



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
*P.O. Box 21668*  
*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

September 27, 2013

Eric Olson, Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Chairman Olson:


Enclosed is preliminary information about catch estimates and comparison statistics to date for the first year of the restructured North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program.

1. Enclosure A shows total, retained, and discarded catch in the groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska through August 30, 2013 ("Description of Catch Tables" and Tables A-1 through A-8).
2. Enclosure B contains preliminary data on observer coverage through August 30, 2013, by management area, coverage category, selection pool, and gear (Tables B-1 and B-2). It also includes actual observer coverage realized in 2012 as if the restructured observer program had been implemented in that year (Tables B-3 and B-4).

Additional information and explanation of the tables is included in the enclosures. In addition, NMFS staff will provide an overview of these tables under agenda item B-2 at the October 2013 meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council).

We thank the Council for its support of the Observer Program. We are pleased to report that we are collecting important information about the groundfish and halibut fisheries from a wider range of vessels and fisheries. These data will improve the information available to conserve and manage the fisheries off Alaska. We look forward to continuing to update the Council on information we are collecting through the restructured Observer Program and improving the program where necessary.

Sincerely,

  
James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Administrator, Alaska Region



## Enclosure A

### Total Catch in the groundfish and halibut fisheries

#### Information on data used for catch tables

- Tables reflect total catch of groundfish and halibut (retained and discarded) for the period January 1, 2013 - August 30, 2013. Harvest information, or retained catch, is collected from eLandings catch reports (fish tickets) and production reports. These are the same sources of information used for management.
- There are some halibut landings to entities without a federal processor permit that are not recorded in eLandings at the time of landing (for example, catcher sellers and out of state landings). These fish tickets are manually entered before the end of the year and are not included in the retained halibut catch in these tables.
- Discard information is estimated using bycatch rates derived from haul-specific at-sea observer information. The rates are then applied to landings on a landings specific basis. Discard estimation methods are described in detail in Cahalan et al. 2010.
- The halibut IFQ fishery has a length retention requirement of 32 inches (~15 lbs), below which fish must be discarded. The average weights used to estimate discard of halibut in the halibut IFQ fishery contain both retained and discarded fish. These average weights are likely higher on average than what would be calculated for just discarded fish.
- All catch and discard, including halibut, is round weight metric tons. If species are landed in a condition other than round weight then standard product recovery rates (PRRs) are used to obtain round weight. Standard PRRs are published in Federal regulations: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/rr/tables/tab13.pdf>. Halibut that are landed in ice and slime are additionally corrected for ice and slime. A standard 2% correction is made for ice and slime.

#### Table structure

- The retained and discard information presented in Tables A-2 and A-3 are derived from Table A-1 in that they simply break out the Table 1 information by species and whether the catch was observed or retained. The same is true for tables A-5 and A-6 in that they provide more detail of the information in Table A-4.
- Tables A-2, A-3, A-5 and A-6 contain all catch of each species by gear type. This is not the same as “fishery” and instead is simply the summation of all species catch by each gear type.
- The species in the species catch column in Tables A-2 and A-3 are grouped as described in Table A-7 and the species catch in Tables A-3 and A-4 are grouped as described in Table A-8. The species groupings were done to simplify the tables and are based on categories that made sense from a management standpoint.

Table A-1: Total catch of groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Gulf of Alaska from January 1 through August 30, 2013.

Sector	Trip Disposition	Hook and Line		Non-pelagic Trawl		Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Jig	
		Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard
Catcher Processor	Observed	3,320	830	18,561	5,802	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Total	3,425	839	18,561	5,802	--	--	--	--	--	--
Catcher Vessel: Rockfish Program	Observed	--	--	5,917	295	1,224	4	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	6,014	300	1,224	4	--	--	--	--
Catcher Vessel	Observed	2,357	1,132	4,450	447	8,767	25	210	4	--	--
	Total	24,064	15,750	34,254	3,772	54,514	145	10,487	297	501	--

“--” indicates no catch occurred.

- The table rows titled “Observed” describes catch that occurred on trips where an observer was present.
- The rows titled “Total” represents estimates of all catch from all trips regardless of whether it was observed.
- Trips for catcher processors are defined as a week (Sunday-Saturday).
- Trips for catcher vessels are defined as the time period between when a vessel started fishing and all fish were offloaded (including split deliveries).
- The columns title “Retained” indicate catch that was offloaded (minus dockside discard).
- The columns titled “Discard” are estimated at-sea discard.

Table A-2: Retained groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Gulf of Alaska from January 1 through August 30, 2013 by gear type, operation type, and the amount of retained catch on observed versus all trips.

Species Caught	Hook and Line		Non-Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Pelagic Trawl	
	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total
Deep Water Flats	24	25	3,906	3,906	--	--	--	--
Halibut	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	<1	<1	816	816	--	--	--	--
Pacific Cod	2,662	2,662	797	797	--	--	--	--
Pollock	4	4	770	770	--	--	--	--
Rockfish	66	78	11,026	11,026	--	--	--	--
Sablefish	536	629	339	339	--	--	--	--
Shallow Water Flats	--	--	738	738	--	--	--	--
Sharks	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Skates	26	26	170	170	--	--	--	--
Deep Water Flats	<1	1	2,326	10,944	--	<1	26	216
Halibut	540	8,463	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	<1	2	8	35	2	83	19	123
Pacific Cod	777	6,111	1,557	14,349	207	10,394	83	473
Pollock	11	57	638	5,753	<1	9	8,689	53,620
Rockfish	67	848	5,041	5,334	0	<1	1,173	1,280
Sablefish	918	8,107	222	238	--	--	--	1
Shallow Water Flats	<1	<1	335	2,152	0	<1	<1	7
Sharks	0	2	2	2	--	--	<1	3
Skates	43	473	239	1,461	0	<1	1	16

“--” indicates no catch occurred.

- Halibut discard estimates do not include a mortality rate.
- Trip definitions follow those described in Table A-1. See Table A-7 for species grouping definitions.

Table A-3: Discarded groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Gulf of Alaska from January 1 through August 30, 2013 by gear type, operation type, and the amount of discard estimated on observed trips versus all trips.

Species Caught	Hook and Line		Non-Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Pelagic Trawl	
	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total
Deep Water Flats	56	58	2,538	2,538	--	--	--	--
Halibut	269	269	390	390	--	--	--	--
Other	67	67	570	570	--	--	--	--
Pacific Cod	89	89	274	274	--	--	--	--
Pollock	4	4	600	600	--	--	--	--
Rockfish	138	139	1,260	1,260	--	--	--	--
Sablefish	11	11	37	37	--	--	--	--
Shallow Water Flats	4	4	24	24	--	--	--	--
Sharks	2	2	8	8	--	--	--	--
Skates	191	197	104	104	--	--	--	--
Deep Water Flats	40	458	155	1,343	<1	<1	<1	7
Halibut	601	9,205	123	794	1	69	3	20
Other	56	753	30	215	3	145	2	7
Pacific Cod	108	1,353	119	650	<1	70	0	<1
Pollock	3	19	137	504	<1	7	17	93
Rockfish	80	755	39	130	<1	4	3	6
Sablefish	40	427	0	0	--	--	--	--
Shallow Water Flats	2	14	15	167	<1	1	0	<1
Sharks	37	648	86	116	0	<1	2	15
Skates	164	2,124	38	153	--	--	<1	<1

“—” indicates no catch occurred.

- Halibut discard estimates do not include a mortality rate.
- Trip definitions follow those described in Table A-1. See Table A-7 for species grouping definitions.

Table A-4: Total catch of groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) from January 1 through August 30, 2013.

Sector	Trip Disposition	Hook and Line		Non-pelagic Trawl		Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Jig	
		Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard	Retained	Discard
Catcher Processor	Observed	86,361	18,216	264,240	21,510	507,719	3,434	2,312	61	--	--
	Total	87,473	18,494	264,240	21,510	507,719	3,434	2,312	61	--	--
Mothership	Observed	--	--	16,616	986	102,661	640	--	--	--	--
	Total	--	--	16,616	986	102,661	640	--	--	--	--
Catcher Vessel	Observed	230	147	29,285	1,999	499,455	419	687	12	--	--
	Total	2,911	807	38,016	2,664	499,455	419	18,739	357	11	11

“--” indicates no catch occurred.

- The table rows titled “Observed” describes catch that occurred on trips where an observer was present.
- The rows titled “Total” represents estimates of all catch from all trips regardless of whether it was observed.
- Trips for catcher processors are defined as a week (Sunday-Saturday).
- Trips for catcher vessels are defined as the time period between when a vessel started fishing and all fish were offloaded (including split deliveries).
- The columns title “Retained” indicate catch that was offloaded (minus dockside discard).
- The columns titled “Discard” are estimated at-sea discard.

**Table A-5: Retained groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands from January 1 through August 30, 2013 by gear type, operation type, and the amount of retained catch on observed trips versus all trips.**

Species Caught	Hook and Line		Non-Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Pelagic Trawl	
	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total
Atka Mackerel	2	2	14,089	14,089	--	--	1	1
Flatfish	4	4	155,433	155,433	--	--	6,330	6,330
Halibut	36	36	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	6	6	59	59	<1	<1	72	72
Pacific Cod	79,915	80,861	22,531	22,531	2,311	2,311	4,797	4,797
Processor	2,751	2,775	22,674	22,674	<1	<1	495,422	495,422
Rockfish	80	95	25,491	25,491	--	--	255	255
Sablefish	241	325	163	163	--	--	<1	<1
Turbot	82	93	22,955	22,955	<1	<1	260	260
Skates	3,244	3,276	844	844	--	--	582	582
Sharks	--	--	0	0	--	--	1	1
Atka Mackerel	--	--	0	0	--	<1	59	59
Flatfish	--	--	8	10	--	<1	1,001	1,001
Halibut	171	1,532	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	--	<1	2	2	<1	27	68	68
Pacific Cod	2	968	27,953	36,423	683	18,412	2,123	2,123
Vessel	--	<1	1,320	1,578	--	<1	495,743	495,743
Rockfish	3	30	<1	<1	--	<1	156	156
Sablefish	55	380	--	--	4	299	<1	<1
Turbot	--	<1	2	2	--	<1	135	135
Skates	--	<1	1	1	--	--	169	169
Sharks	--	--	<1	<1	--	--	1	1

“--” indicates no catch occurred.

- Halibut discard estimates do not include a mortality rate.
- Trip definitions follow those described in Table A-4. See Table A-8 for species grouping definitions.

**Table A-6: Discarded groundfish and halibut (in metric tons) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands from January 1 through August 30, 2013 by gear type, operation type, and the amount of discard estimated on observed trips versus all trips.**

Species Caught	Hook and Line		Non-Pelagic Trawl		Pot		Pelagic Trawl	
	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	Observed	Total
Atka Mackerel	21	21	644	644	--	--	0	0
Flatfish	893	924	9,007	9,007	51	51	2,257	2,257
Halibut	3,130	3,157	1,907	1,907	1	1	214	214
Other	793	802	2,718	2,718	7	7	71	71
Catcher Pacific Cod	1,776	1,791	600	600	--	--	8	8
Processor Pollock	339	341	1,953	1,953	2	2	31	31
Rockfish	142	144	600	600	--	--	59	59
Sablefish	10	10	2	2	--	--	--	--
Turbot	534	548	2,143	2,143	0	0	104	104
Skates	10,557	10,736	1,932	1,932	--	--	678	678
Sharks	21	21	3	3	--	--	11	11
Atka Mackerel	--	--	1	2	0	0	9	9
Flatfish	1	14	257	376	0	3	8	8
Halibut	48	269	318	415	--	7	23	23
Other	1	35	159	219	7	236	1	1
Catcher Pacific Cod	16	192	178	245	4	71	0	0
Vessel Pollock	<1	<1	781	1,004	0	1	219	219
Rockfish	12	38	10	15	0	5	47	47
Sablefish	2	8	<1	<1	--	14	--	--
Turbot	24	78	153	202	0	20	0	0
Skates	42	167	141	185	--	--	60	60
Sharks	0	5	0	0	--	<1	51	51

“--” indicates no catch occurred.

- Halibut discard estimates do not include a mortality rate.
- Trip definitions follow those described in Table A-4. See Table A-8 for species grouping definitions.



Table A-7: Description of Gulf of Alaska species groupings for Tables A-2 and A-3.

<b>Deep water Flats</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Rockfish</b>	<b>Shallow Water Flats</b>
Rex sole	Squid	Dusky	Starry flounder
Flathead sole	Octopus	Rougheye	Yellowfin sole
Arrowtooth flounder	Atka Mackerel	Thornyheads	Rock sole
Greenland Turbot		Pacific Ocean Perch	Butter sole
Dover sole		Other rockfish	Other flounder
Kamchatka flounder		Northern	English sole
Deepsea sole		Shortraker	Alaska plaice
			Sand sole

Table A-8: Description of Bering Sea/Aleutian Island species groupings for Tables A-5 and A-6.

<b>Flatfish</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Rockfish</b>	<b>Turbot</b>
Alaska plaice	Squid	Shortraker	Greenland turbot
Starry flounder	Octopus	Rougheye	Kamchatka flounder
Dover sole	Sculpin	Thornyheads	Arrowtooth flounder
Butter sole		Pacific Ocean Perch	
Other flounder		Other rockfish	
English sole		Northern	
Petrale sole			
Flathead sole			
Yellowfin sole			
Rock sole			

## **Enclosure B**

### **Preliminary data on observer coverage by trips and vessels**

#### **Information used for percent observed tables:**

- Tables include preliminary data on total number of trips and vessels and number that were observed by gear type in each observer coverage category. Percent observed was calculated by dividing the observed number of trips or vessels by the total.
- Tables B-1 and B-2 include data from January 1-August 30, 2013. Tables B-3 and B-4 include data from January 1-August 30, 2012.
- For Tables B-1 and B-2, colors in the cells indicate status relative to target observed coverage as described in the 2013 Annual Deployment Plan (100% of trips for catcher/processors, motherships and CVs in full coverage; 14-15% of trips for trip selection; and 13% of vessels for vessel selection); green indicates at or above target; light red is slightly below target; and red is below target.
- Tables B-3 and B-4 present numbers of trips and vessels using the observer coverage categories used to deploy observers under the 2013 Annual Deployment Plan; therefore these table represents actual observer coverage realized in 2012 as if the restructured observer program had been implemented in that year.
- Trips for catcher processors and motherships are defined as a week (Sunday-Saturday). Trips for catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors were defined as the time period between when a vessel started fishing and all fish were offloaded (including split deliveries). For catcher vessels that delivered to a tender a single trip was counted for the tender activity, which could be an underestimate of the total number of tender trips.

Table B-1. **Gulf of Alaska:** Preliminary data on total number of trips and vessels and number that were observed by gear type in each observer coverage category from January 1 through August 30, 2013.

		Gulf of Alaska - 2013														
		Hook and Line			Pelagic Trawl			Non-Pelagic Trawl			Pot			Jig		
		Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed
<b>CP/M</b>	# Trips	30	30	100%				26	26	100%						
	# Vessels	8	8	100%				14	14	100%						
<b>CV Full Coverage</b>	# Trips				15	15	100%	108	108	100%						
	# Vessels				6	6	100%	24	24	100%						
<b>Trip Selection</b>	# Trips	142	1031	14%	91	496	18%	71	426	17%	45	428	11%			
	# Vessels	72	166	43%	41	84	49%	33	77	43%	26	100	26%			
<b>Vessel Selection</b>	# Trips	90	1651	5%							11	223	5%			
	# Vessels	25	339	7%							1	30	3%			
<b>Zero Coverage</b>	# Trips	0	1037	0%							0	25	0%	0	608	0%
	# Vessels	0	286	0%							0	2	0%	0	160	0%

Data source: NMFS Catch Accounting System, observer data, and eLandings landing reports

**Table B-2. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands: Preliminary data on total number of trips and vessels and number that were observed by gear type in each observer coverage category from January 1 through August 30, 2013.**

		<b>Bering Sea Aleutian Islands - 2013</b>															
		<b>Hook and Line</b>			<b>Pelagic Trawl</b>			<b>Non-Pelagic Trawl</b>			<b>Pot</b>			<b>Jig</b>			
		Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	
<b>CP/M</b>	# Trips	57	57	100%	44	44	100%	96	96	100%	7	7	100%				
	# Vessels	36	36	100%	18	18	100%	41	41	100%	3	3	100%				
<b>CV Full Coverage</b>	# Trips		1743	100%	1743	1743	100%	357	359	99%							
	# Vessels		79	100%	79	79	100%	36	36	100%							
<b>Trip Selection</b>	# Trips	25	154	16%				19	151	13%	29	369	8%				
	# Vessels	12	59	20%				11	19	58%	14	59	24%				
<b>Vessel Selection</b>	# Trips	3	127	2%							4	15	27%				
	# Vessels	2	22	9%							1	3	33%				
<b>Zero Coverage</b>	# Trips	0	605	0%										0	415	0%	
	# Vessels	0	59	0%										0	110	0%	

Data source: NMFS Catch Accounting System, observer data, and eLandings landing reports

Table B-3. **Gulf of Alaska:** Total number of trips and vessels and number that were observed by gear type in each restructured observer category from January 1 through August 30, 2012 as if the restricted observer program had been in effect in 2012.

		Gulf of Alaska - 2012													
		Hook and Line			Pelagic Trawl			Non-Pelagic Trawl			Pot		Jig		
		Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	Observed	Total	% Observed
<b>CP/M</b>	# Trips	24	27	89%	4	4	100%	19	23	83%	0	1	0	1	0%
	# Vessels	12	12	100%	1	1	100%	17	17	100%	0	1	0	1	0%
<b>CV Full Coverage</b>	# Trips				33	34	97%	132	138	96%					
	# Vessels				14	15	93%	27	28	96%					
<b>Trip Selection</b>	# Trips	79	1097	7%	145	517	28%	85	489	17%	47	466			10%
	# Vessels	31	178	17%	36	74	49%	34	68	50%	14	104			13%
<b>Vessel Selection</b>	# Trips	0	1943	0%								243			0%
	# Vessels	0	372	0%								38			0%
<b>Zero Coverage</b>	# Trips	0	1097	0%							0	46	0	1448	0%
	# Vessels	0	321	0%							0	5	0	255	0%

Data source: NMFS Catch Accounting System, observer data, and eLandings landing reports

**Table B-4. Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands:** Total number of trips and vessels and number that were observed by gear type in each restructured observer coverage category from January 1 through August 30, 2012 as if the restricted observer program had been in effect in 2012.

<b>Bering Sea Aleutian Islands - 2012</b>																			
		<b>Hook and Line</b>				<b>Pelagic Trawl</b>				<b>Non-Pelagic Trawl</b>				<b>Pot</b>				<b>Jig</b>	
		Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed	Observed	Total	% Observed
<b>CP/M</b>	# Trips	47	59	80%	44	44	100%	95	95	100%	20	20	100%	0	5	0%	0	5	0%
	# Vessels	37	38	97%	17	17	100%	47	48	98%	5	5	100%	0	1	0%	0	1	0%
<b>CV Full Coverage</b>	# Trips				1677	1703	98%	197	318	62%									
	# Vessels				82	82	100%	39	42	93%									
<b>Trip Selection</b>	# Trips	5	195	3%				51	162	31%	55	343	16%						
	# Vessels	2	62	3%				15	32	47%	27	62	44%						
<b>Vessel Selection</b>	# Trips	0	200	0%							0	21	0%						
	# Vessels	0	30	0%							0	3	0%						
<b>Zero Coverage</b>	# Trips	0	1151	0%										0	351	0%	0	351	0%
	# Vessels	0	162	0%										0	82	0%	0	82	0%

Data source: NMFS Catch Accounting System, observer data, and eLandings landing reports