

⁴Twenty percent of the sablefish hook-and-line gear or pot gear final TAC amount will be reserved for use by Community Development Quota (CDQ) participants. (See § 676.24(b)) Regulations at § 675.20(c) do not provide for the establishment of an ITAC for the hook-and-line and pot gear allocation for sablefish. The ITAC for sablefish reflected in Table 1 is for trawl gear only.

⁵"Other flatfish" includes all flatfish species except for Pacific halibut (a prohibited species), flathead sole, Greenland turbot, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

⁶"Other red rockfish" includes shortraker, rougheye, sharpchin, and northern.

⁷"Other rockfish" includes all *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* species except for Pacific ocean perch, sharpchin, northern, shortraker, and rougheye.

⁸"Other species" includes sculpins, sharks, skates, eulachon, smelts, capelin, and octopus.

Proposed TAC Specifications

The Council recommended adopting the Advisory Panel's recommendation for the 1996 BSAI TAC amounts, which equalled the 1995 TAC amounts and apportionments with one exception. The apportionment of the Atka mackerel TAC among the Aleutian Island districts and the Bering Sea was proposed to be revised as follows: Western Aleutians—41,520 mt (51.9 percent); Central Aleutians—11,200 (14.0 percent); and Eastern Aleutians and Bering Sea—27,280 mt (34.1 percent).

The 1,000 mt TAC proposed for pollock of the Bogoslof subarea was intended by the Council only to provide sufficient amounts of pollock to meet bycatch needs in other fisheries. The Council will consider updated information on the status of this resource at its December 1995 meeting to decide whether to allow a directed fishery under the final 1996 specifications.

The Council developed its TAC recommendations based on the preliminary ABC amounts as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the total TAC within the required OY range of 1.4–2.0 million mt. Each of the Council's recommended TAC amounts for 1996 is equal to or less than the final 1996 ABC for each species category. Therefore, NMFS finds that the recommended proposed TAC amounts are consistent with the biological condition of groundfish stocks. The preliminary ABC and TAC amounts, initial TAC (ITAC) amounts, overfishing levels, and initial apportionments of groundfish in the BSAI area for 1996 are given in Table 1 of this action. The apportionment of TAC amounts among fisheries and seasons is discussed below.

Apportionment of TAC

As required by § 675.20(a)(3) and § 675.20(a)(7)(i), each species' TAC initially is reduced by 15 percent, except the hook-and-line and pot gear allocation for sablefish. The sum of these 15-percent amounts is the reserve. The reserve is not designated by species or species group, and any amount of the reserve may be reapportioned to a target species or the "other species" category

during the year, providing that such reapportionments are consistent with § 675.20(a)(2)(i) and do not result in overfishing.

The ITAC for each target species and the "other species" category at the beginning of the year is apportioned between the domestic annual harvest (DAH) category and the total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF), if any. Each DAH amount is further apportioned between two categories of U.S. fishing vessels. The domestic annual processing (DAP) category includes U.S. vessels that process their catch on board or deliver it to U.S. fish processors. The joint venture processing (JVP) category includes U.S. fishing vessels working in joint ventures with foreign processing vessels authorized to receive catches in the exclusive economic zone.

In consultation with the Council, the initial amounts of DAP and JVP are determined by the Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director). Consistent with the final 1991–95 initial specifications, the Council recommended that 1996 DAP specifications be set equal to ITAC and that no groundfish be allocated to JVP and TALFF. In making this recommendation, the Council considered the capacity of DAP harvesting and processing operations and anticipated that 1996 DAP operations would harvest the full TAC specified for each BSAI groundfish species category. The proposed ABC amounts, proposed TAC and ITAC amounts, overfishing levels, and initial apportionments of groundfish in the BSAI area for 1996 are given in Table 1.

These proposed specifications are subject to change as a result of public comment, analysis of the current biological condition of the groundfish stocks, new information regarding the fishery, and consultation with the Council at its meeting scheduled for December 4–11, 1995.

Seasonal Allowances of Pollock TAC

Under § 675.20(a)(2)(ii), the TAC of pollock for each subarea or district of the BSAI area is divided, after subtraction of reserves (§ 675.20(a)(3)), into two seasonal allowances. The first allowance will be available for directed fishing from January 1 to April 15 (roe

season) and the second allowance will be available from August 15 through the end of the fishing year (non-roe season). In 1995, the opening of the pollock roe season was delayed for the offshore component fishery to January 26th (§ 675.23(e)(2)). On September 18, 1995, a notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register (60 FR 48087) that, if approved by NMFS, would continue to authorize a delay of the offshore component roe fishery.

The Council recommended that the seasonal allowances for the Bering Sea pollock roe and non-roe seasons be specified at 45 percent and 55 percent of the ITAC amounts, respectively (Table 2). These seasonal apportionments are unchanged from 1995. As in past years, the pollock TAC amounts specified for the Aleutian Islands subarea and the Bogoslof District are not seasonally apportioned.

When specifying seasonal allowances of the pollock TAC, the Council and NMFS consider the following nine factors as specified in section 14.4.10 of the FMP:

1. Estimated monthly pollock catch and effort in prior years;
2. Expected changes in harvesting and processing capacity and associated pollock catch;
3. Current estimates of, and expected changes in, pollock biomass and stock conditions; conditions of marine mammal stocks; and biomass and stock conditions of species taken as bycatch in directed pollock fisheries;
4. Potential impacts of expected seasonal fishing for pollock on pollock stocks, marine mammals, and stocks and species taken as bycatch in directed pollock fisheries;
5. The need to obtain fishery-related data during all or part of the fishing year;
6. Effects on operating costs and gross revenues;
7. The need to spread fishing effort over the year, minimize gear conflicts, and allow participation by various elements of the groundfish fleet and other fisheries;
8. Potential allocative effects among users and indirect effects on coastal communities; and
9. Other biological and socioeconomic information that affects the consistency