

# Gulf of Alaska Best Use Cooperative

## 2024 Annual Report

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for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## **Introduction:**

Section 802 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-199) required the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), to establish a Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Pilot Program. The Council adopted the Program on June 6, 2005, and it was implemented by Final Rule on November 20, 2006. The Pilot Program expired at the end of 2011. The Council adopted a new Rockfish Program, Amendment 88 to the Gulf of Alaska Fisheries Management Plan, at its June 2010 meeting. On December 27, 2011, NMFS published final regulations implementing the new Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program.

Under the new Rockfish Program (RP), eligible trawl catcher/processors (CPs) can either opt-out of the RP or opt-in. If a CP opts-in to the program, the vessel must participate in a cooperative in order to receive quota share. There is no CP limited access fishery in the new program.

NMFS issues quota shares (QS) for three primary rockfish species – Pacific ocean perch, Northern rockfish, and Dusky rockfish – and for four secondary species – Sablefish, Shortraker rockfish, Rougheye rockfish, and Thornyhead rockfish. Each cooperative also receives a quota share of Halibut PSC mortality. The quota shares are then distributed among the participating vessels. This coop operates as a pass through, with each LLP receiving its pro rata share of the quotas based on historic participation. All primary and secondary quota share species are managed as hard caps with 100% mandatory retention.

The 2024 GOA BUC membership was comprised of the following vessels and licenses:

## **Membership of the Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Best Use Cooperative:**

<b>Vessel Owner</b>	<b>Vessel Name</b>	<b>LLP</b>	<b>ADF&amp;G No.</b>
Ocean Peace, Inc		1802	
M/V Savage, Inc.	Seafisher	2014	56964
America's Finest Fishing, LLC	FV America's Finest	2028	78724
AK Victory, Inc.	Alaska Victory	2080	61083
O'Hara Corporation	Araho	2083	77812
Alaska Legacy, LLC		2905	
O'Hara Corporation	Alaska Spirit	3043	59870
U.S. Fishing, L.L.C.	US Intrepid	3662	54392
American Seafoods Co LLC.		3838	
North Star Vessel, LLC	North Star	3957	78507
Cape Flattery Washington LLC		4360	

## **Monitoring the Fishing Plan and Catch:**

On or before March 1<sup>st</sup>, coops submit their membership agreement to NMFS. NMFS then establishes coop quota shares. The coop manager notifies each owner of their LLP quota shares and sideboard amounts. Coop assignments per LLP are vetted through NMFS In-Season management to ensure correct tonnages. Owners forward the individual quota share and sideboard amounts to the Captains.

NMFS and the Best Use Cooperative are notified in advance of the vessels which will fish the RP quota, and which will fish the sideboards. Vessels fishing CGOA rockfish quota share are mandated to have two observers on board for the RP or while the vessel has RP fish on board. NMFS must have the opportunity to brief the rockfish observers in advance.

Each vessel has one of two catch monitoring programs on board: either “eHarvest” or “CatchPoint.” Observer sampling information is downloaded to the onboard monitoring program after the observers sample the hauls. The onboard programs use the same extrapolation methodology as the NMFS AK Region for determining official catch. In this way, the vessels have real time QS catch data on board.

When the observers send their files to NMFS, the Observer Program performs data checks and then sends data for extrapolation at the AK Region in Juneau. The data are then available to the NMFS In-Season managers and to third party data managers such as the Alaska Seafood Cooperative and Seastate. The official NMFS data can take a day or more to show up on the NMFS Coop Account Balance. The onboard monitoring program information is available immediately and enables real time quota monitoring. The coop bases its official total catch, however, on the NMFS account balance.

Vessel Captains update their home offices daily with the onboard tow data. The office quota share managers compare the onboard monitoring program catch and QS balances with Seastate and with the NMFS AK Region Account Balance for the coop. If any of these databases do not match, tow by tow comparisons are made between the onboard program tow information and the Seastate data (Seastate data is obtained directly from NMFS after extrapolation and can be accessed on the individual tow level). Office managers may also confer with the NMFS AK Region on haul information if discrepancies cannot be solved by looking into the Seastate data. Since the inception of the Rockfish Program in 2007, NMFS In-Season managers have been extremely helpful to industry from both regulatory and data perspectives. Alaska Seafood Cooperative managers are also available for additional assistance in verifying or corroborating numbers if needed.

The vessel Captains communicate directly with one another on the grounds and with the quota share managers, and they can communicate directly with the third-party data managers when necessary. The quota share managers for the participating vessels maintain contact throughout the duration of fishing.

### **Retained and Discarded Primary and Secondary QS:**

Full retention of the three primary rockfish and four secondary quota share species is required under the program. Close to 100% of the Pacific ocean perch allocation and most of the Northern rockfish and Dusky rockfish allocations were harvested. The majority of the secondary rockfish and sablefish quota were taken. Where there was an amount of primary or secondary species quota remaining, it was due to minimizing the risk of taking incidental quota share species that are too close to their limits. There were no discards of primary or secondary quota share species.

## Prohibited Species Catch:

22.75 mt of the halibut mortality was used, amounting to 31% of the quota. Basing a rate on the total harvest of the 3 target and 4 secondary quota share species (~13,000 mt), this represents a 1.75 kg/mt of halibut bycatch rate (kg halibut mortality / mt QS harvest). There were 715 extrapolated Chinook and 5,065 extrapolated non-Chinook, 49 extrapolated Golden King Crab, and 0 extrapolated Bairdi crab taken within the rockfish quota share fisheries. There was 0.18 mt of extrapolated Herring recorded.

## Sideboards:

Rockfish eligible vessels which have history in other Gulf fisheries in the month of July can fish up to a sideboard level equivalent to their historic average catch in those fisheries. The coop fish plan details the timing of the prosecution of the sideboard fisheries, in addition to timing of the harvest of the CGOA rockfish QS.

The WYAK Pacific Ocean Perch sideboard was 99% harvested and 5% of the WYAK dusky rockfish sideboard was harvested.

The WGOA sideboard limitations were removed when Amendment 111 went into effect on March 1, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Vessels also fished deep water flatfish in July, with 6mt of halibut utilized under the DW halibut sideboards. None of the SW Halibut was used. With only 2 mt of SW halibut sideboard, there is not enough for a viable SW flatfish fishery.

## Trades/Overages:

Trades were made among the cooperative members. There were no overages.

## 2024 Account Balance by species:

Table 1: Best Use Cooperative Account Balance for 2024					
Name	Initial	Quota	Catch	Remaining	% Taken
<a href="#">CGOA POP CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	9,898	9,898	9,873	25	100
<a href="#">CGOA Northern Rockfish CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	792	792	737	55	93
<a href="#">CGOA Dusky CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	2,665	2,665	1,699	966	64
<a href="#">CGOA Rougheye CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	185	185	91	95	49
<a href="#">CGOA Sablefish CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	339	339	287	52	85
<a href="#">CGOA Shortraker CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	76	76	65	11	86
<a href="#">CGOA Thornyhead CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	184	184	24	160	13
<a href="#">GOA West Yakutat POP CP Coop RPP SB Rockfish_BUC</a>	Confidential				99
<a href="#">GOA West Yakutat Dusky CP Coop RPP SB Rockfish_BUC</a>	Confidential				5
<a href="#">GOA Halibut Shallow Water Complex TRW CP Coop RPP SB Rockfish_BUC</a>	2	2	-	2	-
<a href="#">GOA Halibut Deep Water Complex TRW CP Coop RPP SB Rockfish_BUC</a>	43	43	6	37	14
<a href="#">CGOA Halibut CP Coop Rockfish_BUC</a>	74	74	23	51	31

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/03/01/2021-03859/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-central-gulf-of-alaska-rockfish-program>