

PROPOSAL 13

5 AAC 28.648. Dutch Harbor Subdistrict Pacific Cod.

Increase Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery guideline harvest level to 10% of the acceptable biological catch for Pacific cod in the federal Bering Sea subarea and expand the area eastward, as follows:

Increase the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery guideline harvest level from 6.4% to 10% of the acceptable biological catch for Pacific cod in the federal Bering Sea subarea. Increase the area of the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict eastward, to include state waters to Longitude line 163 degree 30 minutes west (False Pass sea-buoy).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Provide additional harvest opportunity for the 58-foot and under pot cod fleet, in order to better capture the value this fleet offers to Alaska through harvest of its near-shore resources.

The Dutch Harbor Subdistrict state-waters Pacific cod fishery is a fully utilized fishery that has provided meaningful economic benefits to boats and businesses operating in Western Alaska since it began in 2014. The modest 3% initial allocation to this fishery in its pilot stages allowed managers to test the fishery’s viability and industry effort. After showing strong participation from the under-58 pot cod fleet, this fishery received another modest uptick in GHL during the 2016 board cycle. In keeping with this precedent for step-up development, a GHL increase at this time is an appropriate next step in the evolution of this successful state-water fishery. In addition, an area increase is a valuable tool for spreading out the effort of an expanding fleet, which has grown steadily from its 2014 pilot stages into a vibrant and promising fishery. This new area can and should be established with appropriate considerations for marine mammal protected areas and other important habitats, in collaboration with industry representatives, and state and federal managers.

The under-58 pot cod fleet is largely comprised of vessels that are owned, crewed and maintained by Alaskans. They utilize gear with very low bycatch rates, and through their economic activity, provide a high value directly to the state, Alaskan communities and Alaskan fishermen. Interest in the fishery has consistently increased, and its ongoing success offers a meaningful opportunity for the state and its residents. The potential and strengths of this fishery have outgrown the modest allocations that they started with, warranting an allocation increase and area expansion.

PROPOSED BY: Under Sixty Cod Harvesters (EF-F18-065)
