

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE
GULF OF ALASKA GROUND FISH
Amendment #14

Changes to the FMP

I. SUMMARY

Amendment 14 was approved by the Council at its May 21-24, 1985 meeting. The amendment makes the following changes to the FMP:

1. Establish gear/area restrictions and Optimum Yield (OY) apportionments to specific gear types for sablefish.
2. Establish a Central Southeast Outside District and a specific OY of 600 mt for purposes of managing Other Rockfish.
3. The pollock OY in the combined Western and Central Regulatory Areas is reduced from 400,000 mt to 305,000 mt.
4. The Pacific Ocean Perch OY is reduced in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas from 2,700 mt and 7,900 mt to 1,302 mt and 3,906 mt, respectively.
5. The Gulf-wide Other Rockfish OY is reduced from 7,600 mt to 5,000 mt.
6. The Atka mackerel OY in the Central and Eastern Regulatory Areas is reduced from 20,836 mt and 3,186 mt to bycatch levels only of 500 mt and 100 mt, respectively.
7. The Gulf-wide Other Species OY is reduced to its framework amount of 22,460 mt.

8. Require catcher/processors to check in and check out by radio from a regulatory area/district and to provide a written catch report periodically to the NMFS Regional Office.
9. Implement a framework procedure for the annual adjustment of PSC limits.
10. Implement the NMFS Habitat Policy.
11. Allow the taking of sablefish by hook and longline and pot gear during the period April 1 to December 31, unless closed by field order.

II. CHANGES TO THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE FMP

- (1) Revise the following sentence in the FMP summary:

Page S-1, Paragraph 5. Change the last sentence to read, "the total optimum yield is expected to be as much as 471,651 mt."

- (2) In the summary entitled "History of Amendments," page S-5, make the following changes and additions:

Amendment #12 - delete "Effective" and replace it with "Withdrawn."

Amendment #13 - to "Effective," add the date "8/13/84."

Add to the summary:

Amendment #14 - (Effective)

Established gear/area restrictions and OY apportionments to specific gear types for sablefish; delayed the season opening for sablefish taken by hook and longline or pot gear to April 1 in all areas; established a Central Southeast Outside District and a specific OY of 600 mt for purposes of managing Other Rockfish; reduced the pollock OY in the combined Western and Central Areas to 305,000 mt; reduce the Pacific ocean perch OY in the Western and Central Areas to 1,302 mt and 3,906 mt, respectively; reduced the Gulfwide Other Rockfish OY to 5,000 mt; reduced the Atka mackerel OY in the Central and Eastern Areas to 500 mt and 100 mt; reduced the Gulfwide Other Species OY to its framework amount of 22,460 mt; require catcher/processors to check in and out of regulatory areas and provide a weekly catch report; implement a framework procedure for the annual adjustment of PSC limits; and implemented the NMFS habitat policy.

- (3) In the Table of Contents, beginning on Page 1-1, revise to accommodate the amendments described in this document.
- (4) In Section 3.1, "Area and Stocks Involved," page 3-1, add the following sentence to the end of the first paragraph:

For purposes of managing Other Rockfish, the Eastern Area is divided into the four districts described for sablefish with the addition of a Central Southeast Outside District (all waters within the Southeast Outside District between 56°N and 57°30'N latitude). This additional district is to protect localized rockfish stocks from overharvest and delineates the primary rockfish fishing grounds in this region.

(5) In Section 3.1, page 3-1, "Area and Stocks Involved," add to the third paragraph which ends on page 3-3, the following:

For management purposes Pacific ocean perch is considered to be a complex of five species that have been harvested by the foreign trawl fleet fishing along the continental slope and shelf edge. The four other species included in the complex are:

northern rockfish	<u>S. polyspinus</u>
rougeye rockfish	<u>S. aleutianus</u>
shortraker rockfish	<u>S. borealis</u>
sharpchin rockfish	<u>S. zacentrus</u>

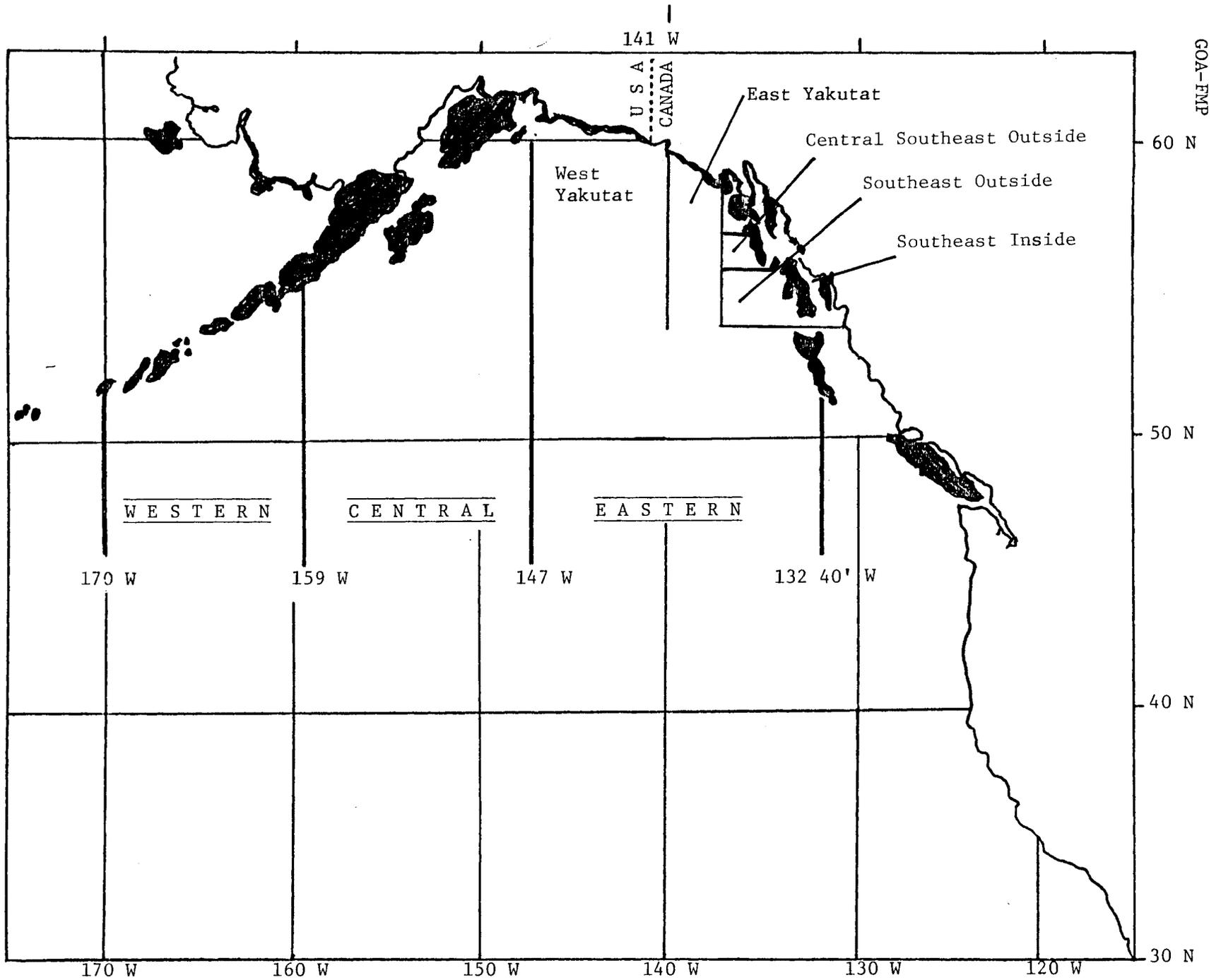
These four species are generally less common than S. alutus in the rockfish trawl fishery. In recent years target fisheries for rockfish have occurred in the nearshore areas of the Eastern Gulf. Two assemblages or species groups occur in the nearshore area and 15 additional species have been identified.

(6) In Section 3.1, "Area and Stocks Involved," page 3-2, replace Figure 3.1 with the Figure 3.1 attached here.

(7) In Section 3.1, "Area and Stocks Involved," page 3-3, delete the following two paragraphs:

The relative abundance of fishes in the cod family (Gadidae) is also different in the Gulf of Alaska compared to the other regions. Pacific hake (Merluccius productus), the most abundant of the cod-like fishes off Washington-California, is present only in the southern portion of the Gulf and generally not in

Figure 3.1 Regulatory Areas of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP)



commercial quantities. Pollock (Theragra chalcogramma), the dominant "cod" and largest element in the bottomfish biomass of the Bering Sea, is much less abundant in the Gulf of Alaska and becomes progressively scarcer to the south until it is practically absent off Oregon. However, the abundance of pollock in the Gulf of Alaska has increased by perhaps an order of magnitude during the past decade or so coincide with a reduction in the abundance of Pacific ocean perch and sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria). Pollock now appear to comprise the largest exploitable biomass within the gadoid community in the Gulf, approaching perhaps that of Pacific hake in the Washington-California region but far smaller than that of pollock in the Bering Sea. Pacific cod (Gadus macrocephalus) may reach its greatest level of abundance in the Gulf.

Other abundant groundfishes which have been the target of fisheries in the Gulf include sablefish and the so-called Atka mackerel, a member of the greening family (Hexagrammidae). Little is known about the distribution and abundance of Atka mackerel because it has only recently become the target of foreign fisheries and the U.S. surveys were not designed to estimate its abundance. Sablefish are found from California waters northward into the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, but reaches its greatest abundance in the Gulf of Alaska.

REPLACE the deleted paragraphs with the following:

The relative abundance of fishes in the cod family (Gadidae) is also different in the Gulf of Alaska compared to the other regions. Pacific hake (Merluccius productus), the most abundant of the cod-like fishes off Washington-California, is present only in the southern portion of the Gulf and generally not in commercial quantities. Pollock (Theragra chalcogramma), the dominant "cod" and largest element in the bottomfish biomass of the Bering Sea, is much less abundant in the Gulf of Alaska and becomes progressively scarcer to the south until it is practically absent off Oregon. However, the abundance of pollock in the Gulf of Alaska has increased by perhaps an order of magnitude during the past decade coincident with a reduction in the abundance of Pacific ocean perch and sablefish (Anoplopoma fimbria). The abundance of pollock now appears to be declining primarily as the result of poor recruitment from the 1980 and 1981 year classes. Pollock currently comprise the largest

exploitable biomass within the gadoid community in the Gulf, approaching perhaps that of Pacific hake in the Washington-California region but far smaller than that of pollock in the Bering Sea. Pacific cod (Gadus macrocephalus) may reach its greatest level of abundance in the Gulf.

Other abundant groundfishes which have been the target of fisheries in the Gulf include sablefish and Atka mackerel, a member of the greenling family (Hexagrammidae). This species supported a targeted foreign fishery in the Central regulatory area over the past decade, but now has declined to negligible quantities. The 1984 survey indicates that the total biomass for Atka mackerel is 39,000 mt with 38,000 mt being available in the Western Area and 1,000 mt in the Central Area. Length frequency information suggests that the population consists mostly of large fish. Recruitment in the Central Area appears nonexistent. The absence of catches in the Eastern area indicates stocks are not sufficiently abundant to support a commercial fishery. The low abundance of Atka mackerel may be due to a westward shift in the distribution of stocks or to excessive fishing mortality. Sablefish are found from California waters northward into the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, but this species reaches its greatest abundance in the Gulf of Alaska.

(8) In Section 3.2.1.2, "Sablefish Setline Fishery," page 3-11, delete all text and replace with the following:

The sablefish fishery began about 1906, and was relatively unimportant until about 1935 when the catch began to increase. The historic peak was reached in 1946 when slightly more than 2,800 mt were landed. Since then the harvest has fluctuated from low levels to as high as the 1985 OY of 8,980 mt. The fishery has expanded to all areas of the Gulf of Alaska and the entire quota is now taken by domestic fishermen. As a result of increasing effort, the sablefish harvest can now be taken in a relatively short period. Currently, the three forms of legal gear for this fishery are hook and longline, pots, and trawl. Harvest, due to increasing gear conflicts between longline and pot gear, time/area restrictions and gear regulations have been implemented which will eventually phase out the use of pot gear.

- (9) In Section 3.2.1.2.1., "Vessels and Gear," page 3-11, delete all text and replace with the following:

In 1984 about 200 vessels harvested sablefish with 89% of the catch being taken by hook and longline gear. Technological advances are presently changing the fishery for sablefish. Within recent years Alaskan fishermen have switched from J-hooks to circle-hooks and have shortened their spacing along the ground line. Most of the fish are dressed at sea and packed in ice. Some vessels process and freeze their catch on board.

- (10) In Section 3.3.1.1., "Regulatory Measures," page 3-25, delete the last sentence of the first paragraph and replace it with the following:

"The most substantive regulations on groundfish fishing in the Gulf of Alaska are for sablefish where OYs, OY apportionment, time/area restrictions and gear regulations are in effect."

- (11) In Section 3.3.1.2., "Purpose of Regulatory Measures," page 3-25, replace the second paragraph, which begins on page 3-26, with the following:

"The sablefish quota which is specified for every regulatory area or district in the Gulf was established originally upon the request of fishermen and management in an attempt to reduce the decline of the sablefish stocks. The equilibrium yield (EY) is based on the most recent biological information on the status of stocks. In recent years the quota, or optimum yield (OY) has been set lower than the estimated EY as a rebuilding measure. For the most part, gear, and season restrictions for the sablefish fishery are based on economic or social considerations. Given the existing domestic fleet's capability to harvest the entire OY, seasons have been set to schedule the fishery when weather and product quality is reportedly the best. Apportionments of OY to specific gear types has recently been used to reduce gear conflict, provide necessary amounts of sablefish as a bycatch to support the developing domestic trawl fisheries, and to stabilize the economic environment of local communities dependent on this fishery."

- (12) In Section 3.5.1., "Output of Subject Domestic Commercial Fishery," page 3-40, change the word "nine" to "seven" in the second paragraph and delete the categories Pacific Ocean Perch, Rattail, and Other Rockfish and replace them with the following:

Pacific Ocean Perch Category

Pacific ocean perch
Northern rockfish
Rougheye rockfish
Shortraker rockfish
Sharpchin rockfish

Demersal Shelf Rockfish

Yelloweye rockfish
Quillback rockfish
Canary rockfish
China rockfish
Rosethone rockfish
Tiger rockfish
Redstripe rockfish
Silvergrey rockfish
Bocaccio rockfish

Other rockfish

Unspecified Sebastes sp.

- (13) In Section 3.5.1.3., "Markets, Domestic and Imports," page 3-57, add to the end of the first paragraph the following sentence:

Specialized markets for fresh rockfish and sablefish account for an increasing amount of U.S. sales.

(14) In Section 4.7., "Current Status of Stocks," page 4-15, delete Table 4.2 and replace with Table 4.2 attached here.

(15) In Section 4.7.1., "Alaska Pollock," delete all the text within Subsection 4.7.1.1., "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)," beginning on page 4-19, and replace it with the following:

Maximum sustained yield were initially estimated for the Gulf of Alaska from results of trawl surveys conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service during 1973-77. These surveys indicated the total exploitable biomass in the Gulf of Alaska to be 1,041,000 - 2,081,000 mt. The exploitable biomass was distributed (among the regulatory areas) according to results of the trawl surveys as follows:

Western	357,000 mt - 713,000 mt
Central	595,000 mt - 1,191,000 mt
Eastern	89,000 mt - 177,000 mt

MSY for the Gulf of Alaska was originally estimated to be 168,800 -334,000 mt, using the relationship discussed in Section 4.7. On the basis of biomass distribution, MSY was distributed among the regulatory areas as follows:

Western	57,000 - 114,000 mt
Central	95,200 - 191,000 mt
Eastern	16,610 - 29,000 mt

The estimates of biomass and MSY have been updated based on recent resource surveys and analysis of fisheries data. Acoustic surveys have been conducted by NMFS to estimate pollock biomass in the Shelikof Strait Region of the Gulf of Alaska during the years 1980, 1981, 1983 and 1984. On the basis of five surveys conducted during March and April, 1984, total pollock biomass is now estimated to be between 1,574,634 and 2,034,857 mt with a mean estimate of 1,789,186 mt. This estimate is believed to represent all of the exploitable biomass in the central and western regulatory areas combined, because few pollock were found elsewhere in the western/central areas while surveying during the spawning period. Results of the 1984 survey indicate that total

TABLE 4.2
The Derivation of Optimum Yield (OY) for
Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Resources (1,000s mt)

		Pollock ^{a/}	Pacific Cod	Flounders	Pacific Ocean Perch	Sablefish	Atka Mackerel	Other Rockfish	Squid	Sebastes Sp.	Other Species	
Exploitable Biomass	WESTERN	1,574-2,035	40-79	220	53	unknown	38	unknown	(110) ^{b/}	unknown		
	CENTRAL				120	"	1	"		"		
	EASTERN				94	"	0	"		"		
	TOTAL				267		39					
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)	WESTERN	344-408	88-177	67	31	22-25		unknown	5.0	3.75		
	CENTRAL											
	EASTERN										16.6	
	TOTAL										360.6-424.6	
Equilibrium Yield (EY) (When stock incapable of producing MSY)	WESTERN	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.7	2.225	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
	CENTRAL				5.2	4.075						
	EASTERN				4.5	4.665-6.330						
	TOTAL				11.4	10.965-12.630						
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	WESTERN	350.0	16.5	20.8	30.6	1.67	4.7	5.0	5.0 ^{c/}	3.75	22.435	
	CENTRAL											33.5
	EASTERN											10.0
	TOTAL											60.0
Optimum Yield	WESTERN	305	16.6	10.4	1.302	1.67	4.7	----- (OY apportioned Gulf-wide) -----				
	CENTRAL				33.5	14.7	3.906	3.06	.5	"	"	"
	EASTERN				9.9	8.4	0.875	3.5-4.75	.1	0.6 ^{d/}	"	"
	TOTAL				60.0	33.5	6.083	8.23-9.480	5.3	5.0	5.0	3.75

a/ For purposes of pollock management, OY for the Western and Central Regulatory Areas are combined.

b/ From unsubstantiated Soviet reports.

c/ Apportioned equally to each INPFC area.

d/ The harvest of demersal shelf rockfish limited to 600 mt in Eastern area between 56°N. and 57°30'N. latitude.

biomass continues to decrease from its peak level in 1982. A cohort analysis of the 1976-82 catch-at-age data provided revised estimates of exploitable biomass and exploitable annual surplus production (ASP). Estimates of average exploitable biomass increased from 1,040,000 mt for 1976-1981 to 1,430,000 mt for 1976-1982. The corresponding average ASP values are 344,000 mt (+ 328,000 mt, 95% C.I.), and 408,000 mt (+ 206,000 mt, 95% C.I.). These average ASP values which have not been updated since 1983 can be considered as current estimates of MSY for the western and central areas. There is no data to update the eastern area.

(16) In Section 4.7.1., "Alaska Pollock," Subsection 4.7.1.2., "Equilibrium Yield (EY)," page 4-20, delete the words:

"MSY attainable"

(17) In Section 4.7.2., "Pacific Ocean Perch," delete all the text within Subsection 4.7.2.1., "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)," page 4-20, and replace it with the following:

Results of a recently concluded comparison of research vessel catch rates during cruises conducted in 1961-62 (prior to the development of the large foreign trawl fisheries in the area) and cruises conducted in 1975 indicate that the perch stocks in the central Gulf of Alaska were no more than 20% of their virgin abundance (Hughes, et al, 1976). The results from the 1984 Gulf of Alaska biomass survey indicate the current exploitable biomass of the Pacific ocean perch complex are 53,400 mt, 120,150 mt and 93,450 mt in the Western, Central, and Eastern Regulatory Areas. The estimate of MSY for S. alutus has been reduced from an earlier estimate of 125,000 mt to 31,000 mt. This latter estimate was derived by a re-analysis of the foreign fishery data using stock reduction method and assuming $M=0.05$ rather than $M=0.15$ used in previous analyses.

- (18) In Section 4.7.2., "Pacific Ocean Perch," Subsection 4.7.2.2., "Equilibrium Yield (EY)," page 4-21, delete the last paragraph and replace it with the following:

This low level of abundance has remained relatively stable in recent years, and there are no signs of strong year classes entering the fishery. United States scientists have noted in INPFC meetings that even though a reduction in the catch of Pacific ocean perch was attained in 1974, the downward trend in stock condition, as inferred from Japanese CPUE values, continued unabated. Based on the estimates of biomass from the 1984 trawl surveys for the species complex and the MSY for S. alutus, the EY for the complex are estimated to be 1,736 mt, 5,208 mt, and 4,530 mt in the Western, Central and Eastern areas, respectively.

- (19) In Section 4.7.3., "Other Rockfish," page 4-21, delete all text within Subsection 4.7.3.1, "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)," and replace it with the following:

The original MSY for other rockfish was set at 7,600 to 10,000 mt Gulf-wide. This level was established as the lower end of the "other rockfish" species catch in the foreign fisheries for Pacific ocean perch (POP) during the period 1973-1975.

A review of observer data collected during the 1973-75 period indicates that the dominant bycatch species in the POP fishery have been incorporated into the POP complex (northern rockfish, rougheye rockfish, sharpchin rockfish) or have been established as another category with a separate OY (shortspine thornyhead).

The foreign and joint venture catches of other rockfish reached 300 mt and 400 mt, respectively, in 1984. The domestic catch approached 800 mt. However, that fishery concentrates on a nearshore species group that has not been previously addressed in the FMP.

Preliminary results of the 1984 trawl survey showed that only one species of "other rockfish" other than those in the POP and Sebastolobus sp.

groups was present in significant numbers. Biomass of dusky rockfish was estimated to be between, 5,000 and 28,000 mt in the Western and Central Gulf. They were encountered primarily on the shallow water zone inside the area where the commercial fishery currently operates. Other species occurred in trace amounts with densities of well below one pound per hectare.

For these reasons, the MSY for other rockfish needs to be reevaluated. Because of the removal of predominant species from the other rockfish category, the 7,600 to 10,000 mt MSY in the FMP for MSY is no longer appropriate. The average harvest of other rockfish in the foreign and joint venture fisheries during the period 1982-84 was approximately 1,500 mt. With the poor showing in the trawl survey, there is no evidence that a greater harvest can be sustained.

(20) In Section 4.7.3., "Other Rockfish," page 4-21, delete text within Subsection 4.7.3.2., "Equilibrium Yield (EY)," and replace it with the following:

Equilibrium Yield (EY) has not been established in the FMP for this species complex.

(21) In Section 4.7.8., "Atka Mackerel," page 4-31, delete all text within Subsection 4.7.8.1., "Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)," and replace it with the following:

Biomass estimates for Atka mackerel, based on a 1979 US-USSR cooperative trawl survey was 32,500 mt for the Gulf of Alaska between 148° to 164°W longitude and 69,000 and 89,000 mt based on a CPUE analysis. Preliminary biomass estimates from the 1984 trawl survey are 38,000 mt in the Western area and 1,000 mt in the Central area. The 95% confidence interval for the 39,000 mt total is $\pm 115\%$, indicating that this estimate is not very reliable. The catches for 1984 were 1,047 mt in the Western Area and 65 mt in the Central Area, and near zero in the Eastern Area. Length frequencies have shifted to larger sizes in the Western and Central Areas with no apparent recruitment occurring in the Central Area.

(22) In Section 4.7.8., "Atka Mackerel," page 4-31, delete all text within Subsection 4.7.8.2., "Equilibrium Yield (EY)," and replace it with the following paragraph:

Given the apparent collapse in the Atka mackerel stocks in the Gulf of Alaska and the westward shift in the fishery and the stock distribution, the EY is near zero in the Central and Eastern areas.

(23) In Section 6.1, "Departure from MSY to ABC for Biological Reasons," page 6-1, delete the first paragraph and replace it with the following:

Of the ten species categories which support the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fishery, MSY and EY were evaluated in Section 4.7, MSY and EY do not apply to the tenth category -- "Other Species." Pacific ocean perch, other rockfish, sablefish and Atka mackerel in the Central and Eastern areas are incapable of producing MSY.

Delete the fourth paragraph which begins on page 6-1 and replace it with the following:

Accordingly, ABCs for cod, flounders, and squid, are considered equal to the low end of the MSY range (Table 4.2). Until those findings can be verified, ABC for these species should be no more than 85% of the reported EY (Table 4.2), again preferring the risk of short-term underexploitation to the risk of long-term effects of overharvest. This value (25,000 mt) is near the 1975-76 average catch of 24,200 mt and will not result in a decrease in production.

(24) In Section 6.1, "Departure from MSY to ABC for Biological Reasons," page 6-6, delete the remainder of the paragraph beginning with ". . . ABC in 1985 will depend on the magnitude . . .," and replace it with the following addition:

that the acceptable biological catch for 1984 is at least 400,000 mt and could be as high as 500,000 mt. ABC in 1985 was reevaluated on the basis of acous-

tic surveys conducted in the Shelikof Strait region of the Gulf of Alaska during March and April, 1984. Total pollock biomass in 1984 is estimated to be between 1,574,634 mt and 2,034,857 mt with a mean estimate of 1,789,186 mt. This mean represents the known exploitable biomass in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas combined, since few pollock were found elsewhere in these areas while surveys were conducted in Shelikof Strait during the spawning period. Similar surveys have been conducted in Shelikof Strait during 1980, 1981, and 1983. Results of the 1984 survey indicate that total biomass continues to decrease from its peak level in 1982. Length and age composition and hydroacoustic survey data from 1984 joint venture fisheries confirm that the 1980 year class (age 4 fish) is weak. The 1981 year class (age 3 fish) also appears to be weak. The abundance estimate of age 3 fish in 1984 is about the same as age 3 fish (1980 year class) in 1983. It is estimated that the 1985 exploitable biomass of pollock will decline from the 1984 level by some 500,000 mt to fall within a range of 1,200,000-1,270,000 mt. An exploitation rate of 28.5% provides a range for the maximum ABC 342,000 mt and 358,000 mt, with a mean of 350,000 mt.

Insert between the third and fourth paragraphs on page 6-6, the following two paragraphs:

The ABC for the Pacific ocean perch complex is set at 75% of estimated EY. This will provide for some rebuilding of the stocks in the Pacific ocean perch complex.

The ABC for Atka mackerel was set at bycatch levels in the Central and Western areas. In the Western area, ABC was set using a exploitation rate between 10% and 15% of 38,000 mt biomass estimate, 3,800-5,700 mt respectively.

(25) In Section 6.2., "Departure from ABC for Socioeconomic Reasons," page 6-8, delete the text under the heading "Pollock" and replace it with the following:

Pollock -- The 1985 OY in the Western and Central area has been set at 305,000 mt of pollock, 45,000 mt lower than the average maximum ABC of 350,000 mt. This value was selected as the amount of fish needed to meet

the requirements of the fishery, recognizing the dependency of the fishery on only two year classes and continuing poor recruitment. This lower value was also chosen because of concerns that a higher pollock OY might lead to unacceptable catches of incidentally caught species.

Under the heading, "Pacific Ocean Perch," page 6-8, delete from the first paragraph the following:

"current EY for this species is believed to be about 50,000 mt, or only 33-40% of MSY."

And replace it with the following:

"current EY for this species is believed to be about 11,474 mt, or 37% of MSY."

On page 6-10, delete the first paragraph and replace it with the following paragraph:

The Pacific ocean perch resource needs strong conservation measures if it is ever to recover. Therefore, ABC for the Eastern Regulatory Area is set at 875 mt, and OY for the Western and Central areas in the Gulf of Alaska is set equal to 75% of EY. Total OY is therefore equal to 6,083 mt.

Insert between the heading "Flounders" and "Sablefish," page 6-10, the following:

Atka Mackerel -- the OY for Atka mackerel in the Western area is 4,678 mt, within the ABC range of 3,800 mt and 5,700 mt. Therefore the OY was not changed. The OY for the Central and Eastern area was set at 500 mt and 100 mt respectively to provide for bycatch levels in other fisheries.

(26) In Section 6.3, "Optimum Yield," on page 6-12, replace Table 6.3 with the revised table attached here.

Table 6.3. 1985 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish OY, DAH, DAP, JVP, Reserves and TALFF by Area (mt)

<u>Species</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>OY</u>	<u>DAH</u>	<u>DAP</u>	<u>JVP</u>	<u>Reserves</u>	<u>TALFF</u>
Pollock	W/C	305,000	256,871	44,371	212,500	23,129	25,000
	E	16,600	13,280	13,280	0	3,320	0
Pacific cod	W	16,560	3,748	2,539	3,209	3,312	7,500
	C	33,540	24,332	19,901	4,431	6,708	2,500
	E	9,900	7,920	7,920	0	1,980	0
Flounders	W	10,400	8,320	7,398	922	1,880	200
	C	14,700	11,760	8,292	3,468	2,690	250
	E	8,400	6,720	6,720	0	1,680	0
POP	W	1,302	1,302	1,302	53 ^{1/}	0	30 ^{1/}
	C	3,906	3,906	3,906	98 ^{1/}	0	16 ^{1/}
	E	875	875	875	0	0	0
Sablefish	W	1,670	1,670	1,670	245 ^{1/}	0	140 ^{1/}
	C	3,060	3,060	3,060	545 ^{1/}	0	31 ^{1/}
	W. Yakutat	1,680	1,680	1,680	0	0	0
	E. Yakutat	1,135	1,135	1,135	0	0	0
	S.E. Outside ^{2/}	1,435	1,435	1,435	0	0	0
	S.E. Inside ^{2/}	500	500	500	0	0	0
Atka mackerel	W	4,678	3,742	50	3,692	836	100
	C	500	380	350	30	100	20
	E	100	80	80	0	20	0
Rockfish	Gulfwide	5,000	4,733	4,600	133	267	25 ^{1/}
Thornyhead	Gulfwide	3,750	3,000	2,990	10	700	50
Squid	Gulfwide	5,000	4,000	3,990	10	950	50
Other species	Gulfwide	<u>22,460</u>	<u>17,944</u>	<u>16,544</u>	<u>1,400</u>	<u>4,191</u>	<u>325</u>
TOTAL		471,651	383,893	154,088	229,805	51,763	35,995

^{1/} Prohibited species catch limits, which are not part of the above totals.

^{2/} Managed by State of Alaska; not included in totals.

(27) In Section 8.3.1.1., "Domestic Season, Gear, Area and Catch Restrictions," page 8-2, delete the text under the heading "(D) Time-area Closures," and replace it with the following:

(1) Sablefish Fishing Seasons.

The trawl fishery shall open January 1 of each year, and the directed pot longline (when permitted) and hook and longline fisheries shall commence on April 1 of each year.

The Regional Director of NMFS shall use field orders to regulate the taking of sablefish to provide for the full achievement of the optimum yields for sablefish and other species. The use of field order authority may include the designation of sablefish as a bycatch-only species in any legal fishery once a specified fraction of the OY for that fishery has been taken, and any other measures that may be necessary to prevent the achievement of the sablefish allocation for a particular gear from closing other fisheries with the same gear which depend on incidental amounts of sablefish.

(2) Time-area closures and gear restrictions to control Pacific Halibut bycatch.

Further fishing with specific types of gear or modes of operation during the year is prohibited in an area by those who take their prohibited species catch (PSC) limit in that area.

Separate PSC limits will be established for the wholly domestic fishery and the joint venture fishery for each area.

Prior to the Regional Director's determination, the Council will make recommendations to him for each fishery and area based on the best available information concerning the affected stocks and fisheries. The Regional Director will make these recommendations and supporting information available to the public for comment. If the Council does not make recommendations by December 15, the halibut PSC measures already established shall automatically constitute the Council's recommendations to the Regional Director.

By the end of the preceding fishing year, the Regional Director will determine:

1. the areas for which PSC limits will be established;
2. the numbers of PSC limits per area and fishery;
3. the level of each PSC limit;
4. whether PSC limits will be allocated to individual operation;
5. the methods of allocation to be used; and
6. the types of gear or modes of operation to be prohibited once a PSC limit is taken.

The Regional Director may change the PSC measures during the year for which they were set if, as new information becomes available, it is apparent to him that his initial determination has become inappropriate with respect to meeting FMP objectives. The Council may recommend such inseason changes based on new information.

The Council's recommendations on PSC measures will be based on the following types of information:

1. estimated bycatch in years prior to that for which PSC limits are being set;
2. expected change in groundfish catch;
3. estimated change in groundfish biomass;
4. estimated change in halibut biomass and stock condition;
5. potential impact on halibut stocks;
6. potential impacts on domestic halibut fishery;
7. methods available to reduce bycatch;
8. the cost of reducing bycatch; and
9. other biological and socioeconomic factors that affect the appropriateness of specific PSC limits in terms of FMP objectives.

For the first fishing year for which this section is effective, the Regional Director will determine the PSC measures to implement using the best information available if the Council does not make recommendations prior to October of the year preceding the year for which they are established.

(28) In Section 8.3.1.1., "Domestic Season, Gear, Area, and Catch Restrictions," page 8-2, delete the section entitled "(E) Gear Restrictions," and replace it with the following:

(E) Sablefish Gears and Allocations.

(1) Eastern Area

(a) Legal Gear. Legal gears for the taking of sablefish are trawls and hook-longlines;

(b) Allocation of Sablefish Between Gears. From 1986 forward, vessels using hook and longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 95% of the OY for sablefish. Vessels using trawl gear shall be permitted to harvest up to 5% of the Optimum Yield for sablefish.

(2) Central Area

(a) Legal Gear. In 1986, legal gears for the taking of sablefish are trawls, hooks and longlines, and pot longlines. In 1987, and thereafter, legal gears shall be trawls and hooks and longlines.

(b) Allocation of Sablefish Between Gears. In 1986, vessels using hook and longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 55% of the sablefish OY; vessels using pot-longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 25% of the OY; and trawl vessels shall be permitted to take up to 20% of the OY. In 1987 and thereafter, vessels using hook and longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 80% of the sablefish OY; and vessels using trawl gear shall be permitted to take up to 20% of the OY.

(3) Western Area.

(a) Legal Gear. In 1986, 1987, and 1988, legal gears for the taking of sablefish are hooks and longlines, pot longlines, and trawls. In 1989 and thereafter, legal gears shall be trawls and hooks and longlines.

(b) Allocation of Sablefish Between Gears. In 1986, 1987, and 1988, vessels using hook and longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 55% of the OY for sablefish; vessels using pot longline gear shall be permitted to take up to 25% of the OY; and vessels using trawls may take up to 20% of the OY. In 1989 and thereafter, vessels using hooks and longlines may take up to 80% of the OY; and vessels using trawls may take up to 20% of the OY.

(4) Gear Limitations.

All sablefish pots must have a biodegradeable escape panel, with an opening in the webbing equal in perimeter to the tunnel eye opening. This opening must be laced on otherwise secured with untreated cotten twine or other natural thread no larger than 120 thread."

(29) In Section 8.3.1.1., "Domestic Season, Gear, Area, and Catch Restrictions," page 8-3, under the heading "(H) Issuance of Field Orders," delete the following text:

The Council finds that the Optimum Yields in this plan, which are based upon projections of the status of stocks, economic and other conditions several months in advance of the actual conduct of the fishery, may be found to be mis-specified in light of unpredicted and unanticipated adverse or favorable stock conditions which are revealed in-season. Under such circumstances, the Council further finds it appropriate for conservation purposes only, "

And replace it with the following:

The Council finds that inseason management actions may be necessary to permit the attainment of optimum yields for sablefish and other species. This may occur because of new information about a stock revealed inseason which suggests revision of OY is necessary, or because catches of a particular species by individual vessels or classes of vessels threaten to cause premature closure of the fishery for that or other species. Under such circumstances, the Council finds it appropriate. . ."

(30) In Section 8.3.1.1., "Domestic Season, Gear, Area, and Catch Restrictions," page 8-5, insert the following new section:

(I) State Regulation of Shelf Rockfish.

The State of Alaska's management regime for demersal shelf rockfish is directed at managing these rockfish stocks within smaller management units than are provided for by the FMP. Such State regulations are in addition to and stricter than Federal regulations. They are not in conflict with the FMP as long as they are (1) consistent with specific provisions of the FMP and (2) limited to establishing smaller areas and quotas, which would result in a harvest of demersal shelf rockfish in each FMP management area at levels no greater than that provided for in the FMP. Such State regulations may apply only to those vessels registered/licensed under the laws of the State of Alaska.

(31) In Section 8.3.2.1., "Foreign Season, Gear, Area and Catch Restrictions," page 8-6, under the heading "(C) Time-area closures," insert the following new section:

(d) Further fishing with specific types of gear or modes of operation during the year is prohibited in an area by those who take their prohibited species catch (PSC) limit in that area.

The method to be used to establish and make inseason adjustments to the PSC measures, PSC limits, and the types of are the same as specified for domestic fisheries in Section 8.3.1.1.(D)(2).

- (32) In Section 8.5.1., "Domestic Reporting Requirements," page 8-15, under the heading "(B) Processor Reports," delete the acronym "DNP" from the first sentence and delete the section "(C)".

Replace Section "(C)" with the following:

(C) "Catcher/processors.

(1) Reporting requirements.

Vessels that catch and process groundfish at sea (catcher/processors) often do not land their catch for periods of several weeks. The NPFMC considers such catcher/processors to be those vessels that have the capacity to freeze their catch at sea and are able, therefore, to remain at sea for periods of more than two weeks before returning to port.

Thus, while they are required to complete and submit a fish ticket upon landing their catch to the appropriate management agency within a period prescribed by regulation, catch information supplied by a fish ticket may not reach the management agencies in time to affect inseason management decisions concerning time/area adjustments or apportionments of surplus groundfish among the various users. Hence, those vessels that catch and process at sea and do not land their catch within two weeks from the date of catch are required to report the hail weights of their catch within a period prescribed by regulation. Such report must be in writing and must be submitted to the Director, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service. The NPFMC intends that each vessel operator be responsible for submitting the written report by whatever means are available to him. The NPFMC does not intend that a catcher/processor, which lands its catch within two weeks from the date of catch, provide a written catch report in addition to the required fish ticket.

(2) Check In and Check Out Report.

Catcher/processors are required to check in and check out of any regulatory area or district for which an optimum yield is established within a time period prescribed by regulation. This report may be by radio through the U.S. Coast Guard to the Director, National Marine Fisheries Service. The NPFMC intends that this requirement will enhance the National Marine Fisheries Service's ability to monitor the timeliness of the written catch reports described in (1) above and to assess the total harvest capacity in a regulatory area/district for purposes of projecting dates when an optimum yield will be reached.