

Observer Data and Catch Reports

During the last week of 2007 the observer program implemented new sampling procedures for observers on vessels. The Region is working closely with the Observer Program as adjustments are made to the databases that compile sampling data and develop full catch estimates in the Catch Accounting System. More work is required on the trawl data since the observers only started submitting trawl data after January 20. The Region completed most of the programming to update the Catch Accounting System as a result of new allocations from Amendments 80 and 85. Catch assignment associated with the three catcher vessel allocations for hook-and-line and pot gear still require some work. The Alaska Region continues to work on new reports for the Amendment 80 allocations.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

Bering Sea Pollock

Catcher/processors

Fifteen catcher/processors (c/ps) are targeting pollock as of January 26. In 2008, for the first week they caught a total of 21,471 mt or 3,578 mt/day. This is lower than the high catch rate in 2007 when 37,819 mt was taken in the first week. However the current rates tracks well with the 2007 A season average rate of 3,211 mt/day.

Inshore processors

Currently, 55 catcher vessels are targeting pollock (49 for same time period in 2007). In 2008, for the first week they caught 24,826 mt compared to 28,060 the first week of 2007. The 2007 average for the A season was 3,900 mt/day.

Motherships

Two motherships are currently active. In 2007, all three participated and averaged 1,035 mt/day.

Flatfish

Fourteen c/ps are targeting rock sole and yellowfin sole. As of January 26, the catch for the trawl sectors is 2,865 mt for rock sole and 1,515 mt for yellowfin sole.

Atka mackerel

The A season BSAI trawl limited access fishery for Atka mackerel in Area 541/Bering Sea subarea closed January 20. According to regulations the first harvest limitation area (HLA) directed fishery for the Amendment 80 cooperative and the Amendment 80 limited access sector in 542 and 543 opened January 22, 2008.

Four c/ps registered for the 2008 A season HLA fisheries in 542 and 543 (4 in 2007). One is in the Amendment 80 cooperative and three are in the Amendment 80 limited access sector. The last HLA fishery closes February 21.

Pacific cod

The hook-and-line, pot and jig fisheries started January 1. Trawl fisheries began January 20.

Hook-and-line C/Ps

In 2008, 36 hook-and-line c/ps have checked into the Pacific cod fishery (36 in 2007). Catch for 2007 is 23,746 mt through January 26. The 2007 A season TAC under the final specifications is 37,660 mt. Depending on the catch rates for the weeks ending February 2 and 9, the A season is expected to close the around February 8 to 11. In 2007, the catch was 24,100 mt through January 27 and the A season closed February 12.

Pot

The 2008 fishery for pot catcher vessels \geq 60 ft closed January 18 with 43 vessels taking about 6,300 mt. In 2007, the fishery closed January 26 with 59 vessels taking about 8,043 mt.

The 2008 fishery for c/ps closed January 20 with 5 vessels taking the 1,160 mt A season allocation under the final harvest specifications. Three of the c/ps fished in the State of Alaska parallel fishery inside 3 miles without federal permits. In 2007 the fishery closed February 20 with 3 c/ps taking 1,690 mt.

Pot and hook-and-line gear

Eight catcher vessels less than 60 ft LOA using pot or hook-and-line gear are fishing the 3,033 mt allocations.

Trawl

Twenty-six trawl catcher vessels delivering shore side are targeting Pacific cod (30 during same time period in 2007). The total Pacific cod catch through January 26 is 1,870 mt (including pelagic gear and mothership effort). In 2007, the catch was 1,774 mt through January 27 and the A season closed March 8.

Projections for 2008 trawl C/P fisheries are difficult since the trawl C/P fleet has now been split into three categories. NMFS prohibited directed fishing for the Amendment 80 limited access fishery effective January 23, 2008. The Amendment 80 cooperative is controlling their catch within the coop.

Gulf of Alaska

Western GOA Pacific cod

As of January 26, inshore deliveries total 1,500 mt. The 2008 A season TAC under the final specifications for the inshore component is 10,502 mt. NMFS set an incidental catch allowance (ICA) of 100 mt to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries and the remaining 10,402 mt as a directed fishing allowance (DFA). The catch by gear is: pot 89%, hook-and-line gear 2%, and trawl gear 9%. For the 2007 A season pot gear took 37%, trawl gear 41%, and hook-and-line gear 37%. In 2007, the A season fishery for inshore Pacific cod closed March 8, taking about 10,100 mt. Eleven non-American Fisheries Act (AFA) crab vessel have taken about 526 mt of

the 947 mt A season sideboard limit. In 2007 13 vessels participated and the fishery closed February 16, 2007. No effort has shown up for the offshore fishery.

Central GOA Pacific cod

As of January 26, inshore deliveries total 5,400 mt. The 2008 A season TAC under the final specifications for the inshore component is 15,350 mt, with an ICA of 1,500 mt and a DFA of 13,850 mt. The catch by gear is: pot 37%, hook-and-line 36%, and trawl 27%. For the 2007 A season, pot gear took 40%, trawl gear 31%, and hook-and-line gear 29%. In 2007, the A season fishery closed February 27, taking about 13,500 mt. At the current rates the projected closure date is around February 16, 2008. In 2008 six non-AFA crab sideboarded vessels participated catching the 588 mt A season limit and the fishery closed February 4, 2008. In 2007 eight vessel participated and the fishery closed January 24, 2007. No effort has shown up for the offshore component.

Pollock

The pollock fisheries in areas 610, 620, and 630 opened January 20. The fishery in 610 closed after two days taking about 100 mt of the final A season TAC of 3,322 mt. NMFS will reopen the fishery when the participants are done with Pacific cod. The fishery in 630 closed after two days taking about 43 mt of the final A season TAC of 3,069 mt. The fishery reopened January 25 for 48 hours taking about 367 mt. Usually directed fishing in 620 starts around late February or early March. In 2007, area 620 closed March 27.

Rockfish pilot program (RPP)

Each year participants in the Rockfish Pilot Program must apply, by March 1st, to participate in one of four fisheries:

- Eligible Rockfish Harvesters (those allocated Quota Share in 2007):
 - Cooperative (catcher processors and catcher vessel)
 - Limited Access (catcher processors and catcher vessel)
 - Opt Out (catcher processors only)

For non-eligible rockfish catcher vessels:

Those persons who did not receive rockfish quota share may apply to participate in the Entry Level Rockfish fishery.

All applications are on our website at:

<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/#apps>.

NMFS will post the allocations as soon as possible after March 1 at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/>.

