

Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative

2017 Annual Report

Prepared for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

April 1, 2018

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 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 four secondary species- Sablefish, Shortraker rockfish, Rougheyeye rockfish and Thornyhead rockfish. Each cooperative also receives a Quota Share of Halibut PSC mortality. The QS species are then distributed among the vessels in the coop. The coop operates as a pass through, with each LLP receiving its pro-rate share of the quotas based on historic participation. All primary and secondary QS species are managed as hard caps with 100% mandatory retention.

The 2017 GOA BUC coop 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
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

Monitoring the Fishing Plan and Catch:

Cooperatives submit their membership agreement to NMFS by March 1st of the fishing year and NMFS issues cooperative permits with QS and sideboard percentages. The coop manager notifies each owner of their LLP QS and sideboard amounts. Coop assignments per LLP are vetted through NMFS In-Season management to ensure correct tonnages. Owners forward the individual QS numbers to the Captains and also inform them of their sideboard allowances 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 in advance which vessels expect to fish the RP quota, and which vessels expect to fish the sideboards. Vessels fishing CGOA rockfish QS are mandated to have two observers on board while fishing in the RP or while the vessel has RP fish on board. In addition, the vessel must give NMFS the opportunity to brief the rockfish observers in advance.

When the observers send their files to NMFS, the Observer Program performs data checks and then sends the data for extrapolation at the AK Region in Juneau. It is then available to the NMFS In-season managers and also to third party data managers such as the Alaska Seafood Cooperative and Seastate. However, this official NMFS catch data can take several days to show up on the NMFS's Coop Account Balance. To make sure the vessels have access to real time catch data onboard, each vessel has one of two catch monitoring programs - "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. The onboard program information is available immediately and enables real time quota monitoring by each vessel. In addition, Seastate sends daily to weekly information to the owners and vessels in the coop, depending on their preference.

Vessel Captains update the home offices daily with the onboard tow data. The office QS 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, then 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. NMFS In-Season managers have been extremely helpful to the 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 each other on the grounds and with the QS managers in their respective offices. They also have the ability to communicate with the third-party data managers when necessary. The QS managers of the participating vessels maintained contact throughout the fishery.

Retained and Discarded Primary and Secondary QS:

Full retention of the three primary rockfish and four secondary QS species is required under the program. Very close to 100% of the allocations of Pacific Ocean Perch, Northern Rockfish and Dusky Rockfish were harvested and most of the secondary rockfish and sablefish quota was taken. If an amount of primary or secondary QS was not harvested, it was left to minimize the risk of exceeding a hardcap. As mandated by the RP regulations, there were no discards of the QS species.

Prohibited Species Catch:

19.289 mt halibut mortality was used or 57.657% of the quota. This represents a 5.3 kg halibut mortality/mt QS harvest bycatch rate. A total of 41 extrapolated Chinook, 299 extrapolated Bairdi, and 9 extrapolated Golden King Crab were caught within the rockfish QS fishery. In addition, 0.034 mt of herring PSC was recorded.

Sideboards:

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. The coop fishing plan details the expected timing of the sideboard fisheries, in addition to the timing of the CGOA rockfish QS harvest.

In the WYAK sideboard fishery, 74.546% of the Pacific Ocean Perch and 4.487% of the Dusky rockfish sideboard was harvested. NMFS opened the WGOA Pacific Ocean Perch fishery in July 2017 and the following percentages were harvested: 51.074% WGOA POP sideboard, 29.131% WGOA Dusky sideboard, and 0.383% WGOA northern rockfish sideboard.

Vessels also fished deep water flatfish in July, using a total of 43.192% of the DW halibut sideboard, or, 12.210 mt of halibut mortality. No SW halibut mortality was taken. With only 1.706 SW halibut sideboard, there is not enough for a viable SW flatfish fishery.

Trades/overages/underages:

Trades were made among the cooperative members, in addition to trades made with the other offshore cooperative. There were no overages.

Table 1. 2017 GOA Rockfish Best Use Cooperative Account Balance

2017 GOA Best Use Cooperative Table 1: Cooperative Account Balance							
CGOA QS Rockfish Harvest	Initial Quota	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Total Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken
POP	1830.963	0	0	1830.963	1813.941	17.022	99.070%
Northern Rockfish	584.487	20.585	0	605.072	580.498	24.574	95.939%
Dusky	845.706	0	6.5	839.206	814.388	24.818	97.043%
Shortraker	50.18	7.256	0	57.436	38.34	19.096	66.753%
Rougheye	173.221	53.79	0	227.011	171.481	55.53	75.539%
Sablefish	66.034	12.712	0	78.746	56.759	21.987	72.079%
Thornyhead	109.12	39.026	0	148.146	135.945	12.201	91.764%
CGOA Halibut	30.883	2.572	0	33.455	19.289	14.166	57.657%
Chinook					41		
Sideboard Fisheries	Initial Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken			
GOA Halibut Deep Water Complex	28.269	12.21	16.059	43.192%			
GOA Halibut Shallow Water Complex	1.706	0	1.706	0.000%			
WGOA POP	361.288	184.524	176.764	51.074%			
WGOA Dusky	5.259	1.532	3.727	29.131%			
WGOA Northern Rockfish	17.275	0.066	17.209	0.382%			
WYAK POP	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL		74.546%			
WYAK Dusky	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL		4.487%			
Data sources: NMFS Account Detail, SeaState.							