

Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative

2016 Annual Report

Prepared for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

April 1, 2017

Introduction:

Section 802 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-199) required the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), to establish a Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Pilot Program. The Council adopted the Program on June 6, 2005, and it was implemented by Final Rule on November 20, 2006. The Pilot Program expired at the end of 2011. The Council adopted a new Rockfish Program, Amendment 88 to the Gulf of Alaska Fisheries Management Plan, at its June 2010 meeting. On December 27, 2011, NMFS published final regulations implementing the new Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program.

Under the Rockfish Program (RP), eligible trawl catcher/processors (CPs) can either opt-out of the RP or opt-in. If a CP opts-in to the program, the vessel must participate in a cooperative in order to receive quota share. There is no CP limited access fishery in the new program.

NMFS issues quota shares (QS) for three primary rockfish species- Pacific Ocean Perch, Northern rockfish and Dusky rockfish- and for four secondary species- Sablefish, Shortraker rockfish, Roughey rockfish and Thornyhead rockfish. Each cooperative also receives an allocation of halibut prohibited species catch (PSC). The quota shares and PSC allocation are then distributed among the participating vessels in the coop. This coop operates as a pass through, with each LLP receiving its pro-rate share of the quotas and PSC based on historic participation. The 2016 GOA Rockfish BUC membership is comprised of the following vessels and licenses:

Membership of the Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative

Vessel Owner	Vessel Name	LLP	ADF&G No.
U.S. Fishing, LLC	U.S. Intrepid	3662	54392
North Pacific Fishing, Inc.	American No. 1	2028	36202
M/V Savage, Inc.	Seafisher	2014	56964
Unimak Vessel, LLC	Unimak	3957	57211
Alaska Legacy, LLC	Legacy	1802	48183
Seafreeze America, LLC	Seafreeze America	2905	78120
Cape Flattery Washington LLC	Cape Flattery	4360	77851
American Seafoods Co., LLC		3838	

Monitoring the Fishing Plan and Catch:

Coops submit their membership agreement to NMFS on or about March 1st each year. NMFS then establishes coop quota shares. The coop manager notifies each owner of their LLP quota shares and sideboard amounts. Coop assignments per LLP are vetted through NMFS In-Season management to ensure correct tonnages. Owners then forward the individual quota share amounts to the vessels. Vessel Captains are also informed of their allowances in the sideboard fisheries for the month of July, in keeping with the sideboard rules of the RP.

NMFS, the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (as back-up managers), and Seastate are notified which vessels will fish the rockfish QS and which will fish in the sideboard fisheries. Vessels fishing CGOA rockfish QS are mandated to have two observers on board for the RP or while the vessel has RP fish on board. NMFS must have the opportunity to brief the rockfish observers in advance.

Each vessel has one of two catch monitoring programs on board, either “eHarvest” or “CatchPoint.” Observer sampling information is downloaded to the onboard monitoring program after the observers sample the hauls. The onboard programs use the same extrapolation methodology as the NMFS AK Region for determining official catch. In this way, the vessels have real time QS catch data on board.

When the observers send their files to NMFS, the Observer Program performs data checks and then sends data for extrapolation at the AK Region in Juneau. The data is then available to the NMFS In-season managers and also to third party data managers such as the Alaska Seafood Cooperative and Seastate. The official NMFS data can take several days to show up on the NMFS Rockfish Coop Account Balance. The onboard monitoring program information is available immediately and enables real time quota monitoring. Seastate provides daily information to the owners and vessels in the coop. The coop bases its official total catch, however, on the NMFS account balance.

Vessel Captains update the home offices daily with the onboard tow data. The office quota share managers compare the onboard monitoring program catch and QS balances with Seastate and with the NMFS region’s Account Balance for the coop. If any of these databases do not match, tow by tow comparisons are made between the onboard program tow information and the Seastate data (Seastate data is obtained directly from NMFS after extrapolation and we can look at it on the individual tow level). We may also confer with the NMFS AK Region on haul information if discrepancies cannot be solved by looking into the Seastate data. Since the inception of the Rockfish Program in 2007, NMFS In-Season managers have been extremely helpful to industry from a regulatory and data perspective. Alaska Seafood Cooperative managers are also available for additional assistance in verifying or corroborating numbers if requested.

The vessel Captains communicate directly with one another on the grounds, with the quota share managers, and they have the ability to communicate directly with the third party data managers when necessary. The quota share managers of the participating vessels maintained contact throughout the fishery.

Retained and Discarded Primary and Secondary QS:

All primary and secondary QS species are managed as hard caps and full retention of the QS species is required under the program. Very close to 100% of the allocations of Pacific Ocean Perch and Northern Rockfish were harvested and most of the secondary rockfish and sablefish quota was taken. Any QS remaining in the account, for instance Dusky rockfish, was left to minimize the risk of taking incidental catch of other QS species that were too close to their hard cap limits. There were no discards of the QS species.

Halibut PSC and Chinook Catch:

A total of 22.975 mt halibut PSC was used or 59.053% of the allocation available to the cooperative. This represents 0.49 of one percent halibut bycatch rate (mt halibut mortality/mt QS harvest), with QS harvest as the total of the 3 target and 4 secondary QS species.

A total of 14 extrapolated Chinook salmon were taken within the rockfish QS fishery.

Sideboard Fisheries:

Rockfish eligible vessels which have history in other Gulf fisheries in the month of July can fish up to a sideboard level equivalent to their historic average catch in those fisheries. Coop vessels participated in three sideboard fisheries in the year 2016. The timing of these sideboard fisheries is detailed in the annual cooperative fishing plan, in addition to the timing of the harvest of the QS species.

NMFS opened the WGOA Pacific Ocean Perch fishery in July 2016, with the following percentages of WGOA rockfish sideboards harvested: 76.183% of sideboard WGOA POP, 9.763% WGOA Northern rockfish sideboard and 84.743% of sideboard WGOA Dusky.

In the West Yakutat Rockfish Sideboard fishery, the Pacific Ocean Perch sideboard was 74.662% harvested and the Dusky rockfish sideboard was 1.507% harvested.

Coop vessels also fished the deep water flatfish complex in July, using a total of 14.131 mt halibut mortality, representing 42.427% of the deep water halibut sideboard. No vessel fished the shallow water complex in July, so no shallow water halibut mortality was taken. With only 1.706 mt shallow water halibut sideboard, there is not enough for a viable SW flatfish fishery.

No salmon were taken in any of the sideboard fisheries.

Trades/overages:

There were trades made among the cooperative members, as well as trades made with the other offshore cooperative. There were no overages.

Table 1: 2016 GOA Rockfish Best Use Cooperative Account Balance

CGOA QS Rockfish Harvest	Initial Quota	Transfers In	Total Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken
POP	2249.267	10	2259.267	2244.447	14.82	99.344%
Northern Rockfish	877.071	31.5	908.571	875.529	33.042	96.363%
Dusky	1167.586	0	1167.586	910.514	257.072	77.983%
Shortraker	63.216	0	63.216	62.998	0.218	99.655%
Rougheye	218.533	68.45	286.983	286.983	0	100%
Sablefish	74.141	19.2	93.341	82.578	10.763	88.469%
Thornyhead	137.469	93.859	231.328	231.328	0	100%
CGOA Halibut	38.906	0	38.906	22.975	15.931	59.053%
Chinook				14		
Sideboard Fisheries	Initial Quota	Transfers In	Total Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken
GOA Halibut Deep Water Complex	33.307	0	33.307	14.131	19.176	42.427%
GOA Halibut Shallow Water Complex	1.706	0	1.706	0	1.706	0%
Chinook				0		
WGOA POP	533.32	0	533.32	406.3	127.02	76.183%
WGOA Dusky	9.615	0	9.615	8.148	1.467	84.743%
WGOA Northern Rockfish	41.137	0	41.137	4.016	37.121	9.763%
Chinook				0		
WYAK POP	CONFIDENTIAL			CONFIDENTIAL		74.662%
WYAK Dusky	CONFIDENTIAL			CONFIDENTIAL		1.507%
Chinook				0		
Data sources: NMFS Account Detail, SeaState.						