

Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative

2020 Annual Report

Prepared by Christopher Oliver
for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

March 24, 2021

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 new 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, Rougheyeye rockfish, and Thornyhead rockfish. Each cooperative also receives a quota share of Halibut PSC mortality. The quota shares are then distributed among the participating vessels. This coop operates as a pass through, with each LLP receiving its pro rata share of the quotas based on historic participation. All primary and secondary quota share species are managed as hard caps with 100% mandatory retention.

The 2020 GOA 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.
Seafreeze America LLC	Seafreeze America	1802	78120
M/V Savage, Inc.	Seafisher	2014	56964
America’s Finest Fishing, LLC	America’s Finest	2028	78724
AK Victory, Inc.	Alaska Victory	2080	61083
O’Hara Corporation	Araho	2083	77812
Alaska Legacy, LLC	Legacy	2905	48183
O’Hara Corporation	Alaska Spirit	3043	59870
U.S. Fishing, L.L.C.	US Intrepid	3662	54392
American Seafoods Co LLC.	Forum Star	3838	59687
Unimak Vessel, LLC	Unimak	3957	57211
Cape Flattery Washington LLC	Cape Flattery	4360	77851

Monitoring the Fishing Plan and Catch:

On March 1st, coops submit their membership agreement to NMFS. 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 forward the individual quota share to the Captains. Captains are also informed 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 of the vessels which will fish the RP quota, and which will fish the sideboards. Vessels fishing CGOA rockfish quota share 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 out data for extrapolation at the AK Region in Juneau. The data are then available to the NMFS In-Season managers and 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 Coop Account Balance. The onboard monitoring program information is available immediately and enables real time quota monitoring. Seastate sends daily to weekly information to the owners and vessels in the coop, depending on whether fishing sideboard or quota share. The coop bases its official total catch, however, on the NMFS account balance.

Vessel Captains update their 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 AK Region 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 can be accessed on the individual tow level). Office managers 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 both regulatory and data perspectives. Alaska Seafood Cooperative managers are also available for additional assistance in verifying or corroborating numbers if needed.

The vessel Captains communicate directly with one another on the grounds and with the quota share managers, and they can communicate directly with the third-party data managers when necessary. The quota share managers for the participating vessels maintain contact throughout the duration of fishing.

Retained and Discarded Primary and Secondary QS:

Full retention of the three primary rockfish and four secondary quota share 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. Where there was an amount of primary or secondary species quota remaining, it was due to minimizing the risk of taking incidental quota share species that are too close to their limits. There were no discards of primary or secondary quota share species.

Prohibited Species Catch:

12.175 mt of the halibut mortality was used, amounting to 16.431% of the quota. Basing a rate on the total harvest of the 3 target and 4 secondary quota share species (8,234.123 mt), this represents a 0.11% halibut bycatch rate (mt halibut mortality / mt QS harvest). 560 extrapolated Chinook were taken within the rockfish quota share fisheries, 752 extrapolated non-Chinook, 135 extrapolated Bairdi, and 0 extrapolated Golden King Crab. A total of 0.055 mt (or 55 kilograms) 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 fish plan details the timing of the prosecution of the sideboard fisheries, in addition to timing of the harvest of the CGOA rockfish QS.

The sideboard WYAK Pacific Ocean Perch was 99.643% harvested and 62.359% of the WYAK dusky rockfish fishery was harvested.

NMFS opened the WGOA Pacific Ocean Perch fishery for July 2020. The following percentages of WGOA rockfish sideboards were harvested: 66.694% of sideboard WGOA POP, 4.724% of sideboard WGOA Dusky, and 14.152% WGOA northern rockfish sideboard.

Vessels also fished deep water flatfish in July, using a total of 8.176% of the DW halibut sideboard, or 3.516 mt of halibut mortality. None of the SW halibut sideboard was used. With only 2 mt of SW halibut sideboard, there is not enough for a viable SW flatfish fishery.

Trades/Overages/Underages:

Trades were made among the cooperative members. There were no overages.

Table 1 - Best Use Cooperative Account Balance 2020

CGOA QS Rockfish	Initial Quota	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Total Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken
POP	8103.252			8103.252	8094.875	8.377	99.897%
Northern Rockfish	1151.396			1151.396	1144.429	6.967	99.395%
Dusky	922.762			922.762	905.446	17.316	98.123%
Shortraker	113.6			113.6	104.546	9.054	92.03%
Rougheye	267.859			267.859	128.465	139.394	47.96%
Sablefish	226.22			226.22	211.564	14.656	93.521%
Thornyhead	241.415			241.415	91.841	149.574	38.043%
CGOA Halibut	74.1			74.1	12.175	61.925	16.43%
Golden King Crab					0		
Bairdi					135		
Chinook					560		
Non-Chinook					752		
Herring					0.055		
Golden King Crab, Bairdi, Chinook, and Non-Chinook reported in number of animals; all others reported in metric tons							
Sideboard Fisheries	Initial Quota	Total Catch	Remaining Quota	Percent Taken			
GOA Halibut Deep Water Complex	43	3.516	39.484	8.177%			
GOA Halibut Shallow Water Complex	2	0	2	0%			
WGOA POP	727	484.862	242.138	66.694%			
WGOA Dusky	561	26.501	534.499	4.724%			
WGOA Northern Rockfish	842	119.159	722.841	14.152%			
WYAK POP	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL		99.643%			
WYAK Dusky	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL		62.359%			
Data Sources: NMFS Account Detail, SeaState							

Table 2 - Best Use Cooperative Halibut PSC Usage 2012-2020

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CGOA	12.36959	21.783	30.0414	28.712	22.975	19.289	25.973	34.116	12.175
DW Halibut	24.37987	11.234	0.793	12.4	14.131	16.059	7.029	7.664	3.516
SW Halibut	0	0.714	0	0	0	1.706	0.054	0	0
Data Sources: NMFS Account Detail, past cooperative reports									