

Alaska Groundfish Cooperative
Report to the North Pacific
Fishery Management Council
for the 2015 Fishery

March 23, 2016

Introduction

On January 20th 2015, the Alaska Groundfish Cooperative (AGC) began fishing under regulations implementing Amendment 80. This report summarizes AGC operations during 2015.

AGC membership

AGC membership includes the following four companies, and eight non-AFA trawl catcher processors and/or permits.

Company	Vessel/Permit	LLP LOA
Iquique U.S., L.L.C.	Ocean Cape	122
O'Hara Corporation	Harvester Enterprise	181
The Fishing Company of Alaska, Inc.	Alaska Juris	238
	Alaska Spirit	221
	Alaska Victory	227
	Alaska Warrior	215
	Alaska Ranger	203
	Alaska Voyager	228

Co-op Management

AGC activities are governed by a Board of Directors, which is appointed by AGC members. The Members executed a cooperative agreement that outlines harvest strategies, harvest shares and agreement compliance provisions.

The AGC co-op manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the cooperative. This includes communications, regulatory compliance, catch and bycatch tracking, and QS management.

Transfers occurred during the year between co-op members, and between Am 80 cooperatives.

During the 2015 fishing year we had 795 vessel days of operation.

Catch Monitoring

The AGC manager receives observer data from the vessels fishing. Catch and species composition information is received from the Observer Program, and from NMFS Alaska Region. Production

information is received from Alaska Region. All of these sources are used to ensure that the vessels do not exceed quotas. Software on the vessels allows the Captains to keep close track of quota usage.

Seastate, Inc. also monitors AGC catch and production, and the co-op manager is able to compare information through a secure web site to ensure any possible errors are caught and resolved.

During the 2015 fishing season, neither QS allocations, nor PSC allocations were exceeded.

GOA Sideboards

Some AGC vessels participated in the Rockfish Pilot Program Co-op fishery in the CGOA. These vessels are sideboarded under the rockfish program. One AGC vessel participated in the WGOA Am 80 rockfish sideboard fishery. At the time AGC's WGOA Am 80 sideboard eligible vessel left the GOA, no sideboard limits were exceeded.

2015 AGC Catch

The following tables provide AGC catch information. Data has been rounded to the nearest whole number. **All co-op catch during 2015 fell within allocation levels and no overages occurred.**

BSAI AGC Allocated Quota & PSC and Catch Amounts

Species	AGC Am 80 Allocation (mt)	AGC Catch (mt)	Total Transfer In (mt)	Total Transfer Out (mt)
Mackerel 541	11,616	11,823.60	484	100
Mackerel 542	8,116	8,079.84	8	
Mackerel 543	5,742	5,701.76	6	
Flathead Sole	1,708	412.91		136.88
Pacific Cod	4,711	4,396.17	928.75	109.66
POP 541	3,362	3,432.16	80	
POP 542	2,947	2,897.75	7	2
POP 543	4,171	4,146.42	9	1
Rock Sole	13,318	4,243.22		327.41
Yellowfin Sole	44,455	10,916.847		16,067.26
Bairdi Z1 (#)	96,980	18,082		1,736
Bairdi Z2 (#)	161,899	43,978		2,897
Halibut Mortality (mt)	632	454.52		9.4

COBLZ Opilio (#)	1,521,531	121,405		38,368
Red King Crab (#)	12,459	5,253		198

BSAI Salmon Catch Amount

Species	AGC Catch (#)
Chinook	1,615
Non-Chinook	823

Retention Compliance Standard

After NMFS removed the Groundfish Retention Standards in 2013, AGC adopted a Retention Compliance Standard program to help continue the high levels of retention achieved by the fleet. The RCS is implemented through a civil contract and compliance is monitored by an independent third party audit. The RCS requires groundfish retention of 85%. In 2015, AGC achieved a groundfish retention at a rate of 91.3%.

2015 AGC Activities

Among other activities, AGC participated in the following programs in 2015:

Adoption of the Halibut Bycatch Best Practices standards

These are the guiding principles and practices that fishermen need to follow to reduce halibut bycatch and mortality. AGC has adopted these Practices and is working with all members of the Amendment 80 fleet to improve communications to help reduce bycatch. All AGC companies have adopted the use of halibut excluders and are working with gear modifications to reduce the amount of halibut landed.

Development of the Amendment 80 Halibut Avoidance Program

In order to meet the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council's objective of providing additional incentives to reduce halibut bycatch and mortality, AGC worked with the Alaska Seafood Cooperative (ASC) to develop a Halibut Avoidance Program. This Program was implemented at the beginning of the 2016 fishing season. Target bycatch rates have been established, and monetary penalties and halibut PSC reductions are in place as "incentives" to meet or beat those target rates.

Participation in the Amendment 80 Community Outreach efforts

In conjunction with the ASC, AGC met with representatives of the Bering Sea Elders Group, the Association of Village Presidents and the Native American Rights fund to implement the agreement to adequately protect western Alaska subsistence resources in the Etolin Strait, Nunivak Island area, while maintaining access to important flatfish fishing grounds.

Halibut Deck Sorting Experimental Fishing Permit

AGC worked with ASC to be included in upcoming aspects of the halibut deck sorting EFP.



P.O. Box 74, Vashon, WA 98070

Ph: (206)463-7370
Fax: (206)463-7371
Email: karl@seastateinc.com

February 26, 2016

To whom it may concern:

Listed below are results of an audit of the Alaska Groundfish Cooperative's groundfish retention for 2015.

Materials and Methods:

Observer data were supplied to Sea State, Inc via the Northwest Groundfish Observer Program's password-protected web site. Logon credentials were supplied by all members of the Alaska Groundfish Cooperative. Production data were obtained via the NMFS Alaska Region e-Landings system, again using credentials supplied by member companies. Unsourced hauls in the observer data were extrapolated using standard methods documented by NMFS Alaska Region to produce total groundfish catch estimates in accord with those in the Alaska Region Catch Accounting System. Retained product data were expanded to round weight equivalents using published Product Recovery Rates (PRRs). Groundfish retention was then calculated according to the formula:

$$\text{Retention percentage} = \text{Retained catch (retained product RWE)} / \text{Total catch (CAS)}$$

For 2015, the Alaska Groundfish Cooperative's total catch Total catch (CAS) of FMP species was 77,083 mt. The round-weight equivalent of products (RWE) from this catch was 70,339 mt. The coop-wide retention percentage was 91.3%

Sincerely,

Karl Haflinger
Sea State, Inc