

Species	Historic range	Status	When listed	Critical habitat	Special rules
Scientific name	Common name				
Fabaceae—Pea family					
<i>Lespedeza bipartita</i>	Prairie bush-clover	U.S.A. (A, T, MN, WI)	T	253	NA NA

Dated: November 28, 1986.

P. Daniel Smith,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 611, 672, 675

[Docket No. 70103-7003]

Foreign Fishing, Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of 1987 interim initial specifications for groundfish; prohibited species catch limits for certain groundfish species and for Pacific halibut; reapportionments of reserves; and request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** NOAA announces 1987 initial apportionments of (1) target quotas (TQs) for each category of groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska; (2) prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for certain groundfish species in the Gulf of Alaska; (3) PSC limits for Pacific halibut in the Gulf of Alaska; (4) total allowable catches (TACs) for each category of groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area. (5) reapportionments of reserves in both management units, and (6) request comment on this action. This action is necessary to provide groundfish harvest amounts to domestic fishermen in the Gulf of Alaska and to domestic and foreign fishermen in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, and to control incidental catches of Pacific halibut and certain groundfish species in the Gulf of Alaska that are fully utilized by domestic fishermen for domestic annual processing (DAP). It is intended as a conservation and management measure, providing for full utilization of available groundfish resources off Alaska during 1987, pending publication of final specifications and apportionments for 1987.

**DATES:** This notice is effective January 3, 1987. Comments on this action are invited until January 18, 1987.

**ADDRESS:** Comments should be sent to Robert W. McVey, Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 1668, Juneau, AK 99802.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ronald J. Berg (NMFS, 907-588-7229).

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

For the Gulf of Alaska, this action establishes, on an interim basis, 1987 TQs for each groundfish species, PSC limits for certain groundfish species, and proposes PSC limits for Pacific halibut. For the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, it establishes, on an interim basis, TACs for each groundfish species. This action also apportions available TQs and TACs among domestic annual processing (DAP), joint venture processing (JVP), and total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF), and reserves.

In the Gulf of Alaska, procedure for establishing TQs for groundfish species comprises one part of Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery, which is currently undergoing review by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) under section 304 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act). TQs are analogous to the optimum yields (OYs) for each groundfish species as specified in the current FMP. The FMP was developed under the Magnuson Act and is implemented by rules appearing at 50 CFR 611.92 and Part 672. The immediate authority and procedures for establishing TQs are provided for by an emergency interim rule (52 FR 422, January 6, 1987) implemented under section 305(e) of the Magnuson Act and are identical to those of the proposed amendment (51 FR 44812, December 12, 1986). The sum of the TQs for all species must fall within the established OY range for these species of 116-800 thousand metric tons (mt). Twenty percent of each species' TQ is set aside as a reserve for possible later reapportionment to DAP or JVP. Certain amounts of the reserve are apportioned to TQs as explained below.

In the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, TACs are established for

groundfish species by the FMP for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area. This FMP was also developed under the Magnuson Act and is implemented by rules appearing at 50 CFR 611.93 and Part 675. Under the FMP, the sum of the individual species' TACs must fall within the OY range of 1.4 to 2.0 million mt. The TAC for each species or species group is reduced by 15 percent, resulting in initial TACs of 85 of OY, which are apportioned to the DAP, JVP, and TALFF on January 1. The remaining 15 percent from each TAC contributes to a non-specific operational reserve, which may be reapportioned by the Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director) at any time during the fishing year. For 1987, as in 1986, the operational reserve is initially 300,000 mt. Certain amounts of the reserve are apportioned to TACs as explained below.

The TQs and TACs are apportioned initially among DAP, JVP, reserves, and TALFF for each species under §§ 611.92 and 672.20(f)(2) for the Gulf of Alaska and under §§ 611.93 and 675.20(a) (4) and (5) for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area. DAP amounts are intended for harvest by U.S. fishermen for delivery and sale to U.S. processors. JVP amounts are intended for joint ventures in which U.S. fishermen deliver their catches to foreign processors at sea. The reserves for both areas are set aside for possible reapportionment to DAP and/or JVP if the initial apportionments prove inadequate, or to TALFF if surpluses are identified later in the fishing year.

Under §§ 611.92, 611.93, 672.20(a), and 675.20(a)(4), the initial amounts of DAP and JVP are determined each year by the Regional Director. The DAP and JVP amounts must equal the actual DAP and JVP of the previous year plus any additional amounts the Regional Director projects will be used by the U.S. fishing industry during the coming fishing year, not to exceed the TQ or TAC. These additional amounts will reflect as accurately as possible the projected increases in U.S. processing and harvesting capacity and the extent to which U.S. processing and harvesting will occur during the coming year. These projections will be based upon the latest

available information that is available, including industry surveys, market data, and stated intentions by representatives for the U.S. fishing industry.

Under § 672.20(e), as modified by Amendment 14 (50 FR 43193, October 24, 1985), the PSC limits for Pacific halibut that will be applied to DAP and JVP vessels are published in the Federal Register by the Secretary after consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council).

At its September 24-28, 1986, meeting, the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Advisory Panel (AP) reviewed information presented by the Council's Plan Teams concerning the status of stocks in both the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area and recommendations by the Gulf of Alaska Plan Team for Pacific halibut PSCs. The Council then recommended to the Regional Director preliminary initial TQs and apportionments and also Pacific halibut PSCs in the Gulf of Alaska. It also recommended initial TACs and their apportionments in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area. The Secretary published the Council's recommendations (51 FR 43397, December 2, 1986) and invited public comments to be submitted to the Regional Director until January 2, 1987. The proposed PSC limits for Pacific halibut were discussed in the same notice and are adjusted in this action. A notice of final PSC limits will be published in the Federal Register as soon as practicable. No comments were received by the Regional Director regarding the preliminary initial specifications for groundfish.

At its December 9-12, 1986, meeting, the Council again considered reports from the Plan Teams and its SSC and AP as well as testimony from the public. The Council recommended certain changes in the TQs for 1987 and apportionments between DAP and JVP in the Gulf of Alaska (§ 672.20, Table 1) and 1987 TACs and apportionments among DAP, JVP, and TALFF in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area (§ 675.20, Table 1). Except for a directed joint venture fishery for "other flounders" in the Central Regulatory Area, supported by needed bycatch amounts of other species, and an exploratory joint venture fishery for pollock, the Council set the Gulf of Alaska DAPs equal to TQs. The Council did so in response to testimony that indicates a significant increase in investment in catch/processor and mothership vessels and shoreside processing plants in the Gulf of Alaska, accompanied by an intent to catch and

process large amounts of groundfish of most species in 1987. The Council also recommended PSC limits for certain groundfish species and for Pacific halibut in the Gulf of Alaska, and reapportionments of groundfish reserves in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area. The following is a discussion of each of these actions.

#### Gulf of Alaska

The Council considered new information and adopted acceptable biological catches (ABCs), TQs, and apportionments between DAP and JVP for each of the groundfish species, as follows:

**Pollock**—The pollock biomass decreased to 620,000 mt in 1986, the lowest value since the hydroacoustic surveys began in 1981. An increasing trend in biomass for the next few years is projected, however, due primarily to a strong 1984 year class. The Plan Team set ABC for the Western/Central Area in the range of 70,000 mt to 120,000 mt, using an age-structured projection model.

Due to positive forecasts in biomass trends, tempered by the uncertainty relative to the unlikely spawning success of the current record low population levels, the team recommended that ABC be 95,000 mt, which was adopted by the Council. No new information exists for the Eastern Area where the Plan Team recommended an ABC of 16,600 mt, which the Council rounded to 17,000 mt. The Council adopted TQs for the Western/Central and Eastern Areas of 84,000 and 4,000 mt, respectively, which is less than the ABCs as a response to uncertainty in biomass trends in the Western/Central Area and lack of interest by DAP fishermen in the Eastern Area. As discussed above, the Council recommended that the pollock TQ in the Gulf of Alaska be set equal to DAP to reflect the significant increase in investment in catcher/processor and mothership vessels and shoreside processing plants along the Gulf of Alaska. A preseason survey by NMFS of DAP fishermen and processors in the Gulf of Alaska indicated the intent and capacity to process 85,000 mt of pollock.

The Council recommended an exploratory fishery for pollock outside of Shelikof Strait from January 15 to April 10, 1987. For this purpose, a TQ of 20,000 mt is also established in the Western/Central Regulatory Area outside Shelikof Strait and apportioned to the joint venture fishery.

**Pacific cod**—This species is in good condition and stable. The Plan Team recommended, and the Council adopted,

an ABC equal to 125,000 mt, apportioned among the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas as 38,000, 77,000, and 10,000 mt, respectively. The Council adopted TQs for the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas equal to 15,000, 33,000, and 2,000 mt. The TQs are significantly reduced from the ABCs to reduce the incidental catch of Pacific halibut and as a socioeconomic measure to preclude allocations to TALFF and JVP. Although foreign directed longlining for Pacific cod was allowed in the Gulf of Alaska during previous years that the FMP has been in place, that fishery has now been shifted to the Bering Sea to prevent conflicts and interaction with a rapidly growing domestic longline fishery for Pacific cod. Thus, the TQ is nearly equivalent to the DAP except for a small JVP bycatch allowance. The Council intends to provide DAP fishermen maximum fishing efficiency in terms of catches per unit of effort, which would be reduced if DAP fishermen had to compete with joint ventures or foreign directed fisheries. Thus, DAP fishermen will have reduced costs per catch, which will increase their profit margins.

**Flounders**—The Plan Team calculated an ABC for this species group to be 537,000 mt, apportioned among the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas as 101,000, 345,000, and 90,000 mt, respectively. The Council adopted these ABCs for the Western and Eastern Areas and 346,000 mt for the Central Area. The Council set TQs for the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas equal to 3,000, 5,500, and 500 mt, respectively. It reduced the TQs from the ABCs to reduce the incidental catch of Pacific halibut and to provide DAP fishermen with maximum fishing efficiency in terms of catches per unit of effort, which would be reduced if they had to compete with joint ventures or foreign directed fisheries. Thus, DAP fishermen will have reduced costs per catch, which will increase their profit margins.

**Pacific ocean perch**—The Plan Team considers this species group to still be depressed. The Council adopted the Plan Team's ABC recommendation of 10,500 mt, apportioned among the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas as 2,800, 3,300, and 4,400 mt, respectively. The Council adopted TQ for the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas of 1,500, 1,500, and 2,000 mt, respectively. The TQs are reduced from the ABCs to continue the rebuilding of this depressed stock.

**Sablefish**—The Plan Team recommended an ABC of 25,000 mt, which is the point estimate of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) from past

production models. The distribution of the ABC among the regulatory areas, according to the 200-to-1,000-meter depth distribution is: Western—3,750 mt; Central—11,000 mt; West Yakutat District—5,500 mt; East Yakutat/Southeast Outside Districts—5,250 mt. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommended ABCs but set TQs totalling 20,000 mt, distributed according to the 400-to-1,000 meter depth distribution, where the commercial fishery largely takes place. The TQs are distributed among the Western and Central Regulatory Areas, and the West Yakutat and East Yakutat-Southeast Outside Districts in the following amounts: 3,000, 8,800, 4,000, and 4,200 mt, respectively. The Secretary has apportioned these TQs as provided by the FMP to DAP hook-and-line (H&L), trawl, and pot gear, which are the only legal gear types for use in the sablefish fishery in the regulatory areas of the Gulf of Alaska, as follows:

**APPORTIONMENTS OF TARGET QUOTAS**  
(metric tons)

AREA	TQ	Per-cent	Share (mt)
Western	3,000 H&L	55	1,650
	TRAWL	20	600
	POT	25	750
Central	8,800 H&L	80	7,040
	TRAWL	20	1,760
West Yakutat	4,000 H&L	95	3,600
	TRAWL	5	200

**APPORTIONMENTS OF TARGET QUOTAS—Continued**

(metric tons)

AREA	TQ	Per-cent	Share (mt)
East Yakutat/Southeast Outside	4,200 H&L	95	3,990
	TRAWL	5	210

Pot gear, which was permitted in the Central Area during 1986, is permitted only in the Western Area in 1987 as provided by the phase out schedule in the FMP for this gear type.

Atka mackerel—Stocks of this species continue to decline. Past estimates of yield were likely over optimistic; lack of recruitment for several years has contributed to their decline. The Council adopted the Plan Team recommendation that the ABC be set at zero, allowing only bycatch amounts to support other target fisheries. Hence, TQs among the Western, Central, and Eastern Areas are 100, 100, and 40 mt, respectively.

"Other rockfish"—The Plan Team estimated an ABC based on the performance of the fishery of 3,350 mt, comprised of 1,250 mt for demersal shelf rockfish species (those above 100 fathoms in depth) in the Southeast District and 2,100 mt of all other rockfish species in waters deeper than 100 fathoms in the Southeast Outside District and elsewhere in the Gulf of

Alaska. The Council, with advice from its SSC, determined that insufficient data exist to derive ABCs for this species group, but set TQs equal to 1,250 mt in the Southeast Outside District shallower than 100 fathoms and 4,000 mt in waters deeper than 100 fathoms in this District and in all depths elsewhere in the Gulf of Alaska. The 1,250 mt of demersal shelf rockfish species will be managed by the State of Alaska as provided for by the FMP such that the separate quotas managed by the State in the Southeast Outside District will be no more than 1,250 mt.

Thornyhead rockfish—The relative abundance of this species group has declined 53 percent since 1960. The Plan Team recommended that ABC be set at the current level of 3,750 mt, which will constrain the exploitation rate below 5 percent of the exploitable biomass. The Council concurred and established the TQ equal to the ABC Gulfwide.

Squid—The Plan Team set the ABC for squid equal to MSY, or 5,000 mt Gulfwide. The Council determined that insufficient data exist to set ABC, but set TQ equal to 5,000 mt, recognizing that if a fishery were to develop for their species, future analyses could be based on fishery performance.

"Other species"—The Council set TQ for "other species" equal to five percent of the sum of all other TQs as required by the FMP, or 10,312 mt.

The initial TQs in the Gulf of Alaska and their apportionment between DAP and JVP are shown for each species by regulatory area in Table 1.

TABLE 1. INITIAL (AS OF JANUARY 1, EACH YEAR) TARGET QUOTA (TQ), DOMESTIC ANNUAL HARVEST (DAH), DOMESTIC ANNUAL PROCESSING (DAP), JOINT VENTURE PROCESSING (JVP), AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE LEVEL OF FOREIGN FISHING (TALFF), ALL IN METRIC TONS, IN THE WESTERN (W), CENTRAL (C), EASTERN (E) AND NAMED MANAGEMENT AREAS. TQ=DAH+RESERVE+TALFF; DAH=DAP+JVP.

Species and area	Species code	TQ	DAH	DAP	JVP	Reserve	TALFF
<b>Pollock:</b>							
W/C	701	84,000	84,000	83,700	300	0	0
Outside Shelikof		20,000	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
E		4,000	4,000	4,000	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>108,000</b>	<b>108,000</b>	<b>87,700</b>	<b>20,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Pacific cod:</b>							
W	702	15,000	15,000	15,000	0	0	0
C		33,000	33,000	32,775	225	0	0
E		2,000	2,000	2,000	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>49,775</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Flounders:</b>							
W	129	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0	0
C		5,500	5,500	4,000	1,500	0	0
E		500	500	500	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**TABLE 1. INITIAL (AS OF JANUARY 1, EACH YEAR) TARGET QUOTA (TQ), DOMESTIC ANNUAL HARVEST (DAH), DOMESTIC ANNUAL PROCESSING (DAP), JOINT VENTURE PROCESSING (JVP), AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE LEVEL OF FOREIGN FISHING (TALFF), ALL IN METRIC TONS, IN THE WESTERN (W), CENTRAL (C), EASTERN (E) AND NAMED MANAGEMENT AREAS. TQ=DAH+RESERVE+TALFF; DAH=DAP+JVP.—Continued**

Species and area <sup>1</sup>	Species code	TQ	DAH	DAP	JVP	Reserve	TALFF
<b>Pacific<sup>2</sup> ocean perch:</b>							
W	780	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0
C		1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0
E		2,000	2,000	2,000	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sablefish:</b>							
W	703	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0	0
C		8,800	8,800	8,800	0	0	0
W. Yakutat		4,000	4,000	4,000	0	0	0
E. Yakutat/SE		4,200	4,200	4,200	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>20,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Atka mackerel:</b>							
W	207	100	100	100	0	0	0
C		100	100	75	25	0	0
E		40	40	40	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other<sup>3</sup> rockfish:</b>							
Gulfwide	849	4,000	4,000	4,000	0	0	0
C S.E. Outside		1,250	1,250	1,250	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,250</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Thorny-head rockfish: Gulfwide	749	3,750	3,750	3,700	50	0	0
Squid: Gulfwide	509	5,000	5,000	4,950	50	0	0
Other species <sup>4</sup> : Gulfwide	499	10,312	10,312	9,212	1,100	0	0

<sup>1</sup> See figure 1 of § 672.20 for description of regulatory areas/districts.

<sup>2</sup> The category "Pacific ocean perch" includes *Sebastes alutus* (Pacific ocean perch), *S. polyspinus* (northern rockfish), *S. aleuticus* (rougheye rockfish), *S. borealis* (shortraker rockfish), and *S. zacentrus* (sharpchin rockfish).

<sup>3</sup> The category "other rockfish" includes all fish of the genus (*Sebastes*) except the category "Pacific ocean perch" as defined in footnote 2 above and *Sebastes* (Thornyhead rockfish).

<sup>4</sup> The category "other species" includes sculpins, sharks, skates, eulachon, smelts, and octopus. The TQ is equal to 5% of the TQs of the target species.

### Prohibited Species Catch Limit for Pacific Halibut

The Council received testimony concerning the amounts of Pacific halibut that initially had been proposed (51 FR 43397, December 2, 1986) as PSC limits. Since the initial notice, the Plan Team has again estimated the incidental catch rates of Pacific halibut caught in directed on-bottom trawl groundfish fisheries and off-bottom trawl groundfish fisheries to be 2.53 percent and 0.06 percent, respectively. Using these rates and the mix of groundfish expected to be caught by DAP and joint venture fisherman using on-bottom and off-bottom trawls and hook-and-longline gear, the bycatch and resulting mortality of halibut were estimated and are shown in the following table.

### HALIBUT

(In metric tons)

	Bycatch	Mortality
<b>DAP:</b>		
Bottom trawl	2,179	1,089
Midwater trawl	40	20
Longline	786	197
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,005</b>	<b>1,306</b>
<b>JVP:</b>		
Bottom trawl	47	47
Midwater trawl	0	0
Longline	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,052</b>	<b>1,353</b>

About 3,005 mt and 47 mt of Pacific halibut are expected to be caught in DAP and JVP fisheries in 1987. Actual mortality, given the difference between DAP and JVP fishing operations, is estimated to be 1,306 mt and 47 mt,

respectively. Therefore, the Council recommended that the Secretary establish the total Gulf of Alaska PSC limit for Pacific halibut at 3,000 mt (rounded from 3,005) and 47 mt, respectively, for the 1987 DAP and JVP fisheries. If the Regional Director determines that a PSC limit has been reached by a DAP or JVP fishery, he must prohibit further bottom trawling by that fishery in the Gulf of Alaska for the remainder of the fishing year. He may, however, allow some or all of those vessels to continue to fish for groundfish using bottom trawl gear under specified conditions as described at § 672.20(e).

### Prohibited Species Catch Limits of Groundfish

Certain species of groundfish are fully utilized by DAP fishermen. The Magnuson Act requires that all of these species be made available to DAP fishermen. Other fisheries, i.e., the joint ventures, which target on other groundfish species for which they have

an allocation, catch incidentally some of the species that are fully utilized by DAP fishermen. Under Magnuson Act sections 201(d)(2) and 204(b)(6)(B)(ii), no amounts of fully utilized species can be made available for harvest in directed foreign fisheries or received at sea during any year by foreign vessels. In addition, any mortality of fully utilized species in excess of TQ is inconsistent with the provisions of the FMP, which provides only for a harvest equal to the specified TQ for any species category.

The Council has determined that sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, and "other rockfish" will be fully utilized by DAP fishermen in 1987. Under the framework procedure implemented by emergency interim rule (52 FR 422, January 6, 1987), which authorizes PSC limits for fully utilized groundfish species in excess of their TQs, the Council has recommended, and the Secretary has concurred, that PSC limits of 48 mt, 111 mt, and 20 mt, respectively, should be established for sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, and "other rockfish" in the joint venture fishery. If the Regional Director determines that a groundfish PSC limit has been reached by the joint venture fisheries, he will publish a notice closing that directed fishery in all or part of the area or district concerned.

#### Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area

The Council considered new information and adopted ABCs and TACs for each of the groundfish species, as follows:

**Pollock**—The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendation for 1987 pollock ABCs in the Bering Sea Subarea of 1.2 million mt and in the Aleutian Islands Subarea of 100,000 mt, the same as the 1986 TACs. These values are based on biomass estimates and patterns of recruitment; they represent an exploitation rate of 13.6 percent of the exploitable biomass, which is well within the historical exploitation rate range of 10 to 15 percent for the Bering Sea pollock stock since 1977. The Council set TAC for the Bering Sea Subarea at 1.2 million mt in response to industry interest to fully utilize the Bering Sea pollock stocks. The Council reduced the Aleutian Islands TAC to 88,000 mt from the recommended ABC of 100,000 mt to compensate for amounts of pollock being taken outside the exclusive economic zone by foreign vessels in an area known as the "doughnut hole".

**Pacific cod**—The Council adopted an ABC for Pacific cod equal to the sum of the ABCs estimated for the Bering Sea and for the Aleutian Islands area of 375,000 mt and 25,000 mt, respectively,

or 400,000 mt. The ABC is based on a new biomass estimate for Pacific cod of 1,134,100 mt, using data from a new trawl survey completed in 1986. This estimate is the highest on record. The Council set TAC at 280,000 mt, substantially below ABC, to constrain market supply in response to the U.S. fishing industry's intent to improve its competitiveness in available markets.

**Yellowfin sole**—The yellowfin sole resource remains in relatively good condition and is still producing slightly above the MSY level of 150,000 mt. The Council adopted a TAC of 187,000 mt, on the basis of the Plan Team's estimate that the ABC is equal to this amount.

**Greenland turbot**—The Council adopted the Plan Team's new estimate of ABC for this species of 20,000 mt, in the low end of the 16,500–35,000 mt ABC range, which reflects poor recruitment in recent years. Although the ABC is low, it is increased from the earlier estimate on which TAC was proposed. The increase results from updated analyses that reflect revised estimates of average virgin biomass, recruitment at age 4 instead of age 5, and a projected recruitment of 10 percent instead of zero during 1986–1989. The Council adopted TAC equal to ABC.

**Arrowtooth flounder**—The Council adopted the Plan Team's new estimate for the arrowtooth flounder ABC of 30,900 mt. The new estimate includes results of the 1986 trawl survey. The updated information indicates that abundance of this species has remained relatively high and stable. This ABC is 10 percent of the average biomass during the period 1984–1986 of 309,000 mt. The Council established a TAC of 9,795 mt to avoid exceeding aggregate OY for all species of 2.0 million mt.

**Other flatfish**—The other flatfish category includes rock sole, flathead sole, Alaska plaice, and miscellaneous flatfish species. The resource remains in abundant condition and the stock is capable of producing above MSY. The Plan Team has recomputed ABC for this flatfish group to be 193,300 mt, based on results of the 1986 NMFS trawl survey. The Council adopted the Plan Team's ABC estimate, but recommended the TAC be set at 148,300 mt to avoid exceeding the aggregate OY for all species of 2.0 million mt.

**Sablefish**—Sablefish stocks have improved substantially in both of the subareas and are capable of producing MSY. The best estimates of MSY are 2,200 to 3,700 mt for the Bering Sea Subarea and 2,400 to 4,000 mt for the Aleutian Islands Subarea. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendation that ABCs equal the upper end of the MSY range (3,700 mt for

the Bering Sea and 4,000 mt for the Aleutian Islands Area) and set the TACs equal to the ABCs.

**Pacific ocean perch**—No significant change is apparent in the status of the Pacific ocean perch stocks. The revised ABC estimates reflect reapportionments in estimates of the biomass between the two regions. In general, the status of the stocks remains stable. Abundance remains substantially below historic high levels in the early 1980's, but indications exist of some improved recruitment in recent years. The Plan Team recommended ABCs of 3,600 mt in the Bering Sea and 10,900 mt in the Aleutian Islands area. The Council's SSC, however, in reviewing the data, recommended that the respective ABCs should be 2,850 mt and 8,175 mt. The Council adopted the SSC's recommendation and set TACs at 2,850 mt and 8,175 mt in the Bering Sea and in the Aleutian Islands area, respectively.

**Other rockfish**—No significant change has occurred in the status of the "other rockfish" stocks. In general, the stocks have remained relatively stable but low. The Plan Team recommended that ABCs be 75 percent of the equilibrium yield or 450 mt in the Bering Sea and 1,430 mt in the Aleutian Islands area to promote rebuilding of the stocks in both area. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendations and set the TACs equal to the ABCs in both management areas.

**Atka mackerel**—New information is not available to update the 1986 estimate of ABC, which is 30,800 mt. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendation and set the TAC equal to the ABC.

**Squid**—New information is not available to update the 1986 estimate of ABC, which is 10,000 mt. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendation for this ABC but set the TAC equal to 500 mt to avoid exceeding aggregate OY for all species.

**Other species**—The Plan Team calculated the 1987 ABC based on a 10 percent exploitation rate of the 1985 estimated biomass. The biomass estimate is updated annually from NMFS' trawl surveys. Since the resource is relatively stable, ABC is estimated to be 49,500 mt, 10 percent of the average biomass during the period 1984–1986. The Council adopted the Plan Team's recommendation but set TAC equal to 15,000 mt to avoid exceeding the OY of all species.

The TACs adopted by the Council and the apportionments of those TACs among DAP, JVP, and TALFF are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2.—1987 ORIGINAL TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC), DOMESTIC ANNUAL PROCESSING (DAP), JOINT VENTURE PROCESSING (JVP), RESERVE<sup>1</sup>, AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE LEVEL OF FOREIGN FISHING (TALFF), IN THE BERING SEA (BS), AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA (AI), OR BOTH, ALL IN METRIC TONS

[TAC = RESERVE + DAP + JVP + TALFF; Initial TAC = 0.85 TAC; DAP = JVP + TALFF]

Species	Species Code	Area	TAC	DAH	DAP	JVP	TALFF
Pollock	701	BS	1,200,000	1,020,000	188,967	630,013	5,000
		AI	88,000	88,000	57,210	30,790	0
Pacific ocean perch	780	BS	2,850	2,543	2,423	120	12
		AI	8,175	6,949	6,766	163	0
Rockfish	849	BS	450	442	382	59	9
		AI	1,430	1,215	1,001	214	0
Sablefish	703	BS	3,700	3,495	3,145	350	40
		AI	4,000	3,400	3,317	83	0
Pacific cod	702	BS/AI	280,000	206,705	111,767	94,938	31,295
Yellowfin sole	720	BS/AI	187,000	158,950	100	158,850	5,000
Greenland turbot	721	BS/AI	20,000	15,250	15,213	37	1,750
Arrowtooth flounder	118	BS/AI	8,785	4,193	630	3,363	4,133
Other flatfish	129	BS/AI	148,300	111,575	23,103	88,472	14,480
Atka mackerel	207	BS/AI	30,800	30,790	250	30,540	10
Squid	509	BS/AI	500	52	4	48	373
Other species	499	BS/AI	15,000	10,500	500	10,000	2,250

<sup>1</sup> Fifteen percent of the TAC, or 300,000 mt, is apportioned to the operational reserve; of this 28,410 mt is apportioned to JVP and TALFF, effective with the date of filing of this notice. The remaining reserve is 271,590 mt.

<sup>2</sup> Eighty-five percent of the original TAC is established as the initial TAC, which may be augmented from the reserve during the fishing year.

#### Initial Reapportionment of Reserve

Gulf of Alaska—The Council recommended that the Regional Director reapportion all the reserves for sablefish, Pacific ocean perch, and "other rockfish" to DAP since these species will be fully utilized by DAP fishermen in 1987. All reserves of these species are being reapportioned, therefore, to DAP, effective with date of filing of this notice. Fishermen engaged in joint ventures for flounders will also catch certain amounts of other groundfish species. Accordingly, the Council recommended that the Regional Director reapportion certain reserves to JVP to support that fishery. Reserves are being reapportioned to JVP as follows: Western/Central Area, pollock—300 mt; the Central Area, Pacific cod—225 mt, Atka mackerel—25 mt, thornyhead rockfish—50 mt, squid—50 mt, and "other species"—1,100 mt. The balance of all other reserves are reapportioned to DAP for full utilization by DAP fishermen during 1987.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area—The Council recommended that the Regional Director reapportion certain amounts of the reserve to JVP and TALFF primarily for bycatch purposes except for a JVP target fishery for pollock in the Aleutian Islands area. Accordingly, the reserve has been reapportioned as follows: Pollock—5,000 mt to TALFF in the Bering Sea and 13,200 mt to JVP in the Aleutian Islands area; yellowfin sole—5,000 mt to TALFF; Pacific ocean perch—120 mt to JVP and

12 mt to TALFF; "other rockfish"—59 mt to JVP and 9 mt to TALFF in the Bering Sea; sablefish—350 mt to JVP and 40 mt to TALFF in the Bering Sea; and Atka mackerel—4,615 mt to JVP and 10 mt to TALFF. These reapportionments reduce the operational reserve from 300,000 mt to 271,590 mt, effective with the date of filing of this notice.

#### Comments Requested

Under §§ 672.20(c) and 675.20(b), the Secretary may apportion reserves on such dates as he determines appropriate. Under §§ 672.20(c), 675.20(b), 611.92(c), and 611.93(b), the Secretary must provide all interested persons an opportunity to comment on the proposed apportionments before they are made, unless he finds that good cause exists for not so doing. The Secretary finds that sufficient bycatches must be made available in time to allow the harvest of target catches. Comments are invited on the specifications, PSCs, apportionments, and releases of reserve for 15 days after the effective date of this notice. Comments should be sent to the Regional Director at the above address.

#### Other matters

This action is taken under the authority of §§ 611.92(c), 611.93(b), 672.20, and 675.20 and complies with Executive Order 12291.

Immediate implementation of these specifications, PSCs, and apportionments is necessary to provide domestic and foreign fishermen with

harvestable amounts of groundfish by the beginning of the 1987 fishing year. Failure to do so will idle vessels and result in economic loss. Therefore, the Secretary for good cause finds that it is impracticable and contrary to the public interest to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment, or to delay for 30 days the effective date of this rule. The Secretary notes that the public had the opportunity to participate in discussions on the substance of this interim rule during the Council meeting in December 1986. Comments are invited for 15 days after the effective date of this notice.

#### List of Subjects

##### 50 CFR Part 611

Fisheries, Foreign relations.

##### 50 CFR Parts 672 and 675

Fisheries.

Dated: January 2, 1987.

William E. Evans,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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##### 50 CFR Part 663

[Docket No. 70101-7001]

##### Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.