

Final Report
ISA
Rockfish Cooperative

2020

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Prepared by:
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc.
P.O. Box 788
Kodiak AK 99615

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. At the February 2020 meeting, the Council took final action to recommend reauthorization of the Rockfish Program with minor modifications and no sunset date. The new regulations are expected to be implemented prior to the current RP expiration date.

The ISA 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. There were six cooperatives in 2020 which marked the ninth year of the Rockfish Program and, in compliance with Amendment 88, this Final Report is submitted to NMFS as a summary of allocations, harvests, transfers and cooperative performance during the 2020 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).

¹ Starting in 2012, Pelagic shelf rockfish consists only of dusky rockfish

II. COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP

In 2020, the ISA Rockfish Cooperative consisted of seven member licenses (compared to seven in 2019) with seven member vessels (Table 1) of which five actively fished during the 2020 RP season: Mar Del Norte, Mar Pacifico, Evie Grace, Vanguard and Ocean Hope 3. International Seafoods of Alaska (ISA) in Kodiak, Alaska (currently in the process of being sold to Silver Bay Seafoods) served as the primary purchasing and processing facility for the ISA Rockfish Cooperative.

Table 1. LLPs, LLP owners and member vessels of the ISA Rockfish Cooperative 2020.

LLP No.	LLP Owner	Member Vessel	ADFG No.
3665	LAURA FISHERIES JOINT VENTURE	EVIE GRACE	78702
1554	CHELLISSA FISHERIES, LLC	CHELLISSA	70459
2188	GREEN HOPE LLC	GREEN HOPE	47790
1841	NORTHERN SEA FISHERIES LLC	MAR DEL NORTE	21650
2696	MAR PACIFICO, INC.	MAR PACIFICO	23131
2683	MARTIN FISHERIES, INC	OCEAN HOPE 3	48173
2565	FUTURA FISHERIES, INC. /Great Alaska Fisheries, Inc	VANGUARD	39946

III. COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

The ISA Rockfish Cooperative was represented and managed by Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc in collaboration and coordination with the co-op president, Rob Langdon, the ISA Seafoods plant manager, Kyffon Brinegar, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

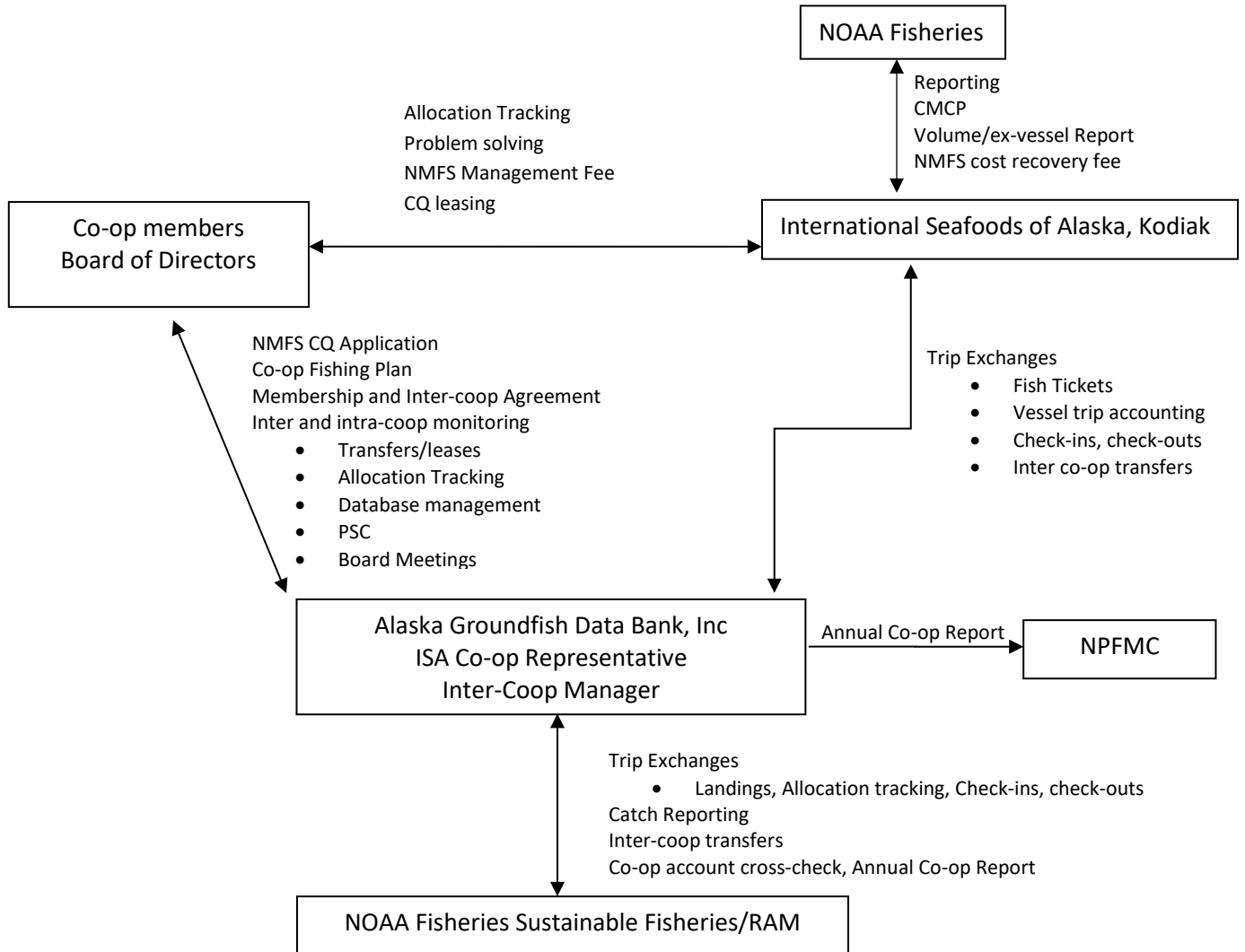
Fishing plans were devised to harvest the allocations efficiently while minimizing the amount of prohibited and non-marketable species. Harvest numbers, observer data and fish ticket information were analyzed, updated and distributed to the appropriate parties in a timely manner to ensure proper management.

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” with no limits to the number of check ins as was the case for the RPP. 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.
- (2) **Observer Coverage:** 100% Observer coverage was required by all participating vessels.
- (3) **CMCP Monitor:** For the new 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 was used to perform transfers, conduct cross-checks, check co-op balances and detect missing database information.

Figure 1. Schematic of ISA Rockfish Cooperative Operations and Management



IV. COOPERATIVE PERFORMANCE

A. Co-op Allocations, Transfers and Harvests

The ISA Rockfish Cooperative’s harvests for the 2020 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.

The Pacific cod quota was set at an all-time low in 2020 due to the stock falling below the B20 threshold which triggered additional conservation measures to protect Stellar Sea Lions. The coops were concerned that the low cod cooperative quota could be reached prematurely which would shut down all fishing for all the cooperatives. The intercooperative addressed these concerns at their meeting on April 14, 2020. From the minutes:

“Other bycatch consideration (Pacific cod): The Pacific cod allocation to the co-ops is even lower than last year (~320K lbs) and once all the cod is caught, all coop fishing stops. It was agreed that language in the Intercooperative Agreement should be added stating that Pacific cod should not be targeted until Nov 1 and, if a vessel intends to target cod after Nov 1, they should check in with the intercoop manager (AGDB) first to coordinate cod harvests across all coops to avoid over harvest. The motion was made by Paddy (O’Donnell), seconded by Kurt (Cochran) with no objections. Language is as follows:

Pacific cod. The parties agree to not target Pacific cod until on or after November 1st due to the low Pacific cod cooperative quota available for the 2020 fishery and to check in with the Intercooperative Manager (AGDB) prior to any November cod trip in order to coordinate cod harvests across all cooperatives and not exceed the CV quota.

Table 2. ISA Rockfish Cooperative 2020 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 7, 2020).

Vessel	POP	NR	Dusky	Sablefish	P. cod	Thornyhead	Halibut PSC
MAR PACIFICO	1,329,492	0	4,357	32,914	69,887	1,259	3,345
MAR DEL NORTE	661,233	0	375	47,635	0	176	52
EVIE GRACE	1,555,938	613,801	574,518	91,716	47,288	635	36,486
OCEAN HOPE 3	795,321	1,309	20,628	29,808	783	1,985	8,685
VANGUARD	1,265,688	331	6,092	31,684	1,069	2,038	4,577
Total Co-op Harvest	5,607,672	615,441	605,970	233,757	119,027	6,093	53,145
Final ISA Allocation:	5,963,981	1,031,572	932,361	234,041	128,239	35,749	60,475
% Harvested	94.03%	59.66%	64.99%	99.88%	92.82%	17.04%	87.88%

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

	POP	NR	Dusky	Sablefish	P. cod	Thornyhead	Halibut
Initial ISA Allocation:	5,416,094	593,745	527,938	171,864	57,033	28,091	46,135
Transfers (OBSI):	56,257	305,667	260,491	11,412	8,829	1,866	3,065
Transfers (SOK)	90,388			2,366	20,858		
Transfers (WAF)	795,321	1,309	20,628	29,808	16,708	1,985	5,023
Transfers (NP)	(394,080)	130,851	123,303	18,591	24,811	3,807	6,252
Total Transfers	547,887	437,826	404,423	62,177	71,206	7,658	14,340
Final ISA Allocation:	5,963,981	1,031,572	932,361	234,041	128,239	35,749	60,475
Total CV Coops*:	27,711,518	3,795,484	3,358,161	963,355	319,689	157,459	253,579
ISA % CV Allocation:	21.52%	27.18%	27.76%	24.29%	40.11%	22.70%	23.85%

*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 2020, this amounted to 2,789,213 lbs of primary rockfish in the aggregate. During the 2020 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 ISA co-op in 2020 amounted to 22.7% 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. For the 2020 season, these caps amounted to 10,459,549 lbs primary rockfish, 289,007 lbs sablefish, and 95,907 lbs Pacific cod. As can be seen in Table 4, ISA exceeded the Pacific cod processing cap by 24,848 lbs. NMFS Enforcement was notified and is in the process of reviewing the circumstances.

Table 4. LBS and % of CV allocations by CQ species received and processed by ISA Seafoods in 2020. Processing caps are 30% of the CV primary rockfish, sablefish and cod CQ.

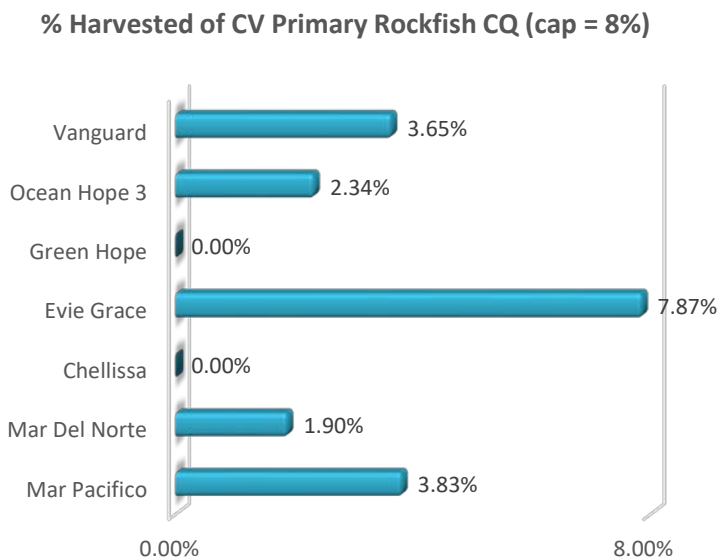
Species	POP	NR	DUSKY	Total Primary RF	Sablefish	Cod	% RF	% Sable	% Cod
ISA Processed	6,203,197	359,517	484,955	7,047,669	242,353	120,755	20.21%	25.16%	37.77%
CV Allocation	27,711,518	3,795,484	3,358,161	34,865,162	963,355	319,689			

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	21.3%	15.5%	17.9%	20.4%
SOK	23.7%	32.2%	31.4%	25.4%
WAF	16.6%	10.3%	8.5%	15.1%
OBSI	12.5%	10.1%	10.6%	12.0%
ISA	21.5%	27.2%	27.8%	22.7%
Pacific	4.4%	4.8%	3.8%	4.4%
Final Allocation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Includes CP CQ transferred onshore

Figure 2. Harvests of primary rockfish by ISA 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: at-sea discards of Pacific Ocean Perch, Northern Rockfish, Dusky Rockfish, Pacific cod, Thornyheads, and Sablefish are not allowed. During the 2020 ISA Rockfish Cooperative’s fishing season (May 1– November 15, 2020), there were three occurrences of at-sea discards of POP: The Mar Del Norte discarded 200 lbs POP from his May 18 delivery; the Mar Pacifico discarded 40,000 POP from his June 23 trip and the Evie Grace discarded 10,000 lbs POP on his Oct 26 trip. The discards were all attributed to overfull codends and the amounts were debited from their CQ accounts.

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 ISA Rockfish Co-op used 53,145 lbs or 88% of its final halibut PSC allocation of 60,475 lbs.

Table 6. Halibut bycatch standards adopted by the ISA Rockfish Cooperative.

Inter-coop standard		Red Light Standard		Yellow Light Standard	
<i>Species</i>	<i>% halibut</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>% halibut</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>% halibut</i>
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), 57 mt were used. As part of the RP, 45% of the unused CQ halibut PSC (60 mt in 2020) remained in the water. Added to the initial 12.5% reduction (27 mt), the total amount of halibut PSC savings in the RP in 2020 was 87 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.

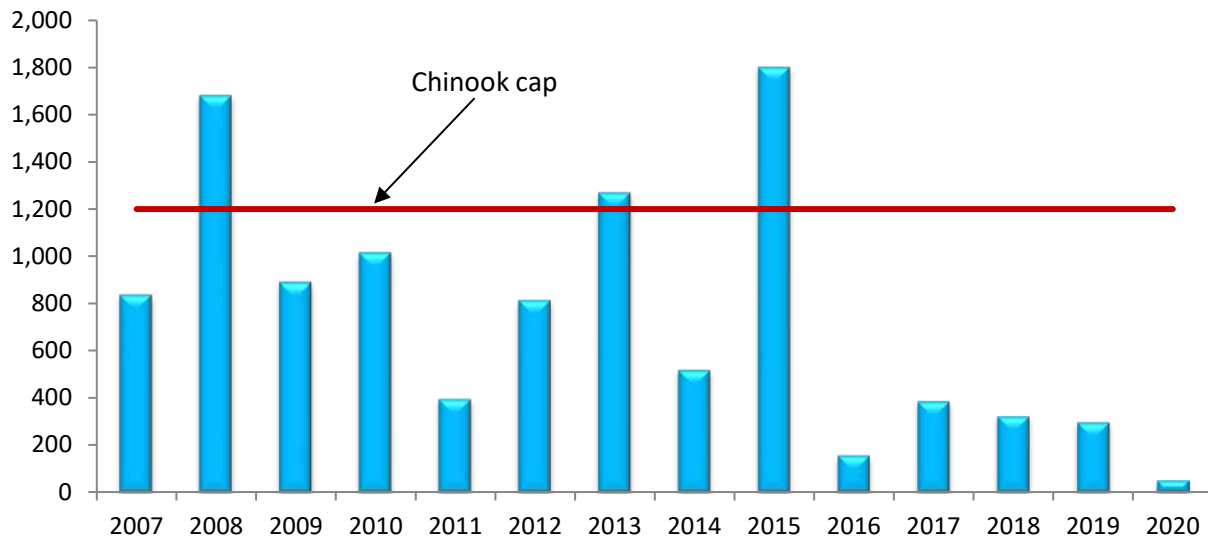
Operators agreed to promptly self-report Chinook salmon hotspot areas from the grounds to AGDB and/or their Cooperative’s affiliated processor.

According to NMFS catch accounting, there were 52 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 (2012-2020). 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
2019	298	12,644	0.024
2020	52	13,566	0.004
Average	747	9,821	0.076

Figure 3. Chinook PSC in the RP, 2007-2020.



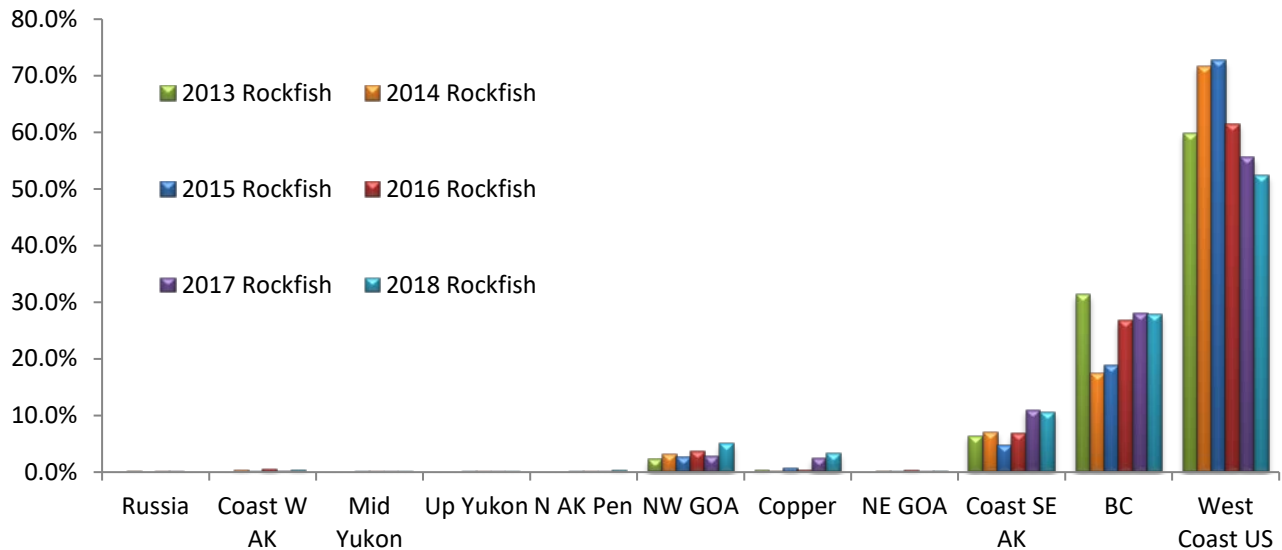
Rockfish Genetics Project: The Rockfish Genetics project that started 2013 continued in 2020. The goal was to collect tissue samples from all landed Chinook salmon during the RP fishery to determine stock of origin.

Over the 2020 season, tissue samples from 1,123 landed Chinook as well as snouts from 81 tagged salmon were collected and sent to NMFS Auke Bay Lab for processing and analysis. As in 2018 and 2019, 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 genetic results are expected Summer or Fall 2021. Results from the 2013-2018 Rockfish fisheries are shown in Table 8 and Figure 4 (courtesy Chuck Guthrie, NMFS Auke Bay). Due to COVID, the results from 2019 are not yet available.

Table 8. Stock of Origin results, 2013-2018 CGOA CV Rockfish fishery.

Area	2013 Rockfish	2014 Rockfish	2015 Rockfish	2016 Rockfish	2017 Rockfish	2018 Rockfish
No. Samples Processed	2,070	398	635	493	280	499
Russia	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coast W AK	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
Mid Yukon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Up Yukon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
N AK Pen	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
NW GOA	2.2%	3.2%	2.7%	3.7%	2.7%	5.0%
Copper	0.3%	0.1%	0.8%	0.3%	2.4%	3.3%
NE GOA	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%
Coast SE AK	6.4%	7.1%	4.8%	6.9%	10.9%	10.7%
BC	31.3%	17.4%	18.9%	26.8%	28.1%	28.0%
West Coast US	59.9%	71.7%	72.8%	61.5%	55.6%	52.5%
SE, BC,WC combined	97.6%	96.2%	96.5%	95.1%	94.7%	91.1%
Total	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 4. Chinook stock of origin results from 2013-2018 census collections of tissue samples.



VI. Other Prohibited Species Catch: The following were attributed to the combined in-shore catcher vessel cooperative catch accounts by NMFS CAS during the 2020 RP fishing season (May 1st – November 15th): 13 non-Chinook salmon, 2,694 Bairdi tanner crab and .016 MT Pacific herring (source: Steve Whitney, NMFS as of Dec. 7, 2020).

VII. 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 ISA 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.