

Final Report  
WAF  
Rockfish Cooperative

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2016

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In Section 802 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress included a Directive to the Secretary of Commerce to establish, in consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (the Council), a pilot program for management of three primary rockfish species in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA): Pacific Ocean perch (POP), northern rockfish (NR), and pelagic shelf rockfish fisheries (PSR)<sup>1</sup>. The ensuing catcher vessel Rockfish Pilot Program (RPP) allowed each catcher vessel/harvester to join a cooperative in association with the processor to which it delivered the most pounds of CGOA rockfish during the processor qualifying period. Each cooperative receives an annual harvest share allocation based on the qualified harvest history of its members (combined vessel quota shares or QS). In addition to the allocation of target rockfish, catcher vessel cooperatives also receive allocations of secondary species, which include Sablefish, Pacific cod, and Thornyhead rockfish along with an allocation of Halibut PSC mortality. Allocations to the catcher vessel sector are based on the average percentage of retained secondary catch or Halibut PSC mortality in the target rockfish fisheries during the qualifying period. These allocations are distributed to the cooperative members based on the amount of primary rockfish that the cooperative member holds.

The 5-year RPP ended in 2011 and was rolled over into a new, modified, catch share program in June 2010 under Amendment 88 of the GOA Fisheries Management Plan (FMP). This Rockfish Program (RP) went into effect in 2012 and is scheduled to sunset after 10 years in 2022.

As in the RPP, the primary RP objective is to stabilize the residential processing work force by filling times of year with low processing volumes, particularly May and June, and to remove the processing conflict with salmon. Additionally, the RP reduces the competition for fish among harvesters thereby promoting safety, high quality seafood production, and increased economic performance and stability for co-op members, fishermen and processors. The extended, non-derby style season allows co-op members to improve harvesting efficiency in the target fisheries while minimizing incidental bycatch of prohibited species through better fishing practices and efficient fleet monitoring and information distribution.

The WAF Rockfish Cooperative is one of 7 inshore cooperatives (compared to five co-ops in the RPP) formed in March 2012 in accordance with Amendment 88 of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska. 2016 marked the fifth year of the new Rockfish Program and, in compliance with Amendment 88, this Final Report is submitted to NMFS and the Council as a summary of allocations, harvests, transfers and cooperative performance during the 2016 rockfish fishing season in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA). Catch figures and statistics were provided by the cooperative's manager and representative, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc. (AGDB) and cross-checked with NMFS Co-op catch data accessed through the NMFS Co-op ledger website (efish).

## **II. COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP**

In 2016, as in 2015, the WAF Rockfish Cooperative consisted of six member licenses with six member vessels (Table 1), five of which actively fished during the 2016 RP season: Elizabeth F, Walter N, Collier

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<sup>1</sup>As of 2012, Pelagic shelf rockfish consists only of dusky rockfish

Brothers, Progress, Golf Rush. Trident Seafoods in Kodiak, Alaska served as the primary purchasing and processing facility for the WAF Rockfish Cooperative (Star of Kodiak plant).

**Table 1. LLPs, LLP owners and member vessels of the WAF Rockfish Cooperative 2016.**

| LLP No. | LLP Owner                    | Member Vessel    | ADFG No. |
|---------|------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1273    | ELIZABETH F, INC.            | ELIZABETH F      | 14767    |
| 1271    | ELIZABETH F, INC.            | WALTER N         | 34919    |
| 1523    | COLLIER BROS LLC             | COLLIER BROTHERS | 54648    |
| 3600    | EVENING STAR, INC.           | HICKORY WIND     | 47795    |
| 3896    | PROGRESS FISHING, LLC ET AL. | PROGRESS         | 6        |
| 3987    | F/V GOLD RUSH FISHERIES LLC  | GOLD RUSH        | 40309    |

### III. COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

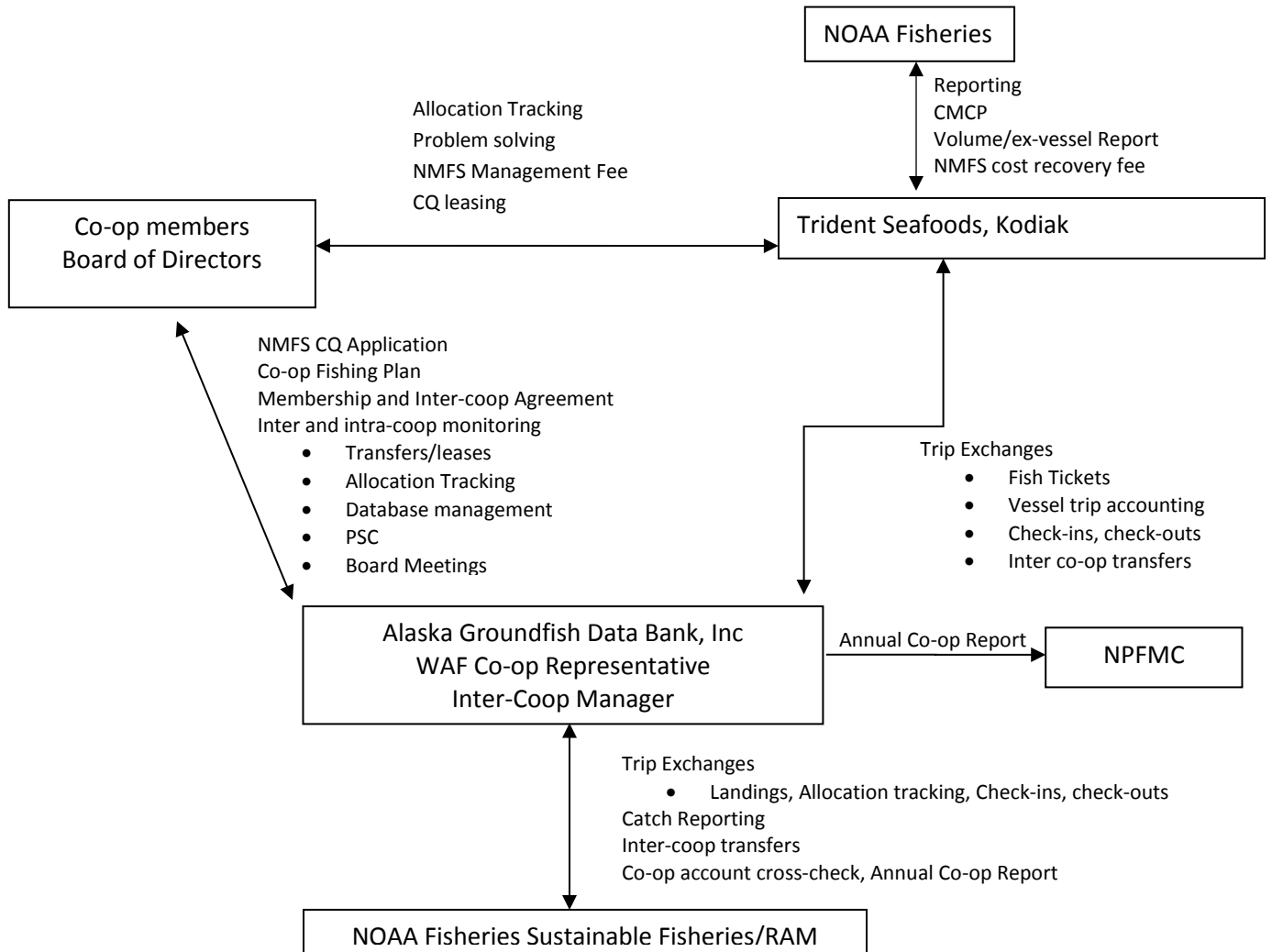
The WAF Rockfish Cooperative was represented and managed by Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc in collaboration and coordination with the co-op president, Don Ashley, the Trident plant manager, Paul Lumsden, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Fishing plans were devised to harvest the allocations efficiently while minimizing the amount of prohibited and non-marketable species. Harvest numbers, observer data and fish ticket information were analyzed, updated and distributed to the appropriate parties in a timely manner to ensure proper management. Figure 1 shows the schematic outlining the Co-op’s operations and flow of information among the contributing parties.

#### A. *Monitoring*

- (1) **Check-ins and Check-outs:** To facilitate moving into and out of non-RP fisheries during the rockfish season, NMFS instituted “Check-ins” and “Check-outs”. Co-op vessels were required to check into the RP fishery 48 hours prior to starting a trip and to check out of the program before participating in other fisheries. For the RP, there were no limits to the number of check-ins or check-outs.
- (2) **Observer Coverage:** 100% Observer coverage was required by all participating vessels.
- (3) **CMCP Monitor:** For the Rockfish Program, NMFS hired a Catch Monitoring and Control Plan (CMCP) specialist to monitor each Processor’s CMCP. RP Processors are required to file with NMFS their CMCP prior to the start of the RP season. This plan details how the processor monitors the deliveries and complies with monitoring requirements. This is in lieu of 200% observer coverage at the plants required during the RPP.
- (4) **NOAA Fisheries/Restricted Access Management:** NOAA RAM’s Co-op ledger web site (efish) was used to perform transfers, conduct cross-checks, check co-op balances and detect missing database information.

**Figure 1.** Schematic of WAF Rockfish Cooperative Operations and Management



#### IV. COOPERATIVE PERFORMANCE

##### A. Co-op Allocations, Transfers and Harvests

The WAF Rockfish Cooperative’s harvests for the 2016 season are summarized by species and vessel in Table 2. Note that cooperative fishing allowed individual vessel overages to be offset by quota not harvested by other member vessels. Inter-coop transfers (Table 3) were arranged by the Inter-coop manager to maximize harvesting of the allocations among the seven catcher vessel cooperatives, adhere to cooperative agreements and to cover overages.

**Table 2. WAF Rockfish Cooperative 2016 harvests by species and co-op harvesting vessel. Weights are in round pounds. CQ totals from ADF&G Fish Tickets (includes dock and at-sea discards). Halibut mortality PSC is from NMFS/RAM Co-op ledger website (as of Dec. 12, 2016).**

| Vessel                       | POP              | NR             | Dusky          | Sablefish     | P. cod         | Thornyhead    | Halibut PSC   |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Walter N                     | 719,504          | 498            | 2,208          | 13,594        | 446            | 760           | 0             |
| Elizabeth F                  | 691,485          | 89             | 2,170          | 8,765         | 552            | 1,062         | 3,015         |
| Collier Brothers             | 432,405          | 122,273        | 87,456         | 15,039        | 2,777          | 3,299         | 0             |
| Progress                     | 952,109          | 41,499         | 138,255        | 23,308        | 6,681          | 4,206         | 778           |
| Gold Rush                    | 800,594          | 128,143        | 240,014        | 20,200        | 14,831         | 4,023         | 819           |
| <b>Total Co-op Harvest</b>   | <b>3,596,097</b> | <b>292,502</b> | <b>470,103</b> | <b>80,906</b> | <b>25,287</b>  | <b>13,350</b> | <b>4,612</b>  |
| <b>Final WAF Allocation:</b> | <b>3,596,137</b> | <b>415,487</b> | <b>584,960</b> | <b>82,798</b> | <b>427,741</b> | <b>23,513</b> | <b>35,607</b> |
| <b>% Harvested</b>           | <b>100.00%</b>   | <b>70.40%</b>  | <b>80.36%</b>  | <b>97.71%</b> | <b>5.91%</b>   | <b>56.78%</b> | <b>12.95%</b> |

**Table 3. WAF Rockfish Co-op allocations and inter-coop transfer summary (weights are in pounds).**

|                                | POP              | NR             | Dusky          | Sablefish     | P. cod         | Thornyhead    | Halibut       |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Initial WAF Allocation:</b> | 3,514,744        | 441,331        | 483,545        | 82,798        | 427,741        | 23,513        | 35,607        |
| <b>Transfers (OBSI)</b>        |                  | (25,843)       |                |               |                |               |               |
| <b>Transfers (SOK)</b>         | 81,393           |                | 101,415        |               |                |               |               |
| <b>Total Transfers</b>         | 81,393           | (25,843)       | 101,415        | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0             |
| <b>Final WAF Allocation:</b>   | <b>3,596,137</b> | <b>415,487</b> | <b>584,960</b> | <b>82,798</b> | <b>427,741</b> | <b>23,513</b> | <b>35,607</b> |
| <b>Total CV Coops*:</b>        | 20,814,804       | 4,282,965      | 5,309,079      | 605,740       | 3,106,509      | 170,768       | 258,602       |
| <b>WAF % CV Allocation:</b>    | 17.28%           | 9.70%          | 11.02%         | 13.67%        | 13.77%         | 13.77%        | 13.77%        |

\*Includes CP CQ transferred onshore

## B. Vessel Use, Co-op CQ and Processing Caps

- (1) **Vessel harvests:** A vessel harvest cap of 8% of total primary rockfish quota allocated to the CV sector is one of the new changes to the RP. In 2016, this amounted to 2,432,548 lbs of primary rockfish in the aggregate. During the 2016 season, no vessel exceeded this limit (see figure 2).
- (2) **Co-op QS:** Control of harvest shares by a CV cooperative shall be capped at 30% of aggregate POP, northern rockfish and Dusky rockfish allocated to the CV sector. Final quota share allocated to the WAF co-op in 2016 amounted to 15.1% of the aggregate CV rockfish cooperative quota (Table 5).
- (3) **Processing limits:** For the Rockfish Program, a provision was approved that states no processor shall process or receive more than 30% of: (1) primary rockfish in the aggregate; (2) sablefish; (3) Pacific cod allocated to the CV sector. During the 2016 season, Trident Seafoods in Kodiak did not exceed these caps. See Table 4. Note: Trident Seafoods purchased the Western Alaska Fisheries plant in Kodiak in December 2014. NMFS ruled that the processing cap applies to the processor entity, not the facility. Therefore, all CQ landed at the Star of Kodiak plant, the old WAF plant (renamed in 2016 Trident's Pillar Mountain plant) as well as Trident's newly constructed addition next door to SOK which went online July 1, 2015 counted towards the 30% caps.

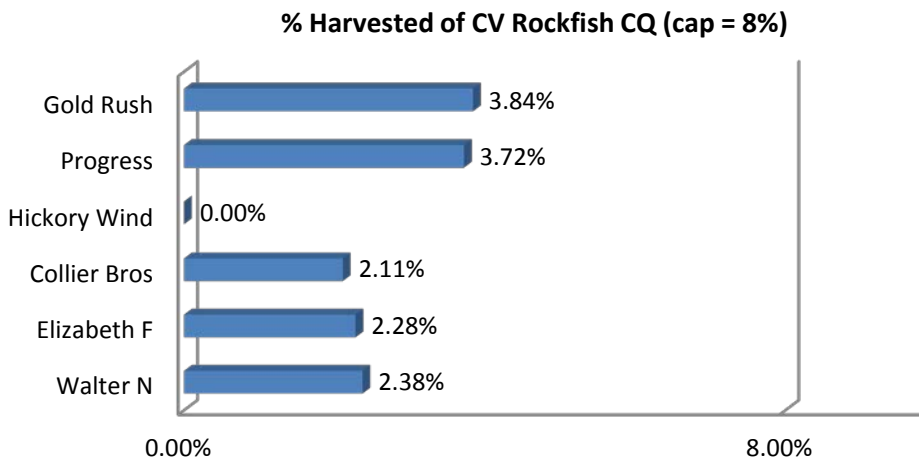
**Table 4. LBS and % of CV allocations by CQ species received and processed by Trident Seafoods in 2016. Processing caps are 30% of the CV primary rockfish, sablefish and cod.**

| Species           | Total Primary RF | Sablefish | Cod       | % RF   | % Sable | % Cod |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| Trident Processed | 8,441,177        | 180,354   | 47,085    | 27.76% | 29.99%  | 1.52% |
| CV Allocation     | 30,406,848       | 601,331   | 3,106,509 |        |         |       |

**Table 5. Primary rockfish CQ (POP, Northern Rockfish, Dusky rockfish): % of Final CV sector allocations by species and co-op**

| CV Co-op CQ             | POP           | NR            | Dusky         | Total Rockfish |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| NP                      | 17.5%         | 22.7%         | 22.7%         | 19.2%          |
| SOK                     | 25.0%         | 24.6%         | 27.8%         | 25.4%          |
| WAF                     | 17.3%         | 9.7%          | 11.0%         | 15.1%          |
| OBSI                    | 12.5%         | 22.2%         | 20.5%         | 15.3%          |
| ISA                     | 16.8%         | 17.3%         | 16.2%         | 16.7%          |
| Global                  | 6.7%          | 3.4%          | 1.8%          | 5.4%           |
| Pacific                 | 4.2%          | 0.0%          | 0.1%          | 2.9%           |
| <b>Final Allocation</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b>  |

**Figure 2. Harvests of primary rockfish by WAF member vessels (% of aggregate CV primary rockfish). Vessel harvest cap is 8%**



**C. Retained and Discarded Catch of CQ**

Federal regulations require the RP participants to retain all Cooperative Quota (CQ) species except halibut: at-sea discards of Pacific Ocean Perch, Northern Rockfish, Dusky Rockfish, Pacific cod, Thornyheads, and Sablefish are not allowed. During the 2016 WAF Rockfish Cooperative’s fishing season (May 1– November 15, 2016), there were no occurrences of at-sea discards of CQ species.

**D. Sideboard limits and rockfish sideboard fishery harvests**

The Rockfish Program established sideboard limits and/or prohibitions that limit LLP holders participating in the Program from expanding their harvests in other fisheries. These sideboard restrictions apply only in July, historically the most active month for rockfish fishing. For the CV sector, the sideboard limits established in the RPP have been removed for ease of management. The following prohibitions remain in place during the month of July:

- (1) For the month of July, limit all CVs to the shallow water complex fisheries (fishing in the deep complex is prohibited)
- (2) Directed fishing for WYAK and WGOA primary rockfish species in the month of July is prohibited

**V. COOPERATIVE PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH**

**A. Halibut:** The cooperative’s fishing plan instituted a management scheme to discourage high halibut bycatch rates since the co-op’s RP fishing would cease once its halibut PSC mortality cap was reached. Standards were set and enforced by the co-op members to abide by the halibut PSC mortality rate limits (Table 6). The WAF Rockfish Co-op used 4,612 lbs or 13% of its final halibut PSC allocation of 35,607 lbs.

**Table 6. Halibut bycatch standards adopted by the WAF Rockfish Cooperative.**

| Inter-coop standard |           | Red Light Standard |           | Yellow Light Standard |           |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Species             | % halibut | Species            | % halibut | Species               | % halibut |
| POP                 | 0.50%     | POP                | 0.45%     | POP                   | 0.38%     |
| NR/Dusky            | 2.20%     | NR/Dusky           | 1.98%     | NR/Dusky              | 1.65%     |
| Sable/cod           | 4.00%     | Sable/cod          | 3.60%     | Sable/cod             | 3.00%     |

Of the total 191.4 mt halibut PSC allocated to the RP (CV and CP co-ops), only 69 mt were used. As part of the RP, 45% of the unused CQ halibut PSC (55 mt in 2016) remained in the water. Added to the initial 12.5% reduction (27 mt), the total amount of halibut PSC savings in the RP in 2016 was 82 mt (not for use in any trawl fishery).

**B. Chinook Salmon:** Amendment 97 to the GOA FMP, effective January 1, 2015, established Chinook salmon bycatch limits in the W/CGOA non-pollock trawl fisheries. The cap for the RP is 1,200 Chinook:

|                   | W/CGOACP | W/CGOA CV non-rockfish | CGOA CV Rockfish | Total |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Chinook PSC Limit | 3,600    | 2,700                  | 1,200            | 7,500 |

All Shoreside Cooperatives agreed to the Salmon Bycatch Avoidance Plan adopted in 2014. The plan included four parts: i) “slow start” to test the fishing grounds; ii) individual vessel Chinook salmon bycatch standards for the months of May, June, July, and August, iii) Chinook salmon hotspot reporting requirements, and iv) full retention of all bycaught Chinook salmon (required by regulation as of January 1, 2015). Fish ticket data were used to monitor the cooperative vessel’s bycatch performance.

Operators agreed to promptly self-report Chinook salmon hotspot areas from the grounds to AGDB and/or their Cooperative’s affiliated processor. As in 2015, four hot spot alerts were sent out in 2016 compared to three in 2014 and eight in 2013.

According to NMFS catch accounting, there were only 155 Chinook salmon taken during the season, well below the 1,200 salmon cap and by far the lowest number and rate since the RPP started in 2007 (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Chinook PSC, total CV rockfish harvests and Chinook PSC rate for the RPP (2007-2011) and the RP. Catcher vessel co-ops only. Source: Steve Whitney, NMFS.**

| Year           | Chinook (no.) | Rockfish Harvest (mt) | Rate (Chinook/mt) |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 2007           | 840           | 7,748                 | 0.108             |
| 2008           | 1,683         | 7,440                 | 0.226             |
| 2009           | 892           | 6,874                 | 0.130             |
| 2010           | 1,017         | 7,992                 | 0.127             |
| 2011           | 396           | 7,071                 | 0.056             |
| 2012           | 817           | 10,067                | 0.081             |
| 2013           | 1,271         | 8,820                 | 0.144             |
| 2014           | 520           | 10,100                | 0.051             |
| 2015           | 1,802         | 10,768                | 0.167             |
| 2016           | 155           | 13,026                | 0.012             |
| <b>Average</b> | <b>939</b>    | <b>8,991</b>          | <b>0.104</b>      |

**Rockfish Genetics Project:** The Rockfish Genetics project that started 2013 continued into 2016. The genetic data collection is expected to continue in 2017.

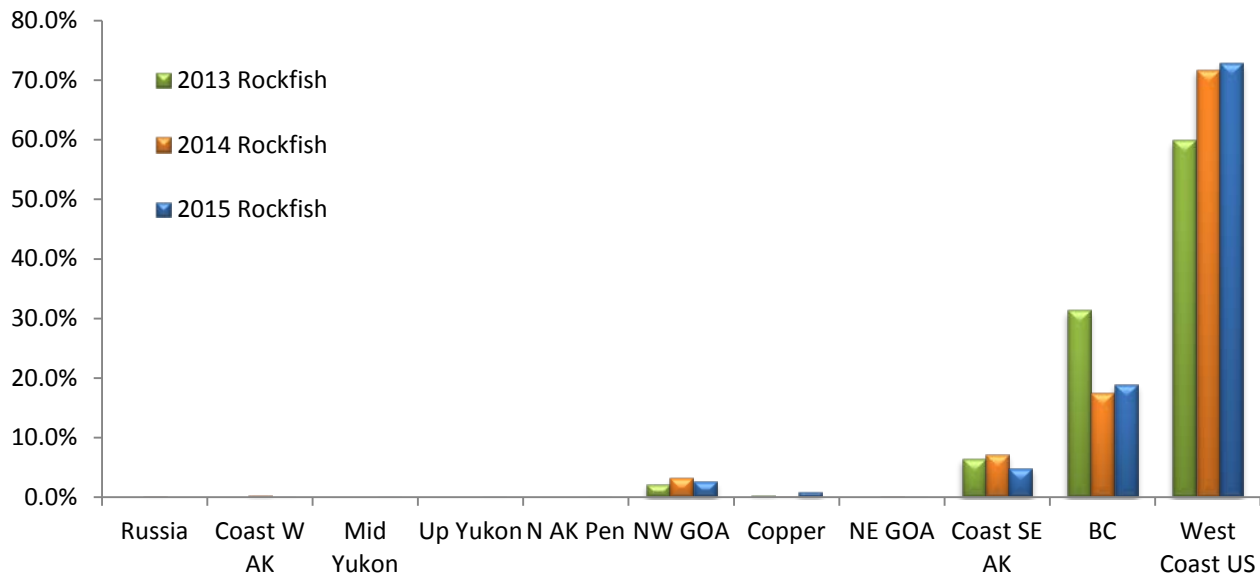
Over the 2016 season, DNA samples from 496 landed Chinook as well as snouts from 30 tagged salmon were collected and sent to NMFS Auke Bay Lab for processing. Preliminary results are expected Fall 2017. Results from the 2013-2015 Rockfish fisheries are shown in Table 8 and Figure 3 (courtesy Jeff Guyon and Chuck Guthrie, NMFS Auke Bay). As in previous years, the 2015 data show that the majority of bycaught Chinook are from the West coast, SE Alaska and British Columbia (96.5% in combination).

**Table 8. Stock of Origin results, 2013-15 CGOA CV Rockfish fishery.**

| Area                         | 2013 Rockfish | 2014 Rockfish | 2015 Rockfish |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>No. Samples Processed</b> | <b>2,070</b>  | <b>398</b>    | <b>635</b>    |
| Russia                       | 0.0%          | 0.1%          | 0.0%          |
| Coast W AK                   | 0.0%          | 0.3%          | 0.1%          |
| Mid Yukon                    | 0.0%          | 0.0%          | 0.0%          |
| Up Yukon                     | 0.0%          | 0.0%          | 0.0%          |
| N AK Pen                     | 0.0%          | 0.0%          | 0.0%          |
| NW GOA                       | 2.2%          | 3.2%          | 2.7%          |
| Copper                       | 0.3%          | 0.1%          | 0.8%          |
| NE GOA                       | 0.0%          | 0.1%          | 0.0%          |
| Coast SE AK                  | 6.4%          | 7.1%          | 4.8%          |
| BC                           | 31.3%         | 17.4%         | 18.9%         |
| West Coast US                | 59.9%         | 71.7%         | 72.8%         |
| SE, BC,WC combined           | 97.6%         | 96.2%         | 96.5%         |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>100.1%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |



**Figure 3. Chinook stock of origin results from 2013-2015 census collections of tissue samples.**



**C. *Other Prohibited Species Catch:*** The following were attributed to the combined in-shore catcher vessel cooperative catch accounts by NMFS CAS during the 2016 RP fishing season (May 1<sup>st</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup>): 223 non-Chinook salmon, 51 Golden king crab (source: Steve Whitney, NMFS as of Dec. 4, 2016).

## VI. PENALTIES/CIVIL ACTIONS

The multispecies aspect of the RP precludes harvesting the co-op’s allocation exactly on a vessel-by-vessel basis: such is the advantage of fishing the quota cooperatively where the vessels can balance out each other’s catches with no penalty incurred on the group as a whole. However, individuals who exceed their individual co-op quota share (except by prior agreement – e.g. leases and clean up trips) are penalized monetarily as a disincentive for future occurrences. As per the WAF Co-op Member Agreement, 100% of the ex-vessel revenue of the overage is paid by the offender directly to the member vessel that covers the overage. This discourages future excessive overage events. There were no civil actions taken against any co-op member.