

2.11 The Alaska groundfish trawl fishery Prohibited Species Donation Program: Preliminary results for 2016

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Abstract

The amount of Pacific halibut bycatch unintentionally-landed by vessels fishing for non-Pacific halibut groundfish off Alaska in 2016, through September 30, totaled 45,665 pounds (20,713 kg) net weight. This included 20,999 pounds (9,525 kg) of Pacific halibut that were delivered to processors in Bering Sea ports and 24,666 pounds (11,188 kg) to processors in Gulf of Alaska ports. Since 1998, landings such as these have been donated to food banks, following handling by SeaShare, Inc., under a permit granted by the National Marine Fisheries Service. SeaShare has provided annual reports to IPHC on the quantity of Pacific halibut handled. The fish has been processed into steaks and distributed to food banks. The amount of landed halibut bycatch handled in the program has totaled 581,974 pounds (263,979 kg) net weight since program inception, representing over 1.75 million meals, based on a 1/3-pound (150-g) serving size.

Introduction

Since 1998, SeaShare, Inc., of Bainbridge Island, Washington has operated a program that acquires unintentionally-landed halibut bycatch and other species from Alaskan fisheries for donation to hunger-relief programs. SeaShare acquires Pacific halibut, salmon, and many other species from numerous sources under the auspices of the Prohibited Species Donation (PSD) program adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) following several years of development and, ultimately, approval by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). This report provides a preliminary summary of the quantity of halibut that has been processed through the PSD through 30 September 2016.

Program history

The initial PSD program that was adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) in 1998 expired on December 31, 2000. NMFS and IPHC staff conducted a review of the program during 2000 to examine the appropriateness of granting an extension of it. The review was discussed with the NPFMC at its June 2000 meeting and led to an extension of the program. The extension that was granted contains no sunset provision but does require a review of the program every three years. The PSD was initially limited to shore-based trawl catcher vessels that landed in Dutch Harbor, Alaska but was expanded into Gulf of Alaska ports in 2011. The PSD program has no limitations on the amount of halibut that can be donated, nor any requirement that the halibut bycatch originates from specific fisheries.

SeaShare has been providing annual reports to IPHC since the program began. Those reports have noted the weight of donated halibut based on dockside tallies of dressed (eviscerated) fish from the processors. Since 2008, SeaShare has reported the amount of final-processed product; i.e., steaks or headed/gutted fish. Headed/gutted weights are used as provided, while IPHC staff

has used a product recovery rate of 0.79 to convert the steak weights back to headed and gutted form for continuity in reporting, based on recovery rates reported by Crapo et al. (1993).

Final 2015 results

The total amount of Pacific halibut collected by SeaShare in 2015 was 54,048 pounds (24,516 kg), with 14,204 pounds (6,443 kg) (26%) coming from Bering Sea ports and 39,844 pounds (18,073 kg) (74%) from Gulf of Alaska ports ([Table 1](#)). Processing and inspection were conducted by SeaFreeze (Seattle), as in previous years.

Preliminary 2016 results

The amount of Pacific halibut processed in 2016 through September 30 was 45,665 pounds (20,713 kg) net weight (Table 1). Halibut bycatch came from both Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska ports, mostly from Akutan and Kodiak, Alaska, respectively. The preliminary figures showed a lower proportion (54%) of Pacific halibut coming from Gulf of Alaska processors in 2016 (74% prior year). As SeaShare expects a substantial amount from Dutch Harbor from the pollock “B” season, which has yet to occur and be tallied, the final 2016 figures could prove to be composed of a higher proportion of donations from the Bering Sea, as opposed to the Gulf of Alaska.

Handling of fish was similar to past years. Shipping to Seattle, WA was donated by Coastal Transportation, Matson/Horizon, TOTE, and AML. The U.S. Coast Guard also flew fish to Kotzebue and Nome, AK in 2016. Processing in Kodiak was conducted at North Pacific Seafoods Inc., Trident Seafoods, and Ocean Beauty Seafoods. The fish was weighed, inspected, steamed, and repacked at Seafreeze Cold Storage, City Ice Cold Storage, Custom Cold Storage, Unisea, and E&E Foods. Headed/gutted fish of good quality were sorted and distributed to food banks. Receiving food banks for this period were The Glory Hole (Juneau), Kenai Peninsula Food Bank (Soldotna), Brother Francis Shelter (Kodiak), Kodiak Baptist Mission (Kodiak), Nana Corp. (Kotzebue), Kawerak, Inc. (Nome), Food Bank of Alaska (Anchorage), St. Herman’s Seminary (Kodiak), San Francisco Food Bank (California). New recipients in 2016 included Millionair Club (Seattle), 2nd Harvest (Spokane), and the city of Palmer, AK. The total pounds for 2015 and 2016 (through September 30) were estimated to represent 347,100 meals.

References

Crapo, C., Paust, B., and J. Babbit. 1993. Recoveries and yields from Pacific fish and shellfish. AK Sea Grant, Mar. Adv. Prog. Bull. No. 37.

Table 1. Amount of Pacific halibut (pounds, net weight) received and distributed by SeaShare acquired through the NMFS Prohibited Species Donation program. Through 2007, the amount is based on dock-side tallies of fish weight. Beginning in 2008, the amount has been based on data provided to the IPHC in the form of finished-product (steak) weights, and subsequently converted to estimated net weight assuming a recovery rate of 0.79, based on guidelines reported by Crapo et al. (1993). Results for 2016 are preliminary through September 30.

Year	Bering Sea/Aleutians				Gulf of Alaska				Overall Total
	Dutch Harbor	Akutan	Beaver Inlet	Total	Kodiak	King Cove	Sand Pt.	Total	
1998	21,196	0	0	21,196	0	0	0	0	21,196
1999	4,476	0	0	4,476	0	0	0	0	4,476
2000	18,269	0	0	18,269	0	0	0	0	18,269
2001	43,579	0	0	43,579	0	0	0	0	43,579
2002	33,974	0	0	33,974	0	0	0	0	33,974
2003	18,406	0	0	18,406	0	0	0	0	18,406
2004	15,890	0	0	15,890	0	0	0	0	15,890
2005	29,286	0	0	29,286	0	0	0	0	29,286
2006	10,762	0	0	10,762	0	0	0	0	10,762
2007	34,619	0	0	34,619	0	0	0	0	34,619
2008	43,375	0	0	43,375	0	0	0	0	43,375
2009	14,258	0	0	14,258	0	0	0	0	14,258
2010	11,739	0	1,375	13,114	0	0	0	0	13,114
2011	6,914	0	2,233	9,147	13,908	775	0	14,683	23,830
2012	--	--	--	5,502	--	--	--	30,649	36,151
2013	3,557	6,127	0	9,684	38,353	141	1,636	40,130	49,814
2014	26,642	21,703	0	48,344	15,632	1,689	5,597	22,918	71,263
2015	95	14,109	0	14,204	34,719	1,518	3,608	39,844	54,048
2016	--	20,999	0	20,999	20,601	1,605	2,459	24,666	45,665
Total	337,037	62,937	3,608	409,083	123,214	5,727	13,301	172,891	581,974