



Alaska Seafood Cooperative
Report to the North Pacific
Fishery Management Council
for the 2022 Fishery

March 2023

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Introduction

On September 14, 2007, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule implementing Amendment 80 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). Amendment 80 provides specific groundfish and prohibited species catch (PSC) allocations to the non-American Fisheries Act (AFA) trawl catcher processor sector and allows the formation of cooperatives. Sector allocations and the formation of cooperatives were intended to assist in improving groundfish retention.

On January 20, 2008, the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC) began fishing Amendment 80 allocations. Previous annual reports described AKSC co-op management/harvest strategies and catch monitoring protocols. Catch monitoring protocols are implemented through regulation and, except for halibut deck sorting protocols, remain largely unchanged since program inception. These sections were removed from this report to improve readability.

This report summarizes AKSC and its catch for the 2022 fishing year. Harvest and management strategies continue to be reviewed periodically by cooperative members and are adapted to address changes to fishing conditions and information needs.

AKSC membership

During 2022, AKSC was comprised of the following five member companies, consisting of 18 non-AFA trawl catcher processors and 1 non-AFA trawl catcher vessel.

Company	Vessel	Length Overall
Fishermen's Finest, Inc.	American No. 1	160
	U.S. Intrepid	185
	America's Finest	262
North Star Fishing Company, LLC	Arica	186
	Cape Horn	158
	Unimak	185
	North Star	261
Ocean Peace, Inc	Seafisher	230
	Ocean Peace	219
	Alaska Warrior	215
	Alaska Victory	227
	Bering Hope	151
O'Hara Corporation	Constellation	166
	Defender	123
	Enterprise	120
	Alaska Spirit	221
	Araho	194

United States Seafoods, LLC	Seafreeze Alaska	295
	Seafreeze America	208

2022 AKSC Catch

The following tables provide AKSC catch. All data is rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity. It is important to understand that fishing behavior and catch amounts under any given year of cooperative operations may not reflect those of other years.

AKSC initially apportions its annual NMFS-issued allocation to individual companies or vessels. Subsequently, AKSC companies can engage in transfers with other AKSC companies or vessels to maximize harvesting efficiencies. Because allocations are managed under hard caps, some portion of each of AKSC's allocations will be left unharvested to serve as a buffer prior to reaching allocation amounts.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands AKSC Allocated Quota and Catch Amounts

Species	AKSC A80 Allocation (mt)	AKSC Catch (mt)
Cod	18,681	16,731
Yellowfin Sole	166,608	127,018
Rock Sole	52,938	15,342
Flathead Sole	28,702	12,191
POP 541	6,406	6,377
POP 542	4,728	4,701
POP 543	9,617	9,584
Mackerel BS/541	21,692	16,060
Mackerel 542	13,499	13,484
Mackerel 543	19,931	19,902

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands AKSC PSC Limits and Catch Amounts

Species	AKSC A80 Allocation (mt)	AKSC Catch
Halibut Mortality (mt)	1,745	1,560
King Crab Z1 (#)	14,282	1,903
Bairdi Z1 (#)	312,115	21,197
Bairdi Z2 (#)	532,660	337,602
COBLZ Opilio (#)	1,909,256	188,114

Notes: Crab are reported as individuals.

Retention Compliance Standard

Amendment 79, also known as the Groundfish Retention Standard or GRS, was implemented simultaneously with Amendment 80 in 2008. The GRS required the cooperative to annually

improve groundfish retention over the course of several years from 65% in 2008 to 85% in 2011 and beyond.

Soon after the adoption of the GRS, the Council repealed the GRS because of problems of enforceability and a mismatch between the analysis used to establish the GRS and the metrics used to estimate retention under the GRS. Simultaneously, at the request of the Council, AKSC substituted an internal monitoring system known as the Retention Compliance Standard (RCS) for the GRS program.

The RCS is implemented through contract with substantial non-compliance fines, and an annual third-party audit report. The RCS agreement, including the calculation methodology, and the third part audit are appended to this report.

Since 2008, AKSC has exceeded Council retention expectations, and annual RCS-measured retention has consistently exceeded 90%. ***The RCS required a 2022 groundfish retention of 85 percent; AKSC achieved a groundfish retention of 92.0%.***

GOA sideboard management

Regulations limit Amendment 80 vessels to historic catch levels by establishing sideboard amounts for several species. To help manage GOA sideboard fisheries, AKSC established a GOA fishing plan. The 2022 GOA fishing plan includes cooperative management measures to limit individual vessels and the cooperative to halibut PSC sideboard amounts.

Summary

The Council has designed, and NMFS has implemented, a well-designed program that provides AKSC with the necessary tools to effectively manage Amendment 80 fisheries, minimize bycatch to the extent practicable, and increase retention. AKSC and its member companies are working hard to achieve the goals of Amendment 80 by implementing internal data management and quality control measures that enable companies and vessel captains to maximize allocations. For 2022, AKSC target catch amounts for this complex multi-species fishery were well utilized, PSC limits were below regulatory limits, and the groundfish retention goals exceeded.



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January 31, 2023

Re: Audit of the Alaska Seafood Cooperative's groundfish retention for 2022.

This letter details the methods and results for an audit of the Alaska Seafood Cooperative's groundfish retention for 2022.

Methods:

Observer data for cooperative vessels were supplied to Sea State Inc. via the North Pacific Observer Program's password-protected web site. Logon credentials were supplied by all members of the Alaska Seafood Cooperative. Production data were obtained from the NMFS Alaska Region e-Landings system using login credentials supplied by member companies.

Unsampled hauls in the observer data were extrapolated using standard methods documented by NMFS Alaska Region to produce total groundfish catch estimates in accord with those in the Alaska Region Catch Accounting System. Retained product data were expanded to round weight equivalents (RWE) using published Product Recovery Rates.

Groundfish retention is given by:

Retained percentage = Retained catch (retained product RWE) / Total Catch (CAS).

For 2022, three groundfish categories transitioned to Prohibited Species Catch (PSC): AI Other Rockfish (August 23), Blackspotted/rougheye (August 6), and BS Sablefish (September 21). The retained percentage calculation does not include these species after the transition date.

Results:

For 2022, the Alaska Seafood Cooperative's Total Catch of FMP species was 394,446 mt. The round-weight-equivalent (RWE) from this catch was 326,521 mt. The annual retention rate for the Alaska Seafood Cooperative was 82.8%

Sincerely,

Steve Martell
Sea State Inc.