

# **Year End Report of The Fishing Company of Alaska**

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## **Offshore Rockfish Cooperative**

Respectively submitted to:  
**Regional Administrator**  
NMFS Alaska  
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## Section I INTRODUCTION

The Council adopted the proposed Central GOA Rockfish Program on June 14, 2010, to replace the Pilot Program, which expired on December 31, 2011. The final rule implementing Amendment 88, the Rockfish Program, became effective on December 27, 2011. The CGOA Rockfish Program is similar to the Pilot Program, but does incorporate some changes, such as:

1. Uses different qualifying years for eligibility for QS;
2. Uses a different suite of years to determine sideboard limits and the allocation of QS

The CGOA Rockfish Program takes over the 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 (PSR). The CGOA Rockfish Program also allows for the formation of rockfish fishing cooperatives in the catcher vessel (CV) and catcher processor (CP) sectors.

The Fishing Company of Alaska (FCA) Rockfish Cooperative was one of three offshore/catcher processor cooperatives formed first in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and has carried over to the new CGOA Rockfish Program for 2012. During this 2012 fishing season the FCA cooperative performed quota transfers with Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative.

Each cooperative received 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 primary rockfish species (POP, NR, PSR), catcher processor cooperatives also received allocations of secondary species, which included sablefish, thornyhead, shortraker, roughey rockfish and halibut PSC mortality. The catcher processor (CP) vessel co-ops did not receive allocations of Pacific cod. The CP cod was managed as a maximum retainable amount (MRA's in the CP sector) but was allocated shortraker and roughey rockfish. Allocations to both the inshore and catcher processor sectors were based on the average percentage of retained catch and halibut PSC mortality usage of these species in the target rockfish fisheries during the qualifying period. These allocations were distributed to the cooperative members based on the amount of primary rockfish that the cooperative member held.

This year (2012) marks the first year of the CGOA Rockfish Program, and in compliance with Amendment 88, this annual report is submitted to the Council as a summary of harvests, transfers and cooperative performance during the 2012 rockfish fishing season in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA).

## **Section II COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP**

The 2012 Fishing Company of Alaska Cooperative (FCA) consisted of three member vessels, AK Spirit (LLP #3043), AK Victory (LLP #2080) and AK Warrior (LLP # 2083); the Alaska Spirit and Victory actively fished in the RPP.

### **Member Licenses**

Vessel Name	ADF&G	USCG	LLP
Alaska Spirit	59870	554913	3043
Alaska Victory	61083	569752	2080
Alaska Warrior	56965	590350	2083

## **Section III COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT- MONITORING**

The Fishing Company of Alaska (FCA) cooperative was represented and managed by Bill McGill of Fishing Company of Alaska, Inc. in collaboration and coordination with the other offshore cooperative, Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative, the inshore inter-cooperative manager, Julie Bonney of the Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (in-season management).

FCA's 2012 cooperative harvesting strategy was to bring the entire allocation under one cooperative and manage the harvesting in the central GOA utilizing the AK Spirit and AK Victory to take the quota.

Based on its fishing experience in the Pilot Program, FCA was able to develop an effective onboard catch monitoring program and employ fishing techniques that maximized harvest and minimized PSC bycatch in the CGOA without exceeding any species or PSC allocations. The ability to coordinate harvesting of relatively small TACs between the vessels proved to be a key factor in this program.

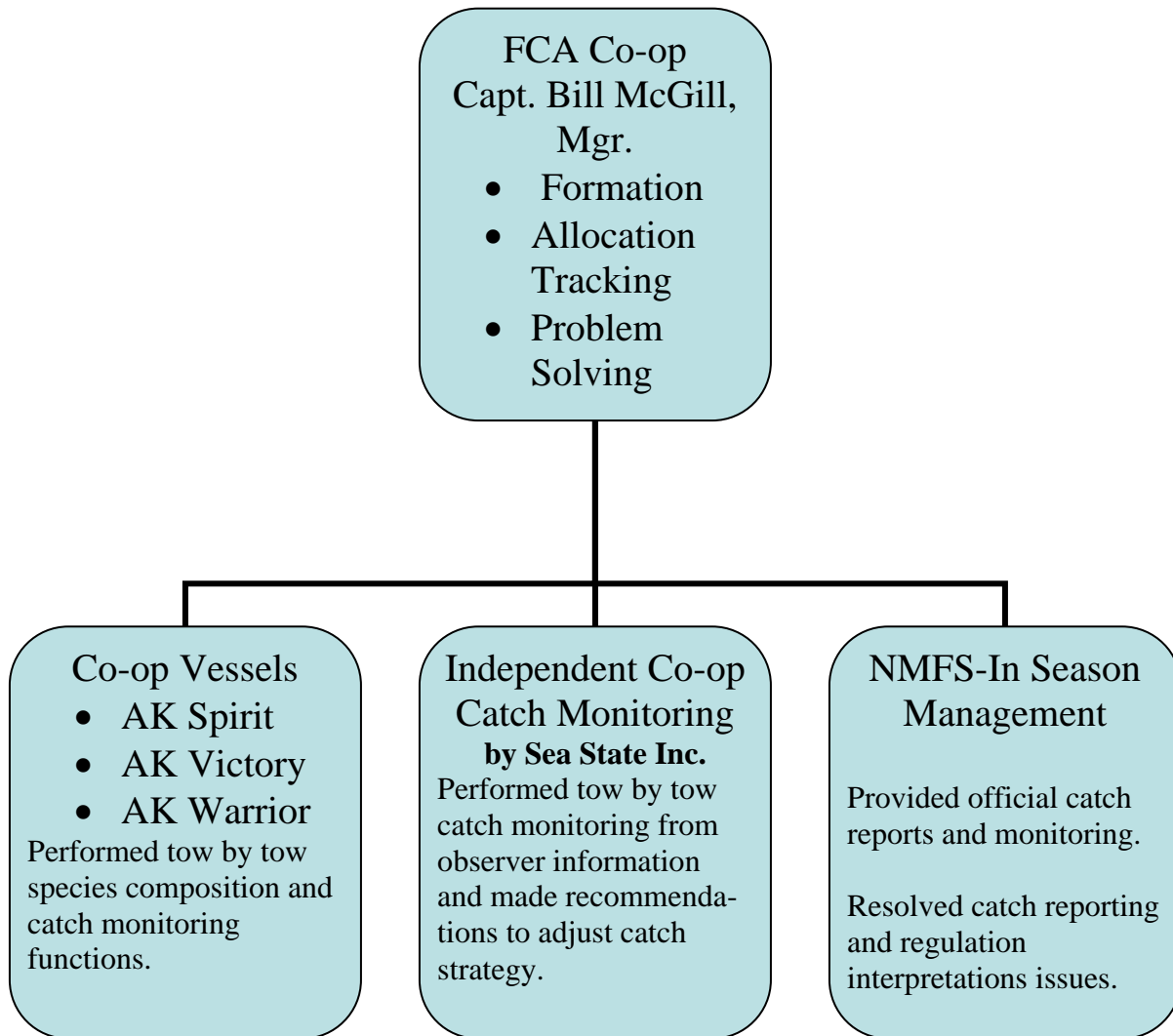
## **Vessel Catch-Monitoring**

All of FCA's co-op vessels were equipped with onboard catch monitoring systems that allowed them to compute and monitor catch on a tow by tow basis based on real time haul estimates, species composition and observer information. Each vessel's accounting was compared to catch reports compiled by an independent catch monitoring company, Sea State Inc., who utilized the most current official NMFS observer catch information. The comparative data was then transmitted to the vessels via the co-op manager and any discrepancies between the vessels catch estimates and those compiled by Sea State were immediately rectified.

In addition to the above, a third check of catch data accuracy was made when the co-op manager also compared the vessels and Sea State catch numbers with the NMFS co-op manager's official catch accounting in Juneau to ensure no species allocations were exceeded. While all of this may have seemed a bit redundant, it gave all concerned confidence that over harvesting of CQ would not happen.

**Figure 1** below shows the schematic outlining the co-op's operations and flow of information among the contributing parties.

**Figure 1. Schematic of Fishing Co. of Alaska Rockfish Cooperative Operations and Management.**



## Section IV CO-OP ALLOCATIONS, TRANSFERS and PERFORMANCE

FCA cooperative allocations and transfers for the 2012 season are summarized by species in Table 1.

The FCA cooperative did perform inter-cooperative transfers with the other offshore cooperative in an effort to maximize the offshore sectors total harvest and balance out accounts within the cooperative.

**Table 1 Central Gulf of Alaska Allocations and Transfers IN and OUT of Cooperative by Species.**

NAME	FCA Allocation	Transferred In from or Out to the coop listed	In Transfers	Out Transfers	Total QS	Catch	CQ Remaining	Percent Harvested
CGOA Dusky (PSR)	278.223	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	41.184	0	319.407	295.721	23.686	92.58%
CGOA Northern	419.471	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	12.226	20.00	411.697	407.860	3.837	99.07%
CGOA POP	2,559.673	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	15.918	0	2,575.591	2,556.732	18.859	99.27%
CGOA Roughey	237.378	GOA BUC	23.924	0	261.302	21.305	239.997	8.15%
CGOA Sablefish	96.023	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	13.426	0	109.449	100.822	8.627	92.12%
CGOA Shortraker	85.870	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	43.088	0	128.958	118.222	10.736	91.67%
CGOA Thornyhead	96.409	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	79.135	0	175.544	19.815	155.729	22.29%
CGOA Halibut - PSC	35.194	Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative	26.536	0	61.730	13.715	48.015	22.22%
GOA DW Complex Halibut SB	10.953		0	0	0	15.967	-5.014	146%
GOA SW Complex Halibut SB	0		0	0	0	0	0	0%

1 Percent is after adjusted transfers in/out of co-op.

## Section V WESTERN GULF OF ALASKA (WGOA) SIDEBOARDS

In this first year of the new program, Fishing Company of Alaska attempted to manage its cooperative in a conservative manner; focusing on catch monitoring, individual vessel accountability and developing inter-cooperative transfer relationships with other cooperatives. All co-op vessels fished in the WGOA sideboard fishery. The Western GOA fishery competition (race for fish) has intensified as a result of the CGOA rockfish program. The last real race for fish in Gulf remains in the Western area where the fishing days have been reduced from one week, to 3 days and only two days during the 2010 fishing year. WGOA POP was a one day fishery in 2011, and a one day opener in the first year of the new program.

**Table 2 Western GOA Sideboard Species**

Species Group	Area	Sideboard Percentage	Total CP Sideboard Limit (mt)	FCA Co-op Sideboard Limit (mt)	FCA Catch (mt)	FCA Balance (mt)	FCA % Remaining
Northern Rockfish	WG	87.89	1,602	1,407.9	295.658	1,112.2	21%
Pacific Ocean Perch	WG	61.49	1,064	654.2	692.336	-38.072	106%
Dusky (PSR)	WG	92.31	296	273.2	114.766	158.481	42%

(\*) The POP fishery closed on TAC after one day.

## Section VI CO-OP CENTRAL GOA PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH (PSC)

The FCA co-op was initially allocated 35.194 mts of halibut PSC and used 13.175 mts. Any unused halibut PSC automatically became available to the inshore sector on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Section VII PROGRAM SIDEBOARDS

The Rockfish Program established sideboard limitations (not allocations) that limited LLP holders participating in the program from expanding their harvests in other fisheries. These sideboard limits applied only in July, historically the most active month for rockfish fishing.

All three of the FCA cooperative vessels participated in the Western Gulf co-op sideboard fisheries. The side board limits shown in Table 2, should not have been limiting on the FCA cooperative because the POP fishery was only open for 24 hours due to increased fishing effort by non-central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish participants



(Amendment 80 vessels) and the CGOA Rockfish CPs. POP remained bycatch for a period of time after closing to directed fishing. During the Northern fishery after the POP closure, this co-op inadvertently exceeded WGOA POP Sideboards, as indicated in Table 2.

## **Section VIII PENALTIES/CIVIL ACTIONS**

There were no NMFS enforcement actions or other sanctions taken against the FCA cooperative fishing in the RPP. The WGOA POP overage is still pending.

## **Section IX SUMMARY COMMENTS**

The most discouraging aspect of the program seems to be the side effect of the intensified race for fish in Western GOA. The lack of rationalization in Western GOA will continue to intensify the race for fish and limit the total benefits that could be obtained for the sector that harvests offshore rockfish in the GOA.