

C-5(a) GOA Trawl Bycatch Management

North Pacific Fishery Management Council motion

October 5, 2013

The Council requests that staff provide a discussion paper reviewing the program structure described below using the decision framework provided in the June 2013 'roadmap' document and the Council's purpose and need statement. The paper should evaluate whether and how the elements of this design address the objectives in the Council's purpose and need statement. The intent is to receive feedback characterizing: 1) how the fishery would operate under the new design; 2) how well it may meet the Council's stated objectives; and 3) which second-tier decisions are necessary to transform the program structure into alternative(s) for analysis. The paper should also include information on bycatch reduction results from other trawl catch share programs in the North Pacific and other regions.

GOA Trawl Bycatch Management Program

1. Bycatch management

The primary objective of this action is to improve incentives for PSC reduction and PSC management, achieved in several ways through this program design.

- a. **Reduced PSC.** The Council intends to adopt a program to: (1) minimize Chinook salmon bycatch, and (2) achieve more efficient use of halibut PSC, allowing some efficiency gains to provide additional target fishery opportunity while leaving some halibut PSC savings in the water for conservation and contribution to exploitable biomass.
- b. **Duration of shares.** A portion of target species share allocations (maximum 25%) will be evaluated for retention based on achievement of performance targets relative to bycatch and other Council objectives after a set period of time (3 - 10 years). The time period and the criteria used to evaluate performance will be established in regulation.
- c. **Cooperative management.** A system of cooperative management is best suited to managing and reducing bycatch (such as, hotspot program, gear modifications, excluder use, incentive plan agreements) while maximizing the value of available target species. Cooperatives are intended to facilitate a flexible, responsive, and coordinated effort among vessels and processors to avoid bycatch through information sharing and formal participation in a bycatch avoidance program.
- d. **Gear modification.** Option: gear modifications for crab protection.

2. Observer coverage

All trawl catcher vessels in the GOA will be in the 100% observer coverage category.

3. Areas

Western Gulf, Central Gulf, West Yakutat

4. Sector allocations of target species and PSC

Allocations for the trawl CP and CV sectors for WG and CG Pacific cod (Am 83), CGOA rockfish program (Am 88), and GOA pollock (Am 23) are maintained. Am 80 target sideboards and GOA flatfish eligibility are maintained. Allocate halibut and Chinook salmon PSC caps between the CP and CV sectors.

5. Allocated species

Target species are pollock and Pacific cod. PSC species include halibut and Chinook salmon.

6. Program structure for trawl catcher vessel fishery

Voluntary cooperative structure

- a. Allocate target species (pollock, Pacific cod) at the cooperative level, based on aggregate catch histories associated with member vessels' LLPs.
- b. Apportion halibut PSC and Chinook salmon PSC limits to each cooperative on a pro rata basis relative to target fisheries of GOA trawl vessels in the cooperative [such as, pollock Chinook salmon PSC cap divided based on pollock landings; non-pollock Chinook salmon cap divided based on non-pollock landings (excluding rockfish); halibut PSC apportioned in proportion to the cooperative's allocation of target species.]
- c. Participants can choose to either join a cooperative or operate in a limited access pool [sector-level, non-transferable target allocations and PSC]. Harvesters would need to be in a cooperative with a processor by a specified date prior to the season to access a transferable allocation of target species and PSC.
- d. Initial (2 years) cooperative formation would be based on the majority of a license holder's historical landings (aggregate trawl groundfish deliveries, excluding Central GOA rockfish harvested under a rockfish cooperative quota allocation) to a processor.
- e. Each cooperative would be required to have a private cooperative contract. The contract would require signatures of all harvesters in the cooperative and the processor (option: and community in which the processor is located). The contract would include clear provisions for how the parties may dissolve their contract after the first two years. If a harvester wants to leave that cooperative and join another cooperative, they could do so if they meet the requirements of the contract.
- f. Additional contract elements (such as, bycatch management, active participation, mechanism to facilitate entry, community provisions) may be required to ensure the program is consistent with Council objectives.

Option: Each processor controls a portion of PSC within a cooperative and negotiates terms of access through private agreement. The processor would activate the incremental PSC through NMFS, making it accessible to the cooperative. PSC made available by these agreements cannot be used by processor-owned vessels.

7. Fishery dependent community stability

- a. Consolidation limits
 - Vessel caps and limits on the percentage of the total allocation that a person can hold (accessible only through a cooperative).
 - Processor caps in each area (WG and CG).
- b. Target species quota would be regionalized (WG or WY/CG designation) based on historical delivery patterns.

Option: Target species CG quota that has historically been landed in Kodiak would have a port of landing requirement to be delivered to Kodiak; CG quota not historically landed in Kodiak would be regionalized (WG or WY/CG).

- c. Require individuals or entities to meet fishery participation criteria in order to be eligible to purchase an eligible trawl license with associated history.

8. Transferability

- a. (Annually) Full transferability for annual use within the cooperative. Cooperatives can engage in inter-cooperative agreements on an annual basis.
- b. (Long-term) The LLP is transferable, with the associated history of the target species (which, when entered into a cooperative, brings with it a pro rata share of PSC.) Target species history is severable and transferable to another eligible license.

9. Gear conversion

Upon further development, the Council could include gear conversion provisions that allow Pacific cod trawl allocations to be fished with fixed gear, although any harvest would continue to be deducted from the vessel's annual trawl quota account and would not affect the fixed gear Pacific cod sector allocations.