

CHANGES TO THE FMP FOR THE GROUND FISH FISHERY
OF THE BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA

Revision of the 1992 PSC limit for halibut

On page 14-8, paragraph D of Section 14.4.2.2 is suspended through December 31, 1992. A new paragraph D is added, which will expire at the end of the 1992 fishing year, to read as follows:

During 1992, the primary and secondary PSC bycatch limits for trawl gear are 4,400 mt and 5,033 mt, respectively. A PSC mortality limit of 750 mt is established for non-trawl gear that is applicable to the BSAI management area.

CHANGES TO THE FMP FOR THE GROUND FISH FISHERY
OF THE BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA
AND FOR
GROUND FISH OF THE GULF OF ALASKA

Time/area closure authority

For the BSAI FMP -- on page 14-17, sections 14.4.9 and 14.4.10 are redesignated as 14.4.10 and 14.4.11 and a new section 14.4.9 Time/area closure authority is added.

For the GOA FMP -- On page 4-12, a new section 4.2.6 Time/area closures is added.

Time/area closure authority

The Secretary, after consulting with the Council, may identify and establish by regulatory amendment time/area closures to reduce bycatch rates of prohibited species. Closures of all or part of an area would require a determination by the Secretary that the closure is based on the best available scientific information concerning the seasonal distribution and abundance of prohibited species and bycatch rates of prohibited species associated with various directed groundfish fisheries or gear types. A time/area closure will limited to the minimum size and duration, which the Secretary determines are reasonably necessary to accomplish the intent of the closure. Any time/area closure would be based upon a determination that it is necessary to prevent:

1. A continuation of relatively high bycatch rates of prohibited species with an area;
2. The take of an excessive share of PSC limits or bycatch allowances by vessels fishing within an area;
3. The closure of one or more directed fisheries for groundfish due to excessive prohibited species bycatch rates that occur in a specified fishery operating within an area; or

4. The premature attainment of specified PSC limits or bycatch allowances and associated foregone opportunity for vessels to harvest available groundfish.