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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 260305-0066; RTID 0648-XF348]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule; harvest specifications and closures.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications, apportionments, and prohibited species catch (PSC) allowances for the groundfish fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to establish harvest limits for groundfish during the remainder of the 2026 and the start of the 2027 fishing years and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the BSAI (FMP). The intended effect of this action is to conserve and manage the groundfish resources in the BSAI in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: Harvest specifications and closures are effective from 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS), Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final EIS, and the annual Supplementary Information Reports (SIR) to the Final EIS prepared for this action are available at: *https://www.regulations.gov*. The 2024 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for the groundfish resources of the BSAI, dated November 2024, as well as the SAFE reports for previous years, are available from the

North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) at 1007 West Third Ave., Suite 400, Anchorage, AK 99501, phone 907-271-2809, or from the Council's website at: *https://www.npfmc.org/*, and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center website at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/population-assessments/north-pacific-groundfish-stock-assessments-and-fishery-evaluation*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Olson and Steven Whitney, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Federal regulations at 50 CFR part 679 implement the FMP and govern the groundfish fisheries in the BSAI. The Council prepared the FMP, and NMFS approved it, under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. General regulations governing U.S. fisheries also appear at 50 CFR part 600.

The FMP and its implementing regulations require NMFS, after consultation with the Council, to specify annually an overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), and total allowable catch (TAC) for each target species (§ 679.20(a) and (c)). The sum of all TACs for target groundfish species in the BSAI must be within the optimum yield (OY) range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million metric tons (mt) (§ 679.20(a)(1)(i)(A) and (a)(2)). This final rule specifies the sum of the TACs at 2.0 million mt for 2026 and 2.0 million mt for 2027. NMFS also must specify: (1) apportionments of TACs; (2) PSC limits and prohibited species quota (PSQ) reserves established by § 679.21; (3) seasonal allowances of pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel TAC; (4) American Fisheries Act (AFA) allocations; (5) Amendment 80 allocations; (6) Community Development Quota (CDQ) reserve amounts established by § 679.20(b)(1)(ii); (7) ABC surpluses and ABC reserves for CDQ groups and any Amendment 80 cooperatives for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole; and (8) halibut discard mortality rates (DMR). The final harvest specifications set forth in tables 1 through 25 of this action satisfy these requirements.

Section 679.20(c)(3)(i) requires that NMFS consider public comment on the proposed harvest specifications and, after consultation with the Council, publish final harvest specifications in the **Federal Register**. The proposed 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for the groundfish fishery of the BSAI were published in the **Federal Register** on December 16, 2025 (90 FR 58204). Comments were invited and accepted through January 5, 2026. Five comment letters were received during the comment period, and no changes were made in response to the comments. NMFS's responses are included in the **Response to Comments** section below.

Under § 679.20(c)(3), NMFS is publishing the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications after: (1) considering comments received within the comment period; (2) consulting with the Council at its December 2025 meeting; (3) considering information presented in the 2026 SIR to the Final EIS that assesses the need to prepare a Supplemental EIS (see **ADDRESSES**); and (4) considering information presented in the final 2024 SAFE report, including the 2024 Ecosystem Status Reports (ESR) for both the Bering Sea (BS) and Aleutian Islands (AI) ecosystems (see **ADDRESSES**). The final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Harvest Specification Process

The specifications are based on the most recent biological, ecosystem, socioeconomic, and harvest information about the condition of the BSAI groundfish stocks and the review and recommendations of the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team (Plan Team), Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Advisory Panel (AP), and the Council. These specifications were developed in compliance with the harvest strategy from the FMP and the Final EIS and ROD.

The most recent reviewed information available to inform these specifications includes the 2024 SAFE report for the BSAI groundfish stocks (see **ADDRESSES**). The

stock assessments that comprise the SAFE report contain a review of the latest scientific analyses available and estimates of each stock or stock complex's biomass and other biological parameters including possible future condition of the stocks, as well as summaries of the available information on the BSAI ecosystem and the economic condition of the BSAI groundfish fisheries off Alaska. The SAFE report provides information to the Council and NMFS for recommending and setting annual harvest levels for each stock or stock complex and documenting significant trends or changes in the resource, marine ecosystems, and fisheries over time. The individual stock assessments that comprise the 2024 SAFE report are available at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/population-assessments/north-pacific-groundfish-stock-assessment-and-fishery-evaluation*.

The ESRs are a component of the SAFE report. The ESRs compile and summarize information about the status of the Alaska marine ecosystems for the Plan Team, SSC, AP, Council, NMFS, and the public, and are updated annually. The ESRs include ecosystem report cards, ecosystem assessments, and ecosystem-based management indicators (*e.g.*, climate indices, sea surface temperature), which together provide context for ecosystem-based fisheries management in Alaska. The ESRs inform stock assessments and are integrated into the annual harvest recommendations through inclusion in stock assessments, including stock-specific risk tables that identify considerations informing any additional scientific uncertainty relevant to the specification of ABC. The ESR information provides context for the SSC's recommendations for OFLs and ABCs, as well as for the Council's TAC recommendations. The SAFE reports and the ESRs are typically presented at the October and December Council meetings before the SSC, AP, and the Council for making groundfish harvest specification recommendations and aid NMFS in implementing these annual groundfish harvest specifications.

In September 2025, the Plan Team met and recommended proposed harvest specifications for 2026 and 2027 based on the 2024 SAFE report. In October 2025, the SSC reviewed these recommendations and other available relevant information and made recommendations on proposed OFLs and ABCs to the Council. After reviewing the available information, the Council recommended proposed 2026 and 2027 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs in October 2025. NMFS subsequently reviewed those recommendations, and NMFS published the proposed specifications for public comment on December 16, 2025 (90 FR 58204). The proposed 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications were based on the 2024 SAFE report and on the final 2026 specifications that were reviewed by the Plan Team, SSC, and the Council in 2024 and published in the **Federal Register** on March 18, 2025 (90 FR 12640).

NMFS was unable to prepare new stock assessments that were scheduled for updates this year for the 2025 SAFE report or new ESRs. The November Groundfish Plan Team meetings were canceled since there were no updated stock assessments to review at that time. At the December Council meeting, the SSC used the best scientific information available to make recommendations on final 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs. This information included the 2024 stock assessments (which already included projected OFLs and ABCs for 2026) and the stock-specific risk tables included with those assessments; Plan Team recommendations from its 2024 and September 2025 meetings; catch reports for each stock and stock complex comparing recent catch data to TACs, ABCs, and OFLs; tables summarizing relevant information on groundfish stocks and stock complexes that included biomass and survey trends; information available from the 2025 Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) surveys; and available ESR information that included the 2024 ESRs and the ESR previews presented to Plan Team and SSC in September and October 2025, respectively. More information on the SSC's review is provided in the December 2025 report:

https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=74322a78-4de1-451c-a10f-13b11286f8b9.pdf&fileName=Draft%20SSC%20Report%20Dec%202025.pdf. The Council then reviewed this information and the recommendations from the SSC for OFLs and ABCs, as well as the recommendations from the AP for TACs, and recommended final 2026 and 2027 TACs.

The 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs are based on the best available biological and scientific information, including projected biomass trends, information on assumed distribution of stock biomass, and revised technical methods used to calculate stock biomass. The FMP specifies the tiers to be used to calculate OFLs and ABCs. The tier applicable to a particular stock or stock complex is determined by the level of reliable information available to the fisheries scientists. This information is categorized into a successive series of six tiers to define OFLs and ABCs, with tier 1 representing the highest level of information quality available and tier 6 representing the lowest level of information quality available. This tier structure was used to calculate the 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs for each stock or stock complex. In December 2025, the SSC adopted the 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs that were recommended as proposed specifications by the Plan Team for all groundfish species in September 2025 and the SSC in October 2025. Because the 2024 SAFE report does not set OFLs and ABCs for 2027, the SSC set the 2027 OFLs and ABCs equal to 2026. These 2027 OFLs and ABCs will be superseded by the final 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications.

The 2026 and 2027 TACs are based on the best available biological and socioeconomic information consistent with § 679.20(a)(3). In making its recommendations, the Council adopted the SSC's OFL and ABC recommendations and the AP's TAC recommendations for all groundfish stocks and stock complexes.

NMFS finds that the recommended OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are consistent with the biological condition of the groundfish stocks as described in the 2024 SAFE report

and in consideration of ecosystem information presented in the ESRs. NMFS also finds that the Council's recommendations for TACs are consistent with the biological condition of groundfish stocks as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the sum of all TACs within the OY range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt (§ 679.20(a)(2) and (a)(3)). Consistent with National Standard 1 guidelines (50 CFR 600.310), the annual catch limit rules for all fisheries (74 FR 3178, January 16, 2009), and the FMP, none of the Council's recommended 2026 or 2027 TACs exceed the final 2026 or 2027 ABCs for any stock or stock complex. NMFS finds that the Council's recommended OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are consistent with the preferred harvest strategy outlined in the FMP, as well as the Final EIS and ROD, and the biological condition of groundfish stocks as described in the 2024 SAFE report that was approved by the Council, while accounting for ecosystem, socioeconomic, and harvest information presented in the final 2024 SAFE report, including the ESRs for both the BS and AI.

NMFS has reviewed the recommendations of the SSC and Council for OFLs, ABCs, and TACs for stocks and stock complexes in the BSAI as well as any other relevant information. Based on that review, NMFS is specifying the OFLs, ABCs, and TACs set forth in the tables of this final rule as consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the FMP, and other applicable law. Therefore, this final rule provides notification that NMFS approves the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications as recommended by the Council.

The 2026 harvest specifications set in this final action supersede the 2026 harvest specifications previously set in the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications (90 FR 12640, March 18, 2025). Pursuant to this final action, the 2026 harvest specifications are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December

31, 2026, and the 2027 harvest specifications are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Other Actions Affecting the 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications

State of Alaska Guideline Harvest Levels

The State of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) established the guideline harvest level (GHL) for vessels using pot, longline, jig, and hand troll gear in the State of Alaska's (State) AI sablefish registration area that includes all State waters west of Scotch Cap Light (164° 44.72′ W longitude) and south of Cape Sarichef (54°36′ N latitude). The 2026 AI GHL is set at 5 percent (1,223 mt) of the combined 2026 Bering Sea (BS) subarea and Aleutian Islands (AI) subarea apportionment of ABC. The 2027 AI GHL is set at 5 percent (1,223 mt) of the combined 2027 BS subarea and AI subarea apportionment of ABC. The State's AI sablefish registration area includes areas adjacent to parts of the BS subarea. Since most of the State's 2026 and 2027 GHL sablefish fishery is expected to occur in State waters adjacent to the BS subarea, the Council and its Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommended that the sum of all State and Federal sablefish removals not exceed the recommended apportionment of ABC for sablefish in the BS and AI subareas. Accordingly, after reviewing the Council recommendations, NMFS approves 2026 and 2027 sablefish TACs in the BS and AI subareas that account for the State's GHLs for sablefish caught in State waters.

The State's GHL for Pacific cod for vessels using pot gear in State waters in the BS is equal to 13 percent of the Pacific cod ABC for the BS subarea. Under the State's management plan, the BS GHL will increase by 1 percent if 90 percent of the GHL is harvested by November 15 of the preceding year for 2 consecutive years but may not exceed 15 percent of the BS subarea ABC. If 90 percent of the GHL is not harvested by November 15 of the preceding year for 2 consecutive years, the GHL will decrease by 1 percent, but the GHL may not decrease below 10 percent of the BS subarea ABC. For

2026, the GHL for vessels using pot gear will remain the same as the GHL set in 2025 at 13 percent of the BS subarea ABC, which is 18,398 mt. The GHL for 2027 may change based on harvest during the preceding fishing years, and any adjustment based on the 2027 GHL will be accounted for in the final 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications. Additionally, the State has established a GHL for vessels using jig gear in State waters in the BS equal to 45 mt of Pacific cod in the BS. The Council and its Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommended that the sum of all State and Federal Pacific cod removals not exceed the ABC recommendations for Pacific cod in the BS subarea. Accordingly, after reviewing the Council recommendations, NMFS approves 2026 and 2027 Pacific cod TACs in the BS subarea that account for the State's GHLs for Pacific cod caught in State waters in the BS.

In 2025, the State's GHL for Pacific cod in State waters in the AI was equal to 35 percent of the AI ABC. The AI GHL will increase annually by 4 percent of the AI subarea ABC if 90 percent of the GHL is harvested by November 15 of the preceding year, but may not exceed 39 percent of the AI subarea ABC or 15 million pounds (6,804 mt). If 90 percent of the GHL is not harvested by November 15 of the preceding year for 2 consecutive years, the GHL will decrease by 4 percent, but the GHL may not decrease below 15 percent of the AI subarea ABC. For 2026, the GHL decreased to 31 percent (a 4 percent reduction) of the AI subarea ABC, which is 4,022 mt. The GHL for 2027 may change based on harvest during the preceding fishing years, and any adjustment based on the 2027 GHL will be accounted for in the final 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications. The Council and its Plan Team, SSC, and AP recommended that the sum of all State and Federal Pacific cod removals not exceed the ABC recommendations for Pacific cod in the AI subarea. Accordingly, after reviewing the Council recommendations, NMFS approves 2026 and 2027 Pacific cod TACs in the AI subarea that account for the State's GHLs for Pacific cod caught in State waters in the AI.

Changes in TACs from the Proposed 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications for the BSAI

In November of each year, the Plan Team typically updates the SAFE report to include new information collected such as NMFS surveys, revised stock assessments drafted by stock assessment authors, and catch data. This past November, there was a disruption in the completion of the stock assessments that were scheduled for update in 2025. The stock assessments were not completed in time for the Plan Team's meeting in November and the Plan Team was unable to meet to review, update, and finalize the 2025 SAFE report.

At the September 2025 Plan Team meeting, NMFS scientists presented updated and new survey results and a preview of ecosystem status information for the ESRs. Scientists also discussed potential changes to assessment models, and accompanying preliminary stock estimates. At the October 2025 Council meeting, the SSC reviewed this information. Normally, the Plan Team would then review at the November Plan Team meeting survey results, model changes, and updated stock assessments for groundfish stocks (consistent with the schedule for review of those stock assessments), which the SSC would then review, along with the Plan Team recommendations, at the December SSC meeting. Model changes based on SSC recommendations often result in changes to final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs. This year, however, there are limited changes between the proposed and final specifications because no updated stock assessments could be prepared and so no model changes or additional review were completed by the Plan Team in November 2025 due to the lapse in appropriations and the government shutdown.

In October 2025, the Council's recommendations for the proposed 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications (90 FR 58204, December 16, 2025) were based on information contained in the 2024 SAFE report for the BSAI groundfish fisheries, dated November 2024. In October 2025, the Council recommended that proposed 2026 and 2027 OFLs

and ABCs be based on rollovers of the 2026 amounts from the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications (90 FR 12640, March 18, 2025). In making this recommendation, the Council used the best information available from the 2024 stock assessments.

In December 2025, the Council's recommendations for the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications were based on information contained in the 2024 SAFE report for the BSAI groundfish fisheries, dated November 2024, due to a disruption in the completion of the stock assessments that were scheduled for update in 2025 and the Plan Team did not meet in November to review, update, and finalize the 2025 SAFE report. However, the 2024 SAFE report as well as the additional information available for the SSC's and Council's review is the best scientific information available. The 2024 SAFE report contains a review of the latest scientific analyses and estimates of each species' biomass and other biological parameters (including stock projections for 2026), as well as summaries of the available information on the BSAI ecosystem, including the stock-specific risk tables and information from the BS ESR and AI ESR. SSC and Council recommendations were also informed by Plan Team recommendations from 2024 and September 2025 meetings; catch reports and relevant information on biomass and survey trends for each stock and stock complex; 2025 AFSC surveys; and ESR information in addition to the 2024 ESRs (ESR previews presented to Plan Team and SSC in September and October 2025).

The AP and Council review the recommended OFLs and ABCs, and in turn recommended TACs for each stock and stock complex such that TACs do not exceed ABCs and ABCs do not exceed OFLs. The Council recommended to increase the AI subarea Pacific cod TAC by 519 mt in 2026 and to increase the TAC by 519 mt in 2027 from the proposed TAC. This increase corresponds to the decrease in the State GHL. The only TAC reduction was for Alaska plaice, which was reduced from the TAC in the proposed rule by 518 mt in 2026 and by 518 mt in 2027 due to anticipated decreased

incidental catches in other fisheries. This decrease was necessitated by the increase of Pacific cod TACs in order to keep the sum of TACs in the BSAI from exceeding the 2.0 million mt limit. These changes are compared in table A. The final TACs, including the limited changes to TACs between the proposed and final harvest specifications, are based on the most recent scientific, biological, and socioeconomic information and are consistent with the FMP, regulatory obligations, and the harvest strategy from the Final EIS and ROD as described in the proposed and final harvest specifications, including the required OY range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt.

Table A -- Stocks or stock complexes with differences between Proposed and Final 2026 and 2027 BSAI TACs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton and percent difference)

Species	Area[1]	2026 and 2027 proposed TAC	2026 final TAC	2026 difference from proposed	2026 percentage difference from proposed	2027 final TAC	2027 difference from proposed	2027 percentage difference from proposed
Pacific cod	AI	8,432	8,951	519	6	8,951	519	6
Alaska plaice	BSAI	16,200	15,682	-518	-3	15,682	-518	-3
Total all species	BSAI	1,999,999	2,000,000	1	0	2,000,000	1	0

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

[1] Aleutian Islands subarea (AI) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI).

Table 1 lists the final 2026 OFL, ABC, TAC, initial TAC (ITAC), CDQ reserve allocations, and nonspecified reserves of the BSAI groundfish stocks and stock complexes; and table 2 lists the final 2027 OFL, ABC, TAC, ITAC, CDQ reserve allocations, and nonspecified reserves of the BSAI groundfish stocks and stock complexes. These final 2026 and 2027 TAC amounts for the BSAI are within the OY range established for the BSAI and do not exceed the ABC for any stock and stock complex. These final 2026 and 2027 ABCs do not exceed the OFL for any stock and stock complex. The apportionment of TAC amounts among fisheries and seasons is discussed below.

Table 1 -- Final 2026 OFL, ABC, TAC, ITAC, CDQ Reserve Allocation, and Nonspecified Reserves of Groundfish in the BSAI[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Species	Area	2026					
		OFL	ABC	TAC	ITAC[2]	CDQ[3]	Nonspecified Reserves
Pollock[4]	BS	2,496,000	2,036,000	1,375,000	1,237,500	137,500	n/a
	AI	56,231	46,437	19,000	17,100	1,900	n/a
	Bogoslof	77,354	58,015	250	250	n/a	n/a
Pacific Cod[5]	BS	169,243	141,520	123,077	109,908	13,169	n/a
	AI	16,273	12,973	8,951	7,993	958	n/a
Sablefish[6]	Alaska-wide	57,797	47,008	n/a	0	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	13,037	8,996	7,422	1,237	337
	AI	n/a	11,421	7,440	6,045	1,256	140
Yellowfin Sole	BSAI	305,039	267,639	145,000	129,485	15,515	n/a
Greenland turbot	BSAI	2,059	1,328	1,328	1,129	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	1,120	1,120	952	120	48
	AI	n/a	208	208	177	n/a	31
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	102,472	87,035	14,000	11,900	1,498	602
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	7,790	6,606	6,606	5,615	n/a	991
Rock sole[7]	BSAI	166,220	158,225	75,000	66,975	8,025	n/a
Flathead sole[8]	BSAI	106,283	87,700	36,000	32,148	3,852	n/a
Alaska plaice	BSAI	33,965	28,230	15,682	13,330	n/a	2,352
Other flatfish[9]	BSAI	26,083	19,562	4,500	3,825	n/a	675
Pacific ocean perch	BSAI	43,084	36,578	33,490	29,481	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	9,905	9,905	8,419	n/a	1,486
	EAI	n/a	6,144	6,144	5,487	657	0
	CAI	n/a	5,441	5,441	4,859	582	0
	WAI	n/a	15,088	12,000	10,716	1,284	0
Northern rockfish	BSAI	22,284	18,232	12,000	10,200	n/a	1,800
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish[10]	BSAI	902	766	766	651	n/a	0
	BS/EAI	n/a	441	441	375	n/a	66
	CAI/WAI	n/a	325	325	276	n/a	49
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	631	473	473	402	n/a	71
Other rockfish[11]	BSAI	1,406	1,054	1,054	896	n/a	0

	BS	n/a	639	639	543	n/a	96
	AI	n/a	415	415	353	n/a	62
Atka mackerel	BSAI	107,889	92,361	82,941	74,066	8,875	n/a
	BS/EAI	n/a	41,731	41,731	37,266	4,465	n/a
	CAI	n/a	23,716	23,716	21,178	2,538	n/a
	WAI	n/a	26,914	17,494	15,622	1,872	n/a
Skates	BSAI	43,285	35,833	27,646	23,499	n/a	4,147
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	400	340	n/a	60
Octopuses	BSAI	6,080	4,560	400	340	n/a	60
Total	n/a	3,849,059	3,188,585	2,000,000	1,790,499	196,428	13,073

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. Regulatory areas and districts are defined at § 679.2 (BSAI = Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area, BS = Bering Sea subarea, AI = Aleutian Islands subarea, EAI = Eastern Aleutian District, CAI = Central Aleutian District, WAI = Western Aleutian District). The 2026 harvest specifications are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

[1] These amounts apply to the entire BSAI management area unless otherwise specified. With the exception of pollock, and for the purpose of these harvest specifications, the BS subarea includes the Bogoslof District.

[2] Except for pollock, the portion of the sablefish TAC allocated to fixed gear, and Amendment 80 species (Atka mackerel, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Pacific cod, and AI Pacific ocean perch), 15 percent of each TAC is placed into a nonspecified reserve (§ 679.20(b)(1)(i)). The ITAC for these species is the remainder of the TAC after the subtraction of these reserves. For pollock and Amendment 80 species, ITAC is the non-CDQ allocation of TAC (see footnotes 3 and 4).

[3] For the Amendment 80 species (Atka mackerel, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Pacific cod, and AI Pacific ocean perch), 10.7 percent of the TAC is reserved for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)). Twenty percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to fixed gear, 7.5 percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to trawl gear, and 10.7 percent of the TACs for BS Greenland turbot and arrowtooth flounder are reserved for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (b)(1)(ii)(D)). For BS pollock and AI pollock, 10 percent is reserved as a CDQ directed fishing allowance (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(A)). AI Greenland turbot, "other flatfish," Alaska plaice, BS Pacific ocean perch, Kamchatka flounder, northern rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, shortraker rockfish, "other rockfish," skates, sharks, and octopuses are not allocated to the CDQ Program.

[4] Section 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*1*) requires the AI pollock TAC to be set at 19,000 mt when the AI pollock ABC equals or exceeds 19,000 mt. The Bogoslof pollock TAC is set to accommodate incidental catch amounts.

[5] The BS Pacific cod TAC is set to account for the 13 percent, plus 45 mt, of the BS apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters. The AI Pacific cod TAC is set to account for 31 percent of the AI apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters.

[6] The sablefish OFL and ABC are Alaska-wide and include the Gulf of Alaska. The Alaska-wide sablefish OFL and ABC are included in the total OFL and ABC. The BS and AI sablefish TACs are set to account for the 5 percent of the BS and AI apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters.

[7] "Rock sole" includes *Lepidopsetta polyxystra* (northern rock sole) and *Lepidopsetta bilineata* (southern rock sole).

[8] "Flathead sole" includes *Hippoglossoides elassodon* (flathead sole) and *Hippoglossoides robustus* (Bering flounder).

[9] "Other flatfish" includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

[10] "Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish" includes *Sebastes melanostictus* (blackspotted) and *Sebastes aleutianus* (rougheye).

[11] "Other rockfish" includes all *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species, except for dark rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, and shortraker rockfish.

Table 2 -- Final 2027 OFL, ABC, TAC, ITAC, CDQ Reserve Allocation, and Nonspecified Reserves of Groundfish in the BSAI[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Species	Area	2027

		OFL	ABC	TAC	ITAC[2]	CDQ[3]	Nonspecified Reserves
Pollock[4]	BS	2,496,000	2,036,000	1,375,000	1,237,500	137,500	n/a
	AI	56,231	46,437	19,000	17,100	1,900	n/a
	Bogoslof	77,354	58,015	250	250	n/a	n/a
Pacific Cod[5]	BS	169,243	141,520	123,077	109,908	13,169	n/a
	AI	16,273	12,973	8,951	7,993	958	n/a
Sablefish[6]	Alaska-wide	57,797	47,008	n/a	0	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	13,037	8,996	7,422	1,237	337
	AI	n/a	11,421	7,440	6,045	1,256	140
Yellowfin Sole	BSAI	305,039	267,639	145,000	129,485	15,515	n/a
Greenland turbot	BSAI	2,059	1,328	1,328	1,129	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	1,120	1,120	952	120	48
	AI	n/a	208	208	177	n/a	31
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	102,472	87,035	14,000	11,900	1,498	602
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	7,790	6,606	6,606	5,615	n/a	991
Rock sole[7]	BSAI	166,220	158,225	75,000	66,975	8,025	n/a
Flathead sole[8]	BSAI	106,283	87,700	36,000	32,148	3,852	n/a
Alaska plaice	BSAI	33,965	28,230	15,682	13,330	n/a	2,352
Other flatfish[9]	BSAI	26,083	19,562	4,500	3,825	n/a	675
Pacific ocean perch	BSAI	43,084	36,578	33,490	29,481	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	9,905	9,905	8,419	n/a	1,486
	EAI	n/a	6,144	6,144	5,487	657	0
	CAI	n/a	5,441	5,441	4,859	582	0
	WAI	n/a	15,088	12,000	10,716	1,284	0
Northern rockfish	BSAI	22,284	18,232	12,000	10,200	n/a	1,800
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish[10]	BSAI	902	766	766	651	n/a	0
	BS/EAI	n/a	441	441	375	n/a	66
	CAI/WAI	n/a	325	325	276	n/a	49
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	631	473	473	402	n/a	71
Other rockfish[11]	BSAI	1,406	1,054	1,054	896	n/a	0
	BS	n/a	639	639	543	n/a	96
	AI	n/a	415	415	353	n/a	62
Atka mackerel	BSAI	107,889	92,361	82,941	74,066	8,875	n/a
	BS/EAI	n/a	41,731	41,731	37,266	4,465	n/a

	CAI	n/a	23,716	23,716	21,178	2,538	n/a
	WAI	n/a	26,914	17,494	15,622	1,872	n/a
Skates	BSAI	43,285	35,833	27,646	23,499	n/a	4,147
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	400	340	n/a	60
Octopuses	BSAI	6,080	4,560	400	340	n/a	60
Total	n/a	3,849,059	3,188,585	2,000,000	1,790,499	196,428	13,073

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. Regulatory areas and districts are defined at § 679.2 (BSAI = Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area, BS = Bering Sea subarea, AI = Aleutian Islands subarea, EAI = Eastern Aleutian District, CAI = Central Aleutian District, WAI = Western Aleutian District). The 2027 harvest specifications are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] These amounts apply to the entire BSAI management area unless otherwise specified. With the exception of pollock, and for the purpose of these harvest specifications, the BS subarea includes the Bogoslof District.

[2] Except for pollock, the portion of the sablefish TAC allocated to fixed gear, and Amendment 80 species (Atka mackerel, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Pacific cod, and AI Pacific ocean perch), 15 percent of each TAC is placed into a nonspecified reserve (§ 679.20(b)(1)(i)). The ITAC for these species is the remainder of the TAC after the subtraction of these reserves. For pollock and Amendment 80 species, ITAC is the non-CDQ allocation of TAC (see footnotes 3 and 4).

[3] For the Amendment 80 species (Atka mackerel, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, Pacific cod, and AI Pacific ocean perch), 10.7 percent of the TAC is reserved for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)). Twenty percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to fixed gear, 7.5 percent of the sablefish TAC allocated to trawl gear, and 10.7 percent of the TACs for BS Greenland turbot and arrowtooth flounder are reserved for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (b)(1)(ii)(D)). For BS pollock and AI pollock, 10 percent is reserved as a CDQ directed fishing allowance (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(A)). AI Greenland turbot, "other flatfish," Alaska plaice, BS Pacific ocean perch, Kamchatka flounder, northern rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, shortraker rockfish, "other rockfish," skates, sharks, and octopuses are not allocated to the CDQ Program.

[4] Section 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*1*) requires the AI pollock TAC to be set at 19,000 mt when the AI pollock ABC equals or exceeds 19,000 mt. The Bogoslof pollock TAC is set to accommodate incidental catch amounts.

[5] The BS Pacific cod TAC is set to account for the 13 percent, plus 45 mt, of the BS apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters. The AI Pacific cod TAC is set to account for 31 percent of the AI apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters.

[6] The sablefish OFL and ABC are Alaska-wide and include the Gulf of Alaska. The Alaska-wide sablefish OFL and ABC are included in the total OFL and ABC. The BS and AI sablefish TACs are set to account for the 5 percent of the BS and AI apportionment of ABC for the State's guideline harvest level in State waters.

[7] "Rock sole" includes *Lepidopsetta polyxystra* (northern rock sole) and *Lepidopsetta bilineata* (southern rock sole).

[8] "Flathead sole" includes *Hippoglossoides elassodon* (flathead sole) and *Hippoglossoides robustus* (Bering flounder).

[9] "Other flatfish" includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

[10] "Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish" includes *Sebastes melanostictus* (blackspotted) and *Sebastes aleutianus* (rougheye).

[11] "Other rockfish" includes all *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species, except for dark rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, and shortraker rockfish.

Groundfish Reserves and the ICAs for Pollock, Atka Mackerel, Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, Yellowfin Sole, and AI Pacific Ocean Perch

Section 679.20(b)(1)(i) requires that NMFS reserve 15 percent of the TAC for each target species category (except for pollock, fixed gear allocation of sablefish, and Amendment 80 species) in a nonspecified reserve. Section 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(B) requires that NMFS allocate 20 percent of the fixed gear allocation of sablefish to the fixed gear

sablefish CDQ reserve for each subarea. Section 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(D) requires that NMFS allocate 7.5 percent of the trawl gear allocations of sablefish for each subarea from the nonspecified reserve and 10.7 percent of the BS subarea Greenland turbot and BSAI arrowtooth flounder TACs to the respective CDQ reserves. Section 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C) requires that NMFS allocate 10.7 percent of the TACs for Atka mackerel, AI Pacific ocean perch, yellowfin sole, rock sole, flathead sole, and Pacific cod (the Amendment 80 species) to the respective CDQ reserves.

Sections 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A) and 679.31(a) require allocation of 10 percent of the BS subarea pollock TAC to the pollock CDQ directed fishing allowance (DFA). Sections 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*2*)(*i*) and 679.31(a) require 10 percent of the AI pollock TAC be allocated to the pollock CDQ DFA. The entire Bogoslof District pollock TAC is allocated as an incidental catch allowance (ICA) pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(ii) because the Bogoslof District is closed to directed fishing for pollock by regulation (§ 679.22(a)(7)(B)). With the exception of the fixed gear sablefish CDQ reserve, the regulations do not further apportion the CDQ reserves by gear. Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*1*), NMFS establishes a pollock ICA of 46,000 mt of the BS subarea pollock TAC after subtracting the 10 percent CDQ DFA. This allowance is based on NMFS's examination of the pollock incidentally retained and discarded catch, including the incidental catch by CDQ vessels, in target fisheries other than pollock in recent years. Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*2*)(*i*) and (*ii*), NMFS establishes a pollock ICA of 4,500 mt of the AI subarea pollock TAC after subtracting the 10 percent CDQ DFA. This allowance is based on NMFS's examination of the pollock incidentally retained and discarded catch, including the incidental catch by CDQ vessels, in target fisheries other than pollock in recent years.

After subtracting the 10.7 percent CDQ reserve and pursuant to § 679.20(a)(8) and (10), NMFS allocates ICAs of 2,000 mt of flathead sole, 3,000 mt of rock sole, 2,000

mt of yellowfin sole, 10 mt of Western Aleutian District (WAI) Pacific ocean perch, 60 mt of Central Aleutian District (CAI) Pacific ocean perch, 100 mt of Eastern Aleutian District (EAI) Pacific ocean perch, 20 mt of WAI Atka mackerel, 100 mt of CAI Atka mackerel, and 800 mt of EAI and BS subarea Atka mackerel. These ICAs are based on NMFS's examination of the incidentally retained and discarded catch in other target fisheries in recent years.

The regulations do not designate the remainder of the nonspecified reserve by species or species group. Any amount of the reserve may be apportioned during the year to a target species that contributed to the nonspecified reserve, provided that such apportionments are consistent with § 679.20(a)(3) and do not result in overfishing (§ 679.20(b)(1)(i)). The Regional Administrator has determined that amounts from the nonspecified reserve will be apportioned to two species groups that contributed to the nonspecified reserve. Because U.S. fishing vessels have demonstrated the capacity to catch the full TACs specified in tables 1 and 2, the total reserve amounts for each species group is included in the full TACs specified in tables 1 and 2. These apportionments of the reserve amounts for these species groups are consistent with NMFS regulations (§ 679.20(a)(3), (b)) and will not result in overfishing as the TACs with the reserve amounts included do not exceed ABCs (and ABCs do not exceed OFLs, see tables 1 and 2 above). Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(b), NMFS is apportioning the reserve amounts shown in table 3 from the nonspecified reserve to BS and AI "other rockfish" and BS/EAI and CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish for 2026 and 2027.

Table 3 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Apportionment of Nonspecified Reserves (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Species	Area or subarea	2026 ITAC	2026 reserve amount	2026 final TAC	2027 ITAC	2027 reserve amount	2027 final TAC
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish	BS/EAI	375	66	441	375	66	441
	CAI/WAI	276	49	325	276	49	325
Other rockfish	BS	543	96	639	543	96	639

Species	Area or subarea	2026 ITAC	2026 reserve amount	2026 final TAC	2027 ITAC	2027 reserve amount	2027 final TAC
	AI	353	62	415	353	62	415
Total		1,547	273	1,820	1,547	273	1,820

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 apportionments are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 apportionments are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Allocation of Pollock TAC Under the AFA

Section 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A) requires that the BS subarea pollock TAC be apportioned as a DFA, after subtracting 10 percent for the CDQ program and 46,000 mt for the ICA in both 2026 and 2027, as follows: 50 percent to the inshore sector, 40 percent to the catcher/processor (C/P) sector, and 10 percent to the mothership sector. In the BS subarea, 45 percent of the DFAs are allocated to the A season (January 20 through June 10), and 55 percent of the DFAs are allocated to the B season (June 10 through November 1) (§§ 679.20(a)(5)(i)(B)(*1*) and 679.23(e)(2)). The AI subarea directed pollock fishery allocation to the Aleut Corporation is the amount of pollock TAC remaining in the AI subarea after subtracting 10 percent for the CDQ DFA and 4,500 mt for the ICA (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*2*)). In the AI subarea, the total A season apportionment of the pollock TAC (including the AI directed fishery allocation, the CDQ DFA, and the ICA) may not exceed 40 percent of the ABC for AI pollock, and the remainder of the pollock TAC is allocated to the B season (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*3*)). Tables 4 and 5 list these 2026 and 2027 amounts. Within any fishing year, any under harvest or over harvest of a seasonal allowance may be added to or subtracted from a subsequent seasonal allowance (§ 679.20(a)(5)(i)(B)(*2*) and (a)(5)(iii)(B)(*3*)(*iii*)).

Section 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*6*) sets harvest limits for pollock in the A season (January 20 through June 10) in Areas 543, 542, and 541. In Area 543, the A season pollock harvest limit is no more than 5 percent of the AI pollock ABC. In Area 542, the A season pollock harvest limit is no more than 15 percent of the AI pollock ABC. In Area

541, the A season pollock harvest limit is no more than 30 percent of the AI pollock ABC.

Section 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*4*) includes requirements regarding BS subarea pollock allocations. First, it requires that 8.5 percent of the pollock allocated to the C/P sector be available for harvest by AFA CVs with C/P sector endorsements delivering to listed C/Ps, unless the Regional Administrator receives a cooperative contract that allows for the distribution of harvest among AFA C/Ps and AFA CVs in a manner agreed to by all members. Second, AFA C/Ps not listed in the AFA are limited to harvesting no more than 0.5 percent of the pollock allocated to the C/P sector. Section 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*3*) divides the BS subarea pollock inshore sector allocation between inshore cooperatives (the aggregate of annual allocations of all AFA inshore CV cooperatives) and inshore open access (the remainder not allocated to inshore cooperatives). Tables 4 and 5 list the 2026 and 2027 allocations of pollock TAC. Table 6 lists the 2026 inshore sector allocation between AFA inshore cooperatives and AFA open access vessels. The 2027 inshore sector allocation between AFA inshore cooperatives and AFA open access vessels will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by December 1, 2026. Table 21 lists the allocation of the CDQ pollock DFA among the CDQ groups. Tables 23, 24, and 25 list the AFA C/P and CV sideboard limits.

Tables 4 and 5 also list seasonal apportionments of pollock and harvest limits within the Steller Sea Lion Conservation Area (SCA). The harvest of pollock within the SCA, as defined at § 679.22(a)(7)(vii), is limited to no more than 28 percent of the annual pollock DFA before 12 p.m. A.l.t. (noon), April 1, as provided in § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(C). The A season pollock SCA harvest limit is apportioned to each sector in proportion to each sector's allocated percentage of the DFA.

Table 4 -- Final 2026 Allocations of Pollock TACs to the Directed Pollock Fisheries and to the CDQ Directed Fishing Allowances (DFA)[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Area and Sector	2026 Allocations	A Season DFA	SCA harvest limit[2]	B season DFA
Bering Sea subarea TAC	1,375,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	137,500	61,875	38,500	75,625
ICA[1]	46,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Bering Sea DFA (non-CDQ)	1,191,500	536,175	333,620	655,325
AFA Inshore	595,750	268,088	166,810	327,663
AFA Catcher/Processors[3]	476,600	214,470	133,448	262,130
Catch by C/Ps	436,089	196,240	n/a	239,849
Catch by CVs[3]	40,511	18,230	n/a	22,281
Unlisted C/P Limit[4]	2,383	1,072	n/a	1,311
AFA Motherships	119,150	53,618	33,362	65,533
Excessive Harvesting Limit[5]	208,513	n/a	n/a	n/a
Excessive Processing Limit[6]	357,450	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea ABC	46,437	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea TAC	19,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	1,900	1,900	n/a	n/a
ICA[1]	4,500	2,250	n/a	2,250
Aleut Corporation[7]	12,600	12,600	n/a	n/a
Area harvest limit[8]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
541	13,931	n/a	n/a	n/a
542	6,966	n/a	n/a	n/a
543	2,322	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bogoslof District ICA[9]	250	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Season or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 harvest specifications for pollock are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

[1] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A), the annual BS subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (46,000 mt), is allocated as a DFA as follows: inshore sector-50 percent, C/P sector-40 percent, and mothership sector-10 percent. In the BS subarea, 45 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the A season (January 20June 10) and 55 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the B season (June 10-November 1). When the AI subarea pollock ABC equals or exceeds 19,000 mt, the annual TAC for the AI subarea is equal to 19,000 mt (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*1*)). Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*2*), the annual AI subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (4,500 mt), is allocated to the Aleut Corporation for a directed pollock fishery. In the AI subarea, the A season is allocated up to 40 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

[2] In the BS subarea, pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(C), no more than 28 percent of each sector's annual DFA may be taken from the SCA before noon, April 1. The SCA is defined at § 679.22(a)(7)(vii).

[3] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*4*), 8.5 percent of the DFA allocated to listed C/Ps shall be available for harvest only by eligible catcher vessels with a C/P endorsement delivering to listed C/Ps, unless there is a cooperative contract for the year.

[4] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*4*)(*iii*), the AFA unlisted C/Ps are limited to harvesting not more than 0.5 percent of the C/P sector's allocation of pollock.

[5] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*6*), NMFS establishes an excessive harvesting share limit equal to 17.5 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

[6] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*7*), NMFS establishes an excessive processing share limit equal to 30 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

[7] Pursuant to § 679.4(m), prior to harvesting or processing pollock in the AI directed pollock fishery, a participant must be selected by the Aleut Corporation and approved by the Regional Administrator. Annual allocation for vessels 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA or less participating in the AI directed pollock fishery is 50 percent of the AI directed pollock fishery allocation (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*5*)).

[8] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*6*), NMFS establishes harvest limits for pollock in the A season in Area 541 no more than 30 percent, in Area 542 no more than 15 percent, and in Area 543 no more than 5 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

[9] Pursuant to § 679.22(a)(7)(B), the Bogoslof District is closed to directed fishing for pollock. The amounts specified are therefore for incidental catch only and are not apportioned by season or sector (§ 679.20(a)(5)(ii)).

Table 5 -- Final 2027 Allocations of Pollock TACs to the Directed Pollock Fisheries and to the CDQ Directed Fishing Allowances (DFA)[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Area and Sector	2027 Allocations	A Season DFA	SCA harvest limit[2]	B season DFA
Bering Sea subarea TAC	1,375,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	137,500	61,875	38,500	75,625
ICA[1]	46,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Bering Sea DFA (non-CDQ)	1,191,500	536,175	333,620	655,325
AFA Inshore	595,750	268,088	166,810	327,663
AFA Catcher/Processors[3]	476,600	214,470	133,448	262,130
Catch by C/Ps	436,089	196,240	n/a	239,849
Catch by CVs[3]	40,511	18,230	n/a	22,281
Unlisted C/P Limit[4]	2,383	1,072	n/a	1,311
AFA Motherships	119,150	53,618	33,362	65,533
Excessive Harvesting Limit[5]	208,513	n/a	n/a	n/a
Excessive Processing Limit[6]	357,450	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea ABC	46,437	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands subarea TAC	19,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
CDQ DFA	1,900	1,900	n/a	n/a
ICA[1]	4,500	2,250	n/a	2,250
Aleut Corporation[7]	12,600	12,600	n/a	n/a
Area harvest limit[8]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
541	13,931	n/a	n/a	n/a
542	6,966	n/a	n/a	n/a
543	2,322	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bogoslof District ICA[9]	250	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Season or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2027 harvest specifications for pollock are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A), the annual BS subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (46,000 mt), is allocated as a DFA as follows: inshore sector-50 percent, C/P sector-40 percent, and mothership sector-10 percent. In the BS subarea, 45 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the A season (January 20-June 10) and 55 percent of the DFA and CDQ DFA are allocated to the B season (June 10-November 1). When the AI subarea pollock ABC equals or exceeds 19,000 mt, the annual TAC for the AI subarea is equal to 19,000 mt (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*1*)). Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*2*), the annual AI subarea pollock TAC, after subtracting first for the CDQ DFA (10 percent) and second for the ICA (4,500 mt), is allocated to the Aleut Corporation for a directed pollock fishery. In the AI subarea, the A season is allocated up to 40 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

[2] In the BS subarea, pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(C), no more than 28 percent of each sector's annual DFA may be taken from the SCA before noon, April 1. The SCA is defined at § 679.22(a)(7)(vii).

[3] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*4*), 8.5 percent of the DFA allocated to listed C/Ps shall be available for harvest only by eligible catcher vessels with a C/P endorsement delivering to listed C/Ps, unless there is a cooperative contract for the year.

[4] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*4*)(*iii*), the AFA unlisted C/Ps are limited to harvesting not more than 0.5 percent of the C/P sector's allocation of pollock.

[5] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*6*), NMFS establishes an excessive harvesting share limit equal to 17.5 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

[6] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*7*), NMFS establishes an excessive processing share limit equal to 30 percent of the sum of the non-CDQ pollock DFAs.

[7] Pursuant to § 679.4(m), prior to harvesting or processing pollock in the AI directed pollock fishery, a participant must be selected by the Aleut Corporation and approved by the Regional Administrator. Annual allocation for vessels 60 feet (18.3 m) LOA or less participating in the AI directed pollock fishery is 50 percent of the AI directed pollock fishery allocation (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*5*)).

[8] Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)(*6*), NMFS establishes harvest limits for pollock in the A season in Area 541 no more than 30 percent, in Area 542 no more than 15 percent, and in Area 543 no more than 5 percent of the AI subarea pollock ABC.

[9] Pursuant to § 679.22(a)(7)(B), the Bogoslof District is closed to directed fishing for pollock. The amounts specified are therefore for incidental catch only and are not apportioned by season or sector (§ 679.20(a)(5)(ii)).

Table 6 -- Final 2026 AFA Inshore Cooperative and Open Access Pollock Allocations (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Cooperative Name[1]	% of Inshore sector allocation	Sum of vessel's catch histories (mt)[2]	2026 Allocations (mt)
AFA Open Access	0.9%	8,107	5,516
Akutan Catcher Vessel Association	33.8%	295,836	201,291
Northern Victor Fleet Cooperative	9.4%	81,828	55,677
Peter Pan Fleet Cooperative	0.0%	0	0
Unalaska Fleet Cooperative (Alyeska)	12.3%	107,357	73,047
UniSea Fleet Cooperative	24.3%	212,761	144,765
Westward Fleet Cooperative	19.4%	169,683	115,454
Sum of all Cooperatives	100.0%	875,572	595,750

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

[1] The 2026 allocations are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. Section 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*3*) divides the BS subarea pollock inshore sector allocation between inshore cooperatives (the aggregate of annual allocations of all AFA inshore CV cooperatives) and inshore open access (the remainder not allocated to inshore cooperatives). The 2027 inshore sector allocation between AFA inshore cooperatives and AFA open access vessels will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by December 1, 2026. NMFS will specify the 2027 AFA inshore cooperative and open access pollock allocations in the 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications.

[2] According to regulations at § 679.62(a)(1), the individual catch history for each vessel is equal to the vessel's best 2 of 3 years of inshore pollock landings from 1995 through 1997 and includes non-CDQ offshore landings to C/Ps for vessels that made 500 or more mt of landings to C/Ps or offshore motherships from 1995 through 1997.

Allocation of the Atka Mackerel TACs

Section 679.20(a)(8) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs for the BSAI trawl limited access sector and non-trawl gear sector, and the jig gear allocation (tables 7 and 8). The percentage of the ITAC for Atka mackerel allocated to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is listed in table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and in § 679.91. Pursuant to § 679.20(a)(8)(i), up to 2 percent of the EAI District and the BS subarea Atka mackerel TAC may be allocated to vessels using jig gear. The percent of this allocation is recommended annually by the Council and is based on several criteria, including the amount of Atka mackerel harvested by vessels using jig gear during recent fishing years and the anticipated harvest capacity of the jig gear fleet. In December 2025, the Council recommended a 2026 and 2027 EAI District and BS subarea Atka mackerel TAC allocated to vessels using jig gear of 0 percent. In recent years no vessels have used jig gear to harvest Atka mackerel, and the Council and NMFS received no public comment on anticipated harvest in future years. After reviewing the Council's recommendation and the regulatory criteria (§ 679.20(a)(8)(i)), NMFS approves a 0 percent allocation of the Atka mackerel TAC in the EAI District and BS subarea to the jig gear sector in 2026 and 2027.

Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) apportions the Atka mackerel TAC, after subtraction of the jig gear allocation, into two equal seasonal allowances. Section 679.23(e)(3) sets the first seasonal allowance for directed fishing with trawl gear from January 20 through June 10 (A season), and the second seasonal allowance from June 10 through December 31 (B season). Section 679.23(e)(4)(iii) applies Atka mackerel seasons to CDQ Atka mackerel trawl fishing. Within any fishing year, any under harvest or over harvest of a seasonal allowance may be added to or subtracted from a subsequent seasonal allowance (§ 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(B)). The ICAs and jig gear allocations are not apportioned by season.

Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*1*) limits Atka mackerel catch within waters 0 nautical miles (nmi) to 20 nmi (37.04 kilometers) of Steller sea lion sites listed in table 6 to 50 CFR part 679 and located west of 178° W longitude to no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543. The Atka mackerel catch is also equally divided between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3). Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*2*) requires that the annual TAC in Area 543 will be no more than 65 percent of the ABC in Area 543. Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(D) requires that any unharvested Atka mackerel A seasonal allowance that is added to the B season be prohibited from being harvested within waters 0 nmi to 20 nmi of Steller sea lion sites listed in table 6 to 50 CFR part 679 and located in Areas 541, 542, and 543.

Tables 7 and 8 list these 2026 and 2027 Atka mackerel seasonal and area allowances, and the sector allocations. One Amendment 80 cooperative has formed for the 2026 fishing year. Because all Amendment 80 vessels are part of the sole Amendment 80 cooperative, no allocation to the Amendment 80 limited access sector is required for 2026. The 2027 allocations for Atka mackerel between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026. Table 21 lists the allocation of CDQ Atka mackerel among the CDQ groups.

Table 7 -- Final 2026 Seasonal and Area Allowances, CDQ Reserve, Incidental Catch Allowances, Gear Shares, and BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector and Amendment 80 Sector Allocations of the BSAI Atka Mackerel TAC (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector[1]	Season[2 3 4]	Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea	Central Aleutian District[5]	Western Aleutian District[5]
TAC	Total	41,731	23,716	17,494
CDQ reserve	Total	4,465	2,538	1,872
	A	2,233	1,269	936
	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562
	B	2,233	1,269	936

	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562
non-CDQ TAC	Total	37,266	21,178	15,622
ICA	Total	800	100	20
Jig[6]	Total	0	n/a	n/a
BSAI trawl limited access	Total	3,647	2,108	n/a
	A	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
	B	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
Amendment 80	Total	32,819	18,970	15,602
	A	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681
	B	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 harvest specifications for Atka mackerel are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

[1] Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs, and the jig gear allocation, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)).

[2] Sections 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery.

[3] The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel for the CDQ reserve, BSAI trawl limited access sector, and Amendment 80 sector are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

[4] Section 679.23(e)(3) authorizes directed fishing for Atka mackerel with trawl gear during the A season from January 20 through June 10, and the B season from June 10 through December 31.

[5] Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*1*)(*i*) limits Atka mackerel catch within waters 0 nautical miles (nmi) to 20 nmi of Steller sea lion sites listed in table 6 to 50 CFR part 679 and located west of 178° W longitude to no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543; § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*1*)(*ii*) equally divides the Atka mackerel catch between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3); and § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*2*) requires that the TAC in Area 543 shall be no more than 65 percent of ABC in Area 543.

[6] Section 679.20(a)(8)(i) requires that up to 2 percent of the EAI District and BS subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtraction of the CDQ reserve and ICA. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season. NMFS sets the amount of this allocation for 2026 at 0 percent.

Table 8 -- Final 2027 Seasonal and Area Allowances, CDQ Reserve, Incidental Catch Allowances, Gear Shares, and BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector and Amendment 80 Sector Allocations of the BSAI Atka Mackerel TAC (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector[1]	Season[2 3 4]	Eastern Aleutian District/Bering Sea	Central Aleutian District[5]	Western Aleutian District[5]
TAC	Total	41,731	23,716	17,494
CDQ reserve	Total	4,465	2,538	1,872
	A	2,233	1,269	936
	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562

	B	2,233	1,269	936
	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562
non-CDQ TAC	Total	37,266	21,178	15,622
ICA	Total	800	100	20
Jig[6]	Total	0	n/a	n/a
BSAI trawl limited access	Total	3,647	2,108	n/a
	A	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
	B	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
Amendment 80[7]	Total	32,819	18,970	15,602
	A	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681
	B	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2027 harvest specifications for Atka mackerel are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs, and the jig gear allocation, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)).

[2] Sections 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery.

[3] The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel for the CDQ reserve, BSAI trawl limited access sector, and Amendment 80 sector are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

[4] Section 679.23(e)(3) authorizes directed fishing for Atka mackerel with trawl gear during the A season from January 20 through June 10, and the B season from June 10 through December 31.

[5] Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*1*)(*i*) limits Atka mackerel catch within waters 0 nautical miles (nmi) to 20 nmi of Steller sea lion sites listed in table 6 to 50 CFR part 679 and located west of 178° W longitude to no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543; § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*1*)(*ii*) equally divides the Atka mackerel catch between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3); and § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(*2*) requires that the TAC in Area 543 shall be no more than 65 percent of ABC in Area 543.

[6] Section 679.20(a)(8)(i) requires that up to 2 percent of the EAI District and BS subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtraction of the CDQ reserve and ICA. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season. NMFS sets the amount of this allocation for 2027 at 0 percent.

[7] The 2027 allocations for Atka mackerel between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

Allocation of the Pacific Cod TAC

Section 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C) allocates 10.7 percent of the BS TAC and the AI TAC to the CDQ program. After CDQ allocations have been deducted from the respective BS and AI Pacific cod TACs, the remaining BSAI Pacific cod TACs are combined for calculating further BSAI Pacific cod sector allocations and seasonal allowances. If the

non-CDQ Pacific cod TAC is or will be reached in either the BS or the AI subareas, NMFS will prohibit non-CDQ directed fishing for Pacific cod in that subarea as provided in § 679.20(d)(1)(iii).

Section 679.20(a)(7)(ii) allocates to the non-CDQ sectors the Pacific cod TAC in the combined BSAI, after subtracting 10.7 percent for the CDQ program, as follows: 1.4 percent to vessels using jig gear; 2.0 percent to hook-and-line or pot CVs less than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA; 0.2 percent to hook-and-line CVs greater than or equal to 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA; 48.7 percent to hook-and-line C/Ps; 8.4 percent to pot CVs greater than or equal to 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA; 1.5 percent to pot C/Ps; 2.3 percent to AFA trawl C/Ps; 13.4 percent to Amendment 80 sector; and 22.1 percent to trawl CVs. The ICA for the hook-and-line and pot sectors will be deducted from the aggregate portion of Pacific cod TAC allocated to the hook-and-line and pot sectors. For 2026 and 2027, the Regional Administrator establishes an ICA of 500 mt based on anticipated incidental catch by these sectors in directed fisheries for groundfish other than Pacific cod. During the fishing year, NMFS may reallocate unharvested Pacific cod among sectors, consistent with the reallocation hierarchy set forth at § 679.20(a)(7)(iii).

The BSAI ITAC allocation of Pacific cod to the Amendment 80 sector is established in table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. One Amendment 80 cooperative has formed for the 2026 fishing year. Because all Amendment 80 vessels are part of the sole Amendment 80 cooperative, no allocation to the Amendment 80 limited access sector is required for 2026. The 2027 allocations for Pacific cod between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

The BSAI ITAC allocation of Pacific cod to the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative (PCTC) Program is established in § 679.131(b). Section 679.131(b)(1)(i) also requires NMFS to establish an ICA for incidental catch of Pacific cod in the A and B seasons by

trawl CVs engaged in directed fishing for groundfish other than PCTC Program Pacific cod. For 2026 and 2027 NMFS sets an ICA amount of 1,500 mt in the A season and 600 mt in the B season. These ICA amounts are based on incidental catch in recent years. In the annual harvest specification process, NMFS determines the Pacific cod trawl CV TAC and the annual apportionment of Pacific cod in the A and B seasons between the PCTC Program DFA and the ICA (§ 679.131(b)(2)) (tables 9 and 10 below). The 2026 PCTC cooperative allocations and PSC limits are listed in table 11. The 2027 cooperative allocations and PSC limits for PCTC Program cooperatives will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

The sector allocations of Pacific cod are apportioned into seasonal allowances to disperse the Pacific cod fisheries over the fishing year (§§ 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B) (CDQ), 679.20(a)(7)(iv)(A) (non-CDQ), and 679.23(e)(5) (seasons)). Tables 9 and 10 list the CDQ and non-CDQ sector allocations and the non-CDQ seasonal allowances. In accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(iv)(B) and (C), any unused portion of a non-CDQ Pacific cod seasonal allowance for any sector, except the jig sector, will become available at the beginning of that sector's next seasonal allowance. Section 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B) sets forth the CDQ Pacific cod gear allowances by season, and CDQ groups are prohibited from exceeding those seasonal allowances (§ 679.7(d)(6)).

Section 679.20(a)(7)(vii) requires that the Regional Administrator establish an Area 543 Pacific cod harvest limit based on Pacific cod abundance in Area 543 as determined by the annual stock assessment process. Based on the 2024 stock assessment, the Regional Administrator determined for 2026 and 2027 the estimated amount of Pacific cod abundance in Area 543 is 32 percent of the total AI abundance. To calculate the Area 543 Pacific cod harvest limit, NMFS first subtracts the State GHL Pacific cod amount from the AI Pacific cod ABC. Then NMFS determines the harvest limit in Area 543 by multiplying the percentage of Pacific cod estimated in Area 543 (32 percent) by

the remaining ABC for AI Pacific cod. Based on these calculations, the Area 543 harvest limit is 2,864 mt for 2026, and 2,864 mt for 2027.

Under the PCTC Program, NMFS is required to specify an AI set-aside of up to 12 percent of the PCTC Program A season cooperative quota for delivery to an AI shoreplant in years in which an AI community representative notifies NMFS of the intent to process PCTC Program Pacific cod in the City of Adak or City of Atka (§ 679.132). A notice of intent to process PCTC Program Pacific cod must be submitted in writing to the Regional Administrator by a representative of the City of Adak or the City of Atka no later than October 15. A notice of intent was not received by October 15, 2025, and accordingly the AI set-aside will not be in effect for 2026. The 2027 set-aside will be determined after the October 15, 2026, deadline in conjunction with the 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications process.

Based on the final 2026 and 2027 Pacific cod TACs, tables 9 and 10 list the CDQ and non-CDQ TAC amounts; non-CDQ seasonal allowances by gear; the sector allocations of Pacific cod; and the seasons set forth at § 679.23(e)(5). The CDQ allocation of BS and AI Pacific cod among the CDQ groups is listed in table 21.

Table 9 -- Final 2026 Sector Allocations and Seasonal Allowances of the BSAI Pacific Cod TAC (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	Percent	2026 share of area, gear, and sector total	Season	Seasonal Amounts
Total Bering Sea TAC	n/a	123,077	n/a	n/a
Bering Sea CDQ	n/a	13,169	See § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)	n/a
Bering Sea non-CDQ TAC	n/a	109,908	n/a	n/a
Total Aleutian Islands TAC	n/a	8,951	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands CDQ	n/a	958	See § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)	n/a
Aleutian Islands non-CDQ TAC	n/a	7,993	n/a	n/a
Western Aleutian Islands (Area 543) Limit	n/a	2,864	n/a	n/a
Total BSAI non-CDQ TAC[1]	100	117,901	n/a	n/a

Total hook-and-line/pot gear	60.8	71,684	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line/pot ICA[2]	n/a	500	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line/pot sub-total	n/a	71,184	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line catcher/processors	48.7	57,017	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	29,079
B-season	n/a	n/a	June 10-Dec 31	27,938
Hook-and-line catcher vessels ≥60 ft LOA	0.2	234	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	119
B-season	n/a	n/a	June 10-Dec 31	115
Pot catcher/processers	1.5	1,756	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	896
B-season	n/a	n/a	Sept 1- Dec 31	861
Pot catcher vessels ≥60 ft LOA	8.4	9,835	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	5,016
B-season	n/a	n/a	Sept 1- Dec 31	4,819
Catcher vessels <60 ft LOA using hook-and-line or pot	2	2,342	n/a	n/a
Trawl catcher vessels[3]	22.1	26,056	n/a	n/a
A-season ICA	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	1,500
A-season PCTC	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	17,782
B-season ICA	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	600
B-season PCTC	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	2,266
C-season trawl catcher vessels	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Nov 1	3,908
AFA trawl catcher/processors	2.3	2,712	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	2,034
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	678
C-season	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Nov 1	0
Amendment 80	13.4	15,799	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	11,849
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	3,950
C-season	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Dec 31	0
Jig	1.4	1,651	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Apr 30	990
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 30-Aug 31	330
C-season	n/a	n/a	Aug 31-Dec 31	330

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 harvest specifications for Pacific cod are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

[1] The sector allocations and seasonal allowances for BSAI Pacific cod TAC are based on the sum of the BS and AI Pacific cod TACs, after subtraction of the reserves for the CDQ Program. If the non-CDQ TAC for Pacific cod in either the BS or AI is or will be reached, then directed fishing will be prohibited for non-CDQ Pacific cod in that subarea, even if a BSAI allowance remains (§ 679.20(d)(1)(iii)).

[2] Section 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(B) requires NMFS to specify an amount of Pacific cod that NMFS estimates will be taken as incidental catch in directed fisheries for groundfish other than Pacific cod by the hook-and-line and pot gear sectors. The ICA for the hook-and-line and pot sectors will be deducted from the aggregate portion of Pacific cod TAC allocated to the hook-and-line and pot sectors. NMFS sets the amount of the ICA for 2026 at 500 mt based on anticipated incidental catch by these sectors in other fisheries.

[3] The A and B season trawl CV Pacific cod allocation will be allocated to the PCTC Program after subtraction of the A and B season ICAs (§ 679.131(b)(1)). Section 679.131(b)(1)(i) requires NMFS to establish an ICA for incidental catch of Pacific cod in the A and B seasons by trawl CVs engaged in directed fishing for groundfish other than PCTC Program Pacific cod. NMFS sets the amount of the ICAs for the 2026 A and B seasons at 1,500 mt and 600 mt, respectively, to account for projected incidental catch of Pacific cod by trawl CVs engaged in directed fishing for groundfish other than PCTC Program Pacific cod.

Table 10 -- Final 2027 Sector Allocations and Seasonal Allowances of the BSAI Pacific Cod TAC (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	Percent	2027 share of area, gear, and sector total	Season	Seasonal Amounts
Total Bering Sea TAC	n/a	123,077	n/a	n/a
Bering Sea CDQ	n/a	13,169	See § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)	n/a
Bering Sea non-CDQ TAC	n/a	109,908	n/a	n/a
Total Aleutian Islands TAC	n/a	8,951	n/a	n/a
Aleutian Islands CDQ	n/a	958	See § 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)	n/a
Aleutian Islands non-CDQ TAC	n/a	7,993	n/a	n/a
Western Aleutian Islands (Area 543) Limit	n/a	2,864	n/a	n/a
Total BSAI non-CDQ TAC[1]	100	117,901	n/a	n/a
Total hook-and-line/pot gear	60.8	71,684	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line/pot ICA[2]	n/a	500	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line/pot sub-total	n/a	71,184	n/a	n/a
Hook-and-line catcher/processors	48.7	57,017	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	29,079
B-season	n/a	n/a	June 10-Dec 31	27,938
Hook-and-line catcher vessels ≥60 ft LOA	0.2	234	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	119
B-season	n/a	n/a	June 10-Dec 31	115
Pot catcher/processers	1.5	1,756	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	896
B-season	n/a	n/a	Sept 1- Dec 31	861

Pot catcher vessels ≥60 ft LOA	8.4	9,835	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Jun 10	5,016
B-season	n/a	n/a	Sept 1- Dec 31	4,819
Catcher vessels <60ft LOA using hook-and-line or pot	2	2,342	n/a	n/a
Trawl catcher vessels[3]	22.1	26,056	n/a	n/a
A-season ICA	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	1,500
A-season PCTC	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	17,782
B-season ICA	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	600
B-season PCTC	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	2,266
C-season trawl catcher vessels	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Nov 1	3,908
AFA trawl catcher/processors	2.3	2,712	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	2,034
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	678
C-season	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Nov 1	0
Amendment 80	13.4	15,799	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 20-Apr 1	11,849
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 1-Jun 10	3,950
C-season	n/a	n/a	Jun 10-Dec 31	0
Jig	1.4	1,651	n/a	n/a
A-season	n/a	n/a	Jan 1-Apr 30	990
B-season	n/a	n/a	Apr 30-Aug 31	330
C-season	n/a	n/a	Aug 31-Dec 31	330

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2027 harvest specifications for Pacific cod are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] The sector allocations and seasonal allowances for BSAI Pacific cod TAC are based on the sum of the BS and AI Pacific cod TACs, after subtraction of the reserves for the CDQ Program. If the non-CDQ TAC for Pacific cod in either the BS or AI is or will be reached, then directed fishing will be prohibited for non-CDQ Pacific cod in that subarea, even if a BSAI allowance remains (§ 679.20(d)(1)(iii)).

[2] Section 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(B) requires NMFS to specify an amount of Pacific cod that NMFS estimates will be taken as incidental catch in directed fisheries for groundfish other than Pacific cod by the hook-and-line and pot gear sectors. The ICA for the hook-and-line and pot sectors will be deducted from the aggregate portion of Pacific cod TAC allocated to the hook-and-line and pot sectors. NMFS sets the amount of the ICA for 2027 at 500 mt based on anticipated incidental catch by these sectors in other fisheries.

[3] The A and B season trawl CV Pacific cod allocation will be allocated to the PCTC Program after subtraction of the A and B season ICAs (§ 679.131(b)(1)). Section 679.131(b)(1)(i) requires NMFS to establish an ICA for incidental catch of Pacific cod in the A and B seasons by trawl CVs engaged in directed fishing for groundfish other than PCTC Program Pacific cod. NMFS sets the amount of the ICAs for the 2027 A and B seasons at 1,500 mt and 600 mt, respectively, to account for projected incidental catch of Pacific cod by trawl CVs engaged in directed fishing for groundfish other than PCTC Program Pacific cod.

Table 11 -- Final 2026 PCTC Cooperative Allocations and PSC Limits (Pacific cod and Pacific halibut amounts are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

Cooperative Name[1]	Total Pacific Cod CQ	A Season Pacific Cod CQ	B Season Pacific Cod CQ	Halibut	Red King Crab	*C. opilio* COBLZ	Zone 1 *C. bairdi*	Zone 2 *C. bairdi*
AKUTAN COD ASSOCIATION	11,868	10,527	1,341	130	978	49,193	19,871	16,559
GA CATCHER VESSELS ASSOCIATION	1,372	1,217	155	15	113	5,687	2,297	1,914
UNIFIED COD COOPERATIVE	4,063	3,604	459	45	335	16,842	6,803	5,669
KATIE ANN, LLC	736	653	83	8	60	3,050	1,232	1,027
USS COD COOPERATIVE	2,008	1,781	227	22	165	8,322	3,361	2,801
Totals:	20,048	17,782	2,266	220	1,651	83,094	33,564	27,970

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding. Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

[1] The 2026 PCTC cooperative allocations and PSC limits are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 cooperative allocations and PSC limits for PCTC Program cooperatives will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026. NMFS will specify the 2027 PCTC cooperative allocations and PSC limits in the 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications.

Sablefish Gear Allocation

Sections 679.20(a)(4)(iii) and (iv) require allocation of the sablefish TAC for the BS and AI subareas between the trawl gear and fixed gear sectors. Gear allocations of the sablefish TAC for the BS subarea are 50 percent for trawl gear and 50 percent for fixed gear. Gear allocations of the sablefish TAC for the AI subarea are 25 percent for trawl gear and 75 percent for fixed gear. Section 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(B) requires that NMFS apportion 20 percent of the fixed gear allocation of sablefish TAC to the CDQ reserve for each subarea. Also, § 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(D)(*1*) requires that in the BS and AI subareas 7.5 percent of the trawl gear allocation of sablefish TAC from the nonspecified reserve, established under § 679.20(b)(1)(i), be assigned to the CDQ reserve for each subarea.

The Council recommended, and NMFS agrees, that only trawl sablefish TAC be established biennially and that fixed gear sablefish TAC be established for 1 year. The harvest specifications for the fixed gear sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries are limited to the 2026 fishing year to ensure those fisheries are conducted

concurrently with the halibut IFQ fishery, which opens March 26, 2026. Concurrent sablefish and halibut IFQ fisheries reduce the potential for discards of halibut and sablefish in those fisheries. The sablefish IFQ fisheries remain closed at the beginning of each fishing year until the final harvest specifications for the sablefish IFQ fisheries are in effect. Table 12 lists the 2026 and 2027 gear allocations of the sablefish TAC and CDQ reserve amounts. Allocations among CDQ groups are listed in table 21.

Table 12 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Gear Shares and CDQ Reserve of BSAI Sablefish TACs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Subarea and gear	Percent of TAC	2026 Share of TAC	2026 ITAC	2026 CDQ reserve	2027 Share of TAC	2027 ITAC	2027 CDQ reserve
Bering Sea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Trawl gear[1]	50	4,498	3,823	337	4,498	3,823	337
Fixed gear[2]	50	4,498	3,598	900	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	100	8,996	7,422	1,237	4,498	3,823	337
Aleutian Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Trawl gear[1]	25	1,860	1,581	140	1,860	1,581	140
Fixed gear[2]	75	5,580	4,464	1,116	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	100	7,440	6,045	1,256	1,860	1,581	140

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

[1] For the sablefish TAC allocated to vessels using trawl gear, 15 percent of TAC is apportioned to the nonspecified reserve (§ 679.20(b)(1)(i)). The ITAC for vessels using trawl gear is the remainder of the TAC after subtracting this reserve. In the BS and AI, 7.5 percent of the trawl gear allocation of the TAC is assigned from the nonspecified reserve to the CDQ reserve for each subarea (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(D)(*1*)). The 2026 sablefish allocations to trawl gear are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 sablefish allocations to trawl gear are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[2] For the sablefish TAC allocated to vessels using fixed gear, 20 percent of the allocated TAC for the BS and AI is reserved for use by CDQ participants (§ 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(B)). The ITAC for vessels using fixed gear is the remainder of the TAC after subtracting the CDQ reserve for each subarea. The Council recommended, and NMFS agrees, that specifications for the fixed gear sablefish IFQ fisheries be limited to one year. The 2026 sablefish allocations to fixed gear are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 sablefish allocations to fixed gear will be specified in the 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications.

Allocation of the AI Pacific Ocean Perch, and BSAI Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole TACs

Sections 679.20(a)(10)(i) and (ii) require that NMFS allocate AI Pacific ocean perch and BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole ITACs between the Amendment 80 sector and the BSAI trawl limited access sector, after subtracting 10.7 percent for the CDQ reserves and ICAs for the BSAI trawl limited access sector and

vessels using non-trawl gear. The allocations of the ITACs for AI Pacific ocean perch and BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole to the Amendment 80 sector and the BSAI trawl limited access sector are established in accordance with tables 33 and 34 to 50 CFR part 679 and with § 679.91.

One Amendment 80 cooperative has formed for the 2026 fishing year. Because all Amendment 80 vessels are part of the sole Amendment 80 cooperative, no allocation to the Amendment 80 limited access sector is required for 2026. The 2027 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026. Tables 13 and 14 list the 2026 and 2027 allocations of the AI Pacific ocean perch and BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole TACs. Allocations among the CDQ groups are listed in table 21.

Table 13 -- Final 2026 CDQ Reserves, ICAs, and Amendment 80 Sector and BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector Allocations of the Aleutian Islands Pacific Ocean Perch and BSAI Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole TACs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	Pacific ocean perch			Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole
	EAI	CAI	WAI	BSAI	BSAI	BSAI
TAC	6,144	5,441	12,000	36,000	75,000	145,000
CDQ	657	582	1,284	3,852	8,025	15,515
ICA	100	60	10	2,000	3,000	2,000
BSAI trawl limited access	539	480	214	n/a	n/a	15,936
Amendment 80	4,848	4,319	10,492	30,148	63,975	111,549

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 CDQ reserves, ICAs, and allocations for BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

Table 14 -- Final 2027 CDQ Reserves, ICAs, and Amendment 80 Sector and BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sector Allocations of the Aleutian Islands Pacific Ocean Perch and BSAI Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole TACs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	Pacific ocean perch			Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin sole
	EAI	CAI	WAI	BSAI	BSAI	BSAI
TAC	6,144	5,441	12,000	36,000	75,000	145,000

CDQ	657	582	1,284	3,852	8,025	15,515
ICA	100	60	10	2,000	3,000	2,000
BSAI trawl limited access	539	480	214	n/a	n/a	15,936
Amendment 80[1]	4,848	4,319	10,492	30,148	63,975	111,549

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2027 CDQ reserves, ICAs, and allocations for BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] The 2027 allocations between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

Section 679.2 defines the ABC surplus for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole as the difference between the annual ABC and TAC for each species. Section 679.20(b)(1)(iii) establishes ABC reserves for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole. The ABC surpluses and the ABC reserves are necessary to mitigate the operational variability, environmental conditions, and economic factors that may constrain the CDQ groups and the Amendment 80 cooperatives from fully harvesting their allocations and to improve the likelihood of achieving and maintaining, on a continuing basis, the OY in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. NMFS, after consultation with the Council, may set the ABC reserve at or below the ABC surplus for each species, thus maintaining the TAC at or below ABC limits. An amount equal to 10.7 percent of the ABC reserves will be allocated as CDQ ABC reserves for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole. Section 679.31(b)(4) establishes the annual allocations of CDQ ABC reserves among the CDQ groups. The Amendment 80 ABC reserves are the ABC reserves minus the CDQ ABC reserves. Section 679.91(i)(2) establishes the Amendment 80 cooperatives' ABC reserve to be the ratio of each cooperatives' quota share units and the total Amendment 80 quota share units, multiplied by the Amendment 80 ABC reserve for each respective species. Table 15 lists the 2026 and 2027 ABC surplus and ABC reserves for BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole. The ABC reserves for the CDQ groups are listed in table 21.

Table 15 -- Final 2026 and 2027 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, CDQ ABC Reserves, and Amendment 80 ABC Reserves in the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	2026 Flathead sole	2026 Rock sole	2026 Yellowfin sole	2027 Flathead sole[1]	2027 Rock sole[1]	2027 Yellowfin sole[1]
ABC	87,700	158,225	267,639	87,700	158,225	267,639
TAC	36,000	75,000	145,000	36,000	75,000	145,000
ABC surplus	51,700	83,225	122,639	51,700	83,225	122,639
ABC reserve	51,700	83,225	122,639	51,700	83,225	122,639
CDQ ABC reserve	5,532	8,905	13,122	5,532	8,905	13,122
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	46,168	74,320	109,517	46,168	74,320	109,517

Note: Sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

[1] The 2026 ABC surpluses and ABC reserves for BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 ABC surpluses and ABC reserves for BSAI flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027. The 2027 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

PSC Limits for Halibut, Crab, and Herring

Sections 679.21(b) and (e) set forth the BSAI PSC limits for halibut, crab, and herring. Section 679.21(b)(1) establishes three fixed halibut PSC limits totaling 1,770 mt, and assigns 315 mt of the halibut PSC limit as the PSQ reserve for use by the groundfish CDQ Program, 745 mt of the halibut PSC limit for the BSAI trawl limited access sector, and 710 mt of the halibut PSC limit for the BSAI non-trawl sector. An additional amount of BSAI halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector is determined annually based on the most recent halibut biomass estimates from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) setline survey index and the NMFS AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index. In accordance with § 679.21(b)(1)(i), NMFS uses both halibut biomass estimates such that the value at the intercept of those survey indices from table 58 to 50 CFR part 679 is the Amendment 80 sector halibut PSC limit. The 2025 AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index estimate of halibut abundance is 133,705 mt, which is below the threshold level of 150,000 mt and is in the “low” abundance state. The 2025 IPHC setline survey index is 6,664 mt and is in the “low” abundance state. Pursuant to table 58 to 50 CFR part 679, the 2026 Amendment 80 sector halibut PSC limit is 1,309

mt. NMFS will publish the 2027 Amendment 80 sector halibut PSC limit in the 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications.

Sections 679.21(b)(1)(iii)(A) and (B) require apportionment of the BSAI non-trawl halibut PSC limit into PSC allowances among six fishery categories (see table 19). Sections 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(A) and (B), (e)(3)(i)(B), and (e)(3)(iv) require apportionment of the trawl PSC limits into PSC allowances among seven fishery categories (see tables 16, 17, and 18). These apportionments into PSC allowances are based on the fishery categories' share of anticipated halibut PSC during the fishing year and the need to optimize the amount of total groundfish harvested under the halibut PSC limit for the non-trawl and trawl sectors.

Pursuant to Section 3.6 of the FMP, the Council recommends that certain specified non-trawl fisheries be exempt from the halibut PSC limit. NMFS concurs with this recommendation and exempts the pot gear fishery, the jig gear fishery, and the sablefish IFQ fixed gear fishery categories from halibut bycatch restrictions for the following reasons: (1) the pot gear fishery has low halibut bycatch mortality; (2) NMFS estimates halibut mortality for the jig gear fleet to be negligible because of the small size of the fishery and the selectivity of the gear; and (3) the sablefish and halibut IFQ fisheries have low halibut bycatch mortality because the IFQ program requires that legal-size halibut be retained by vessels using fixed gear if a halibut IFQ permit holder or a hired master is aboard and is holding unused halibut IFQ for that vessel category and the IFQ regulatory area in which the vessel is operating (see § 679.7(f)(11)).

The 2025 total groundfish catch for the pot gear fishery in the BSAI was 37,446 mt, with an associated halibut bycatch mortality of 8 mt. The 2025 jig gear fishery harvested 0 mt of total groundfish.

Pursuant to § 679.21(e), PSC limits for crab and herring are specified annually based on abundance and spawning biomass. Based on the most recent (2025) survey data,

the red king crab mature female abundance is estimated at 12.7 million red king crabs, and the effective spawning biomass is estimated at 25.9 million pounds (lbs) (11,750 mt). Based on the criteria set out at § 679.21(e)(1)(i), the calculated 2026 and 2027 PSC limit of red king crab in Zone 1 for trawl gear is 97,000 animals. This limit derives from the mature female abundance estimate above 8.4 million mature red king crab and an effective spawning biomass between 14.5 and 55 million lbs.

Section 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(*2*) establishes criteria under which NMFS must specify, after consultation with the Council, an annual red king crab bycatch limit for the Red King Crab Savings Subarea (RKCSS) if the State has established a fishery for red king crab in the Bristol Bay area in the previous year. The regulations limit the RKCSS red king crab bycatch limit to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC limit, and the limit must be based on the need to optimize the groundfish harvest relative to red king crab bycatch. The State established a Bristol Bay red king crab fishery in October 2025, and in December 2025, the Council recommended, and NMFS approves, that the RKCSS red king crab bycatch limit for 2026 and 2027 be equal to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC limit (table 17).

Based on the most recent (2025) survey data from the NMFS annual bottom trawl survey, Tanner crab (*Chionoecetes bairdi*) abundance is estimated at 1,151.3 million animals. Pursuant to criteria set out at § 679.21(e)(1)(ii), the calculated 2026 and 2027 *C. bairdi* crab PSC limit for trawl gear is 980,000 animals in Zone 1, and 2,970,000 animals in Zone 2. The limit in Zone 1 is based on the total abundance of *C. bairdi* (estimated at 1,151.3 million animals) that is greater than 400 million animals. The limit in Zone 2 is based on the total abundance of *C. bairdi* (estimated at 1,153.1 million animals) that is greater than 400 million animals.

Pursuant to § 679.21(e)(1)(iii), the PSC limit for trawl gear for snow crab (*C. opilio*) is based on total abundance as indicated by the NMFS annual bottom trawl

survey. The *C. opilio* crab PSC limit in the *C. opilio* crab bycatch limitation zone (COBLZ) is set at 0.1133 percent of the total abundance minus 150,000 crabs, unless a minimum or maximum PSC limit applies. Based on the most recent (2025) survey estimate from the NMFS annual bottom trawl survey of 12.64 billion animals, multiplied by 0.1133 percent, the calculated limit is 14,321,120 animals. Because the calculated limit is greater than 13 million animals, the maximum PSC limit applies and the PSC limit will be 12,850,000 million animals.

Pursuant to § 679.21(e)(1)(v), the PSC limit of Pacific herring caught while conducting any trawl operation for BSAI groundfish is 1 percent of the annual eastern BS herring biomass. The regulation does not specify how to determine the eastern BS herring biomass for calculating the PSC limit. The Council and NMFS have relied on the State's annual estimate. This year, the AP did not consider the 2025 forecasted biomass estimate because the State submitted their 2025 forecasted biomass estimate after the AP had met and had considered recommendations for apportionments among trawl fishery categories. The Council considered the available forecasted biomass estimates (2024 and 2025) and the AP's recommendation for apportionments among trawl fishery categories that was based on the 2024 estimate. The Council ultimately recommended a herring PSC limit based on the 2024 forecasted biomass estimate of 265,096 mt and apportionments among the trawl fishery categories consistent with the AP's recommendations. For 2026 and 2027, NMFS implements a PSC limit for Pacific herring based on the 2024 forecasted biomass estimate, which was developed by the State in 2024 based on biomass for spawning aggregations, and based on the Council's recommendations for apportionments among trawl fishery categories, which were developed with the benefit of the AP's recommendations for apportionments. The herring PSC limit for 2026 and 2027 is 2,651 mt for all trawl gear as listed in tables 16 and 17.

Section 679.21(e)(3)(i)(A)(*1*) allocates 10.7 percent from each trawl gear PSC limit specified for crab as a PSQ reserve for use by the groundfish CDQ program. Section 679.21(e)(3)(i)(A) requires that crab PSQ reserves be subtracted from the total trawl gear crab PSC limits. The crab and halibut PSC limits apportioned to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors are listed in table 35 to 50 CFR part 679. The resulting 2026 and 2027 apportionments of PSC limit to CDQ PSQ reserves, the Amendment 80 sector, and the BSAI trawl limited access sector are listed in table 16. Pursuant to §§ 679.21(b)(1)(i), 679.21(e)(3)(vi), and 679.91(d) through (f), crab and halibut trawl PSC limits apportioned to the Amendment 80 sector are then further assigned to Amendment 80 cooperatives as cooperative quota. Crab and halibut PSC cooperative quota assigned to Amendment 80 cooperatives is not apportioned to specific fishery categories. In 2026, there are no vessels in the Amendment 80 limited access sector and there is a single Amendment 80 cooperative. The 2027 PSC limits between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by November 1, 2026.

The BSAI allocation of halibut and crab PSC limits to the PCTC Program is established in § 679.131(c) and (d). The halibut PSC apportioned to the trawl CV sector is 98 percent of the halibut PSC limit apportioned to the BSAI trawl limited access sector's Pacific cod fishery category, and the remaining 2 percent is apportioned to the AFA C/P sector. The trawl CV sector apportionment is further assigned to the A and B seasons (95 percent) and the C season (5 percent), and the A and B season limit is reduced by 25 percent to determine the overall PCTC Program halibut PSC limit. The crab PSC apportioned to the trawl CV sector is 90.6 percent of the crab PSC limit apportioned to the BSAI trawl limited access sector's Pacific cod fishery category, and the remaining 9.4 percent is apportioned to the AFA C/P sector. The trawl CV sector apportionment is further assigned to the A and B seasons (95 percent) and the C season (5

percent), and the A and B season limit is reduced by 35 percent to determine the overall PCTC Program crab PSC limit. The limits of halibut and crab PSC for the PCTC Program are listed in table 18, and in table 11 for PSC limits for PCTC Program cooperatives.

Sections 679.21(b)(2) and (e)(5) authorize NMFS, after consulting with the Council, to establish seasonal apportionments of halibut and crab PSC limits for the BSAI trawl limited access and non-trawl sectors to maximize the ability of the fleets to harvest the available groundfish TAC and to minimize bycatch. The factors to be considered are: (1) seasonal distribution of prohibited species; (2) seasonal distribution of target groundfish species relative to prohibited species distribution; (3) PSC bycatch needs on a seasonal basis relevant to prohibited species biomass and expected catches of target groundfish species; (4) the expected variations in bycatch rates throughout the year; (5) the expected changes in directed groundfish fishing seasons; (6) the expected start of fishing effort; and (7) economic effects of establishing seasonal prohibited species apportionments on segments of the target groundfish industry. Based on these criteria, the Council recommended and NMFS approves the seasonal PSC apportionments in tables 18 and 19 to maximize harvest among gear types, fisheries, and seasons while minimizing bycatch of PSC. PSC limits for PCTC Program cooperatives are listed in table 11. PSC limits among the CDQ groups are listed in table 21.

Table 16 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Apportionment of Prohibited Species Catch Limits to Non-Trawl Gear, the CDQ Program, Amendment 80, and the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

PSC species and area and zone[1]	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve[2]	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector[3]	BSAI trawl limited access sector	BSAI PSC limits not allocated to Amendment 80
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,079	710	315	n/a	1,309	745	n/a
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,651	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	97,000	n/a	10,379	86,621	43,293	26,489	16,839
C. opilio (animals) COBLZ	12,850,000	n/a	1,374,950	11,475,050	5,639,987	3,688,081	2,146,982
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 1	980,000	n/a	104,860	875,140	368,521	411,228	95,390
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 2	2,970,000	n/a	317,790	2,652,210	627,778	1,241,500	782,932

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

[1] Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones. The 2026 prohibited species catch limits are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 prohibited species catch limits are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[2] The PSQ reserves for the CDQ Program for crab species are 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

[3] The halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector is determined annually based on the most recent halibut biomass estimates from the IPHC setline survey index and the NMFS AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index (§ 679.21(b)(1)(i)(A) through (C)). NMFS uses both halibut biomass estimates such that the value at the intercept of those survey indices from table 58 to 50 CFR part 679 is the Amendment 80 sector halibut PSC limit.

Table 17 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Herring and Red King Crab Savings Subarea Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for all Trawl Sectors (Herring amounts are rounded to nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

Fishery categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	153	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish[1]	77	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	8	n/a
Rockfish	8	n/a
Pacific cod	14	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,359	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species[2,3]	31	n/a
2026 Red king crab savings subarea nonpelagic trawl gear[4]	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,651	97,000

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] "Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

[2] Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and "other species" fishery category.

[3] "Other species" for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

[4] In December 2025, the Council recommended and NMFS approves that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the Red King Crab Savings Subarea (RKCSS) be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC limit (§ 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(*2*)).

Table 18 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors and Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

BSAI trawl limited access sector fisheries	Prohibited species and area[1]				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	*C. opilio* (animals) COBLZ	*C. bairdi* (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	250	23,337	3,521,725	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish[2]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rockfish April 15-December 31	5	n/a	2,972	n/a	1,000
Total Pacific cod[3]	315	2,955	148,531	60,000	50,000
AFA C/P Pacific cod	6	278	13,962	5,640	4,700
PCTC Program Pacific cod, A and B	220	1,653	83,097	33,567	27,973
Trawl CV Pacific cod, C season	15	134	6,728	2,718	2,265
PCTC Program unallocated reduction	73	890	44,744	18,075	15,062
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species[4]	175	197	14,853	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	3,688,081	411,228	1,241,500

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

[2] "Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

[3] The BSAI trawl limited access sector's Pacific cod fishery category PSC limits for halibut and crab are split between AFA C/Ps, PCTC Program A and B season for trawl CVs, and open access C season (§ 679.131(c) and (d)). The halibut PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV sector by 25 percent each year (§ 679.131(c)(1)(iii)). The crab PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV sector by 35 percent each year (§ 679.131(d)(1)(iii)). Any amount of the PCTC Program PSC limit remaining after the B season may be reapportioned to the trawl CV open access fishery in the C season.

[4] "Other species" for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

Table 19 -- Final 2026 and 2027 Halibut Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher vessel	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Annual Pacific cod	648	13	661
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 15	162	2	n/a
	August 15-December 31	98	2	n/a

Non-Pacific cod non-trawl-Total	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	49
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 prohibited species catch allowances are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Estimates of Halibut Biomass and Stock Condition

The IPHC annually assesses the abundance and potential yield of the Pacific halibut stock using all available data from the commercial and sport fisheries, other removals, and scientific surveys. Additional information on the Pacific halibut stock assessment may be found in the IPHC's 2025 Pacific halibut stock assessment (December 2025) available on the IPHC website at: *https://www.iphc.int*. The IPHC considered the 2025 Pacific halibut stock assessment at its January 2026 annual meeting when it set the 2026 commercial halibut fishery catch limits, also available on the IPHC website.

Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMRs)

To monitor halibut bycatch mortality allowances and apportionments, the Regional Administrator uses observed halibut bycatch rates, DMRs, and estimates of groundfish catch to project when a fishery's halibut bycatch mortality allowance or seasonal apportionment is reached. Halibut bycatch rates are based on observed estimates of halibut bycatch in the groundfish fishery. DMRs are estimates of the proportion of halibut bycatch that do not survive after being returned to the sea. The cumulative halibut mortality that accrues to a particular halibut PSC limit is the product of a DMR multiplied by the estimated halibut PSC. DMRs are estimated using the best scientific information available in conjunction with the annual BSAI stock assessment process.

The DMRs are calculated annually based on a methodology developed by a halibut working group (IPHC, Council, and NMFS staff). The DMR methodology and findings are included as an appendix to the 2024 SAFE report. The updated DMRs calculated using the DMR methodology are reviewed by the Plan Team in September and

the SSC in October. The Plan Team and SSC reviewed the 2026 and 2027 DMRs in September 2025 and October 2025, respectively, and that review is available at *https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=fdf11e1a-cb30-4bbb-8b43-90bf787c9800.pdf&fileName=Halibut%20DMR%20Working%20Group%20recommendations%20for%202026-2027.pdf*.

The halibut working group continues to consider improvements to the methodology used to calculate halibut mortality, including potential changes to the reference period (the period of data used for calculating the DMRs). Future DMRs may change based on additional years of observer sampling, which could provide more recent and accurate data and could improve the accuracy of estimation and progress on methodology. The methodology continues to ensure that NMFS is using DMRs that accurately reflect halibut mortality, which will inform the sectors of their estimated halibut mortality and allow sectors to respond with methods that could reduce mortality and, eventually, the DMR for that sector.

At the October 2025 meeting, the SSC reviewed updated DMRs recommended by the Plan Team that were derived from the DMR methodology, which uses a 2-year and 4-year reference period depending on data availability. The Council then reviewed and recommended proposed 2026 and 2027 DMRs. NMFS adopts for 2026 and 2027 the DMRs reviewed by the Plan Team and SSC and recommended by the Council in October 2025. The final 2026 and 2027 DMRs in this rule are unchanged from the DMRs in the proposed 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications (90 FR 58204, December 16, 2025). Table 20 lists these final 2026 and 2027 DMRs.

Table 20 -- 2026 and 2027 Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMR) for the BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate

Pelagic Trawl	All	1.00
Non-Pelagic Trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	0.86
Non-Pelagic Trawl	Catcher vessel	0.62
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	0.10
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	0.10
Pot	All	0.19

Note: The halibut DMRs are effective at 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Salmon PSC Limits

Under § 679.21(f)(2), NMFS annually allocates portions of either 33,318, 45,000, 47,591, or 60,000 Chinook salmon PSC limits among the AFA sectors, depending on: (1) past bycatch performance; (2) whether Chinook salmon bycatch incentive plan agreements (IPAs) are formed and approved by NMFS; and (3) whether NMFS determines it is a low Chinook salmon abundance year. NMFS will determine that it is a low Chinook salmon abundance year when abundance of Chinook salmon in western Alaska is less than or equal to 250,000 Chinook salmon. The State provides to NMFS an estimate of Chinook salmon abundance using the 3-System Index for western Alaska based on the Kuskokwim, Unalakleet, and Upper Yukon aggregate stock grouping.

If an AFA sector participates in an approved IPA and has not exceeded its performance standard under § 679.21(f)(6), and if it is not a low Chinook salmon abundance year, then NMFS will allocate a portion of the 60,000 Chinook salmon PSC limit to that sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(A). If no IPA is approved, or if the sector has exceeded its performance standard under § 679.21(f)(6), and if it is not a low abundance year, then NMFS will allocate a portion of the 47,591 Chinook salmon PSC limit to that sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(C). If an AFA sector participates in an approved IPA and has not exceeded its performance standard under § 679.21(f)(6), and if in a low abundance year, then NMFS will allocate a portion of the 45,000 Chinook salmon PSC limit to that sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(B). If no IPA is approved, or if the sector has exceeded its performance standard under § 679.21(f)(6),

and if in a low abundance year, then NMFS will allocate a portion of the 33,318 Chinook salmon PSC limit to that sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(D).

NMFS has determined that 2025 was a low Chinook salmon abundance year, based on the State's estimate that Chinook salmon abundance in western Alaska is less than 250,000 Chinook salmon. In addition, all AFA sectors are participating in NMFS-approved IPAs, and no sector has exceeded the sector's annual Chinook salmon bycatch performance standard in any 3 of 7 consecutive years. Therefore, in 2026, the Chinook salmon PSC limit is 45,000 Chinook salmon, allocated to each sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(B). In 2026, the Chinook salmon bycatch performance standard under § 679.21(f)(6) is 33,318 Chinook salmon, allocated to each sector as specified in § 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(D). The AFA sector Chinook salmon PSC limits are also seasonally apportioned with 70 percent for the A season pollock fishery and 30 percent for the B season pollock fishery (§§ 679.21(f)(3)(i) and 679.23(e)(2)). NMFS publishes the approved IPAs, allocations, and reports at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/chinook-salmon-bycatch-management-alaska*.

Section 679.21(g)(2)(i) specifies 700 fish as the Chinook salmon PSC limit for the AI pollock fishery. Section 679.21(g)(2)(ii) allocates 7.5 percent, or 53 Chinook salmon, as the AI PSQ reserve for the CDQ program, and allocates the remaining 647 Chinook salmon to the non-CDQ fisheries.

Section 679.21(f)(14)(i) specifies 42,000 fish as the non-Chinook salmon PSC limit for vessels using trawl gear from August 15 through October 14 in the Catcher Vessel Operational Area (CVOA). Section 679.21(f)(14)(ii) allocates 10.7 percent, or 4,494 non-Chinook salmon, in the CVOA as the PSQ reserve for the CDQ program, and allocates the remaining 37,506 non-Chinook salmon in the CVOA to the non-CDQ fisheries. Section 679.21(f)(14)(iv) exempts from closures in the Chum Salmon Savings

Area trawl vessels participating in directed fishing for pollock and operating under an IPA approved by NMFS.

CDQ Group Quotas

In 2006, Public Law 109-241 amended section 305(i)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1855(i)). This law specifies the allocation of CDQ groundfish among the six CDQ groups. The six CDQ groups are the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA), Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC), Central Bering Sea Fisherman's Association (CBSFA), Coastal Villages Regional Fund (CVRF), Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), and Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA). NMFS published the CDQ and CDQ PSQ percentages on August 31, 2006 (71 FR 51804). The groundfish and PSC amounts for each CDQ group are based on those percentages as applied to the total CDQ amounts in these harvest specifications. These amounts for each CDQ group are shown in table 21.

Table 21 -- 2026 and 2027 CDQ Program Quota Categories, Target CDQ Reserves, PSQ Reserves, and CDQ Group Quotas (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab and salmon are in number of animals.)

Species or Species Group	CDQ group quotas						
	APICDA	BBEDC	CBSFA	CVRF	NSEDC	YDFDA	Total CDQ Reserves
BS Pollock A season	8,662	12,994	3,094	14,850	13,612	8,662	61,875
BS Pollock B season	10,588	15,881	3,781	18,150	16,638	10,588	75,625
BS Pollock Total	19,250	28,875	6,875	33,000	30,250	19,250	137,500
AI Pollock	266	399	95	456	418	266	1,900
BS Trawl Gear Sablefish	71	74	30	44	44	74	337
BS Fixed Gear Sablefish	135	180	144	0	162	279	900
AI Trawl Gear Sablefish	36	28	11	18	17	29	140
AI Fixed Gear Sablefish	156	212	33	301	257	156	1,116
BS Pacific cod	2,034	2,757	1,167	2,361	2,353	2,497	13,169
AI Pacific cod	148	201	85	172	171	182	958
WAI Atka Mackerel	561	281	150	281	262	337	1,872

CAI Atka Mackerel	761	381	203	381	355	457	2,538
EAI/BS Atka Mackerel	1,339	670	357	670	625	804	4,465
Yellowfin Sole	4,299	3,712	1,242	986	1,131	4,146	15,515
Yellowfin Sole ABC reserves	3,636	3,139	1,050	834	956	3,506	13,122
Rock Sole	1,931	1,846	639	878	880	1,851	8,025
Rock Sole ABC reserves	2,143	2,049	709	974	976	2,054	8,905
Flathead Sole	772	812	342	577	576	772	3,852
Flathead Sole ABC reserves	1,109	1,167	491	829	827	1,109	5,532
BS Greenland Turbot	19	24	10	20	23	24	120
Arrowtooth Flounder	330	330	135	195	180	330	1,498
WAI Pacific ocean perch	385	193	103	193	180	231	1,284
CAI Pacific ocean perch	175	87	47	87	82	105	582
EAI Pacific ocean perch	197	99	53	99	92	118	657
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	69	69	28	38	38	72	315
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	2,491	2,180	830	1,245	1,245	2,387	10,379
C. opilio (animals) COBLZ	343,738	329,988	109,996	137,495	109,996	343,738	1,374,950
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 1	27,264	25,166	8,389	8,389	8,389	27,264	104,860
C. bairdi crab (animals) Zone 2	76,270	73,092	25,423	34,957	31,779	76,270	317,790
BS Chinook Salmon A Season	410	615	146	703	644	410	2,930
BS Chinook Salmon B Season	104	156	37	178	163	104	743
BS Chinook Salmon Total	517	775	184	886	812	517	3,690
AI Chinook Salmon	7	11	3	13	12	7	53
Non-Chinook Salmon	629	944	225	1,079	989	629	4,494

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 target CDQ and PSQ reserves are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Directed Fishing Closures

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator may establish a DFA for a species or species group if the Regional Administrator determines that any allocation or apportionment of a target species has been or will be reached. If the Regional Administrator establishes a DFA, and that allowance is or will be reached before the end of the fishing year, NMFS will prohibit directed fishing for that species or

species group in the specified subarea, regulatory area, or district (§ 679.20(d)(1)(iii)). Pursuant to § 679.21(b)(4) and (e)(7), if the Regional Administrator determines that a fishery category's bycatch allowance or seasonal apportionment of halibut, red king crab, *C. bairdi* crab, or *C. opilio* crab for a specified area has been reached, the Regional Administrator will prohibit directed fishing for each species or species group in that fishery category in the area specified by regulation for the remainder of the season or fishing year.

Based on historical catch patterns and anticipated fishing activity, the Regional Administrator has determined that the groundfish allocation amounts in table 22 will be necessary as incidental catch, in addition to ICAs previously mentioned, to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries for the 2026 and 2027 fishing years. Consequently, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator establishes the DFA for the species and species groups in table 22 as zero mt. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for these sectors and species or species groups in the specified areas effective at 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027. Also, for the BSAI trawl limited access sector, bycatch allowances of halibut, red king crab, *C. bairdi* crab, and *C. opilio* crab listed in table 22 are insufficient to support directed fisheries for the species and species groups listed in table 22. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.21(b)(4)(i) and (e)(7), NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for these sectors, species, and fishery categories in the specified areas effective at 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Table 22 -- 2026 and 2027 Directed Fishing Closures[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Species	Area	Sector	2026 allocation	2027 allocation
Pollock ICA	AI	All	4,500	4,500

	BS	All	46,000	46,000
	Bogoslof District	All	250	250
Pacific cod ICA	BSAI	Hook-and-line/pot	500	500
		A-season CV trawl	1,500	1,500
		B-season CV trawl	600	600
Sablefish	AI	Trawl non-CDQ, non-Amendment 80	1,581	1,581
	BS	Trawl non-CDQ, non-Amendment 80	3,823	3,823
Yellowfin sole ICA	BSAI	All	2,000	2,000
Greenland turbot	AI	All	208	208
Flathead sole ICA	BSAI	All	2,000	2,000
Rock sole ICA[2]	BSAI	All	3,000	3,000
Pacific ocean perch ICAs[2]	CAI	All	60	60
	EAI	All	100	100
	WAI	All	10	10
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish	BS/EAI	All	441	441
	CAI/WAI	All	325	325
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	All	402	402
Other rockfish	AI	All	415	415
	BS	All	639	639
Atka Mackerel ICAs	BS/EAI	All	800	800
	CAI	All	100	100
	WAI	All	20	20
Skates	BSAI	All	23,499	23,499
Sharks	BSAI	All	340	340
Octopuses	BSAI	All	340	340
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish fishery category- halibut mortality, red king crab Zone 1, C. *opilio* COBLZ, C. *bairdi* Zone 1 and 2	BSAI	BSAI Trawl limited access	0	0
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish fishery category- halibut mortality, red king crab Zone 1, C. *opilio* COBLZ, C. *bairdi* Zone 1 and 2	BSAI	BSAI Trawl limited access	0	0
Rockfish fishery category- red king crab Zone 1	BSAI	BSAI Trawl limited access	0	0

Note: The directed fishing closures are effective at 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Maximum retainable amounts may be found in table 11 to 50 CFR part 679.

[2] "Other rockfish" includes all *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species except for dark rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, blackspotted/rougheye rockfish, and shortraker rockfish (§ 679.2).

Inseason closures implemented under the final 2025 and 2026 BSAI harvest specifications for groundfish (90 FR 12640, March 18, 2025) remain effective under authority of these final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications and until the date specified in those closure notifications or superseded by a subsequent action. Inseason closures are posted at the following website under the Alaska filter for Management Area: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/rules-and-announcements/bulletins*.

While these closures are in effect, the maximum retainable amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a fishing trip. These closures to directed fishing are in addition to closures and prohibitions found at 50 CFR part 679. NMFS may implement other openings and closures during the 2026 and 2027 fishing years as necessary for effective conservation and management and consistent with the regulations at 50 CFR part 679.

AFA Harvesting Sideboard Limits

Section 679.64 establishes groundfish harvesting sideboard limits on AFA C/Ps and CVs in the BSAI. These sideboard limits are necessary to protect the interests of fishermen and processors who do not directly benefit from the AFA from those fishermen and processors who received exclusive harvesting and processing privileges under the AFA.

Listed AFA C/P Sideboard Limits

Pursuant to § 679.64(a)(1), the Regional Administrator establishes annual AFA C/P harvest limits for each groundfish species or species group in which a TAC is specified for an area or subarea of the BSAI. Section 679.20(d)(1)(iv)(D) and table 54 to 50 CFR part 679 prohibit listed AFA C/Ps from directed fishing for all groundfish species or species groups subject to sideboard limits. Section 679.64(a)(1)(v) exempts AFA C/Ps

from a yellowfin sole sideboard limit because the final aggregate ITAC of yellowfin sole assigned to the Amendment 80 sector and BSAI trawl limited access sector is greater than 125,000 mt. Section 679.64(a)(1)(iii) sets the procedures for calculating AFA C/P sideboard limits when they apply.

Section 679.64(a)(2) and tables 40 and 41 to 50 CFR part 679 establish a formula for calculating PSC sideboard limits for halibut and crab caught by listed AFA C/Ps. The basis for these sideboard limits is described in detail in the final rules implementing the major provisions of the AFA (67 FR 79692, December 30, 2002) and Amendment 80 (72 FR 52668, September 14, 2007). PSC species listed in table 23 that are caught by listed AFA C/Ps participating in any groundfish fishery other than pollock will accrue against the final 2026 and 2027 PSC sideboard limits for the listed AFA C/Ps. Section 679.21(b)(4)(iii), (e)(3)(v), and (e)(7) authorizes NMFS to close directed fishing for groundfish other than pollock for listed AFA C/Ps once a final 2026 or 2027 PSC sideboard limit listed in table 23 is reached. Pursuant to § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(C) and (e)(3)(ii)(C), halibut or crab PSC by listed AFA C/Ps while fishing for pollock will accrue against the PSC allowances annually specified for the pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery categories, according to § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (e)(3)(iv).

Table 23 -- Final 2026 and 2027 BSAI American Fisheries Act Listed C/P Prohibited Species Catch Sideboard Limits (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

PSC species and area[1]	Ratio of PSC to total PSC	2026 and 2027 PSC limit available to trawl vessels after subtraction of PSQ	2026 and 2027 C/P PSC sideboard limit
Halibut	n/a	n/a	286
Red king crab Zone 1	0.007	86,621	606
C. opilio COBLZ	0.153	11,475,050	1,755,683
C. bairdi Zone 1	0.140	875,140	122,520
C. bairdi Zone 2	0.050	2,652,210	132,610

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 sideboard limits are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 sideboard limits are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

AFA CV Sideboard Limits

Section 679.64(b)(3) and (b)(4) and tables 40 and 41 to 50 CFR part 679 establish formulas for setting AFA CV groundfish sideboard limits and halibut and crab PSC sideboard limits for the BSAI. The basis for these sideboard limits is described in detail in the final rules implementing the major provisions of the AFA (67 FR 79692, December 30, 2002), Amendment 80 (72 FR 52668, September 14, 2007), and Amendment 122 (88 FR 53704, August 8, 2023). Section 679.64(b)(6) exempts AFA CVs from a yellowfin sole sideboard limit because the final aggregate ITAC of yellowfin sole assigned to the Amendment 80 sector and BSAI trawl limited access sector is greater than 125,000 mt.

Section 679.20(d)(1)(iv)(D) and table 55 to 50 CFR part 679 prohibit non-exempt AFA CVs from directed fishing for a majority of the groundfish species or species groups subject to sideboard limits. The only remaining sideboard limit for non-exempt AFA CVs is for Pacific cod. Pursuant to amendment 122 to the FMP, the Pacific cod sideboard limit is no longer necessary in the A and B seasons because directed fishing in the BSAI for Pacific cod by trawl CVs is now managed under the PCTC Program, and accordingly the sideboard limit is in effect in the C season only (§ § 679.64(b)(3)(ii)). Table 24 lists the final 2026 and 2027 non-exempt AFA CV groundfish sideboard limits.

Table 24 -- Final 2026 and 2027 BSAI Pacific Cod Sideboard Limits for Non-Exempt American Fisheries Act CVs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Fishery by area/gear/season	Ratio of 1997 AFA CV Catch to 1997 TAC	2026 allocation for C season	2026 AFA CV sideboard limit	2027 allocation for C season	2027 AFA CV sideboard limit
Pacific cod BSAI	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Trawl gear CV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jun 10-Nov 1	0.8609	3,908	3,364	3,908	3,364

Fishery by area/gear/season	Ratio of 1997 AFA CV Catch to 1997 TAC	2026 allocation for C season	2026 AFA CV sideboard limit	2027 allocation for C season	2027 AFA CV sideboard limit

Note: The 2026 AFA CV Pacific cod sideboard limit is effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 AFA CV Pacific cod sideboard limit is effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

Halibut and crab PSC limits listed in table 25 that are caught by AFA CVs participating in any groundfish fishery other than pollock will accrue against the final 2026 and 2027 PSC sideboard limits for the AFA CVs. Section 679.21(b)(4)(iii), (e)(3)(v), and (e)(7) authorizes NMFS to close directed fishing for groundfish other than pollock for AFA CVs once a final 2026 or 2027 PSC sideboard limit listed in table 25 is reached. Pursuant to § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(C) and (e)(3)(ii)(C), halibut or crab PSC by AFA CVs while fishing for pollock will accrue against the PSC allowances annually specified for the pollock/Atka mackerel/"other species" fishery categories, according to § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (e)(3)(iv).

Table 25 -- Final 2026 and 2027 American Fisheries Act CV Prohibited Species Catch Sideboard Limits for the BSAI[1] (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

PSC species and area[1]	Target fishery category[2]	AFA CV PSC sideboard limit ratio	2026 and 2027 PSC limit available to trawl vessels after subtraction of PSQ	2026 and 2027 CV PSC sideboard limit
Halibut	Pacific cod Trawl	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Pacific cod hook-and-line or pot	n/a	n/a	2
	Yellowfin sole total	n/a	n/a	101
	Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish[3]	n/a	n/a	228
	Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	n/a	n/a	0
	Rockfish	n/a	n/a	2
	Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species[4]	n/a	n/a	5
Red king crab Zone 1	n/a	0.299	86,621	25,900
C. *opilio* COBLZ	n/a	0.168	11,475,050	1,927,808
C. *bairdi* Zone 1	n/a	0.330	875,140	288,796

PSC species and area[1]	Target fishery category[2]	AFA CV PSC sideboard limit ratio	2026 and 2027 PSC limit available to trawl vessels after subtraction of PSQ	2026 and 2027 CV PSC sideboard limit
C. *bairdi* Zone 2	n/a	0.186	2,652,210	493,311

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding. The 2026 sideboard limits are effective from 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026. The 2027 sideboard limits are effective from 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 2027, through 1200 hours, A.l.t., March 18, 2027.

[1] Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas.

[2] Target trawl fishery categories are defined at § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (e)(3)(iv).

[3] "Other flatfish" for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

[4] "Other species" for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

Response to Comments

NMFS received 5 letters with 15 unique comments during the public comment period for the proposed BSAI groundfish harvest specifications (90 FR 58204, December 16, 2025). Four letters were from organizations, and one letter was from an individual. NMFS's responses are below.

Comment 1: The Final EIS and ROD are outdated and NMFS must prepare a new or supplemental EIS on the harvest specifications. Without these updated analyses, NMFS is thwarting the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and engaging in uninformed decision making. There are significant new circumstances and information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action and its impacts. New information includes information related to climate variability, marine heatwave impacts, vessel strikes and entanglements, pelagic trawl bottom contact, impacts on northern fur seal prey, salmon bycatch, hatchery salmon impacts on aquatic ecosystems, and plastics. This significant new information indicates the trawl fisheries are having harmful environmental effects to an extent not previously considered in the existing NEPA analyses for the fisheries.

Response: A new EIS is not necessary for NMFS to approve and implement the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI and GOA because NMFS implements the specifications each year based on the harvest strategy analyzed as an

alternative in the Final EIS and selected in the ROD. In short, NMFS already prepared an EIS that supports these final groundfish harvest specifications and has taken a "hard look" and determined, as documented in the 2026 SIR, that supplementation of the Final EIS is not required for NMFS to approve and implement the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI and GOA.

Groundfish harvests are managed subject to annual limits on the retained and discarded catch amounts of each stock and stock complex. The "harvest strategy" is the method used to calculate these annual limits, referred to as "harvest specifications," and the process of establishing them is referred to as the "specifications process." NMFS prepared the Final EIS to analyze the environmental, social, and economic impacts of alternative harvest strategies used to determine the annual harvest specifications for the federally managed groundfish fisheries in the GOA and BSAI management area.

The purpose of the harvest strategy is to: (1) provide for orderly and controlled commercial fishing for groundfish; (2) promote sustainable incomes to the fishing, fish processing, and support industries; (3) support sustainable fishing communities; and (4) provide sustainable flows of fish products to consumers. The harvest strategy balances groundfish harvest in the fishing year with ecosystem needs (*e.g.*, non-target fish stocks, marine mammals, seabirds, and habitat). Importantly, the harvest strategy and specification process are designed to use the best available scientific information developed through the SAFE report (including the ESRs) to calculate the status determination criteria, assess the status of each stock, and set the TACs.

In the ROD, NMFS selected one of the alternative harvest strategies analyzed in the Final EIS: to set TACs that fall within the range of ABCs recommended through the harvest specifications process. NMFS concluded that the preferred harvest strategy analyzed in the Final EIS and selected in the ROD provides the best balance among relevant environmental, social, and economic considerations and allows for continued

management of the groundfish fisheries based on the most recent, best scientific information. While the specific numbers that the harvest strategy produces may vary from year to year, the methodology used for the preferred harvest strategy remains constant. NMFS has not changed the harvest strategy or specifications process from what was analyzed in the Final EIS.

As recognized in the ROD, the preferred alternative harvest strategy (1) prevents overfishing because it is consistent with the ABCs for the target species recommended on the basis of the best scientific information; (2) sets TACs that fall within the BSAI OY range, which is set to reflect ecosystem constraints; (3) works within a broad range of existing and evolving fishery management measures meant to balance harvest for fishing and processing industries and communities and environmental harm and ecosystem impacts, while also facilitating continued harvests of BSAI groundfish; and (4) allows for management of target species within harvest limits that are based on the best scientific information available, including ecosystem information.

The harvest strategy employs the same process each year but is designed to consider the most current, available information on stock status and ecosystem conditions so that the outputs of the process (OFLs, ABCs, and TACs) are adaptive and reflective of current conditions. Each year the strategy uses the best scientific information available in the SAFE reports to derive the annual harvest specifications for OFLs, ABCs, and TACs. Through this process, each year, the Groundfish Plan Teams for the BSAI and GOA (Groundfish Plan Teams) use the most recent stock assessments based on survey results and other biological data to calculate biomass, OFLs, and ABCs for each stock and stock complex. The OFLs and ABCs are published with the harvest specifications, and provide the foundation for the Council and NMFS to develop the TACs. The OFLs and ABCs reflect fishery science, applied in light of the requirements of the FMPs. The Council uses the AP report as a basis for TAC recommendations, which are consistent with the SSC's

OFL and ABC recommendations (*i.e.*, the TAC recommendations cannot exceed the SSC's ABC recommendations, and ABCs cannot exceed OFLs).

The Final EIS evaluated the consequences of alternative harvest strategies on ecosystem components and on the ecosystem as a whole. The Final EIS evaluated the alternatives for their effects within the action area. The environmental consequences of each alternative were considered for the following resource components: target species, non-specified species, forage species, prohibited species, marine mammals, seabirds, habitat (Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)), ecosystem relationships, and socioeconomic impacts. These considerations were evaluated based on the conditions as they existed at the time the Final EIS was developed, but the Final EIS also anticipated potential changes in these conditions, including climate variability, would be incorporated, as appropriate, through the annual implementation of the harvest strategy. Each year since 2007 NMFS has considered in the SIR process relevant changes (*i.e.*, new information, changed circumstances, potential changes to the action) for the primary purpose of evaluating the need to supplement the Final EIS.

Consistent with the NEPA and NOAA's Policy and Procedures for Compliance with the NEPA and Related Authorities, Companion Manual for NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A, NMFS should prepare supplements to either draft or final environmental impact statements if a major federal action remains to occur and: (i) the agency makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or (ii) there are substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis (*Marsh* v. *Oregon Nat. Res. Council*, 490 U.S. 360, 371-373 (1989)). The Companion Manual states that NMFS may choose to prepare a SIR for determining whether supplementation is necessary; the SIR is a decision tool that documents NMFS's evaluation of new information, changed circumstances, or proposed changes to an action and assists in determining whether a supplemental NEPA

document is necessary. Ultimately, an agency is required to take a "hard look" at the new information to assess whether supplementation might be necessary (*Norton* v. *S. Utah Wilderness All.*, 542 U.S. 55, 72-73 (2004)).

NMFS prepares a SIR each year to take that hard look and document the evaluation and decision whether a supplemental EIS (SEIS) is necessary to implement the annual groundfish harvest specifications. To do this, NMFS analyzes the available information to determine whether an SEIS must be prepared. The primary sources of information are the SAFE reports, which represent the best scientific information available for the harvest specifications. Included in the SAFE reports are the groundfish stock assessments and any ESPs and the ESRs. Several other regularly updated reports are available as resources, including reports on ecosystem component species (*e.g.*, forage fish report); the Economic SAFE report; marine mammal stock assessment reports, Endangered Species Act (ESA) 5-year status reviews, and other ESA and marine mammal specific reports; EFH 5-year reviews; NMFS inseason management reports and reports on catch, bycatch, and incidental take in the fisheries; and analyses prepared to support other NMFS management actions when relevant. To date, no annual SIR has concluded that an SEIS is necessary.

The SIR recognizes the preferred harvest strategy analyzed in the Final EIS and selected in the ROD was built on an annual process to compile and utilize the most recent, best scientific information available on stock abundance and condition, harvest and survey data, environmental and ecosystem factors, and socioeconomic conditions. The Final EIS contemplates that the annual process was built on flexibility to allow for the implementation of annual harvest specifications that reflect new information and changing circumstances in the context of the considerations in the Final EIS.

NMFS utilizes a two-part inquiry to assess the need for an SEIS. First, NMFS analyzes whether there are substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to

environmental concerns, or, in other words, NMFS considers whether the harvest strategy changed in such a way that it is meaningfully different than how the strategy was considered and evaluated in the Final EIS. Second, NMFS assesses if there are substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis in the Final EIS, or, in other words, NMFS considers whether there is new information that would alter the conclusions on impacts of the implementation of the harvest strategy that were made in that EIS. Ultimately, NMFS considers whether there is substantial new information that indicates implementation of the harvest specifications will affect the environment in a significant manner or to a significant extent not considered in the Final EIS.

First, NMFS has determined that the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for the BSAI are consistent with the preferred alternative harvest strategy analyzed in the Final EIS and selected in the ROD because they were developed through the harvest specifications process, are within the OY established for the BSAI, and do not set TAC to exceed the ABC for any single stock or stock complex.

Second, NMFS has concluded that the best available, most recent information presented on stock abundance and condition, harvest and survey data, environmental and ecosystem factors, and socioeconomic conditions and used to set the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications does not represent a significant change relative to the environmental impacts of the preferred harvest strategy analyzed in the Final EIS. As documented in the 2026 SIR, NMFS assessed relevant information and circumstances regarding the following resource components: (1) systemic ecosystem effects; (2) target species, non-specified and forage species, and prohibited species catch; (3) marine mammals; (4) seabirds; and (5) habitat impacts. In this assessment, the SIR summarizes the analysis of impacts to each resource component in the Final EIS. The SIR relies on the most recent and best available information on each of the resource components to

then evaluate whether any new information and circumstances present a seriously different picture of the likely environmental harms of the action to occur (the annual implementation of the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications) beyond what was considered in the Final EIS. For each resource component, NMFS concluded in the 2026 SIR that the implementation of the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications will not affect the resource component in a significant manner or to a significant extent not considered in the Final EIS.

Based on the SIR prepared in conjunction with these harvest specifications, NMFS determined that the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications do not constitute a substantial change in the proposed action analyzed in the Final EIS and there are no substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis in the Final EIS. More details are provided in the 2026 SIR (see **ADDRESSES**).

Comment 2: Recent marine heatwaves in the North Pacific and Bering Sea have caused widespread, long-lasting ecosystem impacts, with climate-driven warming stressing fish populations by reducing growth and energy reserves, while declining sea ice and increasing ocean acidification further threaten the region's marine ecosystem.

Response: Climate variability is accounted for in NMFS's decision-making on the annual implementation of the harvest specifications, consistent with the harvest strategy in the FMP and analyzed in the Final EIS (see Response to Comment 1).

The harvest specifications process uses the best scientific information available on climate variability, as summarized primarily from the SAFE reports (including the ESRs). The information from SAFE reports and other sources are considered during the harvest specifications process and used to evaluate risk, uncertainty, and ecosystem factors when setting TACs in the manner consistent with the preferred strategy contemplated by the Final EIS and ROD.

Chapter 3.5 of the Final EIS examined existing physical and oceanographic conditions in the BSAI and GOA, and addressed climate and ecological regime shifts, warming and loss of sea ice, and acidification. Climate variability is known to impact all three issues used to assess systemic ecosystem impacts in the Final EIS: (1) predator-prey relationships, (2) energy flow and removal, and (3) diversity.

The annual harvest specifications process continues to assess systemic ecosystem impacts across the three issues analyzed in the Final EIS. Ongoing research has increased NMFS's understanding of the interactions among ecosystem components, including how they are impacted by changing environmental and climate conditions. Advances in research (*e.g.*, genomic sequencing, electronic catch) and engineering (*e.g.*, autonomous sampling vehicles, ship-based acoustic monitoring) have also expanded the breadth of information available for consideration in the annual harvest specifications process since the Final EIS.

SAFE reports and ESRs summarize and present information about ecosystem status and trends, physical oceanography, biological data, and socio-ecological dimensions. There are many examples of climate variability considerations presented in the ESRs, including: (1) physical indicators and oceanographic metrics (*e.g.*, sea surface and bottom temperatures, marine heatwaves, wind, sea-ice, and cold pool extents); (2) impacts from oceanographic changes (*e.g.*, changes in sea ice and cold pool extents resulting in distributional shifts in space (*e.g.*, northward) and time (*e.g.*, earlier/later seasonal movement) in stocks); (3) climate-driven changes to metabolic demands and foraging conditions tied to declining conditions for groundfish during recent marine heatwaves; (4) impacts of anomalously warm conditions in the marine and river environments on juveniles and adults of certain salmon stocks; and (5) emerging stressors like ocean acidification and implications for species (*e.g.*, crab, mollusks). In addition,

recent ESRs have reported indices of borealization in the southeastern Bering Sea in order to monitor ecosystem-level responses to warming conditions.

The Groundfish Plan Teams, SSC, AP, and the Council review the ESRs prior to the review of the stock assessments and advancing recommendations to NMFS for the annual OFLs, ABCs, and TACs. The ESRs provide the scientific review body (the SSC) with context for the annual biological reference points (OFLs and ABCs), and for the Council's final TAC recommendations for groundfish, which are constrained by those biological reference points. Information from the ESRs are also integrated into the annual harvest recommendations through inclusion in stock assessment-specific risk tables (see Reponses to Comments 4 and 8 for more information on risk tables).

Finally, the FMP indicated that the ongoing consideration of factors like climate variability would be addressed in the SAFE reports (FMP Sections 3.2.2.2 and 3.2.3.1.2), as is currently the case with both the individual stock assessments and the ESRs. As a result, the annual harvest specifications process, which implements the preferred alternative harvest strategy under the Final EIS and ROD, allows for the consideration of the best scientific information available on climate variability (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(2); § 600.315).

Comment 3: The harvest specifications are in violation of the Council's peer review process, SSC guidelines, and National Standard 2 because there was no 2025 SAFE report and no recommendations from the Plan Team. The 2024 SAFE is stale and outdated.

Response: NMFS is required to implement harvest specifications consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, implementing regulations, and the FMP. NMFS has determined the final harvest specifications are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including National Standard 2, implementing regulations, and the FMP, and align with other guidelines like the SSC Handbook.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that conservation and management measures be based on the best scientific information available (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(2)) and that the SSC provide scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for ABCs, preventing overfishing, and reports on stock status and health (16 U.S.C. 1852(g)(1)(B)). Regulations implementing the FMP require NMFS to publish proposed specifications after consultation with the Council and provide an opportunity for public comment before finalizing specifications (§ 679.20(c)).

Under the FMP, the Council develops harvest specification recommendations for NMFS's consideration based on: (1) recommendations and supporting information from the Groundfish Plan Teams and SSC; (2) information from the AP and the public; and (3) other relevant information. The SAFE report that informs harvest specifications is reviewed by the Groundfish Plan Teams, SSC, AP, and Council. The FMP and SSC Handbook specify that SSC review constitutes the official scientific review under the Information Quality Act and that SAFE reports accepted by the SSC constitute the best scientific information available for purposes of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (FMP Section 3.2.3.1.2). The SSC Handbook also indicates that the SSC recommends OFLs and ABCs after reviewing the stock assessment and the report of the Plan Team that reviewed the stock assessment. The SSC Handbook is available at: *https://files.npfmc.org/membership/SSC/SSChandbook.pdf*.

NMFS acknowledges there was a disruption in the completion of the stock assessments that were scheduled for update in 2025, and the November 2025 Plan Team meetings were canceled (since there were no updated stock assessments to review at that time). However, this disruption does not render the final harvest specifications inconsistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, implementing regulations, or the FMP. The 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs are unchanged from specifications previously reviewed by the Plan Team and SSC. The OFLs and ABCs recommended in 2025 were based on

the 2024 SAFE report, which underwent full review by the Plan Team and SSC in 2024 and informed the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications. The same OFLs and ABCs were subsequently reviewed again by the Plan Team in October 2025 and by the SSC in October 2025 for the proposed specifications using the 2024 SAFE report, the same as in prior years. This year, the OFLs and ABCs were then reviewed again by SSC in December 2025 using the 2024 SAFE report for the final harvest specifications. Even with the disruptions in 2025, this review by the Plan Team and SSC remains consistent with the FMP and aligns with the SSC Handbook. The SSC further fulfilled its statutory role by recommending ABCs and OFLs to prevent overfishing and by reviewing stock status and health.

In addition to the 2024 stock assessments, additional information was reviewed and considered during the process: prior SAFE reports, BSAI catch reports for 2024 and 2025, biomass and survey trend summaries, 2025 survey information, the 2024 ESRs, and preliminary ESRs and ESPs from October 2025. The information accepted by the SSC constitutes the best scientific information available for purposes of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The annual harvest specification process this year therefore relies on the best scientific information available, including peer-reviewed stock assessments by the Plan Team in 2024 and September 2025 and the SSC in 2024 and 2025 (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(2); § 600.315).

The Council recommended proposed TACs at its October 2025 meeting and final TACs at its December 2025 meeting. The Plan Team, SSC, AP, and Council meetings are open to the public both virtually and in person and provide an opportunity for public comment. The SAFE reports are available online (see **ADDRESSES**). In addition, NMFS published the proposed rule for the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications on December 16, 2025, and public comment was invited through January 5, 2026 (90 FR 58204). Development of the harvest specifications was fully transparent, with multiple

opportunities for public review and comment at the Plan Team, SSC, AP, and Council meetings and through the public comment period announced in the **Federal Register**.

NMFS is now implementing these final harvest specifications after consultation with the Council and consideration of public comment received on the proposed specifications. This is consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and implementing regulations and consistent with the process described in the FMP.

Comment 4: The TACs should be set at the most conservative and precautionary level at the lower limit of the OY of 1.4 million mt. The current process does not account for uncertainty that faces the ecosystem and fisheries.

Response: The groundfish harvest specifications process and resulting TACs incorporates available information on the status of the ecosystems, accounts for uncertainty and risk, and is precautionary, and for these reasons NMFS does not agree that TACs should be set lower than the current sum of 2.0 million mt.

The FMP and implementing regulations direct that the sum of the TACs for the BSAI "must be within the OY range specified" in regulation (§ 679.20(a)(1)(i)(A), (a)(2)). The sum of the TACs for 2026 and 2027 are 2.0 million mt per year, which are within the OY range specified in regulation of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt. This OY, which was previously recommended by the Council and approved by NMFS, is set forth in the FMP and in regulation. NMFS has therefore determined that, in any given year, setting the TACs to fall within the OY range is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and provides the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities and taking into account the protection of marine ecosystems and relevant economic, social, or ecological factors (§ 600.310(e)(3)).

Setting the TACs to meet the upper bound of the OY range of 2.0 million mt represents a 37 percent reduction below the total groundfish ABC and balances relevant National Standard 1 considerations. Setting TACs at the higher bound of the OY will

provide the greatest benefit for the Nation based on the benefits of maintaining viable groundfish fisheries and contributions to regional and local economies. The 37 percent reduction from total groundfish ABC recognizes the benefits that flow from that reduction, such as protections afforded to marine ecosystems, forage for ecosystem components, and other ecological factors (§ 600.310(e)(3)(iii)).

NMFS does not agree that TACs should be set any lower than the current sum. These TACs account for the current status of fish stocks and the BSAI ecosystem, while also accounting for current uncertainties and socioeconomic considerations across the fisheries and communities of the BSAI. The harvest specifications process is a robust process that involves significant scientific review and input and uses the best scientific information available when applying the harvest strategy to establish annual harvest specifications. Scientists from the AFSC prepare the stock assessments using sophisticated statistical analyses of fish populations. The assessments for the BSAI are informed by the survey and harvest data available, including multiple annual surveys in the Eastern Bering Sea and biennial surveys in the AI. The stock assessments undergo rigorous review, during public meetings, by the scientists and resource managers on the Plan Team and SSC. The Plan Team first reviews the stock assessments and recommends OFLs and ABCs for each stock or stock complex for specified management areas. The SSC then reviews the assessments and recommends OFLs and ABCs, which provide the foundation for the Council to recommend and NMFS to establish the TAC for each stock or stock complex. The status of fish stocks in the BSAI is reviewed in each stock assessment; the status of the BS and AI ecosystems are compiled in ESRs and other reports that are expressly considered throughout the process; and the status of fisheries and fishing communities are also compiled in several reports and presented during public comment.

Precaution that accounts for uncertainties and risk is embedded in the harvest strategy and in the annual stock assessment process for specifying OFLs, ABCs, and TACs for BSAI groundfish stocks. First, OFL and ABC are calculated for each stock and stock complex using prescribed methods set forth in the FMP. These methods become more precautionary depending on the tier level and stock status: for example, with less reliable information, the larger the buffer (reduction) between OFL and ABC, and as stock status declines, the OFL and ABC are reduced. Calculating OFLs and ABCs using this tier system accounts for uncertainties as it is based on the level of reliable information about the stock and is adaptive based on stock status. Precaution built into the specification of OFL and ABC also influences TAC as TAC cannot exceed ABC and ABC cannot exceed OFL.

Second, the risk tables are a tool prepared for Alaska groundfish stocks to specifically address uncertainty across four considerations: assessment-related, population dynamics, environmental/ecosystem, and fishery performance. Risk tables account for additional scientific information and uncertainty that are not captured in the modeling, consistent with the FMP and National Standard 1 regulations that ABC accounts for scientific uncertainty in the estimate of OFL and "any other scientific uncertainty" (§ 600.310(f)(1)(ii)). The risk table is used to evaluate the severity and level of concern regarding those four considerations, including environmental/ecosystem considerations, and that evaluation can inform a scientific recommendation to further reduce ABC. Because TAC cannot exceed ABC, reductions in ABC for scientific uncertainty based on the risk table result in additional precaution in the catch limits (TACs) for groundfish of the BSAI.

Third, the sum of all TACs must be within the OY range, which in the BSAI constrains the TACs that NMFS can implement. Since the sum of all TACs in the BSAI well exceeds the upper range of OY, even though TACs can be set up to ABC, some

TACs must be set lower than ABCs to ensure the sum of all TACs falls within the OY range (§ 679.20(a)(1)(i)(A) and (a)(2)). While there is precaution built into the specification of each ABC (a reduction from OFL, representing scientific uncertainty) and TAC (a reduction from ABC, representing management uncertainty), the OY range is further constraining and precautionary across the ecosystem in the BSAI by reducing fishery removals up to the TACs implemented in this final rule. This result further reduces impacts to the ecosystem from fishing for groundfish species.

Any additional uncertainty in this year's process was addressed by the SSC in December 2025 and summarized in the SSC report. At its December 2025 meeting during which the SSC recommended final 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs, the SSC recognized that the lack of new assessments in 2025 due to the government shutdown increases uncertainty and elevates risk for all stocks. In implementing what the SSC called a "structured process" for developing its OFL and ABC recommendations in light of this increased uncertainty and risk, the SSC used as a starting point the proposed OFLs and ABCs for 2026 that were recommended by the SSC in October 2025; these are the final OFLs and ABCs for 2026 that were reviewed in the 2024 cycle and are based on the 2024 SAFE report. Under the SSC's framework, the SSC then evaluated whether any stocks should be considered for potential changes to those proposed specifications and whether individual stocks warranted consideration of additional conservation. The SSC explained that "the framework established criteria for considering whether the [proposed] specifications, which were based on the most recent fully peer reviewed SAFE reports, remain the best available scientific advice."

The SSC's stock-specific deliberations focused on whether additional uncertainty and risk were sufficient to warrant reductions in ABC (which influences TAC because TAC cannot exceed ABC). SSC discussions highlighted the need to explicitly consider the increase in uncertainty as stock trends and reference points are projected forward over

multiple years, but noted that an approach for quantifying increased uncertainty could not be developed in the current timeframe. Ultimately, the SSC used the established qualitative risk table framework for consistency across years in order to inform whether reductions in ABC were warranted on the basis of the best information available during this year's specifications process. The SSC also explained that the specifications process is based on the tier system, precautionary harvest control rules, and assessment frequencies that reflect different life history dynamics and are periodically reviewed and adjusted. In sum, while the SSC recognized the potential for increased uncertainty and risk in developing the 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs, additional uncertainty and risk were expressly assessed by the SSC for each stock through the evaluation of the risk tables, which are an established method for assessing additional scientific information and uncertainty that are not captured in the modeling for calculating ABC. The SSC's December 2025 report is available at: *https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=74322a78-4de1-451c-a10f-13b11286f8b9.pdf&fileName=Draft%20SSC%20Report%20Dec%202025.pdf*.

Comment 5: The PSC limits should be set at the most conservative and precautionary level for the BSAI and must address bycatch mortality of crab, halibut, and salmon. The information used to set the PSC limits is stale and outdated.

Response: The harvest specifications set PSC limits based on pre-existing frameworks set out in regulation. In these final harvest specifications, NMFS implements PSC limits consistent with the requirements of the regulations for setting PSC limits and based on the most recent information available.

National Standard 9 directs that conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, minimize bycatch, and, if bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize mortality of bycatch (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(9)). The Council recommends and NMFS develops and implements FMP amendments and regulations for new bycatch reduction

measures, including PSC limits, based on those recommendations. Each of these actions establishing a PSC limit considered and balanced all the National Standards, including the direction to minimize bycatch and bycatch mortality, including PSC, to the extent practicable. Specifying PSC limits in the annual harvest specifications consistent with the existing PSC regulations is therefore consistent with National Standard 9. The Council and NMFS are committed to continued improvements in bycatch management and have undertaken or are currently considering actions to address PSC (this includes amendment 123 to address halibut PSC in the Amendment 80 sector). However, changes to PSC limits and bycatch management are outside the scope of this final rule to implement the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI.

Regulations at § 679.21 set forth PSC limits for the BSAI groundfish fisheries for PSC species (halibut, crab, herring, and salmon). Some PSC limits in the BSAI are fixed limits set in regulation such that there is no updated information needed: the halibut PSC limits for the BSAI trawl limited access sector, BSAI non-trawl sector, and CDQ Program; non-Chinook salmon PSC limit in the CVOA; and Chinook salmon PSC limit for the Aleutian Islands pollock fishery (§ 679.21(b), (f), and (g)).

Other PSC limits in the BSAI are set in the groundfish harvest specifications based on specific regulatory criteria and updated information, as dictated in regulation: halibut PSC limit for Amendment 80 sector (AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index and IPHC setline survey index); Tanner crab and snow crab PSC limits for trawl fisheries (NMFS annual bottom trawl survey); and Chinook salmon PSC limits for Bering Sea pollock fishery (State of Alaska 3–System Index for western Alaska) (§ 679.21(b), (e), and (f)). In specifying these PSC limits in this final rule, NMFS used the 2025 AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index and IPHC setline survey index, the 2025 NMFS annual bottom trawl survey, and the 2025 State of Alaska 3–System Index for

western Alaska, as required by § 679.21 (see sections above titled PSC Limits for Halibut, Crab, and Herring, and Salmon PSC Limits).

The regulations do not specify the information to be used to set the red king crab (based on abundance and spawning biomass) and herring (annual eastern Bering Sea herring biomass) PSC limits. For red king crab, NMFS used the 2025 NMFS annual bottom trawl survey, and for herring NMFS used the State's 2024 estimate of herring biomass.

Comment 6: NMFS should revise the 2026 and 2027 BSAI groundfish harvest specifications to incorporate stronger bycatch limits, improved monitoring, and precautionary reductions where ecosystem indicators warrant it.

Response: Changes to bycatch limits and monitoring are outside the scope of this final rule to implement the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI. Information on bycatch limits is provided in Response to Comment 5.

Each year NMFS publishes an Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) describing how observers and electronic monitoring (EM) are assigned to Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries to collect scientifically sound, representative data on catch and fishing activity. This information supports stock assessments, bycatch estimation, quota monitoring, and other fishery management and conservation needs, while allowing NMFS to meet monitoring objectives and adapt to changing fishery conditions and technologies. More information on the North Pacific Observer Program is available in the 2026 ADP: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-01/Final_2026_ADP_akro.pdf.*

As explained in the 2026 ADP, the Observer Program is the largest observer program in the country and is responsible for monitoring a fleet of nearly 1,000 vessels that fish a combination of hook-and-line, pot, and trawl gear across the Alaska EEZ. Fishing activities belong to either partial or full coverage components of the program. In the full coverage component of the program, every trip is monitored by 1 or 2 observers,

or, in the case of pollock catcher vessels, has EM on 100 percent of the time, and the vast majority of groundfish harvest is covered by this portion of the program. The full coverage component includes the pollock trawl fishery, PCTC Program fishery, Amendment 80 fishery, and all mothership vessels. In the partial coverage component, a subset of trips are randomly selected for monitoring by an observer or EM system. In 2026, NMFS expects to monitor a total of 4,341 trips and 22,110 days, consisting of an estimated 2,868 trips and 17,461 days in the full coverage component of the program, and 1,473 trips and 4,649 days in the partial coverage component.

For more information on how this process accounts for uncertainty and risk, is precautionary, and includes ecosystem information, see Response to Comments 3, 4, 5, and 8.

Comment 7: Alaska's coastal communities cannot continue bearing the consequences of a management system that prioritizes volume over sustainability.

Response: NMFS recognizes the importance of the communities that depend on Alaska fisheries. NMFS also recognizes the harvest specifications, in particular the specification of TACs, affect fishery participants and communities.

One of the purposes of the harvest strategy used to develop the harvest specifications is to support sustainable fishing communities. The harvest specifications specify TAC amounts for harvest by fishing vessels and processing by fish processors, both of which are supported by businesses located in coastal communities. Many coastal communities rely on processing plants to generate revenue and employ community members, and reducing the amount of fish landed in these communities could have detrimental economic effects on these communities.

The TAC amounts are set each year based on consideration of the best scientific information available and public comment relevant to impacts on coastal communities. The Economic SAFE, ESRs, and ESPs provide relevant information on the status of

fishery participants and communities throughout Alaska and relevant socioeconomic indicators are presented in the ESRs and ESPs. As noted in the 2024 ESRs, the majority of Alaska groundfish and crab fisheries are sustainably managed.

The harvest specifications are also informed by public comment that can be provided at every step through the Council and NMFS process. Public comment can inform the Council's and NMFS's consideration in recommending and setting TACs, respectively, such as impacts to coastal communities. The AP also reviews and provides TAC recommendations to the Council. The Council appoints to the AP recognized experts from the fishing industry and related fields who represent a variety of gear types, industry, and related interests as well as a spread of geographic regions of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest having major interest in the fisheries off Alaska. The AP also has a designated Alaska Native Tribal Representative seat. The purpose of the AP is to represent and provide the perspectives of fishery participants and affected communities. Through its role, the AP provides perspectives on the socioeconomic and cultural impacts of TAC and PSC amounts on fishery participants and affected communities. During this annual process, NMFS also publishes the proposed specifications and invites public comment. This provides the public with another opportunity to offer NMFS information and input for consideration on the socioeconomic impacts of the proposed TACs for each stock or stock complex.

Ultimately, every final 2026 and 2027 TAC has been specified within the robust, precautionary framework outlined in Response to Comment 4; this framework is designed to prevent overfishing while achieving the OY for the BSAI groundfish fisheries. These TACs, as specified under the harvest strategy, are within the OY range for the BSAI groundfish fisheries and support sustainable fishing communities while also providing for sustainable incomes for fishery participants.

Comment 8: Setting TAC above precautionary or conservative levels will worsen bycatch impacts to the ecosystems and harm local Alaska communities dependent on them. NMFS should prioritize conservation of species important to coastal communities.

Response: The TAC setting process accounts for ecosystem and socioeconomic information, such as impacts on communities. The TACs specified in this final rule are consistent with regulations on bycatch, are implemented in consideration of ecosystem information, are based on precaution that is built in to the process, and are reflective of socioeconomic considerations, like effects on communities. Effects on communities is also addressed in Response to Comment 7. The specification of bycatch (PSC) limits is addressed in Response to Comment 5. Response to Comment 4 addresses the precautionary measures embedded in the harvest specification process, and Response to Comment 2 details other reports that inform stock assessments and the harvest specification process.

The annual process for specifying TACs for groundfish in the BSAI is a thorough, scientifically driven process informed by the best available information on the status of target and bycatch species and the marine ecosystems in the BS and AI as well as socioeconomic considerations like harvest data and impacts on fishery participants and communities. The primary sources of ecosystem information are the ESRs, which provide the Plan Team, SSC, AP, Council, scientific community, and the public, as well as NMFS, with information about ecosystem status and trends for the BS and AI ecosystems. The ESRs are drafted by scientists and staff from NOAA, other federal and state agencies, academic institutions, Tribes, and non-profits.

Ecosystem information from the ESRs, as well as ESPs, is integrated into the stock assessments for target species in several ways. Stock assessment authors will include, if possible, relevant ecosystem-related factors into their modeling. Many models use variables that are potentially ecosystem-related, climate-impacted like size and

condition of fish (*i.e.*, length and weight) and recruitment, and some models integrate specific environmental factors that have been influenced by climate variability, such as the extent of the cold pool and bottom temperature in the survey area. Some stock assessments present ecosystem considerations qualitatively through an additional ecosystem considerations section prepared for operational assessments like pollock. And all stock assessments include a risk table that assesses, of the four considerations, environmental/ecosystem considerations that may warrant a reduction in ABC depending on the level of concern and in consideration of additional scientific uncertainty (more information on risk tables is provided in Response to Comment 4). Some stock assessments also include an ESP, which is a framework for organizing ecosystem and socioeconomic information about an individual stock. The ESP informs environmental and ecosystem considerations, population dynamics, and fisheries performance about that stock and is also integrated into the stock assessment in the risk table. BSAI groundfish stocks with ESPs include: sablefish and Eastern Bering Sea Pacific cod.

The ESRs also provide information on the status of PSC species like salmon, halibut, and crab. The 2024 ESRs included information on salmon in the BS ecosystem and AI ecosystem, including a synthesis of the status of adult and juvenile chum, king, and sockeye salmon; updated information on the abundance of salmon; fish condition and trends; trends in the run size of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon; the increasing abundance and role of eastern Kamchatka pink salmon in the Aleutian Islands; and trends in directed commercial catch of salmon. The 2024 EBS ESR also included an overview of foraging and energetics for halibut, and the 2024 AI ESR evaluated changes in the biomass of fish apex predators, including halibut. The 2024 EBS ESR evaluated trends influencing commercial crab stock biomass (including snow crab).

As a result, the Plan Team and SSC review a robust set of information on the status of target and bycatch species and the marine ecosystems in the BS and AI

ecosystems. This information is fully incorporated in the groundfish harvest specifications process such that the setting of OFL and ABC for stocks and stock complexes accounts for the best scientific information available, including on the BS and AI ecosystems. Stock assessments that utilize this information are thoroughly reviewed by the Plan Team and the SSC through a public process.

The TAC setting process is likewise informed by this information, which is the best scientific information available, on the biological condition of the stocks and socioeconomic considerations. The ESRs and ESPs provide relevant information for setting TACs, and information from the ESRs and ESPs is presented and reviewed by the Plan Team, SSC, AP, and Council during the process. In the TAC setting process, the Council reviews the Plan Team and SSC reports. With this information, public comment, and TAC recommendations from the Council's AP, the Council recommends TACs to NMFS. NMFS reviews those recommendations, the Plan Team and SSC reports, the SAFE reports, and other relevant documents.

For specifying TAC, the FMP provides that TAC may be lower than the ABC if warranted on the basis of bycatch considerations, management uncertainty, or socioeconomic considerations, or if required in order to cause the sum of the TACs to fall within the OY range (FMP Section 3.2.3.4). TAC is the annual catch target for a stock or stock complex, derived from the ABC by considering social and economic factors and management uncertainty (*i.e.*, uncertainty in the ability of managers to constrain catch so the ACL is not exceeded, and uncertainty in quantifying the true catch amount) (FMP Section 3.2.1; § 600.310(f) and (g)(4)). Regulations at § 679.20(a)(3) provide that the annual determinations for TACs may be adjusted based on the biological condition of groundfish stocks and specific socioeconomic considerations. As explained in Response to Comment 7, NMFS recognizes the harvest specifications, in particular the specification of TAC, affect fishery participants and communities. The harvest

specifications are informed by public comment that can be provided at every step through the Council and NMFS process. The Council and NMFS consider these factors from the FMP and regulations and public comment in recommending and implementing TACs.

Consistent with National Standard 1 guidelines in Federal regulations at § 600.310 and the FMP, the TAC cannot exceed ABC and ABC cannot exceed the OFL (§ 600.310(f)(3), (f)(4), and (g)(4)). For all stocks and stock complexes in the BSAI, ABCs do not exceed the OFLs, and TACs do not exceed the ABCs (and therefore annual catch limits (ACLs)). The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the OY for each fishery (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(1)). The OFL is the catch level above which overfishing is occurring; overfishing occurs whenever a stock or stock complex is subjected to a level of fishing mortality or annual total catch that jeopardizes the capacity of a stock or stock complex to produce maximum sustainable yield on a continuing basis (FMP Section 3.2.1). This rule specifies an OFL for each stock and stock complex. NMFS manages fisheries inseason to ensure that TACs are not exceeded. Managing the TAC ensures that the ABC (and therefore ACL) and OFL are not exceeded. Each stock assessment also notes whether overfishing has occurred for that stock or stock complex, and none of the groundfish of the BSAI are subject to overfishing.

Comment 9: The 2026 and 2027 harvest specification process incorporates ecosystem considerations, is conservative and precautionary, complies with National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is fully transparent. The process promotes stability and predictability in BSAI groundfish fisheries, supporting fishermen, communities, supply chains, and domestic seafood markets.

Response: NMFS acknowledges this comment. For more information on ecosystem considerations see Response to Comments 1 and 8; precaution see Response to

Comments 2, 4, and 5; National Standard 2 see Response to Comments 3 and 8; and the transparency of the process see Response to Comments 3 and 8.

Comment 10: Due to the 2025 government shutdown, there was no viable path to produce updated SAFEs, and the Council's decision to rely on the most recent available SAFEs is consistent with practices of other councils that cannot conduct annual assessments. The SSC found no significant issues with using existing assessments that would risk exceeding ABCs or the 2.0 million ton BSAI groundfish harvest limit, and identified no scientific basis for reducing 2026 ABC or TAC limits below previously specified levels. The commentator supports multi-year groundfish assessment cycles and encourages the Council to pursue longer-term contingency planning for future disruptions to annual assessments.

Response: NMFS acknowledges this comment.

Comment 11: The 2025 BS pollock ICA was not fully used as incidental catch and not reallocated to the AFA sector. The 2026 ICA should be reallocated to directed fisheries if not harvested as incidental catch. Future ICAs should be set at levels reflecting likely catch.

Response: Incidental catch of BS pollock is historically variable and in recent years has been highly variable. Because of this uncertainty, NMFS cannot predict how much ICA will be taken while developing the harvest specifications and takes a precautionary approach by conservatively setting the ICA based on historical years where catch of ICA was higher to prevent reallocating more to the ICA from AFA sectors mid-year, thus disrupting AFA fishing operations. NMFS has authority under § 679.20(a)(5)(i)(A)(*1*) to reallocate ICA to AFA sectors and vice versa if the Regional Administrator determines that the ICA in the harvest specifications was set too high or too low. If the BS pollock ICA is not being harvested as incidental catch in 2026, NMFS intends to reallocate likely unharvested fish to the AFA sectors if participants show

interest in harvesting this allocation and have the harvesting capacity to catch more fish. NMFS will continue to set ICAs based on the most recent historical years but may reduce the ICA in the future if these recent years show a pattern of lower incidental catch of pollock in non-pollock groundfish fisheries.

Comment 12: NMFS's continued authorization of trawl fisheries unlawfully allows the take of marine mammals listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), violating the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and constituting arbitrary and capricious agency action. Issuing incidental take permits alone does not demonstrate MMPA compliance; NMFS must ensure recovery plans and take reduction plans are in place or underway and that the fisheries' impacts on affected species or stocks are no more than negligible.

Response: NMFS approves and implements the harvest specifications if they are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law, including the MMPA. NMFS has determined that these final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications are consistent with the MMPA. The BSAI (and GOA) groundfish fisheries identified as a Category I or II fishery that interact with ESA-listed species have a valid MMPA section 101(a)(5)(E) permit (89 FR 50270, June 13, 2024).

NMFS categorizes all U.S. commercial fisheries under the MMPA List of Fisheries (LOF) according to the levels of marine mammal mortality and serious injury (M/SI). Each fishery is classified through an analysis that assesses the potential cumulative impact of all fisheries, as well as individual fishery impacts, on a marine mammal stock by comparing M/SI levels to the potential biological removal (PBR) for the marine mammal stock. PBR is defined as the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a marine mammal stock while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population (50 CFR 229.2). Category I fisheries have frequent M/SI of marine mammals resulting in annual

mortality greater than or equal to 50 percent of PBR. Category II fisheries have a level of M/SI that exceeds 1 percent but is less than 50 percent of the stock's PBR level, if total fishery related mortality is greater than or equal to 10 percent of the PBR. Category III fisheries interact with marine mammal stocks with annual M/SI less than or equal to one percent of the marine mammal's PBR level and total fishery-related mortality less than 10 percent of PBR. More information on the LOF and fishery categories is available at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-protection-act-list-fisheries*.

According to the most recent final LOF, no Alaska groundfish fisheries are Category I (89 FR 12257, February 16, 2024). Three Alaska groundfish fisheries are Category II, and two of these fisheries are BSAI groundfish fisheries: the AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands flatfish trawl fishery (the Amendment 80 fishery) and the AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands pollock trawl fishery (the pollock trawl fishery). The rest of the Alaska groundfish fisheries are categorized as Category III.

For Category II fisheries that take ESA-listed species, section 101(a)(5)(E) of the MMPA directs that NMFS shall allow taking of ESA-listed marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing operations if NMFS makes a number of determinations regarding negligible impact, recovery plans, and where required take reduction plans, monitoring programs, and vessel registration (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(E)). In June 2024, NMFS issued a permit for the two BSAI groundfish fisheries that require MMPA permits for the incidental take of ESA-listed species (89 FR 50270, June 13, 2024). Accordingly, both the AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands flatfish trawl fishery and the AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands pollock trawl fishery have a valid MMPA section 101(a)(5)(E) permit for the incidental, but not intentional, take of ESA-listed species during commercial fishing operations. When issuing the section 101(a)(5)(E) permit, NMFS determined the issuance of that permit complied with the MMPA and implementing regulations

regarding the negligible impact determination, recovery plans, take reductions plans, monitoring programs, and vessel registration (89 FR 50270, June 13, 2024). Details on the permit and the analyses that informed NMFS's determinations, as well as NMFS's responses to comments on NMFS's proposed notice of issuance of a permit under the MMPA, are in the **Federal Register** notice announcing NMFS's issuance of the permit at 89 FR 50270, 50276 (June 13, 2024). This **Federal Register** notice is separate from the harvest specifications process and this final rule.

Comment 13: Under the MMPA, NMFS must ensure there are mitigation measures in place for killer whales and other non-ESA listed marine mammals that interact with the trawl fisheries to prevent unnecessary mortality and serious injury of these animals. NMFS must also revise the Eastern North Pacific Alaska resident stock of killer whales and address information on increasing fisheries interactions with humpback whales.

Response: As noted in Response to Comment 12, NMFS has determined that these final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for the BSAI are consistent with the MMPA.

While NMFS remains concerned about the higher number of killer whale incidental catches in the BSAI trawl fisheries in 2023 compared to previous years, industry mitigation efforts have reduced the incidental catches in 2024 and 2025. NMFS continues to investigate and prepare updated analyses on killer whale stocks, including through NMFS's marine mammal stock assessment reports and reports of human-caused mortalities and serious injuries of marine mammals. NMFS also released a technical memorandum, Killer Whale Entanglements in Alaska: Summary Report 1991-2022. More information is available at the following websites: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/cause-death-determined-11-killer-whales-incidentally-caught-fishing-gear-*

alaska-2023 and *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/killer-whale-entanglements-alaska.*

The commenter alludes to increasing fishery interactions with humpback whales off the U.S. West Coast. There is no evidence of a recent increase in interactions with the groundfish trawl fisheries in the BSAI. The AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands flatfish trawl fishery has 100 percent observer coverage for each fishing trip, and there have been no reported or observed M/SI of the Western North Pacific stock of humpback whale in the BSAI flatfish trawl fishery in the most recent stock assessment report. The AK Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands pollock trawl fishery has 100 percent observer coverage, either with a physical observer or through EM. Two humpback whale mortalities (of unknown Distinct Population Segment) were observed in the BSAI pollock trawl fishery between 2016 and 2020. After being prorated for their probability of occurrence, NMFS estimates a mean annual M/SI of 0.008, which remains below 10 percent of the stock's PBR, based on the most recent stock assessment report. The stock assessment reports are available at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports*.

The commenter also asserts that the Eastern North Pacific Alaska resident stock of killer whales consists of two distinct stocks, but changes to the stock definitions of marine mammals managed under the MMPA are outside of the scope of this final rule to implement the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI.

Comment 14: NMFS management of the BSAI groundfish trawl fisheries violates the Fur Seal Act (FSA) because it allows unauthorized takes of Northern fur seals. The pollock fishery takes Northern fur seals by disrupting feeding patterns by harvesting significant quantities of the fur seal's main prey in their core feeding areas during their breeding and nursing season. NMFS's continued authorization of the pollock fishery with no mitigation measures or take reduction plan (TRP) in place violates FSA.

Response: NMFS approves and implements the harvest specifications if they are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law, including the FSA. NMFS has determined that these final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications are consistent with the FSA. At this time, NMFS has concluded that there is not sufficient information to determine if the pollock fishery is disrupting fur seal feeding to an extent that results in take prohibited under the FSA. There is evidence suggesting nutritional limitation could be causing declines in segments (*i.e.*, foraging complexes) of the northern fur seal population; however, there are increasing trends on some foraging complexes on the Pribilof Islands and neither trend is definitively linked to commercial fisheries, particularly the pollock fishery.

We recognize the potential for temporal and spatial competition exists and that understanding these impacts is an ongoing research focus. The commenter's claims of "extensive scientific research" proving the link between the pollock trawl fishery and the fur seal decline overstates the findings of these studies, as most cited studies only suggest potential competition or nutritional limitation, with only one study directly implicating the pollock fishery. The differential trends and habitat relationships of foraging fur seals from the Pribilof Islands emphasizes the importance of continued research and scientific debate on the causes of the northern fur seal trends in abundance, measures of health, and other behavioral attributes informative to their survival and reproductive success.

Comment 15: Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS can approve actions like the harvest specifications only if such actions do not violate other applicable law, like the MMPA, FSA, and NEPA. NMFS has not complied with other applicable law like the MMPA, FSA, and NEPA for the BSAI groundfish harvest specifications.

Response: As addressed in the Classification section (below) and the Response to Comments, NMFS has determined that implementing the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications for the BSAI is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the

FMP, and other applicable law. As explained in Response to Comments 1, 12, 13, and 14, NMFS has determined that this final rule is consistent with the NEPA, MMPA, and FSA.

Changes to the Final Rule

NMFS undertook a thorough review of the relevant comments received during the public comment period. For reasons described in the preceding section, no changes to the final rule were made in response to any of the comments received.

This year there are limited changes to TACs between the proposed and final specifications because no updated stock assessments could be prepared due to a disruption in the completion of the stock assessments that were scheduled to be updated in 2025. The AI subarea Pacific cod TAC increased by 519 mt in 2026 and by 519 mt in 2027 from the proposed TAC. This increase corresponds to the decrease in the State GHL. The only reduction was for Alaska plaice, which was reduced from the proposed rule by 518 mt in 2026 and by 518 mt in 2027. This decrease was necessitated by the increase of Pacific cod TACs in order to keep the sum of TACs in the BSAI from exceeding the 2.0 million mt limit. These changes are compared in table A and the section Changes in TACs from the Proposed 2026 and 2027 Harvest Specifications for the BSAI.

The Atka mackerel TAC allocation for the jig sector in the EAI District and BS subarea decreased by 182 mt due to receiving a zero percent allocation in 2026 and 2027. This decrease was necessitated due to the jig sector not utilizing any of its Atka mackerel TAC allocation in recent years, and NMFS does not anticipate harvest by vessels using jig gear in 2026 and 2027. The final TACs, including the limited changes to TACs between the proposed and final harvest specifications, are based on the most recent scientific, biological, ecosystem, harvest, and socioeconomic information and are consistent with the FMP, regulatory obligations (including the required OY range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt), and the harvest strategy from the Final EIS and ROD.

Classification

NMFS is issuing this final rule pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Through previous actions, the FMP and regulations are designed to authorize NMFS to take this action pursuant to section 305(d) (see 50 CFR part 679). The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that the final harvest specifications are consistent with the FMP and with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law.

Executive Orders (E.O.s) 12866 and 14192

This action is exempt from review under E.O. 12866 because it only implements annual catch limits in the BSAI. This action is exempt from E.O. 14192 because it is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Executive Order (E.O.) 13175

This action will not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Alaska Native Tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Alaska Native Tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Alaska Native Tribes; therefore, consultation with Tribal officials under E.O. 13175 is not required, and the requirements of sections (5)(b) and (5)(c) of E.O. 13175 also do not apply. A Tribal summary impact statement under section (5)(b)(2)(B) and section (5)(c)(2) is not required and has not been prepared. No formal consultations were requested or held on the BSAI harvest specifications.

National Environmental Policy Act

NMFS prepared a Final EIS for the Alaska groundfish harvest specifications and alternative harvest strategies (see **ADDRESSES**) and made it available to the public on January 12, 2007 (72 FR 1512). On February 13, 2007, NMFS issued the ROD for the Final EIS identifying the selected alternative (Alternative 2). NMFS prepared a SIR for this action to address the need to prepare an SEIS. Copies of the Final EIS, ROD, and annual SIRs (including the 2026 SIR for this action) are available from NMFS (see

ADDRESSES). The Final EIS analyzes the environmental, social, and economic consequences of alternative harvest strategies on resource components in the action area. Based on the analysis in the Final EIS, NMFS concluded that the preferred alternative harvest strategy (alternative 2) provides the best balance among relevant environmental, social, and economic considerations and allows for continued management of the groundfish fisheries based on the most recent, best scientific information. Specifically, the preferred alternative harvest strategy (1) prevents overfishing because it is consistent with the ABCs for the target species recommended on the basis of the best scientific information; (2) sets TACs that fall within the BSAI OY range, which is set to reflect ecosystem constraints; (3) works within a broad range of existing and evolving fishery management measures meant to balance harvest for fishing and processing industries and communities and environmental harm and ecosystem impacts, while also facilitating continued harvests of BSAI groundfish; and (4) allows for management of target species within harvest limits that are based on the best scientific information available, including ecosystem information.

The preferred alternative is a harvest strategy in which TACs are set at a level within the range of ABCs recommended through the harvest specifications process. The sum of the TACs also must achieve the OY specified in the FMP and regulations. While the specific numbers that the harvest strategy produces may vary from year to year, the methodology used for the preferred harvest strategy remains constant.

NMFS prepared the 2026 SIR to evaluate whether NMFS should prepare a SEIS for the 2026 and 2027 groundfish harvest specifications. A SEIS should be prepared if a major federal action remains to occur and: (1) the agency makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or (2) there are substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis. After reviewing the most recent, best available information,

including the information contained in the SIR and SAFE report, the Regional Administrator has determined that (1) the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications, which were set according to the preferred alternative harvest strategy, do not constitute a substantial change in the action; and (2) there are no substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis in the Final EIS. Any new information and circumstances do not present a seriously different picture of the likely environmental harms of the action to occur (*i.e.*, the implementation of these harvest specifications) beyond what was considered in the Final EIS such that the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications will not affect the human environment in a significant manner or to a significant extent not considered in the Final EIS. The 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications will result in environmental, social, and economic impacts within the scope of those analyzed and disclosed in the Final EIS. Therefore, an SEIS is not necessary to implement the 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications.

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA, 5 U.S.C. 604) requires that, when an agency promulgates a final rule under 5 U.S.C. 553, after being required by that section or any other law to publish a general notice of proposed rulemaking, the agency shall prepare a final regulatory flexibility analysis (FRFA). The following constitutes the FRFA prepared for these final 2026 and 2027 BSAI harvest specifications.

Section 604 of the RFA describes the required contents of a FRFA: (1) a statement of the need for, and objectives of, the rule; (2) a statement of the significant issues raised by the public comments in response to the initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA), a statement of the assessment of the agency of such issues, and a statement of any changes made in the proposed rule as a result of such comments; (3) the response of the agency to any comments filed by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration (SBA) in response to the proposed rule, and a detailed

statement of any change made to the proposed rule in the final rule as a result of the comments; (4) a description of and an estimate of the number of small entities to which the rule will apply or an explanation of why no such estimate is available; (5) a description of the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements of the rule, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report or record; and (6) a description of the steps the agency has taken to minimize the significant economic impact on small entities consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, including a statement of the factual, policy, and legal reasons for selecting the alternative adopted in the final rule and why each one of the other significant alternatives to the rule considered by the agency that affect the impact on small entities was rejected.

A description of this action, its purpose, and its legal basis are contained at the beginning of the preamble to this final rule and are not repeated here.

NMFS published the proposed rule for 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications, apportionments, and PSC limits for the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI on December 16, 2025 (90 FR 58204). NMFS prepared an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) to accompany the proposed action and included the IRFA in the proposed rule. The comment period closed on January 5, 2026. No comments were received on the IRFA or the economic impacts of this rule. The Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the SBA did not file any comments on the proposed rule.

A Description of and an Estimate of the Number of Small Entities

The entities directly regulated by this action are: (1) entities operating vessels with groundfish Federal fishing permits (FFPs) catching FMP groundfish in Federal waters; (2) all entities operating vessels, regardless of whether they hold groundfish FFPs, catching FMP groundfish in the State-waters parallel fisheries; and (3) all entities

operating vessels fishing for halibut that have incidental catch of FMP groundfish (whether or not they have FFPs). These include entities operating CVs and CPs within the action area and entities receiving direct allocations of groundfish.

For RFA purposes only, NMFS has established a small business size standard for businesses, including their affiliates, whose primary industry is commercial fishing (50 CFR 200.2). A business primarily engaged in commercial fishing (NAICS code 11411) is classified as a small business if it is independently owned and operated, is not dominant in its field of operation (including its affiliates), and has combined annual gross receipts not in excess of $11 million for all its affiliated operations worldwide. NMFS formally reviewed this size standard determination in 2025 and has issued a Notice of Determination that after review consistent with NMFS's small business size standards regulations, the SBA's review requirements under the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, the SBA's regulations establishing size standards, and SBA's size standards methodology, the NMFS-established and codified single small business size standard of $11 million in annual gross receipts for all businesses in the commercial fishing industry continues to reflect the size distribution of all businesses in the commercial fishing industry and is appropriate for continued use for RFA purposes only (90 FR 52917, November 24, 2025). Therefore, no revision to the standard is warranted at this time.

Using the most recent year of data (2024), there were 92 individual CVs and 1 C/P with gross revenues less than or equal to $11 million. The six CDQ groups are also considered small entities. This represents the potential suite of directly regulated small entities. The determination of entity size is based on vessel revenues and affiliated group revenues. This determination also includes an assessment of fisheries cooperative affiliations, although actual vessel ownership affiliations have not been completely established. However, the estimate of these 93 vessels may be an overstatement of the number of small entities because of the complexity of analyzing the links and affiliations

across these vessels, particularly since many of them conduct operations in both Federal and State fisheries. This group of vessels had average gross revenues that varied by gear type. Average gross revenues for hook-and-line CVs, pot gear CVs, and trawl gear CVs are estimated to be $0.73 million, $1.47 million, and $3.39 million, respectively. Average gross revenues for C/P entities are confidential. There are 3 AFA cooperative affiliated motherships that appear to fall under the 750 worker threshold and are therefore small entities. The average gross revenues for the AFA motherships are confidential because all three members are in a cooperative and have operated two of their three vessels in recent years.

Recordkeeping, Reporting, and Other Compliance Requirements and Relevant Federal Rules that May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict with this Rule

This action does not impose recordkeeping and reporting requirements. This action sets TAC and groundfish PSC limits that NMFS utilizes for the management of the groundfish fishery in the BSAI. If a TAC or PSC limit has been or will be reached, NMFS can take action to prevent exceeding the specified limit. Entities operating in the BSAI must follow any inseason actions NMFS issues. The specific compliance requirements for entities operating in the BSAI are set by regulations that are separate from this action. This action does not duplicate, overlap, or conflict with any Federal rules.

Description of Significant Alternatives That Minimize Adverse Impacts on Small Entities

This action implements the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications, apportionments, and PSC limits for the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI. This action is necessary to establish harvest limits for groundfish during the 2026 and 2027 fishing years and is taken in accordance with the FMP implemented by NMFS and recommended by the Council pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The establishment of the final harvest specifications is governed by NMFS's harvest strategy, in consultation with the

Council, for the catch of groundfish in the BSAI. The harvest strategy was selected previously from among five alternatives as described in the Final EIS, with the preferred alternative harvest strategy being one in which the TACs fall within the range of ABCs recommended through the harvest specifications process. The sum of the TACs must be within the OY range specified in the FMP and regulations. Under this preferred alternative harvest strategy, TACs are set to a level that falls within the range of ABCs recommended by the SSC and the sum of the TACs achieve the OY specified in the FMP and regulations. While the specific TAC numbers that the harvest strategy produces may vary from year to year, the methodology used for the preferred harvest strategy remains constant.

The final 2026 and 2027 TACs associated with preferred harvest strategy are those recommended by the Council in December 2025. Final OFLs and ABCs are based on recommendations prepared by the Plan Team and SSC in 2024 for final 2025 and 2026 OFLs and ABCs. The final OFLs and ABCs for 2026 are unchanged from these previously reviewed 2025 and 2026 final amounts, and the 2027 amounts were set equal to 2026 amounts and will be superseded in the final 2027 and 2028 harvest specifications. The 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs were reviewed by the Plan Team in September 2025 and were reviewed and recommended by the SSC in October and December 2025. The Council based its TAC recommendations on those of its AP, and those recommendations are consistent with the SSC's recommendations for final 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs. The sum of all TACs remains within the OY for the BSAI consistent with § 679.20(a)(1)(i)(A). Because setting all TACs equal to ABCs would cause the sum of TACs to exceed the maximum OY of 2.0 million mt, TACs for some stocks and stock complexes are lower than the ABCs recommended by the Plan Team and the SSC.

The final 2026 and 2027 OFLs and ABCs are based on the best available biological information from the 2024 SAFE report, including projected biomass trends,

information on assumed distribution of stock biomass, and revised technical methods to calculate stock biomass. The final 2026 and 2027 TACs are based on the best available biological and socioeconomic information. The final 2026 and 2027 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are consistent with the biological condition of groundfish stocks as described in the 2024 SAFE report, which is the most recent, completed SAFE report, as well as the ecosystem and socioeconomic information presented in the 2024 SAFE report (including the BS and AI ESRs and any ESPs). Accounting for the most recent information to set the final OFLs, ABCs, and TACs is consistent with the objectives for this action, as well as National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(2); § 600.315), which states that actions shall be based on the best scientific information available. The SAFE report also includes information on the economic condition of the groundfish fisheries off Alaska through the Economic SAFE report. Data are available through 2024.

Under this action, the final ABCs reflect harvest amounts that are less than the specified OFLs. The final TACs are within the range of final ABCs recommended by the SSC and do not exceed the biological limits recommended by the SSC (the ABCs and OFLs). Specifying TACs that do not exceed ABCs and ABCs that do not exceed OFLs is consistent with the objectives for this action, the FMP, and National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(1)) and implementing regulations (§ 600.310). NMFS sets, and the Council recommended, final TACs equal to final ABCs, which is intended to maximize harvest opportunities in the BSAI, unless other conservation or management reasons support setting TAC amounts less than the ABCs. Although under the FMP and regulations, NMFS could specify TACs equal to ABCs, NMFS cannot set TACs for all species in the BSAI equal to their ABCs due to the constraining OY limit in the BSAI of 2.0 million mt. For this reason, some final TACs are less than the final ABCs. These specific reductions were reviewed and recommended

by the Council's AP, and then reviewed and adopted by the Council as the Council's recommended final 2026 and 2027 TACs.

Based upon the best available scientific data, and in consideration of the objectives of this action, there are no significant alternatives to the final rule that have the potential to accomplish the stated objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and any other applicable statutes and that have the potential to minimize any significant adverse economic impact of the final rule on small entities. This action is economically beneficial to entities operating in the BSAI, including small entities. The action specifies TACs for commercially valuable species in the BSAI and allows for the continued prosecution of the fishery, thereby creating the opportunity for fishery revenue. After public process, during which the Council and NMFS solicited input from stakeholders, the Council concluded and NMFS likewise determines that these final harvest specifications would best accomplish the stated objectives articulated in the preamble for this final rule and in applicable statutes and would minimize to the extent practicable adverse economic impacts on the universe of directly regulated small entities.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Administrative Procedure Act

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1) and (d)(3), the 30-day delay in effective date requirement does not apply to this rule because the immediate implementation of this rule will relieve a restriction on fishery participants and NMFS finds there is good cause for the measures to take effect on March 18, 2026. The Plan Team and the SSC recommended the OFL and ABC for each stock and stock complex based on the 2024 SAFE report. The Council recommended TACs set less than or equal to the ABC for each stock or stock complex in December 2025. Accordingly, NMFS's review of the final

2026 and 2027 harvest specifications could not begin until after the December 2025 Council meeting and after the public had time to comment on the proposed rule.

The 2026 harvest specifications expire on March 18, 2026. This action is necessary to timely establish harvest specifications for the remainder of the 2026 fishing year and for the start of the 2027 fishing year. If these final specifications are not effective by March 18, 2026, then the BSAI groundfish fisheries will be closed until new harvest specifications are published and effective. Any delay in effectiveness would cause a lapse in fishing and substantial harm to the fishing industry, including vessel owners, captain and crew, processing facilities, and fishing communities. Therefore, the 30-day delay is not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1).

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), there is sufficient good cause to establish that a 30-day delay is not required. If these final harvest specifications are not effective by the start of the 2026 Pacific halibut season as specified by the IPHC, the fixed gear sablefish fishery will not begin concurrently with the Pacific halibut IFQ season. Delayed effectiveness of this action would result in confusion for sablefish harvesters and economic harm from the unnecessary discard of sablefish that are caught along with Pacific halibut, as both fixed gear sablefish and Pacific halibut are managed under the same IFQ program. This action is necessary to allow the sablefish IFQ fishery to begin concurrently with the Pacific halibut IFQ season.

Finally, having this rule be effective on March 18, 2026 provides the fishing industry with the earliest possible opportunity to plan and conduct its fishing operations with respect to TACs. Changes from the proposed to final 2026 and 2027 TACs in the BSAI as discussed in the preamble of this action include an increase in the final AI Pacific cod TAC than the proposed TAC for 2026 and 2027 and a decrease in the final Alaska plaice TAC than the proposed TAC for 2026 and 2027. The changes to TACs between the proposed and final harvest specifications are based on the most recent

scientific, biological, and socioeconomic information and are consistent with the FMP, regulatory obligations, and the harvest strategy from the Final EIS and ROD as described in the proposed and final harvest specifications, including the required OY range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt. Therefore, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), NMFS has demonstrated good cause to show that the 30-day delay requirement does not apply to this rule.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)

A formal section 7 consultation under the ESA was reinitiated for the BSAI groundfish fisheries, and a biological opinion is being prepared. The BSAI groundfish fisheries continue to operate under terms and conditions implemented in prior biological opinions.

Adverse impacts on marine mammals resulting from fishing activities conducted under this action are discussed in the Final EIS. Through a separate action, NMFS has issued a valid MMPA section 101(a)(5)(E) permit for the incidental, but not intentional, take of ESA-listed species during commercial fishing operations for the two BSAI groundfish fisheries identified as a Category II fishery that interact with ESA-listed species (89 FR 50270, June 13, 2024).

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule and shall designate such publications as "small entity compliance guides." The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule or group of rules.

The tables contained in this final rule are provided online and serve as the plain language guide to assist small entities in complying with this final rule as required by the

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This final rule's primary purpose is to announce the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications and prohibited species bycatch allowances for the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI. This action is necessary to establish harvest limits and associated management measures for groundfish during the 2026 and 2027 fishing years and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the FMP. It is taken in accordance with the FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and regulations at 50 CFR parts 600, 679, and 680. This action affects all fishermen who participate in the BSAI fisheries. The specific OFL, ABC, TAC, and PSC amounts are provided in tables in this final rule to assist the reader. Affected fishery participants are advised to review this final rule, including its tables.

Information to assist small entities in complying with this final rule is provided online. The OFL, ABC, TAC, and PSC tables are individually available online at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-groundfish-harvest-specifications*. Explanatory information on the relevant regulations supporting the harvest specifications is also found in footnotes to the tables. Harvest specification changes are also available from the same online source, which includes applicable **Federal Register** notices, information bulletins, and other supporting materials. NMFS will announce closures and openings of directed fishing and other inseason adjustments in the **Federal Register** and information bulletins released by the Alaska Region. Affected fishery participants should keep themselves informed of such actions. Copies of the tables and/or this final rule are also available upon request.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 1540(f); 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 3631 *et seq.*; Pub. L. 105–277; Pub. L. 106–31; Pub. L. 106–554; Pub. L. 108–199; Pub. L. 108–447; Pub. L. 109–241; Pub. L. 109–479.

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