

**C-3(b) and (c): GOA Trawl Bycatch Management Program  
February 9, 2013 Council Motion**

*Purpose and Need Statement:*

Management of Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish trawl fisheries has grown increasingly complicated in recent years due to the implementation of measures to protect Steller sea lions and reduced Pacific halibut and Chinook salmon Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits under variable annual total allowable catch (TACs) limits for target groundfish species. These changes complicate effective management of target and non-target resources, and can have significant adverse social and economic impacts on harvesters, processors, and fishery-dependent GOA coastal communities.

The current management tools in the GOA Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) do not provide the GOA trawl fleet with the ability to effectively address these challenges, especially with regard to the fleet's ability to best reduce and utilize PSC. As such, the Council has determined that consideration of a new management regime for the GOA trawl fisheries is warranted.

The purpose of the proposed action is to create a new management structure which allocates allowable harvest to individuals, cooperatives, or other entities, which will mitigate the impacts of a derby-style race for fish. It is expected to improve stock conservation by creating vessel-level and/or cooperative-level incentives to eliminate wasteful fishing practices, provide mechanisms to control and reduce bycatch, and create accountability measures when utilizing PSC, target, and secondary species. It will also have the added benefit of reducing the incentive to fish during unsafe conditions and improving operational efficiencies.

The Council recognizes that GOA harvesters, processors, and communities all have a stake in the groundfish trawl fisheries. The new program shall be designed to provide tools for the effective management and reduction of PSC and bycatch, and promote increased utilization of both target and secondary species harvested in the GOA. The program is also expected to increase the flexibility and economic efficiency of the GOA groundfish trawl fisheries and support the continued direct and indirect participation of the coastal communities that are dependent upon those fisheries. These management measures could apply to those species, or groups of species, harvested by trawl gear in the GOA, as well as to PSC. This program will not modify the overall management of other sectors in the GOA, or the Central GOA rockfish program, which already operates under a catch share system.

The Council adopts a control date of March 1, 2013, for the Western Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery. Any catch history after this date may not be credited in any allocation system when designing a future fishery management system for the Western Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery.

The Council recommends an expanded discussion paper focused on the following elements and how they would relate to a GOA trawl catch share program:

1. Expanded discussion of state waters management, including options for addressing expansion into state waters which may result from a catch share program that applies to federal waters.
2. Potential benefits and detriments of limited duration quota allocations. This should include the identification of possible bycatch performance incentives upon which to base ongoing quota allocation, and exploration of non-monetary auction options, and bycatch performance incentives that can encourage bycatch avoidance at all times throughout the fishery.

3. Expand the discussion of community protections to include the mechanics and applicability of Community Fisheries Associations and other alternative measures (e.g, port of landing requirements, regionalization) to the GOA trawl fisheries.
4. Information on the number of trawl participants by area in the GOA, including the amount of landings by groundfish species, PSC use, landings by community, and participation in GOA trawl fisheries relative to other fisheries. Include information on the number of trawl licenses that are also endorsed for Pacific cod pot gear in the WG and/or CG.