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# AKUTAN COD ASSOCIATION 2024 COOPERATIVE REPORT

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This report was prepared by ACA coop manager Katie Pitzman (Trident Seafoods)

## Introduction

This is the inaugural report of the Akutan Cod Association (ACA). This is voluntarily submitted to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC; “Council”) as recommended in the final rule, which established the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative (PCTC) Program. The PCTC is a management program for the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel sector A and B seasons (January 20<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 10<sup>th</sup>, respectively). The purpose of this report is to detail the actions and harvest numbers of the ACA in 2024. This report provides the Council and public with an understanding of the fishery, its participants, and efforts to mitigate bycatch. Data for this report were taken from the Sea State, Inc. data repository through their web portal.

## Akutan Cod Association

### Formation

The ACA was formed in 2023 in anticipation of the first PCTC season in January 2024 (i.e., the first year of rationalization). The coop is named for the Trident Seafoods processing facility located in Akutan, Alaska, which has historically been a major processor of Bering Sea trawl-caught cod. Despite the name association, the coop was cofounded by, and membership was offered to, more than just individuals that were part of the Trident fleet at the time of rationalization. The ACA is composed of Limited License Program (LLP) permit holders (members), associated processors, and a list of designated harvest vessels. Coops must apply annually for Cooperative Quota (CQ) which is derived from the quota share that belongs to their members (harvester derived quota) and associated processors (processor derived quota). The CQ is divided by the A and B seasons and must be harvested by vessels listed on the CQ permit or transferred out of the coop for harvest by a non-coop vessel. Prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*), red king crab (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*), and Tanner and snow crab (*Chionoecetes bairdi*, “bairdi”, and *C. opilio*, “snow crab”, respectively), are also allocated to coops via their CQ permit. PSC species are allocated to the coops on an annual basis and PSC usage must be managed by the coop throughout both A and B seasons.

### Cooperative Membership

In 2024, the ACA was comprised of 47 LLP members (Table 1). Based on those member LLPs, ACA received 59.68% of the total HQ for 2024. In the PCTC there is a harvester QS ownership cap of 5%. Several ACA members that own multiple LLPs received legacy exemptions to this ownership cap for the 2024 season and in perpetuity. No single LLP in ACA exceeded 5% in 2024.

**Table 1** List of LLP members in the ACA in 2024, their harvester quota share units and quota share percentage of the PCTC management sector.

LLP	Ownership	Quota Share Units	Quota Share Percentage
1183	LESLIE LEE, INC	1,040	0.2862%
1273	ELIZABETH F, INC.	782	0.2152%
1292	PURATICH, JOSEPH	1,206	0.3319%
1541	MAGIC FISH CO.	2,854	0.7853%
1581	F/V SEEKER, INC.	13,174	3.6251%
1710	MISS LEONA, INC.	6,210	1.7088%
1753	ROYAL AMERICAN FISHERIES, LLC	4,941	1.3596%
1848	GREAT WEST SEAFOODS, L.P.	8,198	2.2559%
1905	ALASKA DAWN SEAFOODS, LLC	2,641	0.7267%
1933	NORTH SEA, INC.	4,944	1.3605%
2071	KE FISHERIES, LLC	706	0.1943%
2092	F/V NORDIC STAR LLC	6,668	1.8349%
2094	F/V STARFISH, LLC	5,437	1.4961%
2098	STARWARD FISHERIES, LLC	6,178	1.7000%
2164	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	5,674	1.5613%
2205	ROYAL VIKING, INC.	5,722	1.5745%
2278	JJL FISHERIES LLC	3,059	0.8418%
2325	NORQUEST SEAFOODS, INC.	9,687	2.6656%
2364	ROSELLA INC	1,130	0.3109%
2537	TRIDENT SEAFOODS CORPORATION	2,347	0.6458%
2541	ROYAL VIKING, INC.	3,557	0.9788%
2550	BLACK SEA FISHERIES, INC.	1,681	0.4626%
2554	NORQUEST SEAFOODS, INC.	12,244	3.3692%
2567	TRIDENT SEAFOODS CORPORATION	262	0.0721%
2636	ROYAL VIKING, INC.	189	0.0520%
2789	SEADAWN LLC	7,343	2.0206%
2973	GOLDEN WEST FISHERIES, INC.	2,069	0.5693%
3144	TRIDENT SEAFOODS CORPORATION	121	0.0333%
3463	TRAVELER FISHERIES LLC	912	0.2510%
3493	ROYAL VIKING, INC.	8,913	2.4526%
3521	EXCALIBUR II, LLC	207	0.0570%
3538	RAVEN ENTERPRISES, INC.	5,584	1.5366%
3594	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	4,172	1.1480%
3620	LESLIE LEE, INC	8,580	2.3610%
3621	COOPER, MARK E	11,076	3.0478%
3654	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	1,802	0.4959%
3658	OCEAN STORM FISHERIES, INC.	976	0.2686%
3734	GOLDEN DAWN, LLC	3,032	0.8343%
3739	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	8,545	2.3514%
3746	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	5,169	1.4224%
3748	SAN JUAN SEAFOODS, INC	4,695	1.2919%
3754	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	5,101	1.4037%
3756	B & N FISHERIES COMPANY	2,073	0.5704%
3787	TRIDENT SEAFOODS CORPORATION	5,203	1.4317%
3855	GOLDEN PISCES, INC.	13,417	3.6920%
3962	ROYAL ATLANTIC, LLC	6,437	1.7713%
4862	FULL ADVANCE LLC	915	0.2518%
		<b>216,873</b>	<b>59.68%</b>

## Associated Processors

In 2024, ACA had four associated processors sign on to their coop agreement, three of which processed cod. These associated processors were all solely associated with the ACA and, therefore, all the processor derived quota share they received in 2024 was allocated in full to ACA's CQ. ACA received 59.09% of the total PCTC processor QS in 2024. In the PCTC there is a processor QS ownership cap of 20%. Trident Seafoods received a legacy exemption to this 20% cap for the 2024 season and in perpetuity, with their three processing entities receiving 49.60% of the available processor QS in 2024 (Table 2). There is also a processor CQ use cap of 20%, which Trident is also exempt from.

**Table 2** List of ACA associated processors and their quota share units and percentage of the total PCTC processor quota. In 2024, the Trident Seafoods Sand Point shoreplant did not process cod. Instead, that PQ was delivered on ACA vessels to the other two Trident processing entities.

Facility	Quota Share Units	Percent of Total Processor Held QS
Trident Seafoods - Independence (Floating Processor)	58,362	19.93%
Trident Seafoods - Sand Point Shoreplant	1,212	0.41%
Trident Seafoods - Akutan Shoreplant	85,658	29.26%
Unisea - Dutch Harbor Shoreplant	27,766	9.48%
	<b>172,998</b>	<b>59.09%</b>

## Harvest Vessels

There were 44 vessels listed as cooperative authorized harvesters for ACA in 2024 (Table 3). Only 22 of those vessels made at least one cod delivery due to quota consolidation through leases and multi-LLP owners stacking quota on fewer vessels. The PCTC program has a vessel use cap of 5%. This means that no single vessel can deliver more than 5% of the annual PCTC directed fishing allowance (DFA) unless qualified under a legacy exemption. In 2024, the vessel use cap was 1,197 MT and no ACA vessels exceeded the cap.

**Table 3** List of cooperative authorized harvest vessels associated with the ACA in 2024

<b>Harvest Vessels</b>	<b>ADF&amp;G Number</b>
Advancer	40762
Alaska Chieftain	61223
Alaska Dawn	69765
Alaska Endeavor	8500
Arctic Ram	57117
Arctic Wind	01112
Arcturus	45978
Caravelle	57634
Columbia	39056
Dominator	08668
Elizabeth F	14767
Excalibur II	54653
Gladiator	32473
Golden Dawn	35687
Golden Pisces	32817
Karen Evich	46701
Leslie Lee	58119
Majesty	60650
Marauder	62288
Marcy J	00055
Michelle Renee	61244
Miss Leona	25227
Muir Milach	41021
Nordic Star	00961
Northern Ram	62892
Northwest Explorer	36808
Ocean Explorer	51073
Ocean Harvester	00101
Ocean Storm	64667
Pacific Explorer	50759
Pacific Ram	61792
Pacific Viking	00047
Pegasus	57149
Predator	33744
Raven	56395
Royal American	40840
Royal Atlantic	00046
Sea Mac	06151
Seadawn	00077
Seeker	59476
Starfish	00012
Starward	39197
Traveler	58821
Walter N	34919

## **Cooperative Management Structure**

The ACA is governed by a five-person Board of Directors. The board convenes at least once a year for the annual board and membership meeting (they may meet more often if there are issues in-season). In addition to the board, there is a coop manager who is responsible for pre- and post-season planning and day-to-day administration of coop activities. The coop manager arranges meetings, pays bills on behalf of the coop, issues dues, calculates initial cod quota allocations, facilitates quota transfers, monitors cod catch progress and PSC bycatch rates, as well as works with outside agencies on the coop's behalf. In 2024, the ACA coop manager was Katie Pitzman (Trident Seafoods).

## **Cooperative Management Strategy**

ACA approves a fishing plan and a list of "best fishing practices" at the annual coop meeting. These documents set the parameters by which the coop manager may regulate the coop members' actions and outlines specific practices that all members agree to avoid PSC bycatch. ACA is also part of the Intercooperative Agreement (ICA), an agreement among all six of the 2024 PCTC coops which outlines collective plans to mitigate bycatch and overharvest of cod, as well as carryout and enforce other PCTC program elements.

## **2024 BSAI Pacific Cod Fishery**

### **ACA Cooperative Quota Allocation**

The total BSAI PCTC DFA for trawl catcher vessels in 2024 was 23,941 MT (17,737 MT for A season and 2,159 MT for B season). The ACA received 59.55% of the PCTC program cod quota share and PSC. These percentages translated to an initial cod CQ of 14,256 MT (12,658 MT in A season and 1,598 MT in B season).

#### Harvester Derived Cod Quota Allocation

ACA's total annual harvester quota (HQ) was, 11,073 MT in 2024 (Table 4). Harvest quota is CQ apportioned pro-rata to the coop's member LLPs. For the sake of efficiency, owners of multiple LLPs consolidated quota onto fewer fishing vessels. Additionally, several members with smaller amounts of quota or with other fisheries to prioritize opted to lease their cod to fellow coop members rather than fish it on their own vessel. Additional details on leasing provided in the "2024 ACA Leasing Activity" section below.

### Processor Derived Cod Quota Allocation

ACA received 3,183 MT of processor quota in 2024 (Table 4). Processor quota (PQ) is divvied up to participants at the discretion of the processors. In the ACA, processor quota is allocated to harvesting vessels based on their history delivering to that processor. The coop manager communicates with the processors pre-season and allocates PQ to vessels appropriately. Once PQ is allocated to a vessel it is treated interchangeably with harvester quota as that member's quota allocation and can be traded or used for coverage by members as they see fit.

There are special regulations concerning vertically integrated companies and CQ from processor derived QS. If a processing company also owns LLPs or CVs, those vessels may not be allocated a larger percentage of CQ than what they bring into the coop without processor quota. This aims to ensure processors cannot consolidate a disproportionate amount of CQ onto their company's vessels. In ACA, Trident Seafoods is a vertically integrated company with several processing entities, LLPs, and active harvest vessel in the coop. The processor quota allocated to the Trident vessels did not exceed the collective PQ that was proportionate to the LLPs earned history. The Trident PQ allocations were reviewed and approved by the ACA board to ensure they were in line with PCTC vertical integration regulations.

**Table 4** Breakdown, by season, of ACA harvester derived quota and processor derived quota **allocations**.

2024 A Season Pacific Cod Quota		2024 B Season Pacific Cod Quota		Total
Harvester Derived Quota	9,832	Harvester Derived Quota	1,241	11,073
Processor Derived Quota	2,826	Processor Derived Quota	357	3,183
<b>Total Initial A Allocation</b>	<b>12,658</b>	<b>Total Initial B Allocation</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>14,256</b>

### Prohibited Species Catch Allowance

The PCTC allocates PSC to coops proportional to their cod CQ. In 2024, ACA was initially given bycatch limits of 145,290 MT of Pacific halibut, 324 red king crab, 16,750 snow crab, 16,928 Zone 1 Tanner crab, and 14,132 Zone 2 Tanner crab. To ensure every fishing vessel is accountable for PSC, halibut and crab, limits are issued to the members by the coop manager with their cod quota. Captains are responsible for executing their cod fishery while staying under their individual PSC limits.

### Aleutian Islands Set-Aside

Per PCTC regulations, 12% of the trawl CV sector A season DFA must be set-aside for delivery to Aleutian Islands (AI) facilities, if there is processor operating in that year. The AI CQ set-aside allocation and harvest strategy is outlined in the ICA. In 2024 there was no processing activity in the AI subarea, therefore no set aside was necessary.



## ACA 2024 Pacific Cod Harvest Performance

A total of 12,757 MT of ACA Pacific cod CQ was harvested by ACA vessels in 2024 (90% of CQ allocation), leaving 1,479 MT of CQ in the water. ACA harvested 11,774 MT (92.3% of cod harvested by the ACA) in A season and 982 MT (8.7%) in B Season (Table 5). The uncaught quota is largely due to small individual vessel quotas leading to low fishing effort and slower fishing in B season. ACA vessels delivered their cod to three processors in 2024. Unisea shoreplant in Dutch Harbor received 2,289 MT in ACA deliveries, Trident entities Akutan shoreplant and floating processor Independence received a total of 10,468 MT (Table 6).

**Table 5** Total Pacific cod harvested in 2024 (in MT) by ACA vessels, broken down by season.

Vessel	A Season Pacific Cod Harvest	B Season Pacific Cod Harvest	Total Pacific Cod Catch
Alaska Dawn	-	154	154
Alaska Endeavor	90	-	90
Dominator	522	-	522
Gladiator	453	125	578
Golden Dawn	296	-	296
Golden Pisces	1,030	148	1,179
Karen Evich	19	-	19
Leslie Lee	554	88	642
Majesty	1,178	-	1,178
Miss Leona	476	33	509
Muir Milach	664	-	664
Nordic Star	345	-	345
Northwest Explorer	374	98	472
Pacific Explorer	533	-	533
Predator	1,074	109	1,182
Raven	374	-	374
Royal American	895	145	1,040
Royal Atlantic	574	84	658
Seadawn	396	-	396
Seeker	850	-	850
Starfish	430	-	430
Starward	646	-	646
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,774</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>12,757</b>

**Table 6** Total ACA Pacific cod harvested in 2024 by season and receiving processor.

Processor	A Season Pacific Cod Harvest	B Season Pacific Cod Harvest	Total Pacific Cod Harvest
Trident Independence	7,934	798	8,733
Trident Akutan	1,649	86	1,735
Unisea	2,191	98	2,289
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,774</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>12,757</b>

PSC in the 2024 Pacific Cod fishery

PSC in the BSAI Pacific cod fishery is closely monitored and mitigation efforts are prioritized. The ACA coop vessel captains and coop manager communicate bycatch rates to each other on a tow-by-tow basis in a WhatsApp group to support bycatch avoidance. PCTC fleet bycatch data are also synthesized by Sea State, Inc. (a third-party data manager) and disseminated to the PCTC coop managers to share bycatch information.

In 2024, Trident Seafoods, with research partners and collaborators, conducted research evaluating halibut bycatch mitigation approaches in the cod fishery using funds from a NOAA Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program (FY23) award. This included testing the ability to reduce halibut bycatch using artificial illumination at the trawl mouth and developing a performance indicator to assess the efficacy of bycatch reduction device designs. This work, supporting halibut bycatch mitigation, is on-going.

**Table 7** ACA prohibited species catch (PSC) allowance and allowance used in 2024, divided by A and B seasons.

	Pacific Halibut Mortality (MT)	Red King Crab Mortality (N)	Tanner Crab (Bairdi) Mortality (N)	Snow Crab (Opilio) Mortality (N)
Annual PSC Allowance	156	322	35,316	16,613
<b>Allowance Used</b>				
Cod Trawl - A Season	45	0	585	0
Cod Trawl - B Season	6	0	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>% of Allowance Used</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0%</b>

2024 ACA Leasing Activity

Quota Lease Regulations and Monitoring

Lease arrangements were made privately and communicated to the coop manager pre-season. The manager monitors leases to ensure that they do not violate any PCTC leasing restrictions. LLPs that are sideboard exempt in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) fisheries and want to lease their PCTC quota, must verify that they qualify for the lease restriction exemption from the Final Rule (88 FR 53714).

There is a second round of lease arrangements made in B Season as many opt not to participate for a variety of reasons. Leases are communicated to the manager as close to April 1<sup>st</sup> as possible, when catch

accounting is finalized for A season. Those leasing quota must be careful not to acquire quota that exceeds the vessel use cap, particularly in B season when they are trying to maximize their total annual cod catch.

### Leases between ACA members

In 2024, seven ACA GOA sideboard exempt vessels leased their PCTC quota under the exemption for those with less than 300 MT of average annual qualifying history. The vessels were the F/Vs *Advancer*, *Caravelle*, *Elizabeth F*, *Karen Evich*, *Marauder*, *Michelle Renee*, and *Ocean Storm*. The combined lease amount for all vessels was 426 MT. Non-GOA exempt vessels also leased quota within the membership. They are not restricted from doing so except by the 5% vessel use cap.

### Intercoop Leases

Because CQ can only be delivered by authorized harvest vessels that are part of the coop, it is sometimes necessary to conduct intercoop transfers. Leases between coops are arranged between the quota holders that have come to an agreement and are then facilitated by the coop managers in eFISH. These leases are bound to the same limits as leases within the coop.

In 2024, ACA performed one transfer of cod quota and PSC to an outside coop (117 MT of Pacific cod) and received quota and PSC in two transfers from other coops (combined 97 MT).

## **Leasing Penalties**

Penalties for violating lease restrictions are outlined in the ACA membership agreement and are enforced by the coop manager. There were no leasing violations or penalties assessed to ACA members in 2024.