observed halibut incidental catch rates, discard mortality rates (DMRs), and estimates of groundfish catch to project when a fishery's halibut bycatch mortality allowance or seasonal apportionment is reached. The DMRs are based on the best information available, including information contained in the annual SAFE report.

NMFS is implementing the Council's recommendation that the halibut DMRs developed and recommended by the IPHC for the 2013 through 2015 GOA groundfish fisheries be used for monitoring the final 2013 and 2014 halibut bycatch mortality allowances (see Tables 14 through 16). The IPHC developed the DMRs for the 2013 through 2015 GOA groundfish fisheries using the 10-year mean DMRs for those fisheries. Long-term average DMRs were not available for some fisheries, so rates from the most recent years were used. For the skate, sculpin, shark, squid, and octopus fisheries, where insufficient mortality data are available, the mortality rate of halibut caught in the Pacific cod fishery for that gear type was recommended as a default rate. The IPHC will analyze observer data annually and recommend changes to the DMRs when a fishery DMR shows large variation from the mean. A discussion of the DMRs and how the IPHC establishes them is available from the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

Table 18 lists the final 2013 and 2014 DMRs. These DMRs are unchanged from the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications (77 FR 72297, December 5, 2012).

Table 18. Final 2013 and 2014 Halibut Discard Mortality Rates for Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Alaska (Values are percent of halibut assumed to be dead.)

Gear	Target fishery	Mortality rate (%)
Hook-and-line	Other fisheries[1]	11
	Skates	11
	Pacific cod	11
	Rockfish	9
Trawl	Arrowtooth flounder	73
	Deep-water flatfish	43
	Flathead sole	65
	Non-pelagic pollock	60
	Other fisheries[1]	62
	Pacific cod	62
	Pelagic pollock	71
	Rex sole	69
	Rockfish	66
	Sablefish	71
	Shallow-water flatfish	67
Pot	Other fisheries[1]	17
	Pacific cod	17

[1] Other fisheries includes all gear types for skates, sculpins, sharks, squids, octopuses, and hook-and-line sablefish.

Chinook Salmon Prohibited Species Catch Limits

In 2012, NMFS issued a final rule to implement Amendment 93 to the GOA FMP (77 FR 42629, July 20, 2012). Amendment 93 established separate Chinook salmon PSC limits in the Western and Central GOA in the directed pollock fishery. These limits require NMFS to close the pollock directed fishery in the Western and Central regulatory areas of the GOA if the applicable limit is reached (§ 679.21(h)(6)). The annual Chinook salmon PSC limits in the pollock directed fishery of 6,684 salmon in the Western GOA and 18,316 salmon in the Central GOA are set in regulation at § 679.21(h)(2)(i) and (ii). In addition, all salmon (regardless of species) taken in the pollock directed fisheries in the Western and Central GOA must be retained until an observer at the processing facility that takes delivery of the catch is provided an opportunity to count the number of salmon and to collect any scientific data or biological samples from the salmon (§ 679.21(h)(4)).

American Fisheries Act C/P and CV Groundfish Harvest and PSC Limits

Section 679.64 establishes groundfish harvesting and processing sideboard limitations on AFA C/Ps and CVs in the GOA. These sideboard limits are necessary to protect the interests of fishermen and processors who do not directly benefit from the AFA from those fishermen and processors who receive exclusive harvesting and processing privileges under the AFA. Section 679.7(k)(1)(ii) prohibits listed AFA C/Ps from harvesting any species of groundfish in the GOA. Additionally, § 679.7(k)(1)(iv) prohibits listed AFA C/Ps from processing any pollock harvested in a directed pollock fishery in the GOA and any groundfish harvested in Statistical Area 630 of the GOA.

AFA CVs that are less than 125 ft (38.1 meters) length overall, have annual landings of pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands less than 5,100 mt, and have made at least 40 groundfish landings from 1995 through 1997 are exempt from GOA sideboard limits under § 679.64(b)(2)(ii). Sideboard limits for non-exempt AFA CVs in the GOA are based on their traditional harvest levels of TAC in groundfish fisheries covered by the FMP. Section 679.64(b)(3)(iii) establishes the groundfish sideboard limitations in the GOA based on the retained catch of non-exempt AFA CVs of each sideboard species from 1995 through 1997 divided by the TAC for that species over the same period.

Tables 19 and 20 list the final 2013 and 2014 groundfish sideboard limits for non-exempt AFA CVs. NMFS will deduct all targeted or incidental catch of sideboard species made by non-exempt AFA CVs from the sideboard limits listed in Tables 19 and 20.

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Table 19. Final 2013 GOA Non-Exempt American Fisheries Act Catcher Vessel (CV) Groundfish Harvest Sideboard Limits
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Apportionments by season/gear	Area/component	Ratio of 1995-1997 non-exempt AFA CV catch to 1995-1997 TAC	Final 2013 TACs	Final 2013 non-exempt AFA CV sideboard limit
Pollock	A Season January 20 – March 10	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	4,292	2,595
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	16,433	1,918
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	5,998	1,216
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	4,292	2,595
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	19,811	2,312
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	2,618	531
	C Season August 25 - October 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	9,744	5,892
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	7,600	887
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	9,378	1,902
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	9,744	5,892
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	7,600	887
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	9,378	1,902
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.3495	3,385	1,183
		SEO (650)	0.3495	10,774	3,766
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W	0.1331	12,726	1,694
		C	0.0692	22,180	1,535
	B Season[2] September 1 - December 31	W	0.1331	8,484	1,129
		C	0.0692	14,786	1,023
	Annual	E inshore	0.0079	2,182	17
		E offshore	0.0078	242	2
Sablefish	Annual, trawl gear	W	0.0000	350	0
		C	0.0642	1,108	71
		E	0.0433	261	11
Flatfish, Shallow-water	Annual	W	0.0156	13,250	207
		C	0.0587	18,000	1,057
		E	0.0126	5,827	73
Flatfish, deep-water	Annual	W	0.0000	176	0
		C	0.0647	2,308	149
		E	0.0128	2,642	34
Rex sole	Annual	W	0.0007	1,300	1
		C	0.0384	6,376	245
		E	0.0029	1,884	5
Arrowtooth	Annual	W	0.0021	14,500	30

flounder		C	0.0280	75,000	2,100
		E	0.0002	13,800	3
Flathead sole	Annual	W	0.0036	8,650	31
		C	0.0213	15,400	328
		E	0.0009	6,446	6
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.0023	2,040	5
		C	0.0748	10,926	817
		E	0.0466	3,446	161
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	0.0003	2,008	1
		C	0.0277	3,122	86
Shortraker rockfish	Annual	W	0.0000	104	0
		C	0.0218	452	10
		E	0.0110	525	6
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.0001	377	0
		C	0.0000	3,533	0
		E	0.0067	790	5
Rougheye rockfish	Annual	W	0.0000	81	0
		C	0.0237	856	20
		E	0.0124	295	4
Demersal shelf rockfish	Annual	SEO	0.0020	303	1
Thornyhead rockfish	Annual	W	0.0280	150	4
		C	0.0280	766	21
		E	0.0280	749	21
Other rockfish	Annual	W	0.0034	44	0
		C	0.1699	606	103
		E	0.0000	430	0
Atka mackerel	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0309	2,000	62
Big skates	Annual	W	0.0063	469	3
		C	0.0063	1,793	11
		E	0.0063	1,505	9
Longnose skates	Annual	W	0.0063	70	0
		C	0.0063	1,879	12
		E	0.0063	676	4
Other skates	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	2,030	13
Sculpins	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	5,884	37
Sharks	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	6,028	38
Squids	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	1,148	7
Octopuses	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	1,455	9

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

Table 20. Final 2014 GOA Non-Exempt American Fisheries Act Catcher Vessel (CV) Groundfish Harvest Sideboard Limits
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Apportionments by season/gear	Area/component	Ratio of 1995-1997 non-exempt AFA CV catch to 1995-1997 TAC	Final 2014 TACs	Final 2014 non-exempt AFA CV sideboard limit
Pollock	A Season January 20 - March 10	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	3,921	2,371
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	15,015	1,752
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	5,481	1,112
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	3,920	2,371
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	18,102	2,112
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	2,393	485
	C Season August 25 - October 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	8,903	5,384
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	6,944	810
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	8,568	1,738
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.6047	8,903	5,384
		Chirikof (620)	0.1167	6,944	810
		Kodiak (630)	0.2028	8,568	1,738
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.3495	3,093	1,081
		SEO (650)	0.3495	10,774	3,766
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W	0.1331	13,262	1,765
		C	0.0692	23,113	1,599
	B Season[2] September 1 - December 31	W	0.1331	8,841	1,177
		C	0.0692	15,409	1,066
	Annual	E inshore	0.0079	2,273	18
		E offshore	0.0078	253	2
Sablefish	Annual, trawl gear	W	0.0000	328	0
		C	0.0642	1,039	67
		E	0.0433	245	11
Flatfish, Shallow-water	Annual	W	0.0156	13,250	207
		C	0.0587	18,000	1,057
		E	0.0126	5,827	73
Flatfish, deep-water	Annual	W	0.0000	176	0
		C	0.0647	2,308	149
		E	0.0128	2,642	34
Rex sole	Annual	W	0.0007	1,287	1
		C	0.0384	6,310	242
		E	0.0029	1,863	5

Arrowtooth flounder	Annual	W	0.0021	14,500	30
		C	0.0280	75,000	2,100
		E	0.0002	13,800	3
Flathead sole	Annual	W	0.0036	8,650	31
		C	0.0213	15,400	328
		E	0.0009	6,582	6
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.0023	2,005	5
		C	0.0748	10,740	803
		E	0.0466	3,388	158
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	0.0003	1,899	1
		C	0.0277	2,951	82
Shortraker rockfish	Annual	W	0.0000	104	0
		C	0.0218	452	10
		E	0.0110	525	6
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.0001	354	0
		C	0.0000	3317	0
		E	0.0067	742	5
Rougheye rockfish	Annual	W	0.0000	83	0
		C	0.0237	871	21
		E	0.0124	300	4
Demersal shelf rockfish	Annual	SEO	0.0020	303	1
Thornyhead rockfish	Annual	W	0.0280	150	4
		C	0.0280	766	21
		E	0.0280	749	21
Other rockfish	Annual	W	0.0034	44	0
		C	0.1699	606	103
		E	0.0000	430	0
Atka mackerel	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0309	2,000	62
Big skates	Annual	W	0.0063	469	3
		C	0.0063	1,793	11
		E	0.0063	1,505	9
Longnose skates	Annual	W	0.0063	70	0
		C	0.0063	1,879	12
		E	0.0063	676	4
Other skates	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	2,030	13
Sculpins	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	5,884	37
Squids	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	6,028	38
Sharks	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	1,148	7
Octopuses	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0063	1,455	9

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

Non-Exempt AFA Catcher Vessel Halibut PSC Limits

The halibut PSC sideboard limits for non-exempt AFA CVs in the GOA are based on the aggregate retained groundfish catch by non-exempt AFA CVs in each PSC target category from 1995 through 1997 divided by the retained catch of all vessels in that fishery from 1995 through 1997 (§ 679.64(b)(4)). Table 21 lists the final 2013 and 2014 non-exempt AFA CV halibut PSC limits for vessels using trawl gear in the GOA. These halibut PSC limits are unchanged from the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications.

Table 21. Final 2013 and 2014 Non-Exempt AFA CV Halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) Limits for Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the GOA (Values are rounded to nearest metric ton.)

Season	Season dates	Target fishery	Ratio of 1995-1997 non-exempt AFA CV retained catch to total retained catch	2013 and 2014 PSC limit	2013 and 2014 non-exempt AFA CV PSC limit
1	January 20 - April 1	shallow-water	0.340	444	151
		deep-water	0.070	99	7
2	April 1 - July 1	shallow-water	0.340	99	34
		deep-water	0.070	296	21
3	July 1 - September 1	shallow-water	0.340	197	67
		deep-water	0.070	395	28
4	September 1 - October 1	shallow-water	0.340	148	50
		deep-water	0.070	0	0
5	October 1 - December 31	all targets	0.205	296	61

Non-AFA Crab Vessel Groundfish Harvest Limitations

Section 680.22 establishes groundfish catch limits for vessels with a history of participation in the Bering Sea snow crab fishery to prevent these vessels from using the increased flexibility provided by the Crab Rationalization Program to expand their level of participation in the GOA groundfish fisheries. Sideboard limits restrict these vessels' catch to their collective historical landings in each GOA groundfish fishery (except the fixed-gear sablefish fishery). Sideboard limits also apply to catch made using an LLP license derived from the history of a restricted vessel, even if that LLP license is used on another vessel.

The basis for these sideboard limits is described in detail in the final rules implementing the major provisions of the Allocation of Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fishery Resources (70 FR 10174, March 2, 2005), Amendment 34 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Island King and Tanner Crabs (76 FR 35772, June 20, 2011), and Amendment 83 to the GOA FMP (76 FR 74670, December 1, 2011).

Tables 22 and 23 list the final 2013 and 2014 groundfish sideboard limitations for non-AFA crab vessels. All targeted or incidental catch of sideboard species made by non-AFA crab vessels or associated LLP licenses will be deducted from these sideboard limits.

Table 22. Final 2013 GOA Non-American Fisheries Act Crab Vessel Groundfish Harvest Sideboard Limits
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Season/gear	Area/component/ gear	Ratio of 1996-2000 non-AFA crab vessel catch to 1996-2000 total harvest	Final 2013 TACs	Final 2013 non-AFA crab vessel sideboard limit
Pollock	A Season January 20 - March 10	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	4,292	42
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	16,433	51
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	5,998	1
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	4,292	42
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	19,811	61
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	2,618	1
	C Season August 25 - October 1	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	9,744	95
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	7,600	24
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	9,378	2
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	9,744	95
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	7,600	24
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	9,378	2
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.0000	3,385	0
		SEO (650)	0.0000	10,774	0
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W Jig	0.0000	12,726	0
		W Hook-and-line CV	0.0004	12,726	5
		W Hook-and-line C/P	0.0018	12,726	23
		W Pot CV	0.0997	12,726	1,269
		W Pot C/P	0.0078	12,726	99
		W Trawl CV	0.0007	12,726	9
		C Jig	0.0000	22,180	0
		C Hook-and-line CV	0.0001	22,180	2
		C Hook-and-line C/P	0.0012	22,180	27
		C Pot CV	0.0474	22,180	1,051
		C Pot C/P	0.0136	22,180	302
		C Trawl CV	0.0012	22,180	27
	B Season[2] Jig Gear: June 10 - December 31	W Jig	0.0000	8,484	0
		W Hook-and-line CV	0.0004	8,484	3
		W Hook-and-line C/P	0.0001	8,484	15
	All other gears:	W Pot CV	0.0997	8,484	846

	September 1 - December 31	W Pot C/P	0.0078	8,484	66
		W Trawl CV	0.0007	8,484	6
		C Jig	0.0000	14,786	0
		C Hook-and-line CV	0.0001	14,786	1
		C Hook-and-line C/P	0.0012	14,786	18
		C Pot CV	0.0474	14,786	701
		C Pot C/P	0.0136	14,786	201
		C Trawl CV	0.0012	14,786	18
	Annual	E inshore	0.0110	2,182	24
		E offshore	0.0000	242	0
Sablefish	Annual, trawl gear	W	0.0000	350	0
		C	0.0000	1,108	0
		E	0.0000	261	0
Flatfish, shallow-water	Annual	W	0.0059	13,250	78
		C	0.0001	18,000	2
		E	0.0000	5,827	0
Flatfish, deep-water	Annual	W	0.0035	176	1
		C	0.0000	2,308	0
		E	0.0000	2,642	0
Rex sole	Annual	W	0.0000	1,300	0
		C	0.0000	6,376	0
		E	0.0000	1,884	0
Arrowtooth flounder	Annual	W	0.0004	14,500	6
		C	0.0001	75,000	8
		E	0.0000	13,800	0
Flathead sole	Annual	W	0.0002	8,650	2
		C	0.0004	15,400	6
		E	0.0000	6,446	0
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.0000	2,040	0
		C	0.0000	10,926	0
		E	0.0000	3,446	0
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	0.0005	2,008	1
		C	0.0000	3,122	0
Shortraker rockfish	Annual	W	0.0013	104	0
		C	0.0012	452	1
		E	0.0009	525	0
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.0017	377	1
		C	0.0000	3,533	0
		E	0.0000	790	0
Rougheye rockfish	Annual	W	0.0067	81	1
		C	0.0047	856	4

		E	0.0008	295	0
Demersal shelf rockfish	Annual	SEO	0.0000	303	0
Thornyhead rockfish	Annual	W	0.0047	150	1
		C	0.0066	766	5
		E	0.0045	749	3
Other rockfish	Annual	W	0.0035	44	0
		C	0.0033	606	2
		E	0.0000	430	0
Atka mackerel	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0000	2,000	0
Big skate	Annual	W	0.0392	469	18
		C	0.0159	1,793	29
		E	0.0000	1,505	0
Longnose skate	Annual	W	0.0392	70	3
		C	0.0159	1,879	30
		E	0.0000	676	0
Other skates	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	2,030	36
Sculpins	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	5,884	104
Sharks	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	6,028	106
Squids	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	1,148	20
Octopuses	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	1,455	26

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

Table 23. Final 2014 GOA Non-American Fisheries Act Crab Vessel Groundfish Harvest Sideboard Limits
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Species	Season/gear	Area/component/ gear	Ratio of 1996-2000 non-AFA crab vessel catch to 1996-2000 total harvest	Final 2014 TACs	Final 2014 non-AFA crab vessel sideboard limit
Pollock	A Season January 20 - March 10	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	3,921	38
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	16,434	51
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	5,999	1
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	3,920	38
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	18,101	56
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	2,393	0
	C Season August 25 - October 1	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	8,903	87
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	6,944	22
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	8,568	2
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.0098	8,903	87
		Chirikof (620)	0.0031	6,944	22
		Kodiak (630)	0.0002	8,568	2
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.0000	3,093	0
		SEO (650)	0.0000	10,774	0
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W Jig	0.0000	13,262	0
		W Hook-and-line CV	0.0004	13,262	5
		W Hook-and-line C/P	0.0018	13,262	24
		W Pot CV	0.0997	13,262	1,322
		W Pot C/P	0.0078	13,262	103
		W Trawl CV	0.0007	13,262	9
		C Jig	0.0000	23,113	0
		C Hook-and-line CV	0.0001	23,113	2
		C Hook-and-line C/P	0.0012	23,113	28
		C Pot CV	0.0474	23,113	1,096
		C Pot C/P	0.0136	23,113	314
		C Trawl CV	0.0012	23,113	28
	B Season[2] Jig Gear: June 10 - December 31	W Jig	0.0000	8,841	0
		W Hook-and-line CV	0.0004	8,841	4
		W Hook-and-line C/P	0.0018	8,841	16

	All other gears: September 1 - December 31	W Pot CV	0.0997	8,841	881
		W Pot C/P	0.0078	8,841	69
		W Trawl CV	0.0012	8,841	6
		C Jig	0.0000	15,409	0
		C Hook-and-line CV	0.0001	15,409	2
		C Hook-and-line C/P	0.0012	15,409	18
		C Pot CV	0.0474	15,409	730
		C Pot C/P	0.0136	15,409	210
		C Trawl CV	0.0012	15,409	18
	Annual	E inshore	0.0110	2,273	25
		E offshore	0.0000	253	0
Sablefish	Annual, trawl gear	W	0.0000	328	0
		C	0.0000	1,039	0
		E	0.0000	245	0
Flatfish, shallow-water	Annual	W	0.0059	13,250	78
		C	0.0001	18,000	2
		E	0.0000	5,827	0
Flatfish, deep-water	Annual	W	0.0035	176	1
		C	0.0000	2,308	0
		E	0.0000	2,642	0
Rex sole	Annual	W	0.0000	1,287	0
		C	0.0000	6,310	0
		E	0.0000	1,863	0
Arrowtooth flounder	Annual	W	0.0004	14,500	6
		C	0.0001	75,000	8
		E	0.0000	13,800	0
Flathead sole	Annual	W	0.0002	8,650	2
		C	0.0004	15,400	6
		E	0.0000	6,582	0
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.0000	2,005	0
		C	0.0000	10,740	0
		E	0.0000	3,388	0
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	0.0005	1,899	1
		C	0.0000	2,951	0
Shortraker rockfish	Annual	W	0.0013	104	0
		C	0.0012	452	1
		E	0.0009	525	0
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.0017	354	1
		C	0.0000	3,317	0
		E	0.0000	742	0
Rougheye	Annual	W	0.0067	83	1

rockfish		C	0.0047	871	4
		E	0.0008	300	0
Demersal shelf rockfish	Annual	SEO	0.0000	303	0
Thornyhead rockfish	Annual	W	0.0047	150	1
		C	0.0066	766	5
		E	0.0045	749	3
Other rockfish	Annual	W	0.0035	44	0
		C	0.0033	606	2
		E	0.0000	430	0
Atka mackerel	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0000	2,000	0
Big skate	Annual	W	0.0392	469	18
		C	0.0159	1,793	29
		E	0.0000	1,505	0
Longnose skate	Annual	W	0.0392	70	3
		C	0.0159	1,879	30
		E	0.0000	676	0
Other skates	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	2,030	36
Sculpins	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	5,884	104
Sharks	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	6,028	106
Squids	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	1,148	20
Octopuses	Annual	Gulfwide	0.0176	1,455	26

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

Rockfish Program Groundfish Sideboard and Halibut PSC Limitations

The Rockfish Program establishes three classes of sideboard provisions: CV groundfish sideboard restrictions, C/P rockfish sideboard restrictions, and C/P opt-out vessel sideboard restrictions. These sideboards are intended to limit the ability of rockfish harvesters to expand into other fisheries.

CVs participating in the Rockfish Program may not participate in directed fishing for northern rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, and pelagic shelf rockfish (dusky rockfish) in the West Yakutat district and Western GOA from July 1 through July 31. Furthermore, CVs may not participate in directed fishing for arrowtooth flounder, deep-water flatfish, and rex sole in the GOA from July 1 through July 31 (§ 679.82(d)).

Catcher/processors participating in Rockfish Program cooperatives are restricted by rockfish and halibut PSC limitations. These C/Ps are prohibited from directed fishing for northern rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, and pelagic shelf rockfish (dusky rockfish) in the West Yakutat district and Western GOA from July 1 through July 31. Holders of C/P-designated LLP licenses that opt-out of participating in a Rockfish Program cooperative will be able to access that portion of each sideboard limit that is not assigned to rockfish cooperatives. Tables 24 and 25 list the final 2013 and 2014 Rockfish Program C/P sideboard limits in the West Yakutat district and the Western GOA. Due to confidentiality requirements associated with fisheries data, the sideboard limits for the West Yakutat district are not displayed.

Table 24. Final 2013 Rockfish Program Harvest Limits by Sector for West Yakutat District and Western GOA by the Catcher/Processor Sector. (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Area	Fishery	C/P sector (% of TAC)	Final 2013 TACs	Final 2013 C/P limit
West Yakutat District	Dusky rockfish	Confidential[1]	495	Confidential[1]
	Pacific ocean perch	Confidential[1]	1,641	Confidential[1]
Western GOA	Dusky rockfish	72.3	377	273
	Pacific ocean perch	50.6	2,040	1,032
	Northern rockfish	74.3	2,008	1,492

[1] Not released due to confidentiality requirements associated with fish ticket data, as established by NMFS and the State of Alaska.

Table 25. Final 2014 Rockfish Program Harvest Limits by Sector for West Yakutat District and Western GOA by the Catcher/Processor Sector. (Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Area	Fishery	C/P sector (% of TAC)	Final 2014 TACs	Final 2014 C/P limit
West Yakutat District	Dusky rockfish	Confidential[1]	465	Confidential[1]
	Pacific ocean perch	Confidential[1]	1,613	Confidential[1]
Western GOA	Dusky rockfish	72.3	354	256
	Pacific ocean perch	50.6	2,005	1,015
	Northern rockfish	74.3	1,899	1,411

[1] Not released due to confidentiality requirements associated with fish ticket data, as established by NMFS and the State of Alaska.

The C/P sector is subject to halibut PSC sideboard limits for the trawl deep-water and shallow-water species fisheries during the period July 1 through July 31. No halibut PSC sideboard limits apply to the CV sector, as vessels participating in cooperatives receive a portion of the annual halibut PSC limit. C/Ps that opt-out of the Rockfish Program would be able to access that portion of the deep-water and shallow-water halibut PSC sideboard limit not assigned to C/P rockfish cooperatives. The sideboard provisions for C/Ps that elect to opt-out of participating in a rockfish cooperative are described in § 679.82(c), (e), and (f). Sideboards are linked to the catch history of specific vessels that may choose to opt-out. Once NMFS determines which C/Ps have opted-out of the Rockfish Program in 2013, the ratios and amounts used to calculate opt-out sideboard ratios will be known. NMFS will then calculate any applicable opt-out sideboards and post these allocations on the Alaska Region Web site at *http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/default.htm*). Table 26 lists the 2013 and 2014 Rockfish Program halibut PSC limits for the catcher/processor sector.

Table 26. Final 2013 and 2014 Rockfish Program Halibut Mortality Limits for the Catcher/Processor Sector
(Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.)

Sector	Shallow-water complex halibut PSC sideboard ratio (percent)	Deep-water complex halibut PSC sideboard ratio (percent)	Annual halibut mortality limit (mt)	Annual shallow-water complex halibut PSC sideboard limit (mt)	Annual deep-water complex halibut PSC sideboard limit (mt)
Catcher/ processor	0.10	2.50	1,973	2	49

Amendment 80 Program Groundfish and PSC Sideboard Limits

Amendment 80 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (Amendment 80 Program) established a limited access privilege program for the non-AFA trawl C/P sector. To limit the ability of participants eligible for the Amendment 80 Program to expand their harvest efforts in the GOA, the Amendment 80 Program established groundfish and halibut PSC catch limits for Amendment 80 Program participants.

Section 679.92 establishes groundfish harvesting sideboard limits on all Amendment 80 program vessels, other than the F/V GOLDEN FLEECE, to amounts no greater than the limits shown in Table 37 to 50 CFR part 679. Under regulations at § 679.92(d), the F/V GOLDEN FLEECE is prohibited from directed fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, Pacific ocean perch, dusky rockfish, and northern rockfish in the GOA.

Groundfish sideboard limits for Amendment 80 Program vessels operating in the GOA are based on their average aggregate harvests from 1998 through 2004. Tables 27 and 28 list the final 2013 and 2014 sideboard limits for Amendment 80 Program vessels. These limits are based on the final 2013 and 2014 TACs established by this action, and thus may differ proportionately from the sideboard limits in the proposed harvest specifications. NMFS will deduct all targeted or incidental catch of sideboard species made by Amendment 80 Program vessels from the sideboard limits in Tables 27 and 28.

Table 27. Final 2013 GOA Groundfish Sideboard Limits for Amendment 80 Program Vessels
(Values are rounded to nearest metric ton.)

Species	Apportionments and allocations by season	Area	Ratio of Amendment 80 sector vessels 1998 - 2004 catch to TAC	2013 TAC (mt)	2013 Amendment 80 vessel sideboards (mt)
Pollock	A Season January 20 - February 25	Shumagin (610)	0.003	4,292	13
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	16,433	33
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	5,998	12
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.003	4,292	13
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	19,811	40
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	2,618	5
	C Season August 25 - September 15	Shumagin (610)	0.003	9,744	29
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	7,600	15
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	9,378	19
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.003	9,744	29
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	7,600	15
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	9,378	19
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.002	3,385	7
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W	0.020	12,726	255
		C	0.044	22,180	976
	B Season[2] September 1 - December 31	W	0.020	8,484	170
		C	0.044	14,786	651
	Annual	WYK	0.034	2,424	82
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.994	2,040	2,028
		WYK	0.961	1,641	1,577
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	1.000	2,008	2,008
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.764	377	288
		WYK	0.896	495	444

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

Table 28. Final 2014 GOA Groundfish Sideboard Limits for Amendment 80 Program Vessels
(Values are rounded to nearest metric ton.)

Species	Apportionments and allocations by season	Area	Ratio of Amendment 80 sector vessels 1998 - 2004 catch to TAC	2014 TAC (mt)	2014 Amendment 80 vessel sideboards (mt)
Pollock	A Season January 20 - February 25	Shumagin (610)	0.003	3,921	12
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	15,016	30
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	5,481	11
	B Season March 10 - May 31	Shumagin (610)	0.003	3,920	12
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	18,101	36
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	2,393	5
	C Season August 25 - September 15	Shumagin (610)	0.003	8,903	27
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	6,944	14
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	8,568	17
	D Season October 1 - November 1	Shumagin (610)	0.003	8,903	27
		Chirikof (620)	0.002	6,944	14
		Kodiak (630)	0.002	8,568	17
	Annual	WYK (640)	0.002	3,093	6
Pacific cod	A Season[1] January 1 - June 10	W	0.020	13,262	265
		C	0.044	23,113	1,017
	B Season[2] September 1 - December 31	W	0.020	8,841	177
		C	0.044	15,409	678
	Annual	WYK	0.034	2,526	86
Pacific ocean perch	Annual	W	0.994	2,005	1,993
		WYK	0.961	1,613	1,550
Northern rockfish	Annual	W	1.000	1,899	1,899
Dusky rockfish	Annual	W	0.764	354	270
		WYK	0.896	465	417

[1] The Pacific cod A season for trawl gear does not open until January 20.
[2] The Pacific cod B season for trawl gear closes November 1.

The PSC sideboard limits for Amendment 80 Program vessels in the GOA are based on the historic use of halibut PSC by Amendment 80 Program vessels in each PSC target category from 1998 through 2004. These values are slightly lower than the average historic use to accommodate two factors: Allocation of halibut PSC cooperative quota under the Central GOA Rockfish Program and the exemption of the F/V GOLDEN FLEECE from this restriction (§ 679.92(b)(2)). Table 29 lists the final 2013 and 2014 halibut PSC limits for Amendment 80 Program vessels, as contained in Table 38 to 50 CFR part 679. These halibut PSC limits are unchanged from those listed in the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications.

Table 29. Final 2013 and 2014 Halibut PSC Limits for Amendment 80 Program Vessels in the GOA
(Values are rounded to nearest metric ton.)

Season	Season dates	Target fishery	Historic Amendment 80 use of the annual halibut PSC limit catch (ratio)	2013 and 2014 annual PSC limit (mt)	2013 and 2014 Amendment 80 vessel PSC limit
1	January 20 - April 1	shallow-water	0.0048	1,973	9
		deep-water	0.0115	1,973	23
2	April 1 - July 1	shallow-water	0.0189	1,973	37
		deep-water	0.1072	1,973	212
3	July 1 - September 1	shallow-water	0.0146	1,973	29
		deep-water	0.0521	1,973	103
4	September 1 - October 1	shallow-water	0.0074	1,973	15
		deep-water	0.0014	1,973	3
5	October 1 - December 31	shallow-water	0.0227	1,973	45
		deep-water	0.0371	1,973	73

Directed Fishing Closures

Pursuant to § 679.20(d)(1)(i), if the Regional Administrator determines (1) that any allocation or apportionment of a target species or species group allocated or apportioned to a fishery will be reached; or (2) with respect to pollock and Pacific cod, that an allocation or apportionment to an inshore or offshore component or sector allocation will be reached, the Regional Administrator may establish a directed fishing allowance (DFA) for that species or species group. If the Regional Administrator establishes a DFA and that allowance is or will be reached before the end of the fishing year, NMFS will prohibit directed fishing for that species or species group in the specified GOA regulatory area or district (§ 679.20(d)(1)(iii)).

The Regional Administrator has determined that the TACs for the species listed in Table 30 are necessary to account for the incidental catch of these species in other anticipated groundfish fisheries for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years.

Table 30. 2013 and 2014 Directed Fishing Closures in the GOA (Amounts for incidental catch in other directed fisheries are in metric tons.)

Target	Area/component/gear	Incidental catch amount
Pollock	all/offshore	not applicable[1]
Sablefish[2]	all/trawl	1,719 (2013) 1,612 (2014)
Pacific cod	Western, catcher/processor, trawl	496 (2013) 517 (2014)
Shortraker rockfish[2]	all	1,081
Other rockfish	all	1,080
Rougheye rockfish	all	1,232 (2013) 1,254 (2014)
Thornyhead rockfish	all	1,665
Atka mackerel	all	2,000
Big skate	all	3,767
Longnose skate	all	2,625
Other skates	all	2,030
Sharks	all	6,028
Squids	all	1,148
Octopuses	all	1,455

[1] Pollock is closed to directed fishing in the GOA by the offshore component under § 679.20(a)(6)(i).
[2] Closures not applicable to participants in cooperatives conducted under the Central GOA Rockfish Program.

Consequently, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator establishes the DFA for the species or species groups listed in Table 30 as zero mt. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for those species, areas, gear types, and components in the GOA listed in Table 30. These closures will remain in effect through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2014.

Section 679.64(b)(5) provides for management of AFA CV groundfish harvest limits and PSC bycatch limits using directed fishing closures and PSC closures according to procedures set out at §§ 679.20(d)(1)(iv), 679.21(d)(8), and 679.21(e)(3)(v). The Regional Administrator has determined that, in addition to the closures listed above, many of the non-exempt AFA CV sideboard limits listed in Tables 19 and 20 are necessary as incidental catch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years. In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iv), the Regional Administrator sets the DFAs for the species and species groups in Table 31 at zero. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing by non-exempt AFA CVs in the GOA for the species and specified areas listed in Table 31. These closures will remain in effect through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2014.

Table 31. 2013 and 2014 Non-Exempt AFA CV Sideboard Directed Fishing Closures for All Gear Types in the GOA
(Amounts for incidental catch in other directed fisheries are in metric tons.)

Species	Regulatory area/district	Incidental catch amount
Pacific cod	Eastern	17 (inshore) and 2 (offshore) in 2013 18 (inshore) and 2 (offshore) in 2014
Shallow-water flatfish	Eastern	73
Deep-water flatfish	Western	0
Rex sole	Eastern and Western	1 and 5
Arrowtooth flounder	Eastern and Western	3 and 30
Flathead sole	Eastern and Western	6 and 31
Pacific ocean perch	Western	5
Northern rockfish	Western	1
Dusky rockfish	Entire GOA	5
Demersal shelf rockfish	SEO District	1
Sculpins	Entire GOA	37
Squids	Entire GOA	7

Section 680.22 provides for the management of non-AFA crab vessel sideboards using directed fishing closures in accordance with § 680.22(e)(2) and (3). The Regional Administrator has determined that the non-AFA crab vessel sideboards listed in Tables 22 and 23 are insufficient to support a directed fishery and has set the sideboard DFA at zero, with the exception of Pacific cod pot CV sector apportionments in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas. Therefore, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing by non-AFA crab vessels in the GOA for all species and species groups listed in Tables 22 and 23, with the exception of the Pacific cod pot CV sector apportionments in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas.

Section 679.82 provides for the management of Rockfish Program sideboard limits using directed fishing closures in accordance with § 679.82(d) and (e). The Regional Administrator has determined that the CV sideboards listed in Tables 24 and 25 are insufficient to support a directed fishery and has set the sideboard DFA at zero. Therefore, NMFS is closing directed fishing for Pacific ocean perch and dusky rockfish in the WYK district and the Western Regulatory Area, and for northern rockfish in the Western Regulatory Area by CVs participating in the Central GOA Rockfish Program during the month of July in 2013 and 2014. These closures will remain in effect through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2014.

Closures implemented under the 2012 and 2013 GOA harvest specifications for groundfish (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012) remain effective under authority of these final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, and are posted at the following Web site: *http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/cm/info_bulletins/*.

While these closures are in effect, the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a fishing trip. These closures to directed fishing are in addition to closures and prohibitions found in regulations at 50 CFR part 679. NMFS may implement other closures during the 2013 and 2014 fishing years as necessary for effective conservation and management.

Comments and Response

NMFS did not receive any comments in response to the proposed 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications (77 FR 72297, December 5, 2012).

Classification

NMFS has determined that these final harvest specifications are consistent with the FMP and with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is authorized under 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866 and 13563.

NMFS prepared an EIS for this action (see **ADDRESSES**) and made it available to the public on January 12, 2007 (72 FR 1512). On February 13, 2007, NMFS issued the Record of Decision (ROD) for the EIS. In January 2013, NMFS prepared a Supplemental Information Report (SIR) for this action. Copies of the EIS, ROD, and SIR for this action are available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**). The EIS analyzes the environmental consequences of the groundfish harvest specifications and alternative harvest strategies on resources in the action area. The EIS found no significant environmental consequences of this action and its alternatives. The preferred alternative is a harvest strategy in which TACs are set at a level that falls within the range of ABCs recommended by the Council's SSC; the sum of the TACs must achieve the OY specified in the FMP. The SIR evaluates the need to prepare a Supplemental EIS (SEIS) for

the 2013 and 2014 groundfish harvest specifications.

An SEIS should be prepared if (1) the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns, or (2) significant new circumstances or information exist relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)). After reviewing the information contained in the SIR and SAFE reports, the Regional Administrator has determined that (1) approval of the 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications, which were set according to the preferred harvest strategy in the EIS, do not constitute a change in the action; and (2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the action or its impacts. Additionally, the 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications will result in environmental impacts within the scope of those analyzed and disclosed in the EIS. Therefore, supplemental National Environmental Policy Act documentation is not necessary to implement the 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications.

Pursuant to section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.,* a FRFA was prepared for this action. The FRFA incorporates the IRFA, and includes a summary of the significant issues raised by public comments in response to the IRFA, NMFS' responses to those comments, and a summary of the analyses completed to support the action.

A copy of the FRFA prepared for this final rule is available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**). A description of this action, its purpose, and its legal basis are contained at the beginning of the preamble to this final rule and are not repeated here.

NMFS published the proposed rule on December 5, 2012 (77 FR 72297). NMFS prepared an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) to accompany this action, and included a summary in the proposed rule. The comment period closed on January 4, 2013. No comments were received on the IRFA or the economic impacts of the rule more generally.

The entities directly regulated by this action are those that receive allocations of groundfish in the EEZ of the GOA, and in parallel fisheries within State of Alaska waters, during the annual harvest specifications process. These directly regulated entities include the groundfish CVs and C/Ps active in these areas. Direct allocations of groundfish are also made to Central GOA Rockfish Program cooperatives. These entities are, therefore, also considered to be directly regulated.

In 2011, there were 1,049 individual CVs with revenues less than or equal to $4 million. Some of these vessels are members of AFA inshore pollock cooperatives, or of GOA rockfish cooperatives. Vessels that participate in these cooperatives are considered to be large entities within the meaning of the RFA. After accounting for membership in these cooperatives, there are an estimated 1,002 small CVs remaining in the GOA.

In 2011, nine C/Ps grossed less than $4 million. Some of these vessels were affiliated through ownership by the same business firm. NMFS estimates that these vessels were owned by eight separate firms. Vessels in this group were also affiliated through membership in two cooperatives (the Amendment 80 Alaska Seafood Cooperative and the Freezer Longline Conservation Cooperative). After taking account of firm and cooperative affiliations, NMFS estimates that these nine vessels represent four small entities.

The number of Rockfish Program cooperatives can change yearly. In 2011, there were 10 separate cooperatives. The Rockfish Program cooperatives are directly regulated, since they receive allocations of TAC through the harvest specifications process. The cooperatives are large entities, since they are affiliated with firms with a combined total gross revenue of over $4 million.

This action does not modify recordkeeping or reporting requirements.

NMFS considered other, alternative harvest strategies when choosing the preferred harvest strategy (Alternative 2) in December 2006. These included the following:

- Alternative 1: Set TACs to produce fishing mortality rates, F, that are equal to maxFABC, unless the sum of the TACs is constrained by the OY established in the FMPs. This is equivalent to setting TACs to produce harvest levels equal to the maximum permissible ABCs, as constrained by OY. The term ''maxFABC'' refers to the maximum permissible value of FABC under Amendment 56 to the groundfish FMPs. Historically, the TAC has been set at or below the ABC, therefore, this alternative represents a likely upper limit for setting the TAC within the OY and ABC limits.
- Alternative 3: For species in Tiers 1, 2, and 3, set TAC to produce F equal to the most recent 5-year average actual F. For species in Tiers 4, 5, and 6, set TAC equal to the most recent 5-year average actual catch. For stocks with a high level of scientific information, TACs would be set to produce harvest levels equal to the most recent 5-year average actual fishing mortality rates. For stocks with insufficient scientific information, TACs would be set equal to the most recent 5-year average actual catch. This alternative recognizes that for some stocks, catches may fall well below ABCs, and recent average F may provide a better indicator of actual F than FABC does.
- Alternative 4: (1) Set TACs for rockfish species in Tier 3 at F75%. Set TACs for rockfish species in Tier 5 at F=0.5M. Set spatially explicit TACs for shortraker and rougheye rockfish in the GOA. (2) Taking the rockfish TACs as calculated above, reduce all other TACs by a proportion that does not vary across species, so that the sum of all TACs, including rockfish TACs, is equal to the lower bound of the area OY (116,000 mt in the GOA). This alternative sets conservative and spatially explicit TACs for rockfish species that are long-lived and late to mature and sets conservative TACs for the other groundfish species.
- Alternative 5: (No Action) Set TACs at zero.

These alternatives do not both meet the objectives of this action although they have a smaller adverse economic impact on small entities than the preferred alternative. The Council rejected these alternatives as harvest strategies in 2006, and the Secretary did so in 2007.

Alternative 1 selected harvest rates that will allow fishermen to harvest stocks at the level of ABCs, unless total harvests are constrained by the upper bound of the GOA OY of 800,000 metric tons. The sums of ABCs in 2013 and 2014 are 595,920 mt and 584,094 mt, respectively. The sums of the TACs in 2013 and 2014 are 436,255 mt and 427,722 mt, respectively. Thus, although the sum of ABCs in each year is less than 800,000 metric tons, the sums of the TACs in each year are less than the sums of the ABCs.

In most cases, the Council has set TACs equal to ABCs. The divergence between aggregate TACs and aggregate ABCs reflects a variety of special species- and fishery-specific circumstances:

- Pacific cod TACs are set equal to 75 percent of the Pacific cod ABCs in each year to account for the guideline harvest levels set by the State of Alaska for Pacific cod in its fisheries that are equal to 25 percent of the Council's ABCs. Thus, this difference does not actually reflect a Pacific cod harvest below the Pacific cod ABC.
- Shallow-water flatfish and flathead sole TACs are set below ABCs in the

Western and Central GOA regulatory areas. Arrowtooth flounder TACs are set below ABC in all GOA regulatory areas. Catches of these flatfish species rarely, if ever, approach the proposed ABCs or TACs. Important trawl fisheries in the GOA take halibut PSC, and are constrained by limits on the allowable halibut PSC mortality. These limits routinely force the closure of trawl fisheries before they have harvested the available groundfish ABC. Thus, actual harvests of groundfish in the GOA routinely fall short of some ABCs and TACs. Markets can also constrain harvests below the TACs, as has been the case with arrowtooth flounder, in the past. These TACs are set to allow for increased harvest opportunities for these targets while conserving the halibut PSC limit for use in other, more fully utilized, fisheries.

• The other rockfish TAC is set below the ABC in the Southeast Outside district based on several factors. In addition to conservation concerns for the rockfish species in this group, there is a regulatory prohibition against using trawl gear east of 140° W. longitude. Because most species of other rockfish are caught exclusively with trawl gear, the catch of such species with other gear types, such as hook-and-line, is low. The commercial catch of other rockfish in the Eastern regulatory area, which includes the West Yakutat and Southeast Outside districts, in the last decade has ranged from approximately 70 mt to 248 mt per year.

• The GOA-wide Atka mackerel TAC is set below the ABC. The estimates of survey biomass continue to be unreliable in the GOA. Therefore, the Council recommended and NMFS agrees that the Atka mackerel TAC in the GOA be set at an amount to support incidental catch in other directed fisheries.

Alternative 3 selects harvest rates based on the most recent 5 years of harvest rates (for species in Tiers 1 through 3) or for the most recent 5 years of harvests (for species in Tiers 4 through 6). This alternative is inconsistent with the objectives of this action, because it does not take account of the most recent biological information for this fishery.

Alternative 4 would lead to significantly lower harvests of all species to reduce TACs from the upper end of the OY range in the GOA to its lower end of 116,000 mt. Overall, this would reduce 2013 TACs by about 73 percent. This would lead to significant reductions in harvests of species harvested by small entities. While production declines in the GOA would undoubtedly be associated with price increases in the GOA, these increases would still be constrained by the availability of substitutes, and are very unlikely to offset revenue declines from smaller production. Thus, this action would have a detrimental economic impact on small entities.

Alternative 5, which sets all harvests equal to zero, may also address conservation issues, but would have a significant adverse economic impact on small entities.

Impacts on marine mammals resulting from fishing activities conducted under this rule are discussed in the EIS (see **ADDRESSES**).

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness for this rule because delaying this rule would be contrary to the public interest. The Plan Team review occurred in November 2012, and Council consideration and recommendations occurred in December 2012. Accordingly, NMFS review could not begin until January 2013. For all fisheries not currently closed because the TACs established under the final 2012 and 2013 harvest specifications (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012) were not reached, it is possible that they would be closed prior to the expiration of a 30-day delayed effectiveness period, because their TACs could be reached within that time period. If implemented immediately, this rule would allow these fisheries to continue to fish because the new TACs implemented by this rule are higher than the ones under which they are currently fishing.

Certain fisheries, such as those for pollock and Pacific cod are intensive, fast-paced fisheries. Other fisheries, such as those for sablefish, flatfish, rockfish, Atka mackerel, skates, sculpins, sharks, squids, and octopuses are critical as directed fisheries and as incidental catch in other fisheries. U.S. fishing vessels have demonstrated the capacity to catch the TAC allocations in many of these fisheries. If this rule allowed for a 30-day delay in effectiveness and if a TAC is reached, NMFS would close directed fishing or prohibit retention for the applicable species. Any delay in allocating the final TACs in these fisheries would cause confusion to the industry and potential economic harm through unnecessary discards, thus undermining the intent of the rule. Waiving the 30-day delay allows NMFS to prevent economic loss to fishermen that could otherwise occur should the 2013 TACs be reached. Determining which fisheries may close is impossible because these fisheries are affected by several factors that cannot be predicted in advance, including fishing effort, weather, movement of fishery stocks, and market price. Furthermore, the closure of one fishery has a cascading effect on other fisheries by freeing-up fishing vessels, allowing them to move from closed fisheries to open ones, increasing the fishing capacity in those open fisheries, and causing them to close at an accelerated pace.

In fisheries subject to declining sideboards, a failure to implement the updated sideboards before initial season's end could deny the intended economic protection to the non-sideboarded sectors. Conversely, in fisheries with increasing sideboards, economic benefit could be denied to the sideboarded sectors.

If the final harvest specifications are not effective by March 23, 2013, which is the start of the 2013 Pacific halibut season as specified by the IPHC, the hook-and-line sablefish fishery will not begin concurrently with the Pacific halibut IFQ season. This would result in confusion for the industry and economic harm from unnecessary discard of sablefish that are caught along with Pacific halibut, as both hook-and-line sablefish and Pacific halibut are managed under the same IFQ program. Immediate effectiveness of the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications will allow the sablefish IFQ fishery to begin concurrently with the Pacific halibut IFQ season.

In addition, the immediate effectiveness of this action is required to provide consistent management and conservation of fishery resources based on the best available scientific information. This is particularly true for those species that have lower 2013 ABCs and TACs than those established in the 2012 and 2013 harvest specifications (77 FR 15194, March 14, 2012). Immediate effectiveness also would give the fishing industry the earliest possible opportunity to plan and conduct its fishing operations with respect to new information about TACs. Therefore, NMFS finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

Small Entity Compliance Guide

The following information is a plain language guide to assist small entities in complying with this final rule as required by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This final rule's primary purpose is to announce the final 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications and prohibited species bycatch allowances for the groundfish fisheries of the GOA. This action is necessary to establish harvest

limits and associated management measures for groundfish during the 2013 and 2014 fishing years, and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the FMP. This action affects all fishermen who participate in the GOA fisheries. The specific amounts of OFL, ABC, TAC, and PSC are provided in tables to assist the reader. NMFS will announce closures of directed fishing in the **Federal Register** and information bulletins released by the Alaska Region. Affected fishermen should keep themselves informed of such closures.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.;* 16 U.S.C. 1540(f), 1801 *et seq.;* 16 U.S.C. 3631 *et seq.;* Public Law 105–277; Public Law 106–31; Public Law 106–554; Public Law 108–199; Public Law 108–447; Public Law 109–241; Public Law 109–479.

Dated: February 19, 2013.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, performing the functions and duties of the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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