

# **Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2016**



**Division of Subsistence  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

**Presentation to the  
International Pacific Halibut Commission**

**Portland, OR  
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**Project funded through a grant from the  
National Marine Fisheries Service:  
No. NA16NMF4370166**

**For the full study findings, see:**

Fall, James A. and David Koster. 2018. Subsistence Harvests of Pacific Halibut in Alaska, 2016. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 436. Anchorage.

# Project Background

- New subsistence regulations in effect May 2003
- 118 communities and 123 tribes eligible, plus residents of designated rural areas
- Registration requirement (SHARC)
- Regulations have provision for collecting harvest data
- This report covers the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the harvest assessment program (harvests in 2016)
- Due to funding constraints, the project did not document 2013 or 2015 harvests and will not document 2017 harvests
- If funding available, could continue for 2018

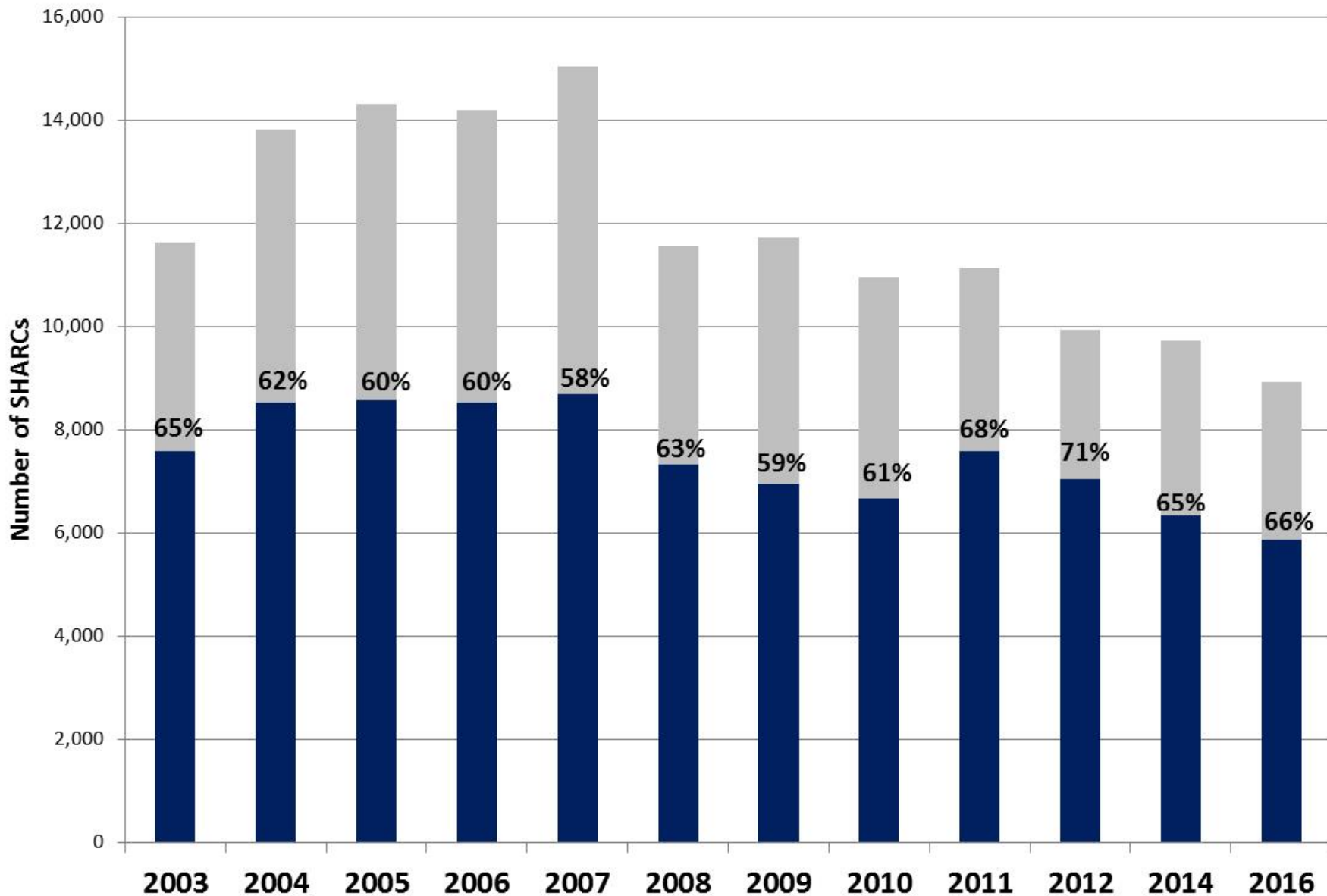
# Methods

- Mailed survey is primary data collection method; response voluntary
- Mailed to all persons holding SHARCs during 2016: 8,779
- Three rounds of mailings
- Supplemented by contacts & interviews in 5 communities in southeast and western AK
- Harvests of some non-SHARC holders (146) included in estimates
- Total target group = 8,925 potential fishers

# Sample Achievement for 2016

- **5,862 surveys returned**, of 8,925 potential fishers
- **Sampling fraction of 66%**
- **High rates of return** achieved in most larger communities with the most SHARCs issued

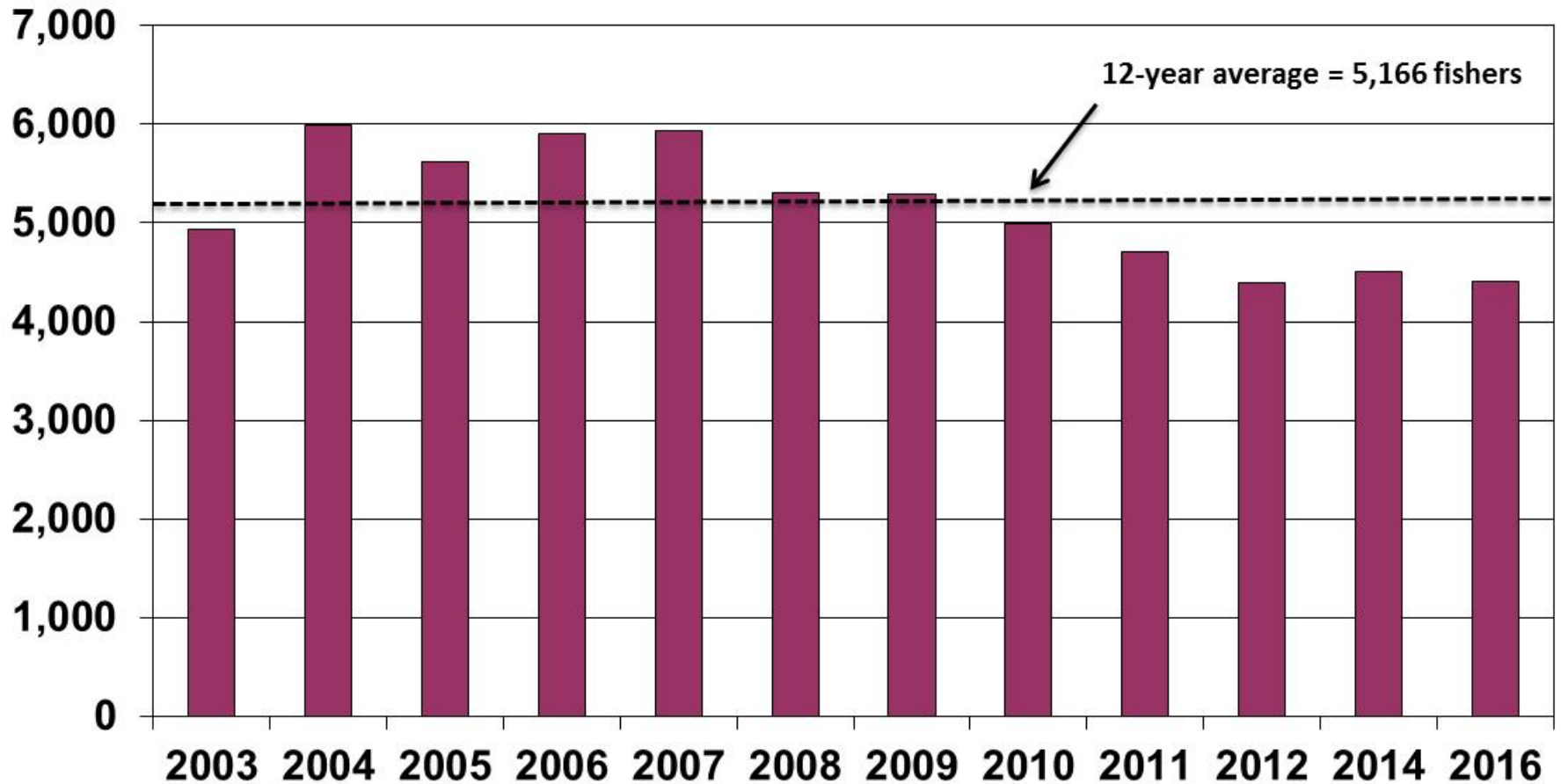
# SHARC Survey Achievement, 2003-2012, 2014 & 2016



# Study Findings: Halibut 2016

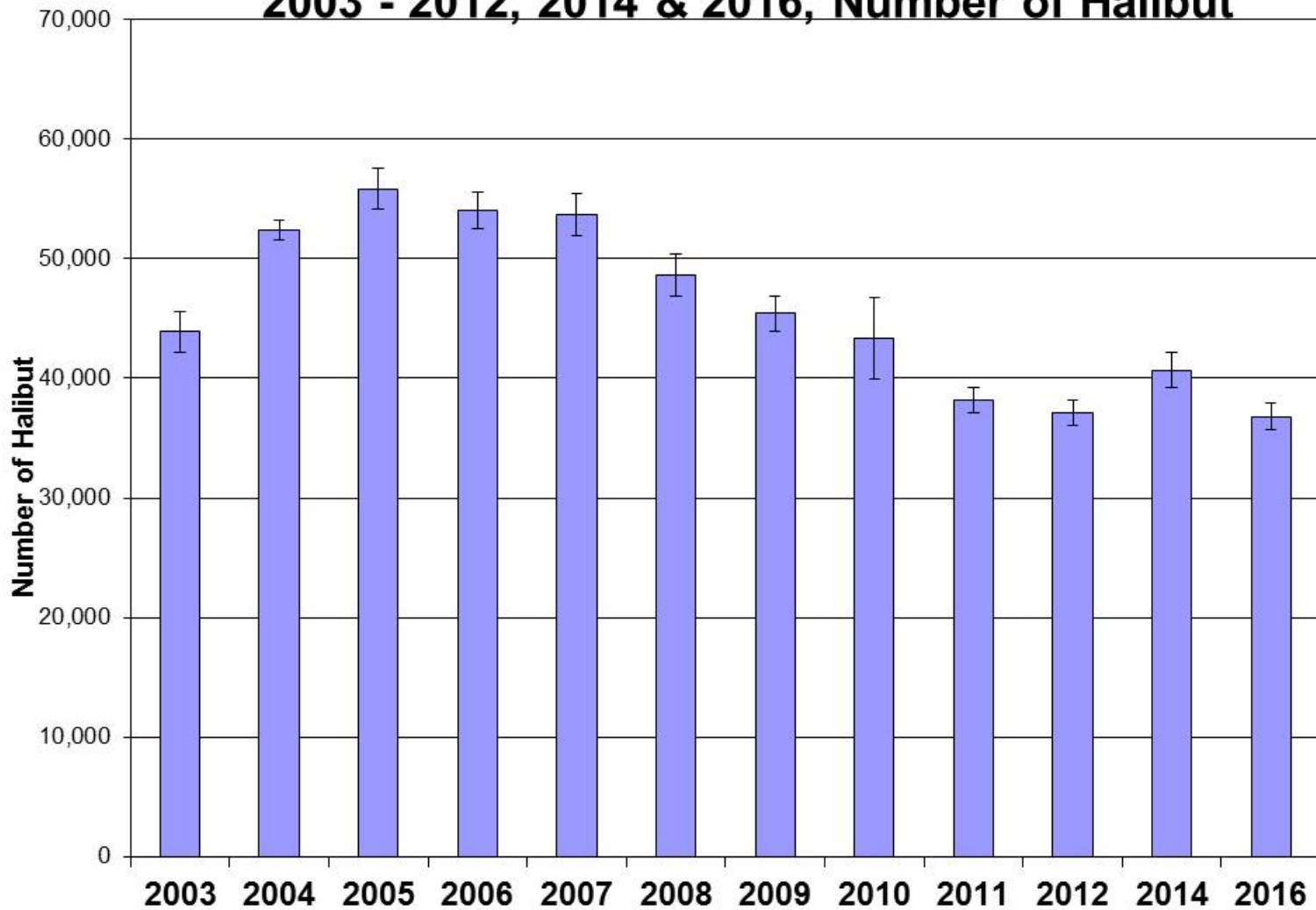
- Estimated number of **subsistence fishers = 4,408**
- Estimated subsistence harvest = **36,815 halibut**
- Estimated subsistence harvest = **727,178 lbs** net weight (= 75% of round weight) (19.8 lbs/fish)
- **60% of harvest occurred in Area 2C** (SE Alaska), 31% in Area 3A (SC Alaska), & 6% in Area 4E (East Bering Sea Coast)
- 75% of harvest taken with setline gear; 25% with hand-operated gear

# Estimated Number of Individuals Subsistence Fishing for Halibut in Alaska, 2003-2012 , 2014 & 2016

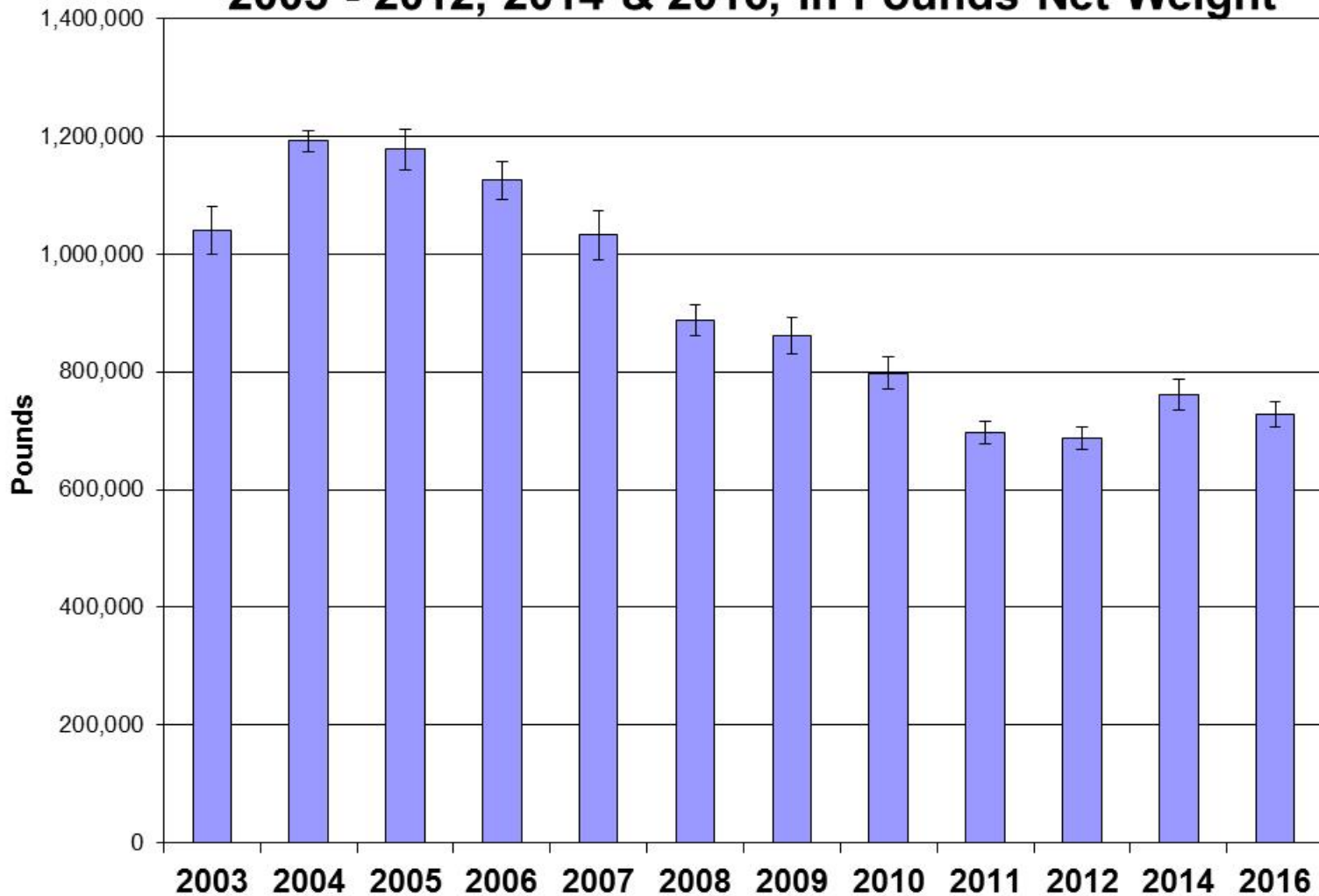




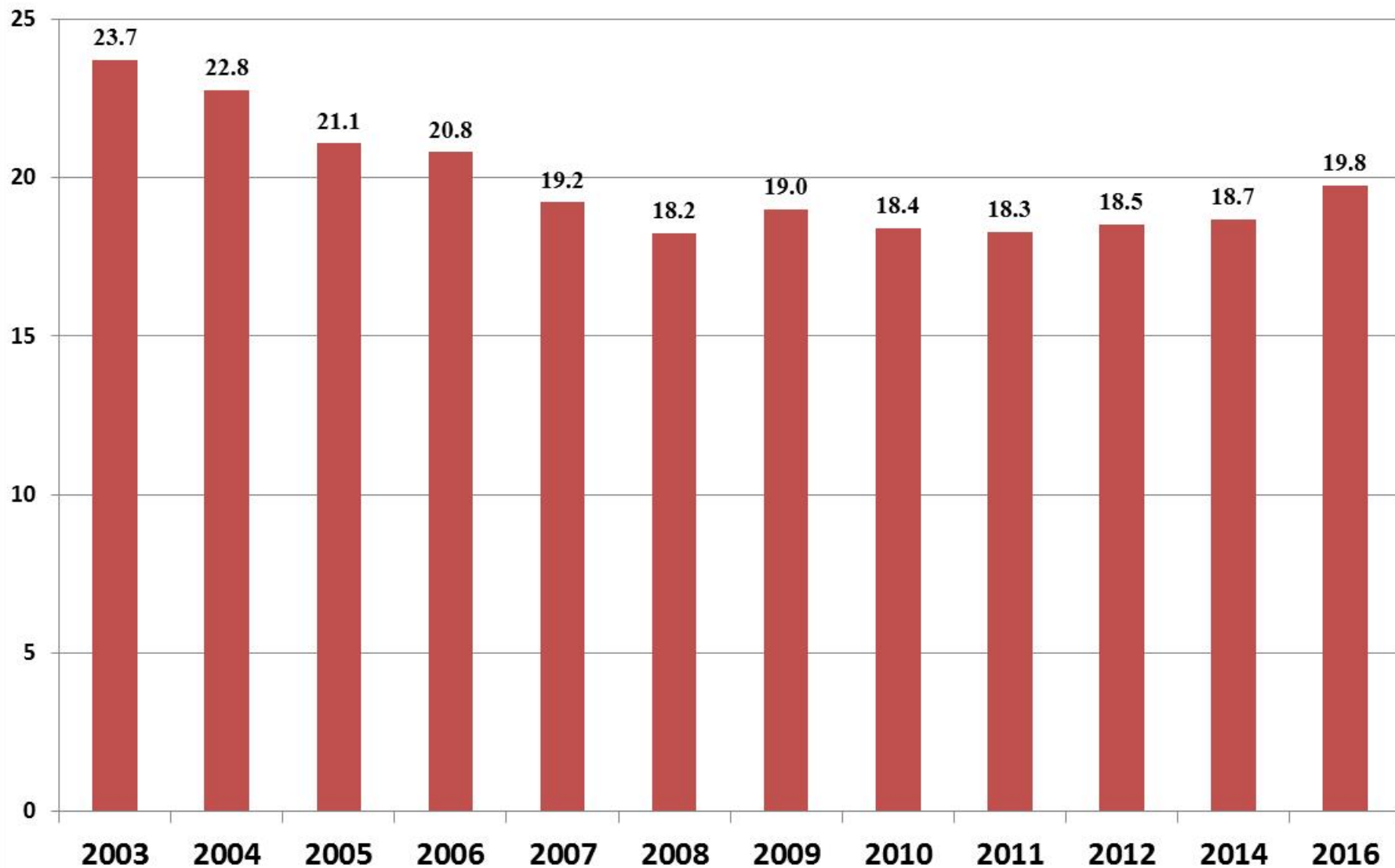
## Estimated Subsistence Harvests of Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012, 2014 & 2016, Number of Halibut



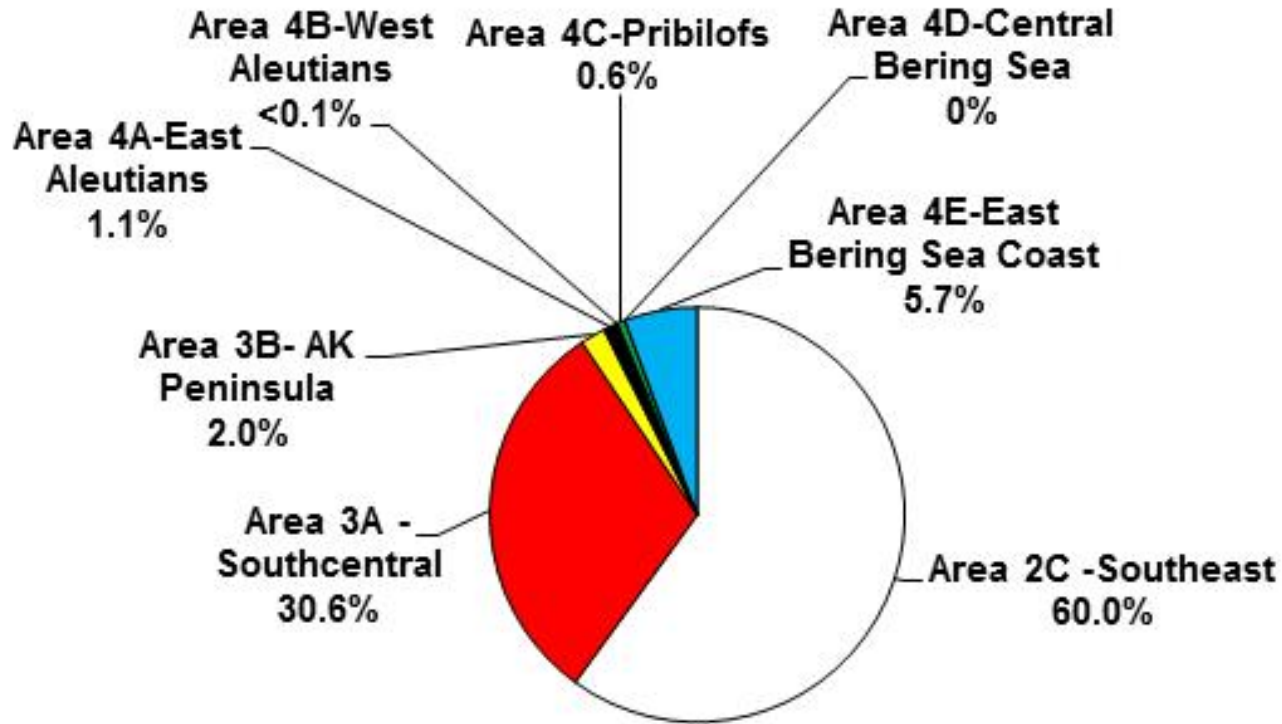
## Estimated Subsistence Harvests of Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012, 2014 & 2016, in Pounds Net Weight



## Average net weight of halibut (lb per fish) in the Alaska subsistence fishery, 2003 - 2012, 2014 & 2016

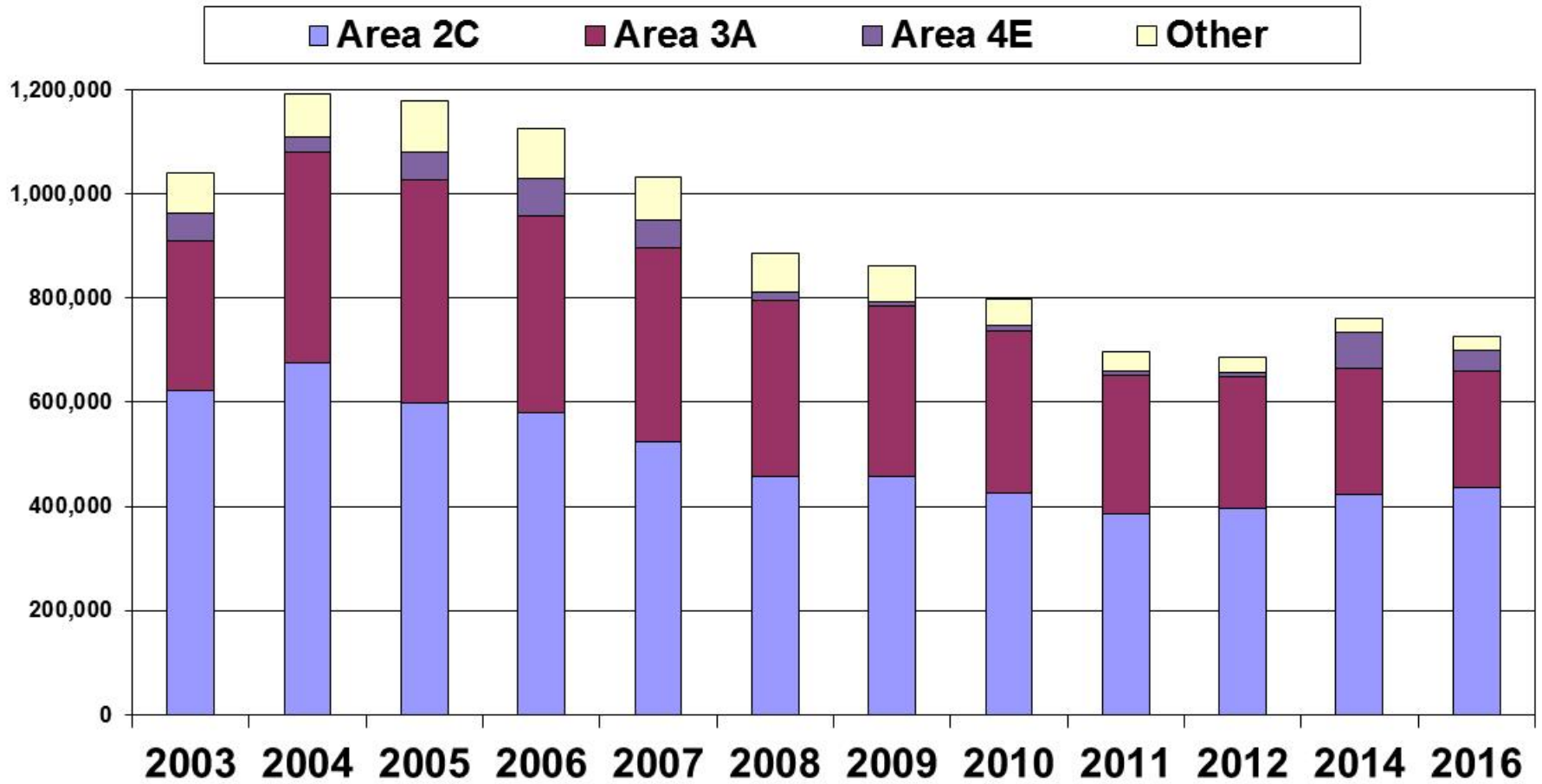


## Percentage of Subsistence Halibut Harvest by Regulatory Area Fished, 2016

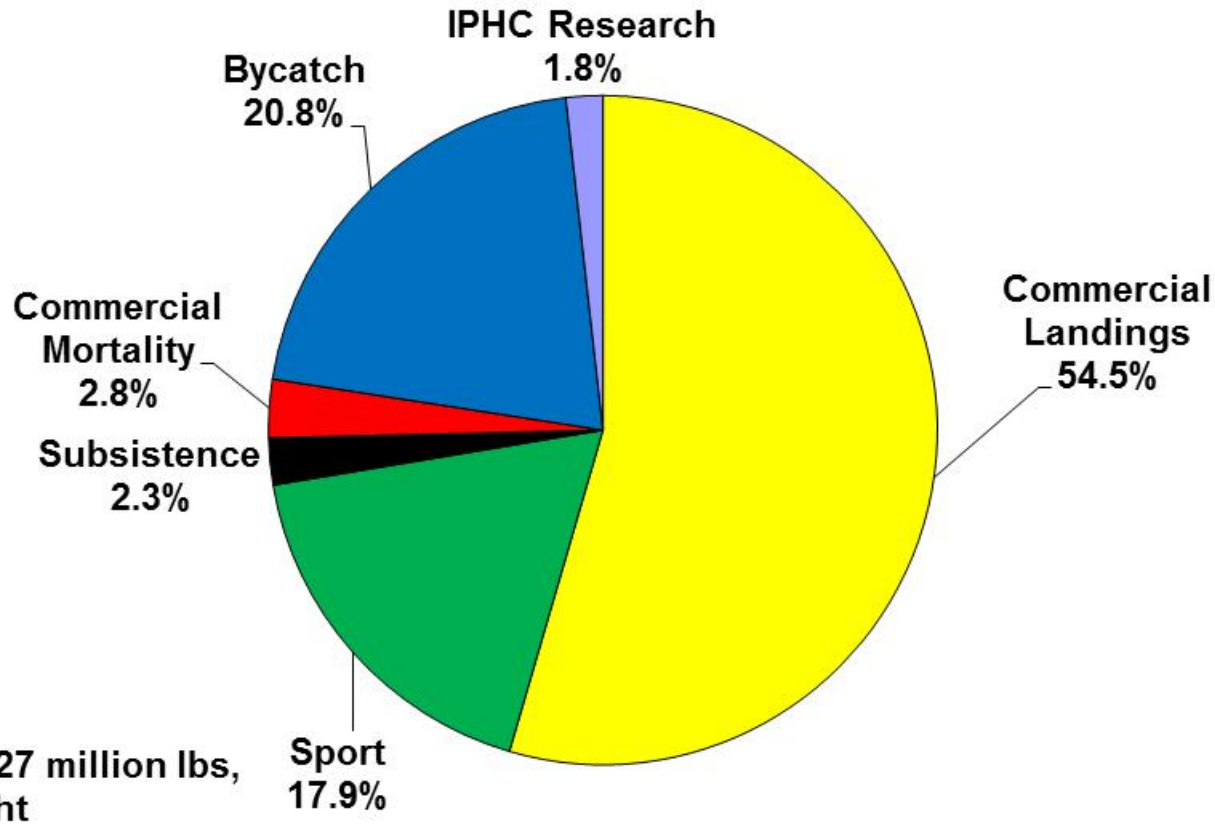


N= 727,178 pounds net weight

# Estimated Subsistence Harvests of Halibut in Alaska, 2003 - 2012, 2014 & 2016 (lbs net weight), by Area



# Halibut Removals, Alaska, 2016



- Subsistence harvests by area ranged from 6.4% in Area 2C to 0.4% in Area 3B

# Conclusions: Harvest Survey, 2016

- Overall, 2016 harvest survey was a success: good response rates and overall reliable harvest estimates
- Can discern some general patterns in the fishery since the new regulations came into effect
- Reasons for overall decline in harvests likely complex and require further investigation
- Concerns about nonrenewal of SHARCs, especially in certain regulatory areas
- Need to supplement mailed SHARC survey with in-person survey in portions of Area 4
- Recommendation to continue harvest monitoring

# For More Information

- Division of Subsistence Website:  
[www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us) and go to publications for final report
- Or: call us at 907-465-4147, or 465-3617, or 267-2353
- Or write: ADF&G, Division of Subsistence, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK, 99518
- Or contact NMFS at: 1-800-304-4846 (option 2) or [www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/subsistence/halibut.htm)