information on the 1996 specification process and provides a discussion of the preliminary ABCs, proposed establishment of the 1996 annual TAC amounts and apportionments thereof among domestic annual processing (DAP), joint venture processing (JVP), total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF) and reserves for each target species and the "other species" category, apportionments of pollock and Pacific cod TAC, apportionments of the sablefish TAC to vessels using hookand-line and trawl gear, halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits, and seasonal allocations of the halibut PSC limits.

Regulations at § 672.20(c)(1)(ii)(A) require that one-fourth of the preliminary or proposed specifications (not including the reserves and the first quarterly allowance of pollock), one-fourth of the inshore and offshore allocations of Pacific cod in each regulatory area, and one-fourth of the halibut PSC amounts become effective at 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, on an interim basis and remain in effect until superseded by the final harvest specifications, which will be published in the Federal Register.

This action provides interim TAC specifications and apportionments thereof for the 1996 fishing year that will become available on January 1, 1996, on an interim or preliminary basis. Background information concerning the 1996 groundfish harvest specification process upon which this interim action is based is provided in the proposed initial harvest specifications appearing in the Proposed Rules section of this Federal Register issue.

Species TAC amounts are apportioned initially among DAP, JVP, TALFF, and

reserves under §§ 611.92(c)(1) and 672.20(a)(2). 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. TALFF amounts are intended for harvest by foreign fishermen. Existing harvesting and processing capacity allows the U.S. industry to utilize the entire 1996 TAC specified for GOA groundfish. Therefore, the Council recommended that DAP equal TAC for each species category, which results in no proposed amounts of TALFF or JVP for the 1996 fishing year.

The reserves for the GOA are 20 percent of the TAC amounts for pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish species, and the "other species" category. Given that the GOA groundfish TAC amounts have been utilized fully by DAP since 1987, NMFS has reapportioned all the reserves to DAP. The interim TAC amounts contained in Table 1 reflect the reapportionment of reserves to DAP.

Amendment 23 to the FMP and Amendment 18 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area established inshore and offshore component allocations of Pacific cod and pollock in the GOA and inshore and offshore component allocations of pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area during the years 1993 through 1995. Because Amendments 23 and 18 and their implementing regulations expire on December 31, 1995, and because the Council has yet to complete development of its comprehensive plan to address problems caused by the open access nature of the Alaska groundfish fisheries, the Council voted

unanimously at its June 1995 meeting to adopt Amendments 40 and 38, which would extend the provisions of the expiring Amendments 23 and 18 through December 31, 1998. The Council has submitted to NMFS for review and approval under the Magnuson Act proposed Amendments 40 and 38. On September 18, 1995, NMFS published a proposed rule that would implement the inshore and offshore allocations through 1998 (60 FR 48087). However, at this time, NMFS has not determined that either Amendment 40 or Amendment 38 is consistent with the national standards. other provisions of the Magnuson Act, and other applicable laws.

This interim specification document specifies allocations of pollock and Pacific cod to inshore and offshore components. If NMFS disapproves proposed Amendment 40 to the FMP, NMFS will revise the applicable GOA interim pollock and Pacific cod TAC allocations specified in this document before the start of the 1996 fishing season. The revised interim TAC allocations of pollock and Pacific cod will be published in the Federal Register.

## 1. Interim TAC Amounts and Apportionments Thereof

Table 1 provides interim TAC amounts, interim TAC allocations of Pacific cod to the inshore and offshore components, first quarterly allowances of pollock in the combined Western and Central regulatory areas, and interim sablefish TAC apportionments to hookand-line and trawl gear. These interim TAC amounts and apportionments thereof become effective at 0001 hours, A.l.t., January 1, 1996.

Table 1.—Interim 1996 TAC Amounts of Groundfish for the Combined Western/Central (W/C), Western (W), Central (C), and Eastern (E) Regulatory Areas and in the West Yakutat (WYak), Southeast Outside (SEO), and Gulfwide (GW) Districts of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA)<sup>123</sup>. First Quarterly Allowances of Pollock in the Combined W/C Regulatory Areas. Interim Sablefish TAC Apportionments to Hookand-Line (H/L) and Trawl (TRW) Gear. Amounts Are in Metric Tons.

Species	Area	Interim TAC
Pollock <sup>4 5</sup>		
	W (61)	6,125
	C (62)	3,125
	C (63)	3,250
Subtotal	W/C E	12,500 675
	-	0/3
Total		13,175
Pacific cod <sup>6</sup>		
Inshore	W	4,241
Offshore	W	471
Inshore	С	9,653
Offshore	C	1,073