

# B REPORT – BYCATCH REPORT

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# BYCATCH REPORT - OVERVIEW

- During the December meeting, the Council requested that staff provide updated bycatch information based on the findings of the Witherell/Fey 2023 paper. This update utilizes the National Bycatch Report Dataset 2026 compiled by AKFIN.
- The *National Bycatch Report* is a national-level compilation of bycatch estimates for U.S. commercial fisheries, produced by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The report documents how much bycatch is occurring across the nation's fisheries.
  - Bycatch is defined in the report as discard of any living marine resource plus any mortality caused by gear interactions
  - The report was published in 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2019
  - NMFS is working towards a modernized database with application for bycatch analysis
- Alaska bycatch data annually compiled by AKFIN and submitted to NMFS for *National Bycatch Report*
  - Groundfish and halibut fisheries
  - All data is in weights - PSC converted to weight
  - Halibut in tons - does not align with standard practice in Alaska



# BYCATCH REPORT - OVERVIEW

- Council staff developed new fisheries grouping in 2022 to consolidate the fishery groupings
  - Trawl grouped into Atka mackerel/rockfish, Pacific cod, pollock, and flatfish
  - Longline grouped into Pacific cod longline, halibut longline and sablefish longline
  - Pot grouped into Pacific cod pot, halibut pot and sablefish pot
- Council staff published a paper with the new groupings and bycatch rates (Witherell/Fey 2023)
  - Fish Bycatch in the North Pacific Halibut, Hippoglossus Stenolepis, and Groundfish Fisheries
  - Paper concludes Alaska has low bycatch rates compared to National average (4.7% versus ~11% in 2021)
- Tables 3-7 from Witherell/Fey 2023 paper updated in this presentation
  - Potential for future annual reporting
  - Halibut in mortality – aligns with standard management practice in Alaska
- Additional tables provided to show historic bycatch rates for longer term comparison



# BYCATCH REPORT - 2025

Area	Gear	Catch(t)	Discard(t)	% Discard
BSAI	Trawl	1,684,111	35,952	2.1%
	Longline	94,413	17,449	18.5%
	Pot	37,429	829	2.2%
GOA	Trawl	201,787	6,848	3.4%
	Longline	24,559	10,058	41.0%
	Pot	26,644	822	3.1%
	Other	1,937	n/a	n/a
Total	Trawl	1,885,898	43,715	2.3%
	Longline	118,972	27,507	23.1%
	Pot	64,072	1,651	2.6%
	Other	1,937	n/a	n/a
All Gears and Areas		2,072,193	71,957	3.5%

- Overview table of total catch, discard and % discarded for gear groupings
- Update of table 7 (Witherell/Fey 2023)



# BYCATCH REPORT - 2025 BSAI TRAWL FISHERIES

Pollock Trawl		Flatfish Trawl		Rockfish/Atka Mackerel		Pacific Cod Trawl	
Squid sp.	6,265	Pollock	5,759	Atka Mackerel	963	Other Flatfish	429
Herring	3,027	Other Flatfish	1,579	Northern Rockfish	864	Pacific Cod	380
Scypho jellies	1,759	Pacific Halibut	1,272	Giant Grenadier	465	Pollock	310
Pollock	733	Sculpin sp.	1,167	Pacific Ocean Perch	464	Rock Sole	227
Pacific Ocean Perch	388	Skate sp.	862	Sculpin sp.	408	Pacific Halibut	222
Chum Salmon*	255	Scypho jellies	802	Skates sp.	389	Skate sp.	196
Skate sp.	149	Yellowfin Sole	776	Rougheyeye Rockfish	266	Sculpin sp.	174
Shark sp.	131	Sea star	610	Squid sp.	215	Arrowtooth Flounder	139
Misc fish	98	Rock Sole	530	Pollock	208	Scypho jellies	76
Flathead Sole	59	Giant Grenadier	406	Misc fish	161	Flathead Sole	62
Total Discard	13,115	Total Discard	15,172	Total Discard	5,371	Total Discard	2,293
Total Catch	1,318,385	Total Catch	198,238	Total Catch	133,629	Total Catch	33,832
%Discard	1.0%	%Discard	7.7%	%Discard	4.0%	%Discard	6.8%

\*Average weight of 3.7 pounds - 151,367 fish

- BSAI Flatfish Trawl had lowest bycatch rate on record (2013-2025) in 2025
  - Average annual pollock discards from 2015 to 2024 was 9,729 tons
  - Average skate discards from 2015 to 2024 was 2,100 tons
- Update of table 3 (Witherell/Fey 2023)



# BYCATCH REPORT - 2025 GOA TRAWL FISHERIES

Pollock Trawl		Flatfish Trawl		Rockfish Trawl		Pacific Cod Trawl	
Pollock	740	Pacific Cod	696	Pacific Cod	242	Shallow Water Flatfi	111
Squid sp.	528	Pollock	596	Giant Grenadier	222	Arrowtooth Fl.	86
Pacific Ocean Perch	417	Arrowtooth Fl.	472	Pacific Ocean Perch	122	Shark sp.	45
Shark sp.	129	Pacific Ocean Perch	260	Other Rockfish	91	Giant Grenadier	35
Smelt sp.	100	Shallow Water Flatf	231	Atka Mackerel	68	Halibut	25
Herring	98	Pacific Halibut	183	Pollock	59	Pacific Cod	11
Shortraker Rockfish	62	Misc fish	126	Sablefish	57	Flathead Sole	6
Giant Grenadier	33	Sablefish	107	Pacific Halibut	55	Sculpin	6
Chinook Salmon*	32	Giant Grenadier	46	Arrowtooth Flounder	49	GOA Rex Sole	5
Misc fish	23	Shark sp.	35	Misc fish	40	Pollock	5
Total Discard	2,181	Total Discard	2,971	Total Discard	1,341	Total Discard	355
Total Catch	152,685	Total Catch	22,153	Total Catch	23,513	Total Catch	3,454
%Discard	1.4%	%Discard	13.4%	%Discard	5.7%	%Discard	10.3%

\*Average weight of 5.2 pounds - 13,122 fish

- GOA Pollock Trawl had notably low bycatch of squid
  - 2020-2024 annual average of 1,322 tons
- GOA Rockfish Trawl had the lowest bycatch rate on record
  - Annual average Arrowtooth flounder discards from 2020 to 2024 was 361 tons
- GOA Flatfish Trawl had the lowest bycatch rate on record
  - Annual average sablefish discards from 2020-2024 was 472 tons
- Update of table 4 (Witherell/Fey 2023)



# BYCATCH REPORT - 2025 BSAI LONGLINE AND POT FISHERIES

Pacific Cod Longline		Pacific Cod Pot		Sablefish Pot		Halibut Longline	
Skate sp.	10,176	Sculpin sp.	340	Arrowtooth Fl.	33	Sculpin sp.	79
Sculpin sp.	1,975	Octopus sp.	134	Misc crabs	11	Skate sp.	55
Pacific Cod	1,045	Pacific Cod	74	Giant Grenadier	10	Pacific Cod	32
Yellowfin Sole	719	Yellowfin Sole	56	Kamchatka Flounder	4	Pacific Halibut	23
Arrowtooth Fl.	669	Tanner Crab	50	Sablefish	3	Shark	15
Flathead Sole	624	Pollock	19	Octopus sp.	3	Sablefish	8
Pollock	486	Snow Crab	12	Pacific Halibut	2	Misc fish	4
Sea star	342	Other Flatfish	12	Greenland Turbot	1	Arrowtooth Fl.	2
Sea anemone sp.	235	Atka Mackerel	11	Tanner Crab	1	Sea star	2
Pacific Halibut	200	Misc crabs	8	Skate sp.	1	Greenland Turbot	1
Total Discard	17,219	Total Discard	758	Total Discard	70	Total Discard	229
Total Catch	93,604	Total Catch	36,018	Total Catch	1,902	Total Catch	785
%Discard	18.4%	%Discard	2.1%	%Discard	3.7%	%Discard	29.2%

- BSAI Halibut Longline had the lowest bycatch rate on record – 52% year over year decline in total catch
  - Annual Average skate discards from 2020 to 2024 was 373 tons
  - Annual average sculpin discards from 2020 to 2024 was 343 tons
- BSAI Sablefish Longline total catch was less than 100 tons in 2025 – not included
- Update of table 5 (Witherell/Fey 2023)



# BYCATCH REPORT - 2025 GOA LONGLINE AND POT FISHERIES

Pacific Cod Longline		Pacific Cod Pot		Sablefish Longline		Sablefish Pot		Halibut Longline	
Skate, Big	1,081	Pacific Cod	174	Shark sp.	365	Sablefish	357	Shark sp.	1,626
Skate, Longnose	369	Other Rockfish	39	Sablefish	250	Arrowtooth Fl.	83	Skate, Longnose	1,026
Shark	220	Misc fish	29	Skate sp.	90	Giant Grenadier	18	Pacific Halibut	778
Skate sp.	210	Sculpin sp.	23	Skate, Longnose	58	Pacific Halibut	13	Pacific Cod	773
Pacific Cod	207	Pacific Halibut	15	Pacific Cod	42	Octopus sp.	8	Skate, Big	547
Sculpin sp.	102	Sablefish	12	Arrowtooth Fl.	16	Golden King Crab	8	Skate sp.	359
Pacific Halibut	94	Sea star	6	Misc fish	14	Misc crabs	3	Misc fish	352
Arrowtooth Fl.	83	Arrowtooth Fl.	4	Thornyhead Rockfish	12	Rattail Grenadier	3	Sablefish	337
Other Rockfish	57	Northern Rockfish	3	Deep Water Flatfish	11	Sea star	2	Sculpin sp.	229
Sablefish	42	Tanner Crab	3	Roughey Rockfish	7	Deep Water Flatfish	2	Arrowtooth Fl.	134
<b>Total Discard</b>	<b>2,639</b>	<b>Total Discard</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>Total Discard</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>Total Discard</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>Total Discard</b>	<b>6,526</b>
<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>7,250</b>	<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>12,297</b>	<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>15,137</b>	<b>Total Catch</b>	<b>13,257</b>
<b>%Discard</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>%Discard</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>%Discard</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>%Discard</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>%Discard</b>	<b>49.2%</b>

- GOA Sablefish Longline had the lowest bycatch rate on record
  - Annual average giant grenadier discards for 2015 to 2024 was 2,823 tons, 2 tons discarded in 2025
    - Downward trend coinciding with increase in sablefish pot usage
- Update of table 6 (WWitherell/Fey 2023)



## BSAI BYCATCH RATES BY FISHERY, 2016-2025

Fishery	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Halibut Hook and Line	43.0%	34.5%	39.3%	38.8%	34.9%	51.5%	44.0%	53.6%	50.5%	29.2%
Hook and Line Cod	18.4%	17.7%	16.8%	11.5%	13.1%	14.7%	18.0%	15.5%	17.3%	18.4%
Pollock	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Pot Cod	2.6%	2.0%	3.2%	2.7%	3.4%	4.3%	4.2%	1.4%	1.6%	2.1%
Sablefish Hook and Line	71.4%	74.2%	74.0%	72.4%	36.0%	62.5%	6.1%	64.4%	14.8%	n/a
Sablefish Pot	14.1%	15.9%	12.9%	11.2%	8.1%	5.0%	4.4%	4.1%	4.7%	3.7%
Trawl Atka Mackerel/Rockfish	2.8%	2.9%	3.7%	3.8%	4.7%	4.8%	5.3%	5.5%	4.8%	4.0%
Trawl Cod	6.0%	3.7%	5.5%	6.1%	3.5%	4.9%	6.7%	7.3%	6.0%	6.8%
Trawl Flatfish	8.6%	9.2%	10.7%	10.4%	10.4%	14.1%	10.3%	11.4%	12.0%	7.7%
Total BSAI	3.7%	3.7%	3.8%	3.4%	3.8%	4.0%	4.5%	3.9%	3.7%	3.0%

- BSAI had the lowest bycatch rate on record (2013-2025)



# GOA BYCATCH RATES BY FISHERY, 2016-2025

Fishery	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Halibut Hook and Line	36.6%	35.8%	41.6%	38.2%	37.1%	37.6%	43.6%	45.6%	49.1%	49.2%
Hook and Line Cod	27.3%	26.6%	22.7%	31.7%	42.3%	20.2%	19.1%	23.1%	16.7%	36.4%
Pollock	0.9%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	2.6%	3.2%	2.0%	1.4%
Pot Cod	5.1%	2.9%	1.5%	2.2%	3.4%	2.1%	1.9%	3.4%	1.3%	2.6%
Sablefish Hook and Line	54.8%	47.3%	46.2%	41.4%	34.4%	27.4%	27.3%	31.4%	27.1%	22.0%
Sablefish Pot	n/a	8.8%	6.3%	26.1%	7.2%	5.5%	4.1%	3.1%	1.8%	3.3%
Trawl Rockfish	6.4%	8.9%	13.8%	9.8%	8.0%	11.2%	8.1%	7.3%	8.0%	5.7%
Trawl Cod	14.3%	14.4%	8.7%	24.7%	29.5%	24.8%	8.8%	12.7%	9.0%	10.3%
Trawl Flatfish	17.7%	17.8%	17.4%	17.1%	15.0%	20.2%	18.3%	13.5%	18.1%	13.4%
Total GOA	9.7%	9.3%	10.2%	10.7%	8.6%	8.5%	8.2%	8.2%	8.3%	7.0%

- GOA had the lowest bycatch rate on record (2013-2025)



# OVERALL BYCATCH RATES, 2016-2025

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Discard(t)	106,515	105,862	103,752	92,899	90,152	90,396	95,661	90,962	86,218	71,956
Catch (t)	2,335,116	2,332,171	2,261,711	2,225,265	2,127,870	2,050,874	1,910,896	2,071,940	2,049,682	2,070,190
%Discard	4.6%	4.5%	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%	5.0%	4.4%	4.2%	3.5%

- Alaska total had the lowest bycatch rate and amount of discards on record (2013-2025) in 2025



# BYCATCH REPORT - SUMMARY

- BSAI, GOA and Alaska wide bycatch rates were all at record lows in 2025
  - 5 of the 18 fishery groups had record low bycatch rates in 2025
- Bycatch Report may be part of future annual reports



## SOURCES

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