

PROPOSAL 283 – 5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific Cod Management Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Board of Fisheries.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Modify season dates in the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict (AIS) Pacific cod state-waters fishery to exclude vessels greater than 60 feet in length from entering the fishery prior to March 15.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The AIS Pacific cod fishery has two regulatory opening dates. The Adak Section (state waters between 175° W long and 178° W long) opens January 1 to trawl, jig, and pot gear vessels 60 feet or less OAL and longline vessels 58 feet or less OAL. The full fishery (all state waters west of 170° W long) opens four days after the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands A season for catcher-vessel trawl fishery closes, or four days after the federal Aleutian Islands Subarea non-CDQ season closes, or March 15, whichever occurs first. Once the full fishery opens, pot gear vessels up to 125 feet OAL, trawl gear vessels up to 100 feet OAL, and longline and jig gear vessels 58 feet or less OAL may participate in the fishery. There are no harvest allocations by gear type but all vessels, regardless of gear type or vessel length, may only harvest 150,000 pounds round weight of Pacific cod per day and may not have more than 150,000 pounds round weight of unprocessed Pacific cod on board a vessel at any time.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This would establish a defined window (January 1 – March 15) of fishing opportunity in the Adak Section for vessels less than 60 ft OAL. A later potential opening for the full fishery could limit participation by larger vessels that have historically participated in the fishery and shift harvest towards pot gear vessels less than 60 feet OAL. During periods with no or limited shore-based processing capacity in the western Aleutian Islands, delaying larger vessels from entering the fishery could result in unharvested GHL.

BACKGROUND: The AIS fishery management plan is complex and influenced by shore-based processor availability in Adak, overlapping federal fishery management, and changes in Pacific cod availability in other areas of the state. Season dates have been generally structured to coordinate opportunity across federal Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Pacific cod fisheries and the AIS state-waters fishery while also attempting to provide adequate opportunity for smaller sized vessels that traditionally deliver to a shore-based processor in Adak. For much of its history, the AIS fishery has been underutilized, with the GHL fully achieved in 4 of 14 years (2007, 2008, 2018, and 2019; Table 283-1). Vessel effort and size for each gear type have varied since 2006 (Table 283-3).

The AIS state-waters Pacific cod fishery was established in February 2006 in response to an emergency petition submitted to the board intended to provide economic opportunity to the community of Adak (Figure 283-1, Table 283-1). The 2006 fishery was open to vessels of any size using any gear type with harvest limited to 150,000 pounds per day and no more than 300,000 pounds per trip.

At the October 2006 board meeting, the opening date for the 2007 season changed from March 15 to four days after the initial federal Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands catcher-vessel trawl season closure. The management plan changed to distribute the GHL across two fishing seasons (A and B season) where 70% of the GHL was available prior to June 10 during the A season and 30% of the GHL plus any unused A season GHL, up to 70% of the total GHL, was made available during the B season after June 10. The A and B season allocations were established to temporally distribute harvest in response to Steller sea lion conservation concerns. The March 15 opening date was retained as the latest possible opening for the A season. Additionally, the board defined vessel size limits to vessels 125 feet or less OAL for pot gear, 100 feet or less OAL for trawl gear, and 58 feet or less OAL for longline and jig gear. The trip limit was also reduced to 150,000 pounds per day and no more than 150,000 pounds per trip. Lower trip limits were adopted in order to slow the pace of the fishery during the A season and equalize fishing efficiency across gear types. The GHL was fully harvested during the 2007 season with the harvest processed by 7 floating processors and 3 shore-based processors, including a processor in Adak (Table 283-1).

In December 2008, the board modified the management plan in response to an ACR and restricted vessels in the B season to 60 feet or less OAL for all gear types. The GHL was fully achieved in the 2008 season and the harvest was processed by 13 floating processors and 3 shore-based processors, including a shore-based processor in Adak. The GHL was not fully harvested in 2009 or 2010 and the management plan was again modified in February 2010 to allow pot vessels over 125 feet OAL to participate in the B season after August 1 of each year (Table 283-1). In December 2010, the City of Adak submitted an emergency petition to the board to disregard federal SSL protection measures set to become effective January 1, 2011, and allow vessels under 60 feet OAL to fish inside state waters near Adak under less restrictive regulations that were in place at the time. The board subsequently adopted regulations that created a section around Adak that included state waters between 175 and 178 W long and restricted fishing in this section to vessels 60 feet or less OAL for trawl, jig, and pot gear and vessels 58 feet or less OAL for longline gear during a parallel season. The new regulations also fixed previously established SSL protection measures in regulation, nullifying the more restrictive SSL protection measures in state waters of the Adak Section.

The AIS GHL was not achieved from 2009 to 2015 (Table 283-1). At the November 2015 meeting, after seven years with foregone state-waters harvest in the AIS, the board adopted regulations that opened the season earlier and relaxed vessel size restriction to encourage larger vessels to participate in the fishery. The A and B seasons were combined resulting in the current January 1 opening for small vessels in the Adak Section with a full fishery opening west of 170° W long to larger vessels after a triggered opening. An earlier triggered opening based on closure of the federal Aleutian Islands subarea non-CDQ Pacific cod fishery was added in addition to the existing opening four days after the initial federal Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands catcher-vessel trawl season closure or March 15, whichever occurs first (Table 283-4). The GHL was not achieved in 2016 and 2017 (Table 283-1).

Beginning fall of 2017, a shore-based processor in Adak began accepting deliveries of Pacific cod. In 2018 and 2019, the full GHL was achieved with most harvest delivered to the shore-based processor in Adak (Table 283-1). Most participants were less than 60-foot pot gear vessels (Table 283-3). The 2019 GHL was 14,078,500 pounds which represents 31% of the federal Aleutian

Islands Pacific cod ABC. A total of 18 vessels participated in the fishery; 11 pot vessels under 60 feet, 3 pot vessels over 60 feet, 2 trawl vessels under 60 feet, and 2 trawl vessels over 60 feet (Table 283-2). The 2019 GHL was fully harvested in 76 days. The 2020 harvest limit is set the regulatory maximum allowable GHL of 15,000,000 pounds (33% of the federal Aleutian Islands Pacific cod ABC).

The recently established Dutch Harbor Subdistrict (DHS) fishery combined with substantial declines in Pacific cod abundance in the Gulf of Alaska has redistributed state-waters fishing effort away from fisheries in GOA to the BSAI. This change has increased effort and competition among users and reduced season lengths the AIS and adjacent state-waters fisheries. Combined harvest from the 2019 AIS and DHS state-waters fisheries represents more than 85% of the total Pacific cod catch across all state-waters fisheries.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this allocative proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in any additional direct cost for a private person to participate in this fishery. This proposal would not result in additional costs to the department.

Figure 283-1.—Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery map.

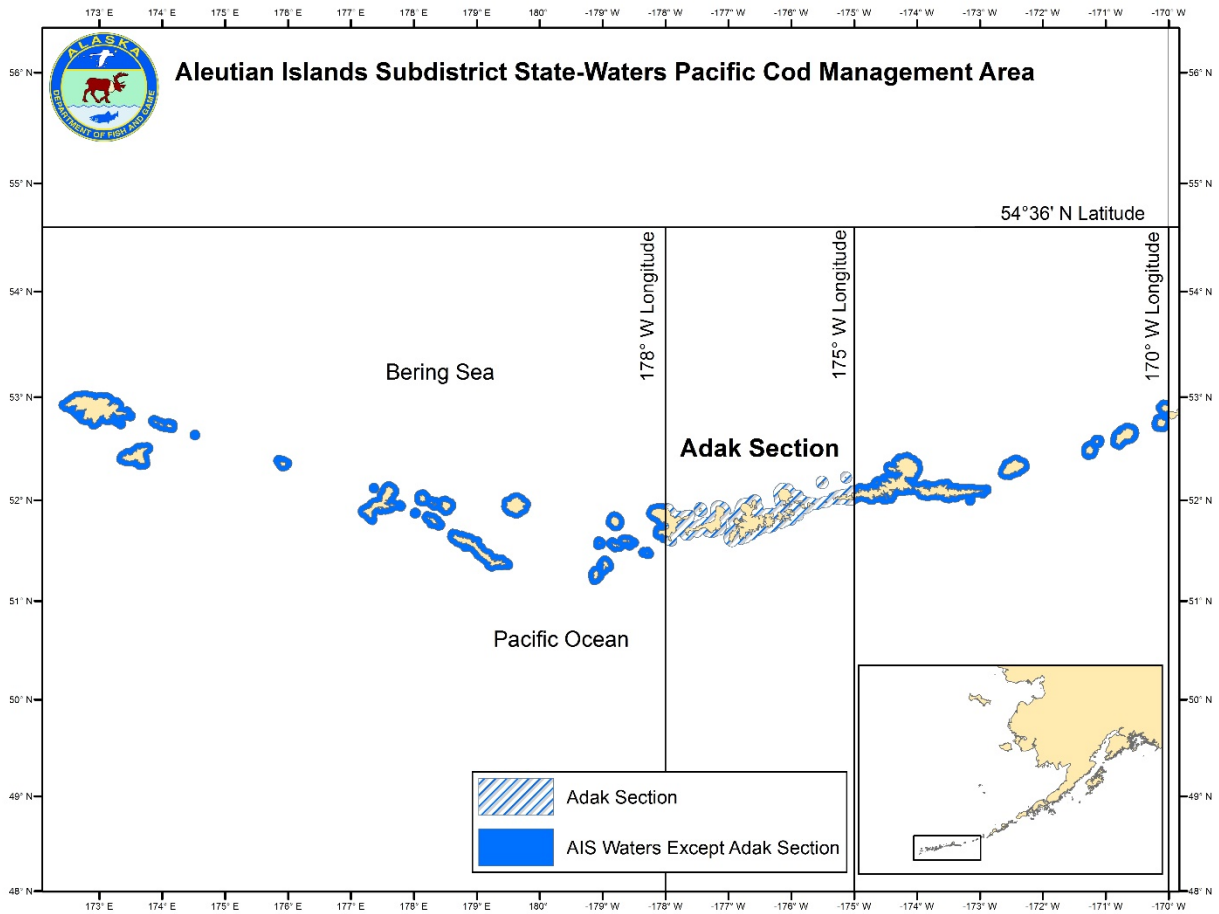


Table 283-1.—Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod harvest, effort, and processor participation, 2006–2019.

Year	GHL ^a	Harvest ^a	GHL Achieved	Vessels	Landings	Floating Processor(s)		Shore-Based Processor(s)		
						Number	Proportion GHL Processed	Number	Adak Proportion GHL Processed	Dutch Harbor, Akutan Proportion GHL Processed
2006	12,830,772	8,855,602	N	30 ^c	87	8	52%	3	15%	< 5%
2007	11,640,288	11,639,001	Y	39 ^c	203	7	45%	3	55%	< 5%
2008	11,640,288	11,719,199	Y	45 ^c	193	13	76%	3	24%	< 5%
2009	12,037,116	CF	N	27	97	6	25% to 50%	1	< 25%	-
2010	11,508,012	8,785,685	N	16 ^c	88	8	72%	2	< 5%	< 5%
2011	15,542,430	CF	N	6 ^c	20	3	< 5%	1	-	< 5%
2012	20,767,332	12,341,027	N	26 ^c	226	3	13%	2	25% to 50%	-
2013	20,304,366	CF	N	13	151	-	-	3	50% to 75%	-
2014	17,863,874	CF	N	8	133	1	< 5%	-	-	-
2015	18,029,404	CF	N	2	8	1	< 5%	-	-	-
2016 ^f	10,476,259	CF	N	6	39	2	< 25%	-	-	-
2017	12,797,703	CF	N	3	84	1	25% to 50%	1	< 5%	-
2018	12,798,000	CF	Y	14	132	1	< 5%	1	< 75%	-
2019	14,078,500	13,664,555	Y	18	155	2	< 25%	3	< 75%	< 5%

Note: CF = Confidential

Shaded rows indicate years when at least 90% of the GHL was harvested and is considered fully achieved.

^a In whole fish pounds.

^b ADF&G made 3.5 million pounds of the GHL available to National Marine Fisheries Service effective on September 1.

^c Some vessels participated in both A and B seasons.

^d Overage from the A season was deducted from the B season GHL. Initial GHL shown.

^e A season GHL was not fully harvested, remaining A season GHL rolled over into B season GHL; initial GHL shown.

^f Regulation changed to only one season for Aleutian Island Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod.

Table 283-2.—Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod season dates and duration, 2006–2019.

Year	Season	Location	Season dates		Season Duration ^a
			Opened	Closed	
2006	A season	West of 170°W long	03/15/06	03/24/06	10
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/06	09/01/06	84
2007	A season	West of 170°W long	03/16/07	03/23/07	8
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/07	09/01/07	84
		West of 170°W long	10/01/07	12/03/07	64
2008	A season	West of 170°W long	03/10/08	03/18/08	9
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/08	07/09/08	30
2009	A season	West of 170°W long	03/25/09	04/01/09	8
		West of 170°W long	04/07/09	06/09/09	64
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/09	09/01/09	84
2010	A season	West of 170°W long	03/16/10	06/04/10	81
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/10	09/01/10	84
		West of 170°W long	11/15/10	12/31/10	47
2011	A season	West of 170°W long	03/30/11	04/01/11	3
		West of 170°W long	04/05/11	06/09/11	66
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/11	09/01/11	84
		West of 170°W long	10/25/11	12/31/11	68
2012	A season	175° to 178°W long	01/01/12	06/09/12	161
		West of 170°W long	03/04/12	04/01/12	29
		West of 170°W long	04/15/12	06/09/12	56
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/12	09/01/12	84
2013	A season	175° to 178°W long	01/01/13	06/09/13	160
		West of 170°W long	03/15/13	04/01/13	18
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/13	09/01/13	84
2014	A season	175° to 178°W long	01/01/14	06/09/14	160
		West of 170°W long	03/15/14	06/09/14	87
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/14	12/31/14	205
2015	A season	175° to 178°W long	01/01/15	06/09/15	160
		West of 170°W long	03/03/15	06/09/15	99
	B season	West of 170°W long	06/10/15	12/31/15	205
2016		175° to 178°W long	01/01/16	12/31/16	366
		West of 170°W long	03/13/16	12/31/16	294

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Year	Season	Location	Season dates		Season Duration ^a
			Opened	Closed	
2017		175° to 178°W long	01/01/17	12/31/17	365
		West of 170°W long	02/27/17	12/31/17	308
2018		175° to 178°W long	01/01/18	03/23/18	82
		West of 170°W long	03/08/18	03/23/18	16
2019		175° to 178°W long	01/01/19	03/17/19	75
		West of 170°W long	03/15/19	03/17/19	2

^a In days.

Table 283-3.—Number of vessels by gear type and vessel size in the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery, 2006–2019.

Year	Longline		Jig		Pot		Trawl		Total vessels
	58 ft or less	Over 58 ft	60 ft or less	61 to 125 ft	60 ft or less	61 to 125 ft	60 ft or less	Over 60 ft	
2006 ^a	3	5	0	0	0	3	3	17	31
2007 ^b	0	0	0	0	1	11	7	13	32
2008 ^{c,d}	7	2	5	0	3	11	5	17	50
2009 ^d	6	0	2	0	0	3	6	10	27
2010 ^{e,f}	0	1	0	0	0	6	4	9	20
2011 ^f	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	7
2012 ^{e,f}	6	0	3	0	6	0	7	9	31
2013 ^f	1	0	0	0	7	0	1	4	13
2014 ^f	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	8
2015 ^f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
2016 ^g	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
2017 ^g	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
2018 ^{e,g}	0	0	0	0	6	2	5	1	14
2019 ^g	0	0	0	0	11	2	2	1	18

^a No vessel size restrictions. Vessels up to 175 feet OAL using longline gear and 300 feet OAL using trawl gear participated in 2006.

^b Vessel length limited to 125 feet or less OAL for pot gear, 100 feet or less OAL for trawl gear, and 58 feet or less OAL for longline and jig gear.

^c Two vessels switched gear types during the season.

^d B season vessel length limited to 60 feet or less OAL for all gear types.

^e One vessel switched gear types during the season.

^f B season vessel length limited to 60 feet or less OAL for all gear types except pot gear vessels greater than 125 feet OAL allowed.

^g Current management plan enacted. Open in the Adak Section for vessels 60 feet or less OAL for trawl, jig, and pot gear and vessels 58 feet or less OAL for longline gear on January 1. Full fishery open to vessels 125 feet or less OAL for pot gear, 100 feet or less OAL for trawl gear, and 58 feet or less OAL for longline and jig gear.

Table 283-4. Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery management plan regulatory modifications by season.

2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHL established at 3% of federal BSAI ABC • No more than 70% of GHL may be available before or after June 10 • Season opened on or after March 15, at the conclusion of the parallel catcher-vessel trawl A season • Gear types: non-pelagic trawl, longline, jig, pot, and hand troll • Adak vessel length and gear restriction zones in place (trawl and longline gear could not be used from May 1–Sept. 15, unless operating in the 60 ft and under vessel size limitation zones near Adak Island) • Daily vessel harvest limit of 150,000 pounds vessel trip limit of 300,000 pounds • Mandatory Pacific cod retention, with proceeds from overage forfeited to state • Daily vessel reporting • Management plan sunset provision for Dec 31, 2007 • Closed areas: NMFS Steller sea lion areas, Aleutian Islands Habitat Conservation Area, coral gardens • Provision for allowing unharvested state-waters Pacific cod to be utilized by NMFS
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel length limits: pot 125 ft or less, trawl 100 ft or less, longline and jig 58 ft or less • Adak vessel length and gear restriction zones repealed from state-waters fishery management plan • Vessel trip limit reduced to 150,000 pounds • Prior to June 10 defined as A season and after June 10 as B season • Season opening and closure dates: state-waters A season opens 4 days after closure of federal catcher-vessel trawl A season, closure of state-waters season during federal BSAI catcher-vessel trawl B season on April 1, and closure of state-waters season during federal BSAI catcher-vessel pot season for vessels 60 feet or greater OAL on September 1 • Regulation allowing unharvested state-waters Pacific cod to be utilized by NMFS repealed • Management plan sunset provision repealed
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No regulatory changes for the 2008 season
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel length for B season limited to less than 60 feet OAL for all gear types
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pot vessels less than 125 feet allowed to participate in the B season after August 1
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No regulatory changes for the 2011 season
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-waters between 175°W long and 178°W long open January 1 and remain open until GHL is reached or June 9, whichever occurs first <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When only waters between 175°W long and 178°W long are open, vessels using non-pelagic trawl, pot, and jig gear are limited to 60 feet or less OAL and vessels using longline gear are limited to 58 feet or less OAL ○ All state waters of the Aleutian Islands District west of 170°W long open 4 days after the parallel BSAI Pacific cod catcher-vessel trawl fishery closes, or on March 15, whichever occurs first • Steller sea lion closure for federal/parallel fishery modified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With the exception of within 3 nautical miles of Kanaga Island/Ship Rock (51°46.70'N, 177°20.72'W), state-waters season continued to use those in place prior to 2011
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No regulatory changes for the 2013 season

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2014

- Clarification of rollover provisions between A and B season
- Clarification of bycatch provisions
- Clarification to registration requirements during concurrent state and federal Pacific cod seasons
- Update of Steller sea lion and essential fish habitat closed area references

2015

- No regulatory changes for the 2015 season

2016

- Fishery changed to just one season
- GHL established at 27% of federal AI ABC; step up provision based on achievement of GHL to max 39% of AI ABC; 15-million-pound cap on GHL

2017

- No regulatory changes for the 2017 season

2018

- No regulatory changes for the 2018 season

2019

- GHL established at 31% of federal AI ABC; step up provision based on achievement of GHL to max 39% of AI ABC; step down provision based on inability to achieve GHL for two consecutive years to a minimum 15% of AI ABC; 15-million-pound cap on GHL
- AIS established as exclusive registration area for Pacific cod.

Note: Regulatory changes are shown according to the first season they went into effect.