

Final Report
OBSI
Rockfish Cooperative

2018

December 15, 2018

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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 (PSR¹). 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 on December 31, 2021.

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.

As mentioned, the Rockfish Program is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2021. If the Council does not take action recommending the continuation of the Rockfish Program, management will revert back to the License Limitation Program (LLP) management structure (race for fish). In order to continue the current program or a modified version of it, the Council must develop an amendment to the GOA groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) which would include developing a new problem statement and alternatives, having staff analyze the alternatives and bring back the analysis for initial review and final action by the Council. The changes could be as simple as amending the sunset date with small program tweaks. In order for a final rule to be implemented by October 2021 and avoid confusion in the management of the rockfish fisheries, the Council needs to take final action by April 2020. To that end, this process started at the December 2018 council meeting with an initial discussion paper: <https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=31687b79-e42b-4276-97bb-36e6aaa4435f.pdf&fileName=D5%20Central%20GOA%20Rockfish%20Reauthorization.pdf>

The OBSI 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. 2018 marked the seventh year of the new Rockfish Program and, in

¹ As of 2012, Pelagic shelf rockfish consists only of dusky rockfish

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 2018, as in 2017, the OBSI Rockfish Cooperative consisted of six member licenses with five member vessels (Table 1) of which two actively fished during the 2018 RP season (New Life, Pacific Star). Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Inc (OBSI) in Kodiak, Alaska served as the primary purchasing and processing facility for the OBSI Rockfish Cooperative.

Table 1. LLPs, LLP owners and member vessels of the OBSI Rockfish Cooperative 2018.

LLP No.	LLP Owner	Member Vessel	ADFG No.
1367	NEW LIFE FISHERIES, INC	DOMINION	-
3504	BAY ISLANDER, INC.	BAY ISLANDER	49618
4465	MARATHON FISHERIES, INC.	MARATHON	49617
5201	NEW LIFE FISHERIES, INC	NEW LIFE	21845
2603	DEFIANT FISHERIES, INC.	TAASINGE	38001
4852	PAC STAR, INC.	PACIFIC STAR	55038

III. COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

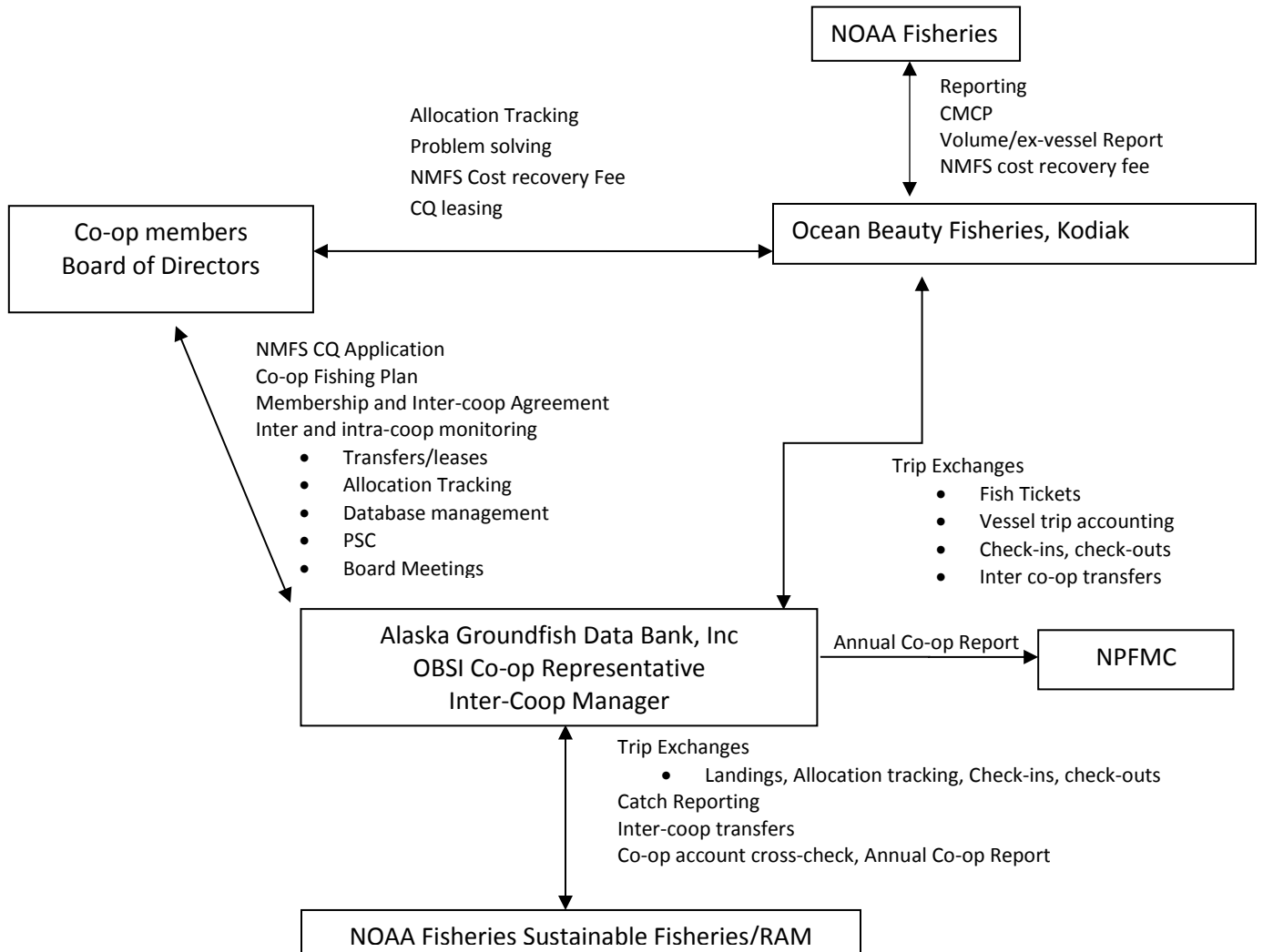
The OBSI Rockfish Cooperative was represented and managed by Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc in collaboration and coordination with the co-op president, Kent Helligso, the OBSI plant manager, James Turner, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

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 OBSI Rockfish Cooperative Operations and Management



IV. COOPERATIVE PERFORMANCE

A. Co-op Allocations, Transfers and Harvests

The OBSI Rockfish Cooperative’s harvests for the 2018 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. OBSI Rockfish Cooperative 2018 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 3, 2018).

Vessel	POP	NR	Dusky	Sablefish	P. cod	Thornyhead	Halibut PSC
NEW LIFE	1,434,605	290,607	440,389	63,520	2,057	11,240	78
PACIFIC STAR	1,214,485	81,011	285,052	48,658	5,889	5,799	6,879
Total Co-op Harvest	2,649,090	371,618	725,441	112,178	7,946	17,039	6,957
Final OBSI Allocation:	2,661,978	659,415	736,330	112,187	73,197	22,782	37,010
% Harvested	99.52%	56.36%	98.52%	99.99%	10.86%	74.79%	18.80%

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

	POP	NR	Dusky	Sablefish	P. cod	Thornyhead	Halibut
Initial OBSI Allocation:	2,883,980	706,980	807,610	119,478	79,259	24,669	40,075
Transfers (ISA):	(222,002)	(47,565)	(71,279)	(9,137)	(6,061)	(1,887)	(3,065)
Transfers (SOK):				1,837			
Transfers (NP):							
Transfers (WAF):				9			
Total Transfers	(222,002)	(47,565)	(71,279)	(7,291)	(6,061)	(1,887)	(3,065)
Final OBSI Allocation:	2,661,978	659,415	736,330	112,187	73,197	22,782	37,010
Total CV Coops*:	21,590,936	3,905,134	4,396,088	770,983	511,452	159,188	263,011
OBSI % CV Allocation:	12.33%	16.89%	16.75%	14.55%	14.31%	14.31%	14.07%

*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 was one of the changes to the RP. In 2018, this amounted to 2,391,373 lbs of primary rockfish in the aggregate. During the 2018 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 OBSI co-op in 2018 amounted to 13.6% 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 2018 season, Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Kodiak did not exceed these caps. See Table 4.

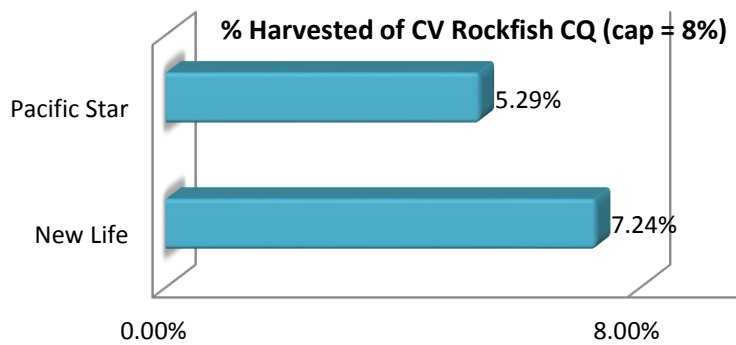
Table 4. LBS and % of CV allocations by CQ species received and processed by OBSI Seafoods in 2018. Processing caps are 30% of the CV primary rockfish, sablefish and cod.

Species	Total Primary RF	Sablefish	Cod	% RF	% Sable	% Cod
OB Processed	3,746,149	112,178	7,946	12.53%	14.55%	1.55%
CV Allocation	29,892,157	770,983	511,452			

Table 5. Primary rockfish CQ (POP, Northern Rockfish, Dusky rockfish): % of Final CV sector allocations by species and co-op (includes CQ transferred to the CV coops from the offshore coops)

CV Co-op CQ	POP	NR	Dusky	Total Rockfish
NP	22.2%	19.0%	21.7%	21.7%
SOK	24.6%	32.2%	28.4%	26.1%
WAF	16.4%	10.3%	10.2%	14.7%
OBSI	12.3%	16.9%	16.7%	13.6%
ISA	20.1%	16.9%	19.1%	19.5%
Pacific	4.4%	4.8%	3.8%	4.4%
Final Allocation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 2. Harvests of primary rockfish by actively fishing OBSI 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 2018 OBSI Rockfish Cooperative’s fishing season (May 1– November 15, 2018), 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 were 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 OBSI Rockfish Co-op used 6,957 lbs or 19% of its final halibut PSC allocation of 37,010 lbs.

Table 6. Halibut bycatch standards adopted by the OBSI 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), 83 mt were used. As part of the RP, 45% of the unused CQ halibut PSC (49 mt in 2018) remained in the water. Added to the initial 12.5% reduction (27 mt), the total amount of halibut PSC savings in the RP in 2018 was 76 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.

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.

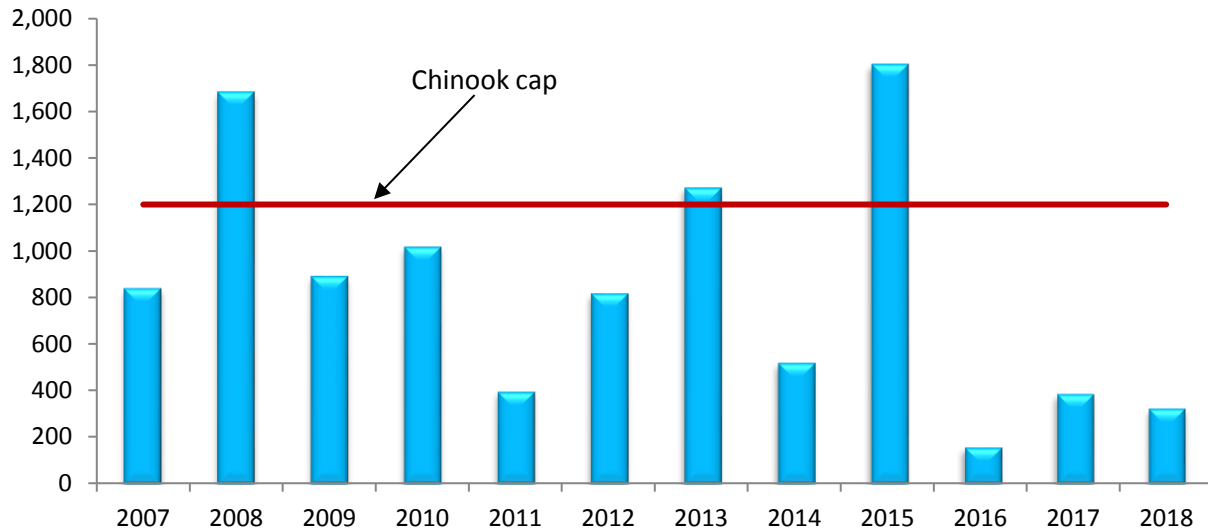
Operators agreed to promptly self-report Chinook salmon hotspot areas from the grounds to AGDB and/or their Cooperative’s affiliated processor.

According to NMFS catch accounting, there were 324 Chinook salmon taken during the season (see Table 7 and Figure 3).

Table 7. Chinook PSC, total CV rockfish harvests and Chinook PSC rates for the RPP (2007-2011) and the Rockfish Program (2012-2018). 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	158	13,026	0.012
2017	387	9,444	0.041
2018	324	11,936	0.027
Average	842	9,274	0.091

Figure 3. Chinook PSC in the RP, 2007-2018.



Rockfish Genetics Project: The Rockfish Genetics project that started 2013 continued in 2018. The goal was to collect tissue samples from all landed Chinook salmon during the RP fishery to determine stock of origin.

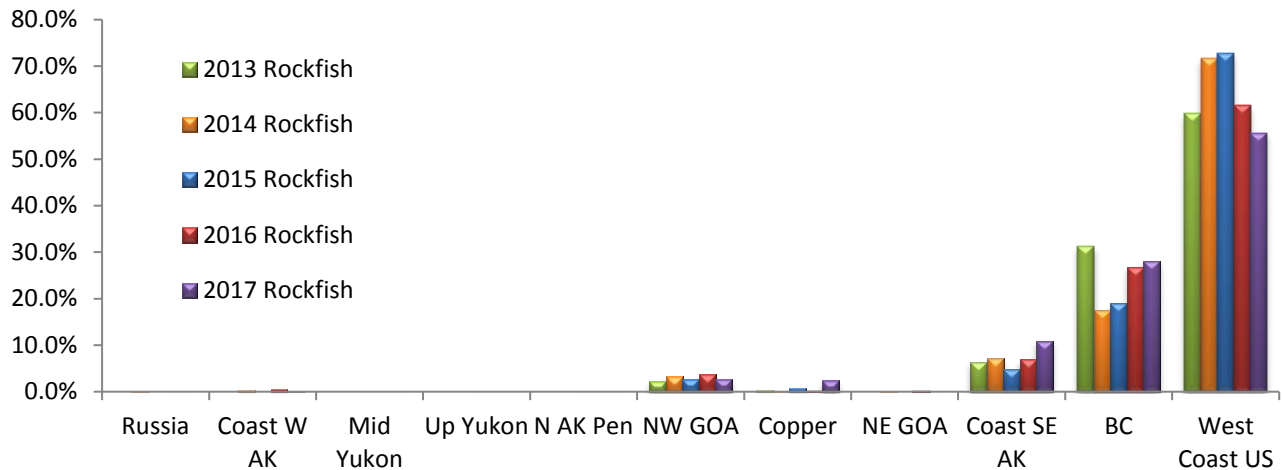
Over the 2018 season, tissue samples from 504 landed Chinook as well as snouts from 29 tagged salmon were collected and sent to NMFS Auke Bay Lab for processing and analysis. As in 2017, otoliths from all the Chinook were also collected and sent to ADFG Mark, Tag and Age Laboratory in Juneau to get an estimate of the hatchery component. Preliminary results are expected Fall 2019. Results from the 2013-2017 Rockfish fisheries are shown in Table 8 and Figure 4 (courtesy Chuck Guthrie, NMFS Auke Bay). As in previous years, the 2017 data show that the majority of bycaught Chinook are from the West coast, SE Alaska and British Columbia (94.7% in combination).

AGDB has partnered with FishNext Research LLC to test alternative shore-based sampling methods to monitor and improve estimates of Chinook salmon bycatch taken by Kodiak trawl catcher vessels delivering their catches to shoreside processors. Currently, Chinook PSC estimates for the non-pollock fisheries are based on observer at-sea basket samples. Alternatives include monitoring large samples dockside (up to 50% of the landed catch); salmon census at the plant by observers and/or plant personnel; and sorting and sampling the entire offloaded catch by plant personnel with third party auditing via EM (electronic monitoring). The project, *“Improving Chinook Salmon Bycatch Estimates for the Gulf of Alaska Trawl Fleet: Alternatives addressing accuracy, cost, and timeliness”*, is being funded through the Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Research Program. Field work for the first year took place May-June 2018 and will continue in May 2019.

Table 8. Stock of Origin results, 2013-17 CGOA CV Rockfish fishery.

Area	2013 Rockfish	2014 Rockfish	2015 Rockfish	2016 Rockfish	2017 Rockfish
No. Samples Processed	2,070	398	635	493	280
Russia	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coast W AK	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%
Mid Yukon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Up Yukon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
N AK Pen	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NW GOA	2.2%	3.2%	2.7%	3.7%	2.7%
Copper	0.3%	0.1%	0.8%	0.3%	2.4%
NE GOA	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Coast SE AK	6.4%	7.1%	4.8%	6.9%	10.9%
BC	31.3%	17.4%	18.9%	26.8%	28.1%
West Coast US	59.9%	71.7%	72.8%	61.5%	55.6%
SE, BC,WC combined	97.6%	96.2%	96.5%	95.1%	94.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 4. Chinook stock of origin results from 2013-2017 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 2018 RP fishing season (May 1st – November 15th): 168 non-Chinook salmon, 31 Golden king crab and 2,825 Bairdi Tanner crab (source: Steve Whitney, NMFS as of Dec. 6, 2018).

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 OBSI 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.