

Overview of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council February 2011

Chris Oliver - Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council



www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc

chris.oliver@noaa.gov



Fisheries Off Alaska

- Would rank in the top 10 producing countries
- Represent 50% of total U.S. catch
- Catch between 3 and 5 billion pounds of groundfish annually for 30 years
- Are the number one private sector employer in Alaska
- Are second only to oil in revenue to the State



Guiding Law for U.S. Marine Fisheries: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

Adopted in 1976, the Act established:

- The 3-200 nm exclusive economic zone [**200 mile limit**].
- **National Standards** and other requirements for conservation and management of resources.
- A system of 8 **Regional Councils** (composed of fishermen and government agency representatives) to develop fishery regulations for their specific area, subject to approval and implementation by the Federal government (i.e., National Marine Fisheries Service).

FMPs, Exclusive Economic Zones by Regional Council

Nationwide:
47 FMPs, 909 Fish Stocks
Dept. Commerce
2 Secretarial FMPs

North Pacific
Fishery Mgt. Council
5 FMPs

Pacific
Fishery Mgt. Council
4 FMPs

Western Pacific
Fishery Mgt. Council
5 FMPs

New England
Fishery Mgt. Council
7 FMPs

Mid-Atlantic
Fishery Mgt. Council
6 FMPs

South Atlantic
Fishery Mgt. Council
7 FMPs

Gulf Of Mexico
Fishery Mgt. Council
7 FMPs

Caribbean
Fishery Mgt. Council
4 FMPs

Fishery Management Councils

	Caribbean
	Gulf of Mexico
	Mid-Atlantic
	New England

	North Pacific
	Pacific
	South Atlantic
	Western Pacific



The North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Structure: 11 voting members (7 fishing representatives and 4 agency representatives): AK (6), WA (3), OR (1), and 1 from NMFS; and 4 non-voting members (USFWS, USCG, PSMFC, State Dept). Staff (13) prepares scientific environmental and economic impact analyses used for decision making.

Function: The Council develops plans and regulations for U.S. fisheries off Alaska, working with affected fishermen and public. Approval and implementation of these plans is effected through partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Process: Council meets 5 times per year, concurrent with its advisory groups: Advisory Panel (21 members from various constituencies), and Scientific and Statistical Committee. Numerous other committees provide advice. Public testimony is taken at all meetings, for all issues.



Membership of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

	Roy Hyder, OR Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Dave Benson, Seattle, WA	Eric Olson, Anchorage, AK	Dave Hanson, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	
John Henderschedt, Seattle, WA	 voting	 voting	 voting	 voting	 voting
					Sam Cotton, Anchorage, AK
 voting	Dan Hull, Anchorage, AK			 voting	Cora Campbell, ADF&G
 voting	Duncan Fields, Kodiak, AK				 voting
					Stefanie Moreland, ADF&G
					Ed Dersham, Anchor Point, AK
					 voting
					ADM CC Colvin, US Coast Guard
					
					CAPT Mike Cerne, USCG
					
					Denny Laussy, US Fish and Wildlife
					
					Nicole Ricci, US Department of State
					
 voting	Jim Balsiger, NMFS AK Region				
Galen Tromble NMFS AK Region					

Who Manages What Fisheries off Alaska?

	North Pacific Fishery Management Council	National Marine Fisheries Service	Alaska Board of Fisheries/ Alaska Dept. Fish & Game	International Pacific Halibut Commission
Groundfish (pollock, cod, flatfish, etc.)	Allocation & conservation	Implements Federal regulations	Some state fisheries (0-3)	
Crabs (king, snow, Tanner crabs)	Bering Sea fisheries – joint management	Bering Sea fisheries - regulations	State & Jointly managed fisheries	
Scallops	License limits	License regulations	Fishery mgmt.	
Halibut	Allocation	Allocation regulations		Conservation
Herring			Fishery mgmt.	
Salmon			Fishery mgmt.	
Others shrimp, urchins, etc.)			Fishery mgmt.	

Federal Jurisdiction off Alaska

- Generally does not extend into State of Alaska waters (within 3 nm from shore) nor beyond the EEZ (200 nm from shore)
- Federal requirements outside the EEZ can be extended to vessels operating with a federal fisheries permit (e.g., VMS and other monitoring requirements)
- Federal management of the Pacific halibut fishery is extended throughout US waters
- Coordination between State and federal management organizations important and reliant on stakeholder input.

Management Partnership Including:

- NOAA Fisheries/Alaska Fisheries Science Center
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Board of Fisheries
- International Pacific Halibut Commission
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Vessels range from:



Small skiffs - longline and jig fishing



Mid-size seine, trawl and longline vessels



Large trawl, longline and crab vessels



Very large catcher/processors

The Fishing Fleet Managed by the Council

Catcher Vessels (deliver shoreside)

150 Trawlers: pollock, cod, flatfish, rockfish

500 Longliners: cod, halibut, sablefish

75 Jig Gear vessels: cod

300 Pot Gear vessels: cod, crabs

Catcher-Processors (process at sea)

35 Trawlers: pollock, flatfish, mackerel, rockfish

50 Longliners: cod, sablefish, turbot

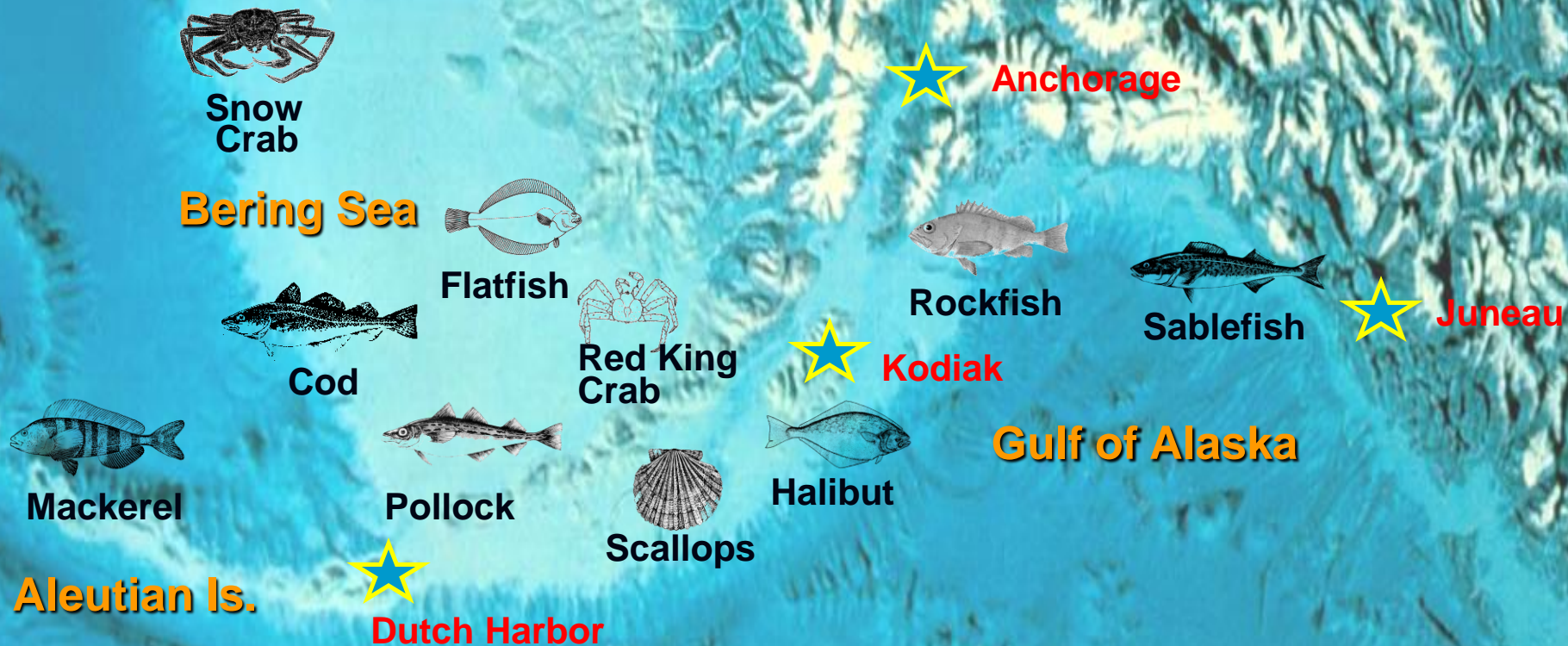
10 Pot Gear vessels: cod, crabs

5 Dredge Gear vessels: scallops



Note: vessel numbers are rounded numbers based on recent participation.

Major Fish Species Managed by the Council

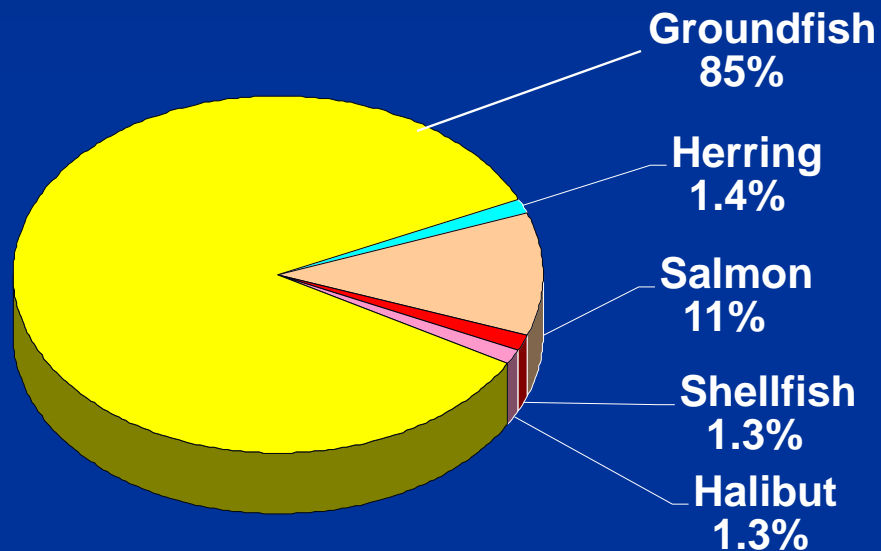


Alaska Fisheries Catch 2009

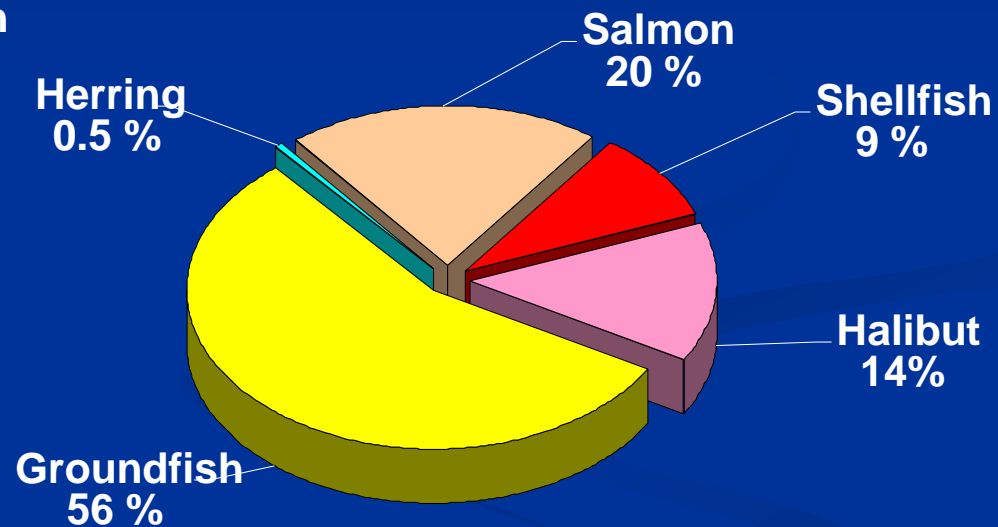
Catch Weight = 2,178,700 Metric Tons

Catch Value = \$1.15 Billion

Weight

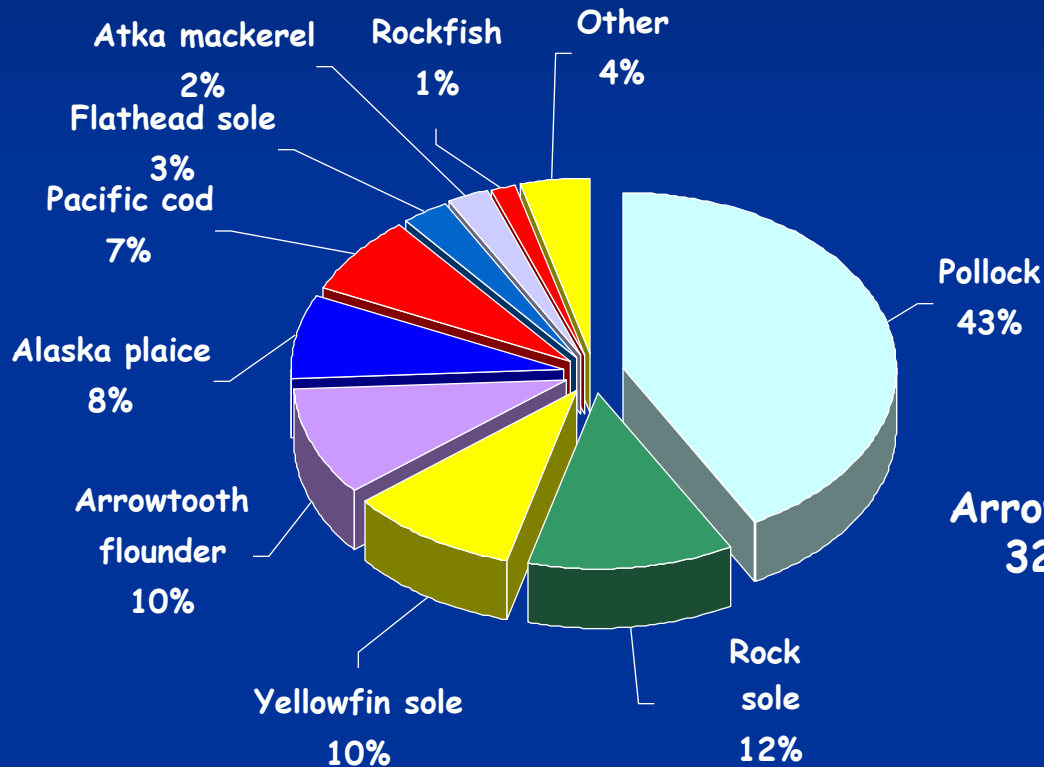


Value

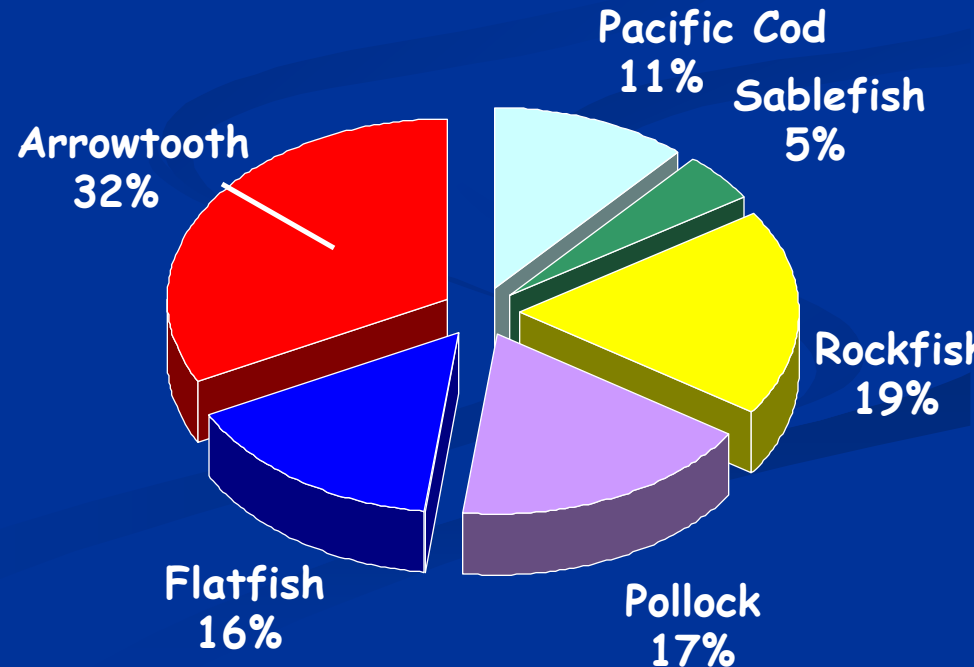


Biomass of major groundfish species

Bering Sea = 17 million mt



Gulf of Alaska = 4 million mt



North Pacific Council's Formula for Sustainable Fisheries Management

- Strong science and research base
- Adherence to scientific advice
- Stakeholder involvement in development of regulations
- Effective monitoring, accounting, and enforcement
- Comprehensive observer program
- Limits on fishing capacity
- **Conservative and strict catch and bycatch limits**
- **Precautionary Approach to address Uncertainty**
- **Habitat protection**
- **Ecosystem considerations**



Strict science-based catch limits

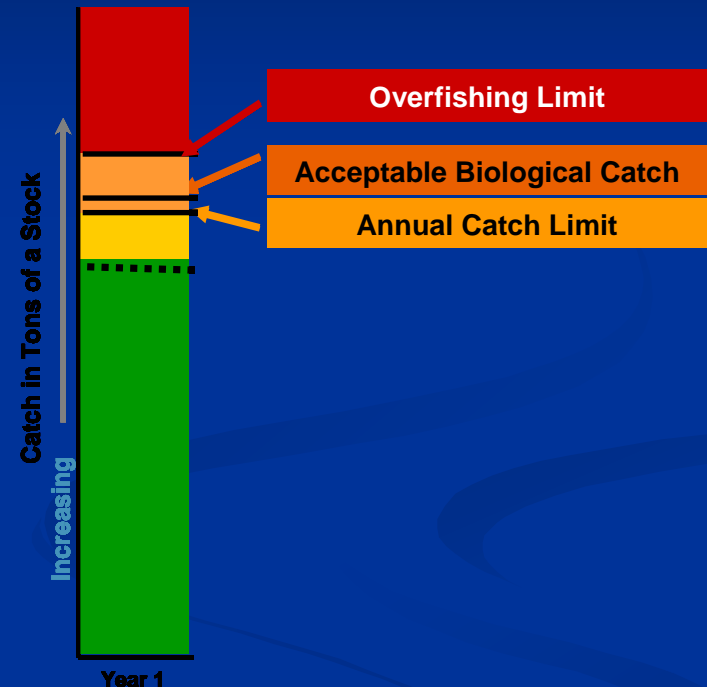
- Rigorous review of stock assessments by Groundfish Plan Teams and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
- Strict annual catch limits or Total Allowable Catch (TACs), at or below Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)
- Overall OY limits for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (2 million mt) and Gulf of Alaska (800,000 mt)
- Independent scientific review of harvest strategies in 2002

Precautionary Catch Limits are Specified

Annual Catch Limits are specified where:

$$TAC \leq ABC < OFL$$

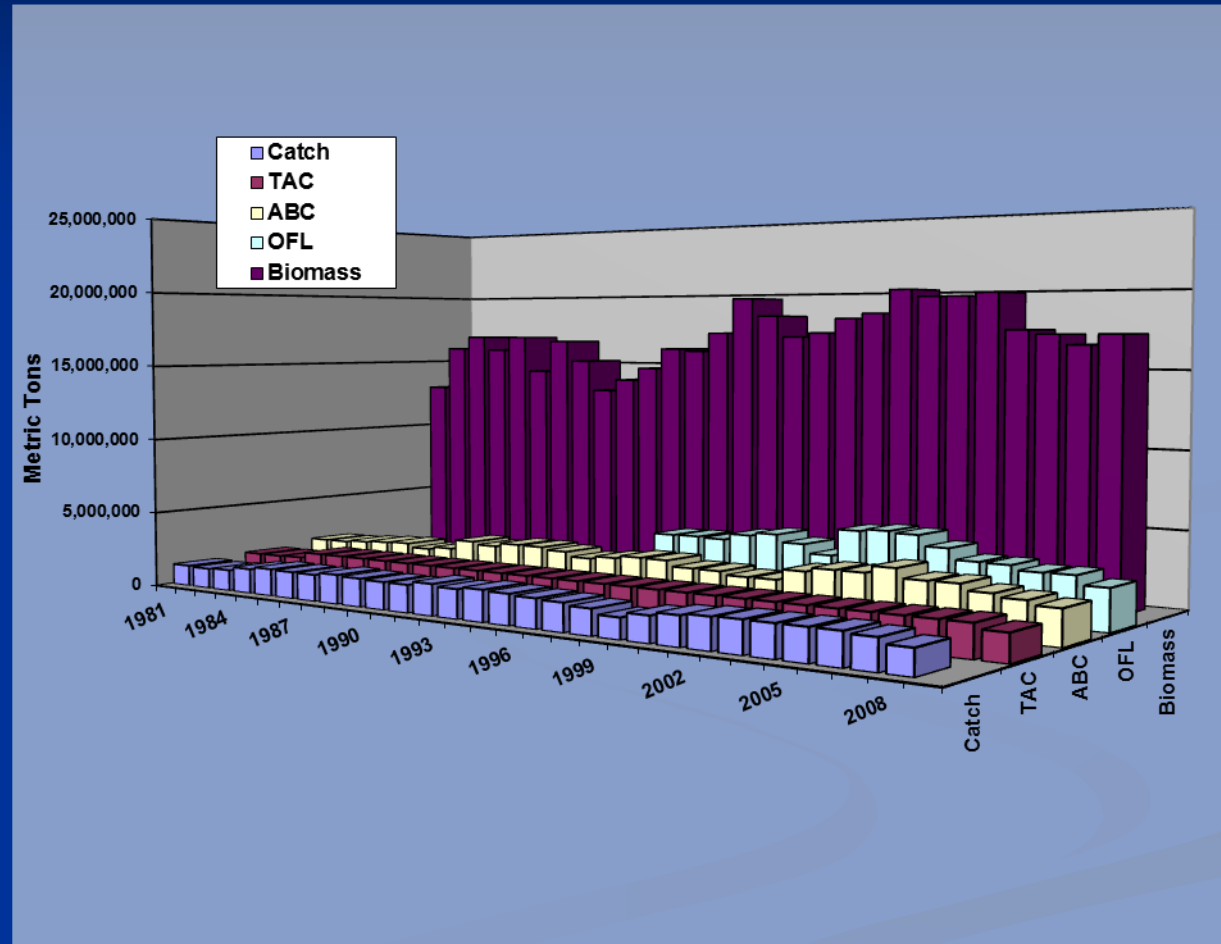
- **OFL (overfishing level)** is harvest limit associated with Maximum Sustainable Yield.
- **ABC (acceptable biological catch)** is the harvest limit that produces higher spawning per recruit. Also called ACL.
- **TAC (total allowable catch)** is the target that includes socioeconomic considerations.



Take home message:
To ensure sustainability, annual catch limits are set well below biologically sustainable levels.

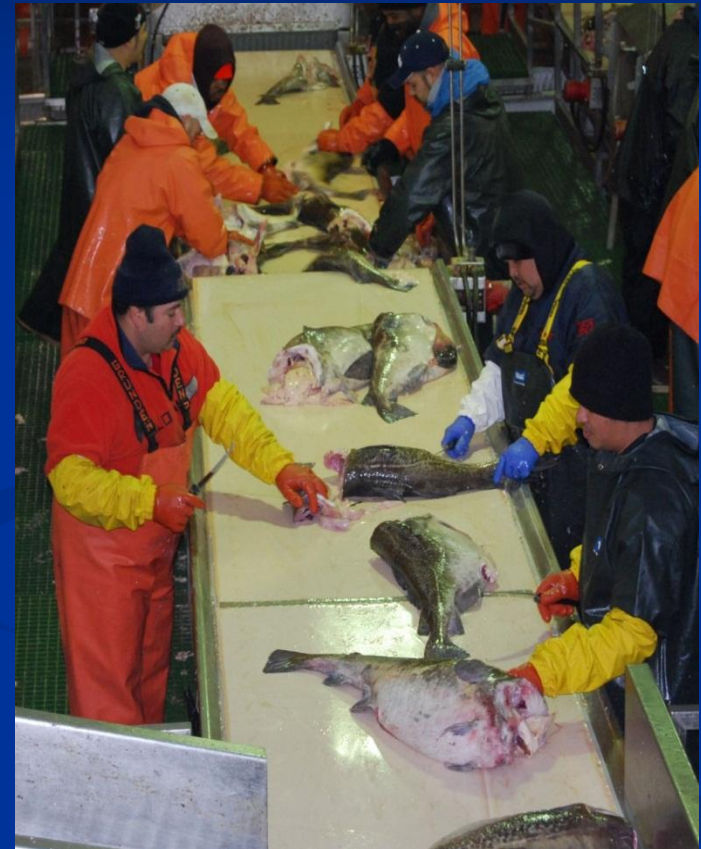
Results

- 2003 BSAI TAC was set at 2 million mt, while ABCs totaled 3.5 million mt harvest
- Groundfish harvest in North Pacific sustained in 3-5 billion pound range for 28 years
- NO overfished groundfish stocks



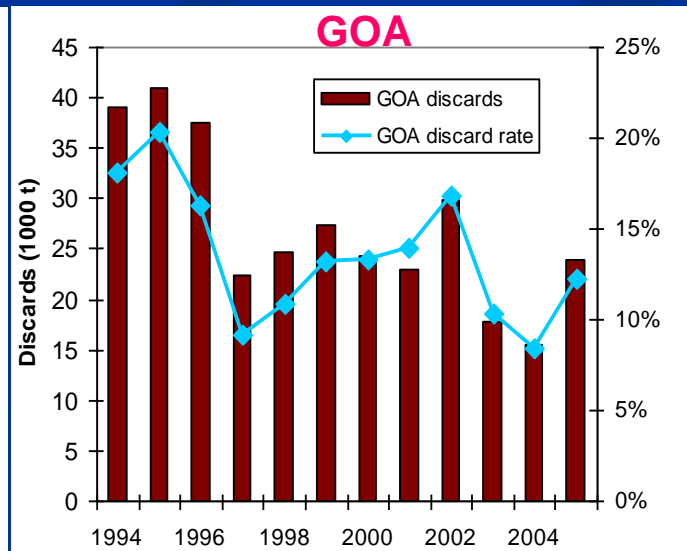
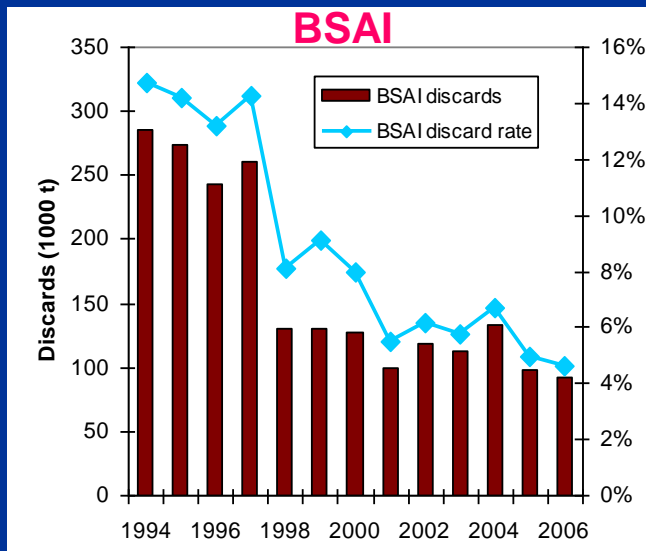
Measures to Ensure that Overfishing NEVER Occurs

- **All catch**, including discards, from all fisheries, **accrues towards the TAC limit**.
- **Comprehensive observer program** (\$17.5 million; ~36,000 observer days/year; 500 observers) based on vessel size (30% 60-125'; 100% > 125'), with 100% coverage at shore plants.
- Many **individual quota based fisheries**, which have stringent monitoring & reporting requirements, and/or legal contracts among cooperative members.
- **Real-time monitoring**, reporting and inseason data analysis.
- **Active inseason management** of fisheries [open; bycatch; prohibited].



Bycatch and Waste Reduction

- The catch composition of incidental **bycatch and discards of non- target species** is **quantitatively estimated** from observer data, both at-sea and onshore.
- Groundfish retention standards will increase **minimum retention** in flatfish fisheries to 85%.
- **Biodegradable panels** and escape rings in cod pots are required to minimize bycatch and ghost fishing.
- **Bycatch limits** for halibut, crab, salmon, and herring.
- **Full retention** of Pacific cod and pollock (all gear/areas) is required.



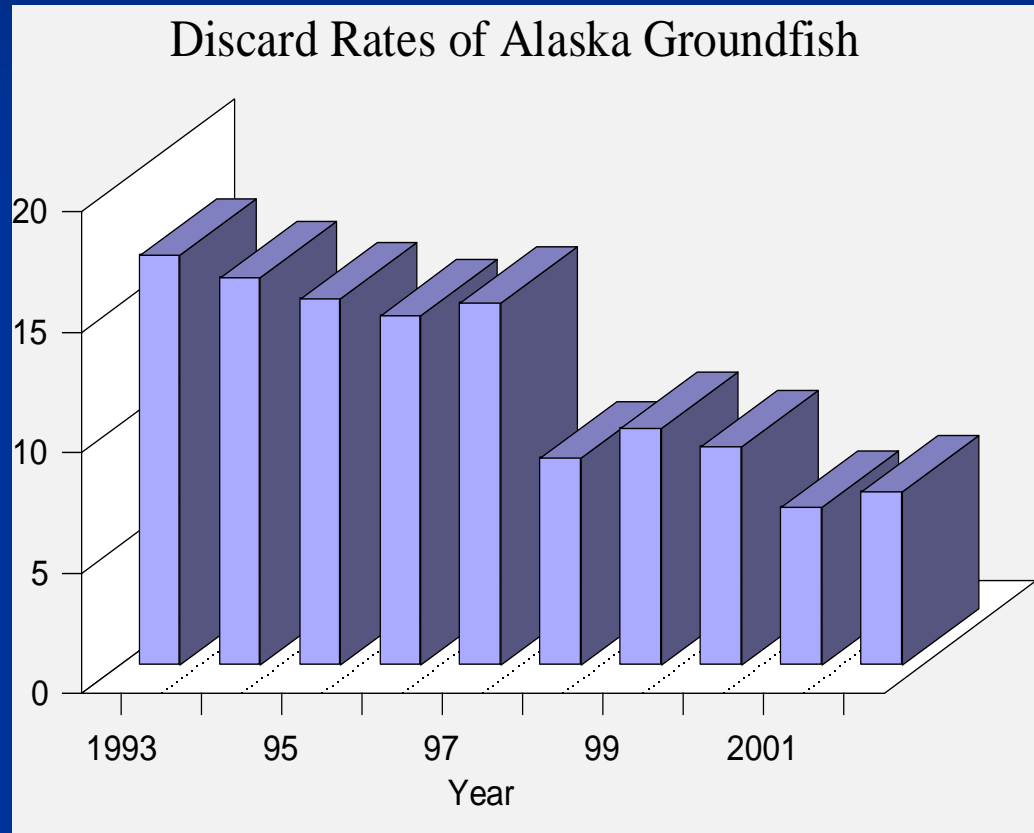
Reducing Bycatch, Discards, and Waste

Bycatch limits for crab, salmon, halibut, and herring, beginning in the 1980s

Gear restrictions such as pelagic trawls only for BSAI pollock, biodegradable panels in pots, prohibition on gillnets and other gear

Mandatory full retention of all pollock and cod, and some GOA flatfish

Voluntary industry program: sharing of bycatch data to avoid bycatch 'hotspots'



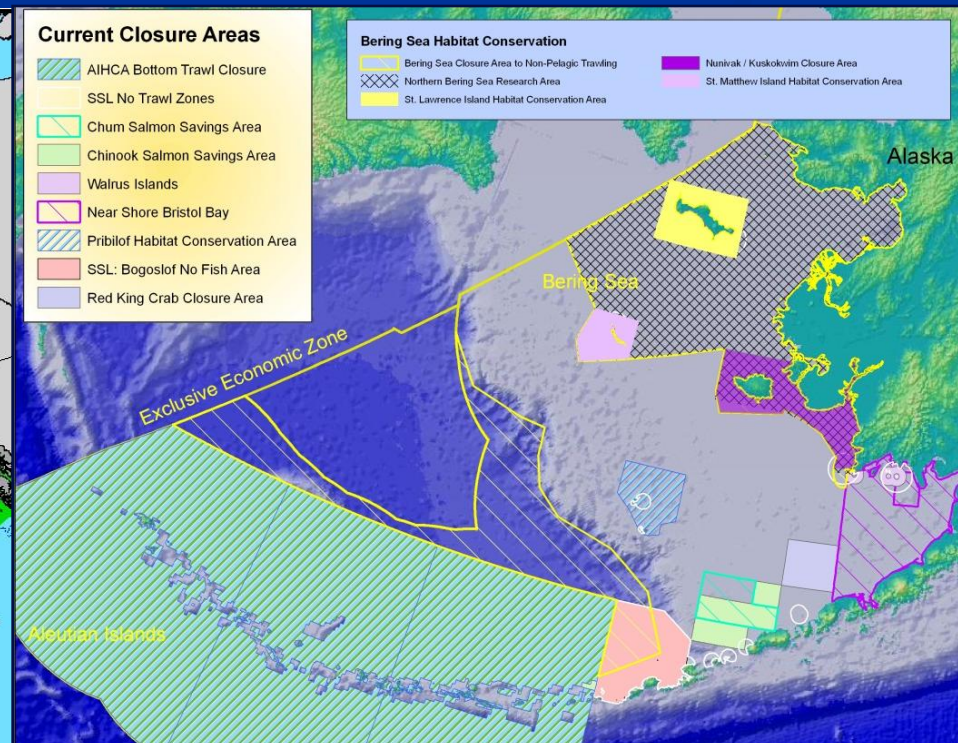
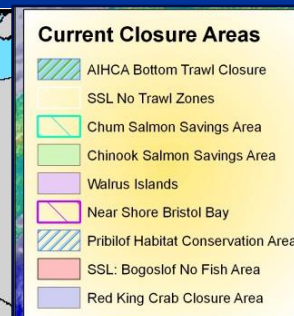
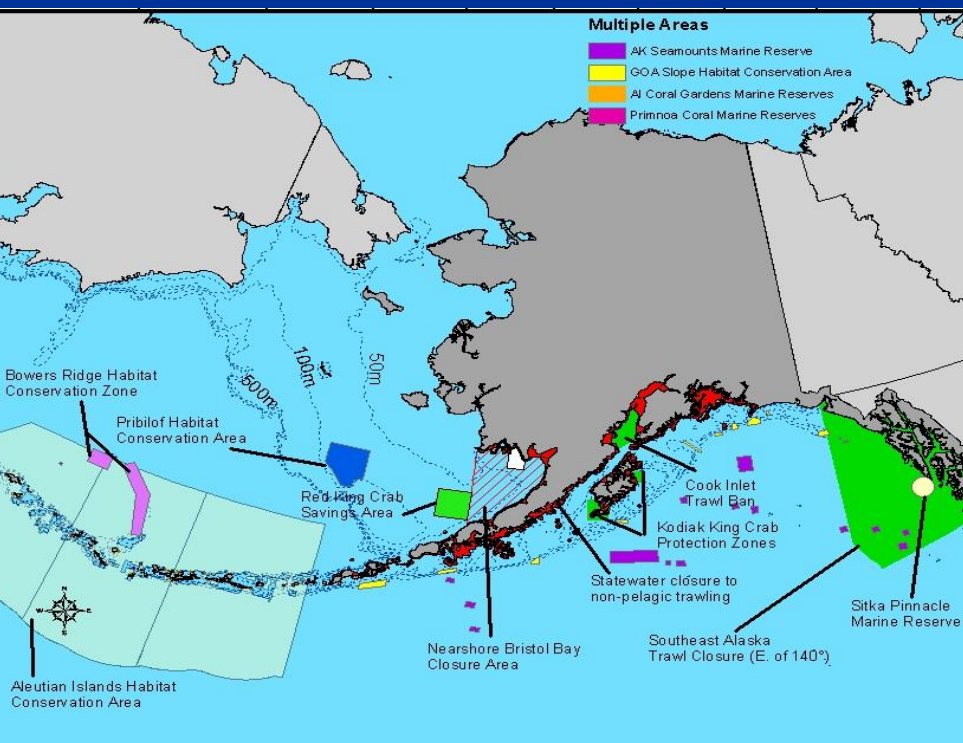


Habitat Conservation



Marine Protected Areas: Bottom trawling is prohibited in 521,000 nm² (61% of total area) to protect habitat for corals and crabs. There are also several Marine Reserves [7,362 nm²] where no fishing allowed.

A recent 2,500 page comprehensive scientific analysis concluded that although fisheries have long term impacts on habitat, these **impacts are minimal and not detrimental** to fish populations or their habitats.



Other Ecosystem Considerations

Steller Sea Lions

- Extensive area closures to minimize potential for competition for prey.
- Many other measures (seasonal allocations, spatial distribution of catches, control rules, etc.).

Pacific Walrus

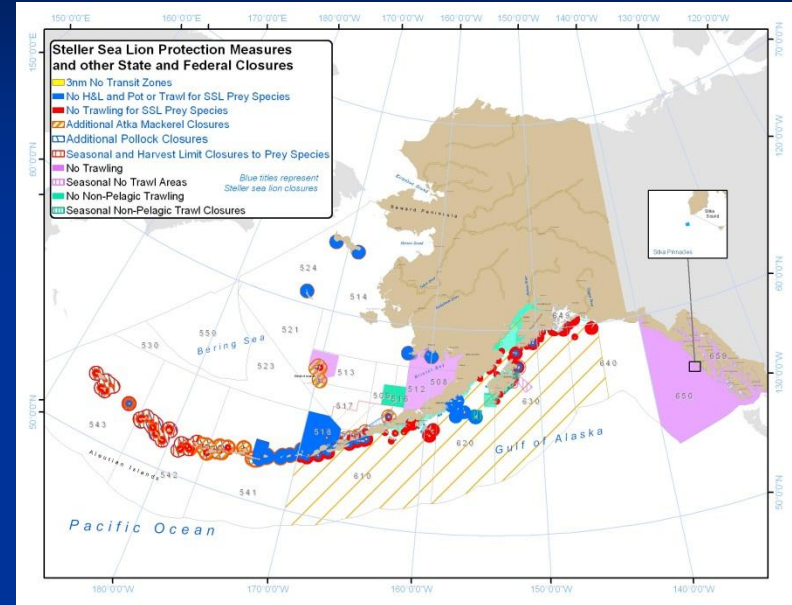
- 12 nm closures around haulouts.

Seabirds

- Deterrent devices (streamer lines) required on longline vessels to minimize incidental catch of albatrosses, fulmars, and others.

Fishing for 'forage fish' is prohibited.

Total Bering Sea groundfish catch limited by the 2 million mt optimum yield limit.



Community Protection

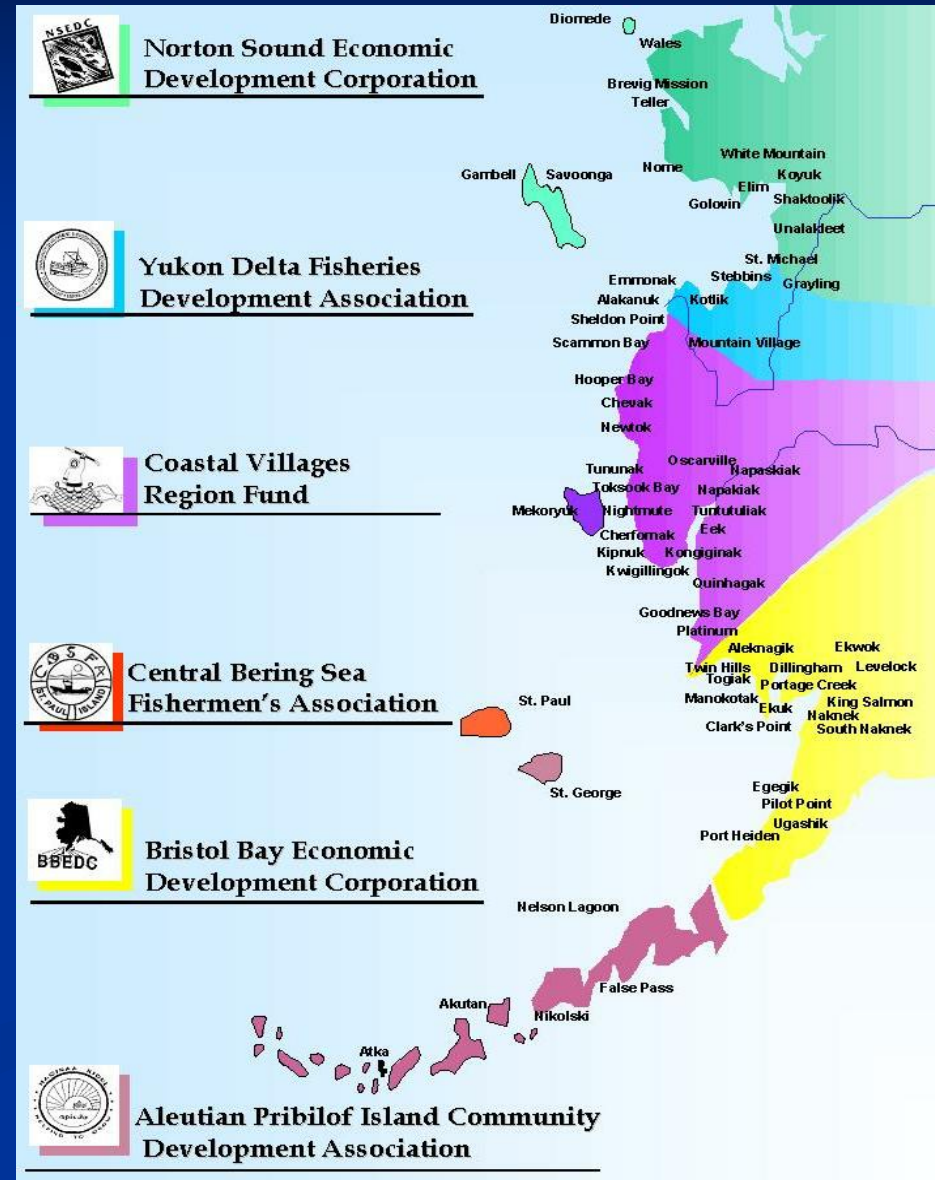
Coastal community needs are accommodated in various ways:

- Proposed management actions include assessment of social and community impacts based on development and maintenance of coastal community profiles
- Sablefish/halibut IFQ program designed with specific safeguards to maintain coastal community fleets
- Sea lion protection measures modified to ease burden on small, local vessels
- Regulations to recognize halibut subsistence fishery
- Regional delivery requirements as well as IPQs, built into crab rationalization program
- CDQ Program



Community Development Quota Program

- Benefits 65 remote coastal communities in Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands since 1992
- Sets aside 10% of pollock, groundfish and crab TACs, and halibut set aside
- Since 1992, over \$100 million in wages, education, and training benefits provided to over 25,000 western AK residents
- 2002 total revenues of the six CDQ groups was about \$70 million combined



New MSA Reauthorization Signed by President January 12, 2007

- Preserves and strengthens regional fishery management councils
- Mandates use of annual catch limits to prevent overfishing (patterned after North Pacific)
- Establishes guidelines for limited access privilege programs (LAPPs)
- Realigns environmental review process under NEPA with the MSA
- Strengthens role of science in decision making
- Improves data collection for better management

Other Applicable Law

Many laws and Presidential executive orders impose requirements for environmental and socio-economic analysis on federal actions implementing FMPs. Among the most important of these are the:

- *Endangered Species Act* -requires an assessment of impacts on listed species;
- *National Environmental Policy Act* -requires an analysis of the environmental impacts of Federal actions;
- *Regulatory Flexibility Act* -requires an examination of adverse impacts on small entities;
- *Executive Order 12866* -requires an analysis of the costs and benefits of regulations.
- *Special interest legislation*

Who does what?

- Propose changes - Public & stakeholders identify management or conservation issues and concerns; provide input for proposed change
- Policy Development —NPFMC guided by AP, SSC, public comment, NOAA Fisheries, NOAA General Counsel.
- Analyses—NPFMC staff, NOAA Fisheries, or contractor, depending on issues and work load.
- Regulations—NMFS Alaska Region staff in consultation with NOAA Enforcement, ADF&G, U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA General Counsel.

NPFMC Decision Process

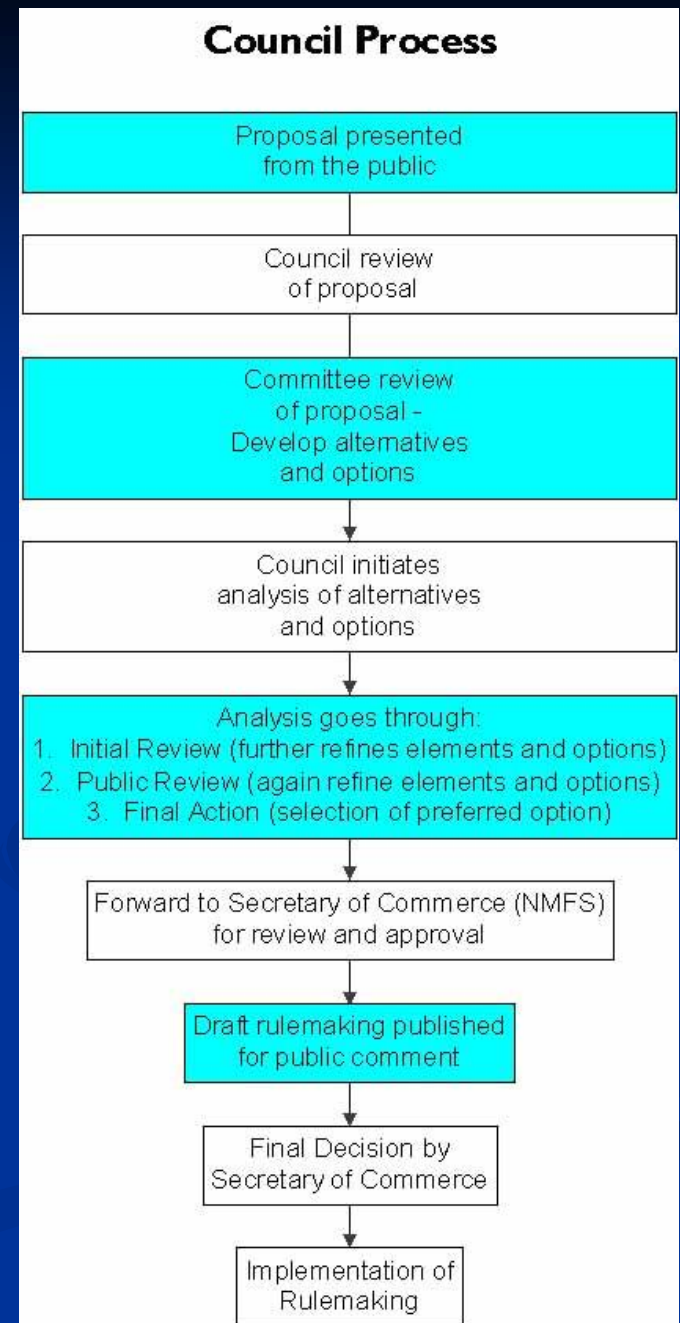
- Proposal presented to NPFMC from public or stakeholder group
- Council consideration for analysis based on need and competing workload priorities
- Council initiates analysis of alternatives and options

NPFMC Decision Process *(cont.)*

Analysis proceeds through:

- Initial review (further refines alternatives if necessary)
- Public review and comment
- Final council decision (selection of preferred alternative)

Changes to fishery regulations require a number of steps including proposal, development of alternatives, analysis and review, decision, and rulemaking. There are opportunities for public input into the process at each step, as indicated in blue boxes of the flow chart



Preparation of Council Action for Submission to the Secretary of Commerce

- NPFMC/AKR staff complete draft analysis
- NMFS staff prepares draft regulations and other documentation supporting NPFMC action
- NOAA General Counsel review and clearance of proposed action for publication and public comment
- NPFMC submits action to SOC for review and approval

SOC Review and Approval Process

- Proposed FMP amendment published for 60-day public review and comment; associated regulations published for 45-30 day public review and comment
- SOC approves, disapproves, or partially approves proposed FMP amendments
- Final rule published with summary of comments and NMFS' response
- Effective 30 days after publication

Coordination with State of Alaska

- ADFG Commissioner voting seat on Council
- Annual meeting between Council and Board of Fish
- Joint Protocol Committee of Council and Board of Fish members meets as necessary
- Ongoing Council/NMFS/ADFG staff coordination

Recent and Pending Council issues

- Salmon bycatch in Pollock fisheries (BSAI chinook, BSAI Chum, GOA Chinook)
- Halibut bycatch caps in the GOA
- Annual catch limits (ACLs) for groundfish, crab, and scallops
- Halibut Charter Sector Allocations/Moratorium
- Arctic FMP
- Salmon FMP updates
- Ocean Policy Task Force – July 2010 – NOC governance and Marine Spatial Planning (stemming from US Commission on Ocean Policy)
- Cod sector allocations in GOA
- Steller Sea Lions and Fisheries

Heightened Council Interest in the Arctic

- Climate warming trends
- Public concerns and comments on effects of climate warming
- Some assert harvestable quantities of fish may move northward into Alaskan Arctic waters, followed by commercial interest in fishing
- Lack of scientific information on Arctic fish stocks
- And no current commercial interest in U.S. Arctic EEZ fish stocks
- The U.S. Arctic is an area currently without an FMP
- FMP could provide opportunity to proactively address potential future issues in the Arctic
- An FMP would be in line with ecosystem-based management policy of NOAA, NMFS, and the NPFMC
- Through an FMP the Council could establish a policy and process for orderly fishery development, if any occurs in the future
- The Council signaled its intent to be precautionary – to close the Arctic EEZ – until it obtains adequate information to open fisheries



Arctic Management Area



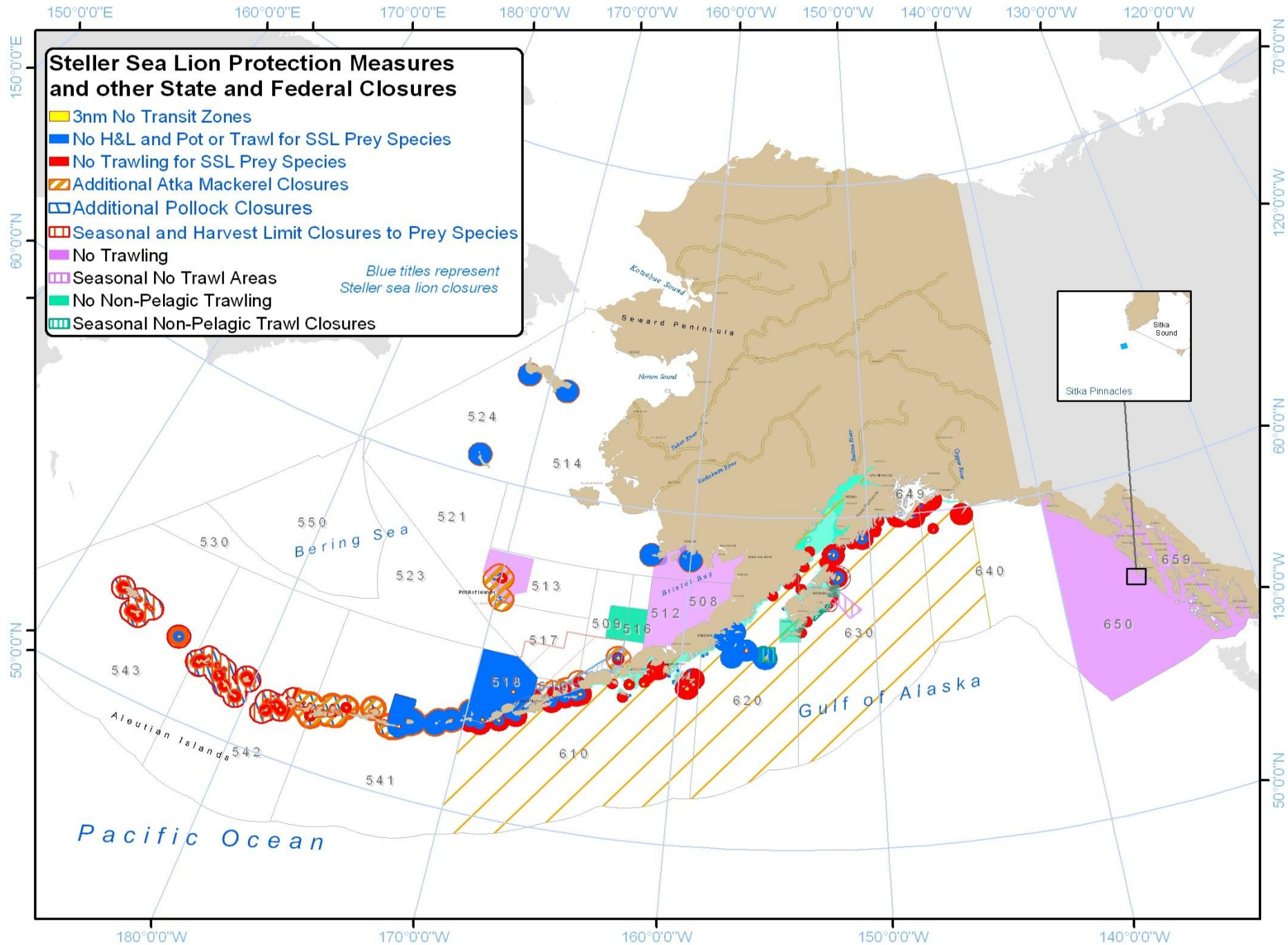
Alaska State Waters



The Council's Action

- Closes the Arctic Management Area to commercial fishing so that unregulated fishing does not occur.....
- And until information improves so that fishing can be conducted sustainably and with due concern for other ecosystem components





Summary

North Pacific fisheries are sustainable, and managed with a precautionary ecosystem-based approach. The management system can quickly adapt to new information and/or changes in stock status or environmental conditions.

It is likely that all North Pacific fisheries would meet any established set of standards or criteria for sustainable certification.



For further information

Council website:
www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc

NMFS FishWatch:
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/index.htm
Get the facts!

