

The Plan Team and the SSC recommended removing redbanded rockfish (*Sebastes babcocki*) from the demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) group and placing it in the "other rockfish" category because the harvest of this species as bycatch in other fisheries can result in closure of the DSR fishery before other species components may be harvested. Furthermore, redbanded rockfish are caught as bycatch in the "other rockfish" category. The DSR and "other rockfish" TAC amounts are adjusted in this action to reflect this reclassification of redbanded rockfish.

The Council adopted the SSC's ABC recommendations for each species category, except for POP. The Council's recommended ABCs reflect harvest amounts that are less than the specified overfishing amounts. These amounts are listed in Table 1. The sum of 1995 ABCs for all groundfish is 492,780 mt, which is lower than the 1994 ABC total of 553,050 mt.

As in 1994, the SSC calculated the ABC for POP by applying a fishing mortality rate of $F=0.078$ adjusted by the ratio of the current biomass to target spawning biomass to provide for rebuilding, which results in an ABC of 8,230 mt. Because this ABC is equal to the overfishing level (OFL), the Plan Team had further reduced this number by $F_{35\%}/F_{30\%}$ to provide a buffer between the ABC and OFL, which results in an ABC of 6,530 mt. As at the September meeting, the SSC did not agree with the latter adjustment and, as it did in 1994, recommended that ABC equal OFL. However, the Council adopted the recommendation of the Plan Team. The ABC for POP is set at 6,530 mt.

1. Specifications of TAC and Apportionments Thereof Among DAP, JVP, TALFF, and Reserves

The Council recommended TACs equal to ABCs for pollock, Pacific cod, sablefish, shortraker/rougheye rockfish, pelagic shelf rockfish, DSR, thornyhead rockfish, Atka mackerel, and northern rockfish. The Council recommended TACs less than the ABC for shallow-water and deep-water flatfish, other

slope rockfish, rex sole, flathead sole, and arrowtooth flounder. The final 1995 ABCs, TACs, and OFLs are shown in Table 1. The sum of the TACs for all GOA groundfish is 279,463 mt, which is within the OY range specified by the FMP. The sum of the TACs is lower than the 1994 TAC sum of 304,595 mt.

The 1995 POP ABC was approximately double the 1994 ABC level. This caused some concern for the Council in establishing a 1995 TAC that was significantly higher than the 1994 TAC. Therefore, the Council requested staff to prepare an FMP amendment to the POP rebuilding plan that would establish an upperbound TAC limit but allow the Council to establish TAC below that limit. The current POP rebuilding plan does not allow a TAC to be set that differs from that specified in the rebuilding plan. However, until the FMP has been amended, NMFS must establish a POP TAC consistent with the current POP rebuilding plan, or 5,630 mt. NMFS recognizes the Council's intent, but is required to specify a TAC consistent with the FMP until the FMP is amended to allow a more conservative TAC and a more rapid rebuilding schedule.

The Plan Team's ABC recommendation for Pacific cod (108,000 mt) was approximately double the 1994 ABC (50,400 mt). This was due, in part, to a change from the length-based stock assessment model to a stock synthesis model that used a different recruitment assumption, and that had fitted survey selectivity of catch along with natural mortality rate. However, the SSC was concerned with the Plan Team recommendation because the stock has been declining since 1987 and, with an average recruitment rate, the stock is projected to decline under any catch rate. The SSC advised using a more conservative $F_{40\%}$ exploitation rate. The resulting ABC is 69,200 mt. The AP recommended a TAC equal to the SSC's ABC. This level was accepted by the Council. The 1995 TAC for Pacific cod is set at 69,200 mt.

The Council recommended setting the TAC for the various flatfish groups equal to the 1994 TAC amounts except

for the Central Gulf (CG) TAC for arrowtooth flounder. The Council recommended increasing the CG TAC for arrowtooth flounder from 20,000 mt to 25,000 mt, to accommodate anticipated increased groundfish harvest in this area of the GOA. The 1995 TAC for various flatfish groups reflect these recommendations.

The Council approved the AP recommendation of adopting the 1994 TAC amounts for flathead sole as the 1995 TAC amounts. In the GOA Eastern Regulatory Area, the 1994 TAC amount (3,000 mt) is higher than the Council's recommended 1995 ABC (2,740 mt). To maintain consistency with the accepted policy of setting TACs lower than or equal to ABC amounts, NMFS is establishing a 1995 TAC of 2,740 mt for the Eastern Regulatory Area. This number is equal to the 1995 ABC recommended by the Plan Team and the SSC and approved by the Council. Adjustment of the flathead sole TAC in the Eastern Regulatory Area changes the total 1995 flathead sole TAC to 9,740 mt. This revision is also reflected in the 1995 TAC for "other species." NMFS establishes a TAC of 13,308 mt for "other species" which represents 5 percent of the sum of the TACs for the other groundfish species categories.

The Council, after specifying the TACs, recommended 1995 apportionments of the TACs for each species category among DAP, JVP, TALFF, and reserves. Existing harvesting and processing capacity of the U.S. industry is capable of utilizing the entire 1995 TAC specification for GOA groundfish; therefore, the Council recommended that the DAP allowance equal the TAC for each species category. NMFS concurs and no TALFF or JVP apportionments for the 1995 fishing year are specified.

NMFS reviewed the Council's recommendations concerning TAC specifications and apportionments. Except as noted, NMFS hereby approves the Council's recommendations and specifications under § 672.20(c)(1)(ii)(B).

The 1995 ABCs, TACs, and overfishing levels are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.—1995 ABCs, TACs, AND DAPs OF GROUND FISH (METRIC TONS) FOR THE WESTERN/CENTRAL (W/C), WESTERN (W), CENTRAL (C), AND EASTERN (E) REGULATORY AREAS AND IN THE WEST YAKUTAT (WYK), SOUTHEAST OUTSIDE (SEO), AND GULF-WIDE (GW) DISTRICTS OF THE GULF OF ALASKA. AMOUNTS SPECIFIED AS JOINT VENTURE PROCESSING (JVP) AND TOTAL ALLOWABLE LEVEL OF FOREIGN FISHING (TALFF) ARE PROPOSED TO BE ZERO AND ARE NOT SHOWN IN THIS TABLE. RESERVES ARE APPORTIONED TO DAP

Species	Area ¹	ABC	TAC=DAP	Overfishing
Pollock ²				
Shumagin	(61)	30,380	30,380}	266,000
Chirikof	(62)	15,310	15,310}	