

The Gulf of Alaska Shoreside Trawl Fleet and the History of Trawl Fishery Rationalization Efforts



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Fishery Management Structures

Cooperative Management

- Annual allocations based on catch history
- No more race / slower fishing pace
 - Increased fish quality
 - More valuable products (fillets v. H&G)
- Individual vessel accountability
- Formal cooperative agreements
 - Penalties to control behavior
 - Incentives to cooperate
 - Increased information sharing
- Minimize bycatch and regulatory discards
- More predictability and stability
- Increased safety at sea
- Increased monitoring

Race for Fish Management

- Compete for common quota pool
- Race to catch and process fish
- Overcapitalization
- No individual vessel accountability
- Less competitive in global markets
 - Less ability to maximize product value
 - Harder to maximize fish quality
 - Seasonal gluts of supply
- Higher peak demand on community infrastructure (water/electricity)
- Less safety at sea

Rationalized West Coast Trawl Fisheries

- Alaska
 - 2000 - American Fishery Act: Co-ops in BS Pollock fisheries
 - 2007 - CGOA Rockfish Pilot Program directed by Congress
 - 2012 - CGOA Rockfish Program: Co-ops in CGOA directed rockfish fisheries
 - 2008 - Amendment 80: Co-ops in BSAI catcher processor flatfish fisheries
 - *ETA 2024 - BSAI Trawl Catcher Vessel Pacific cod co-op fishery program*
- West Coast
 - 2011 - West Coast Trawl rationalization: Co-ops and Individual Fishing quotas (IFQ) for all trawl fisheries in Washington, Oregon and California.
- Only catcher vessel trawl fisheries still operating under limited access system (race for fish) on the West Coast are:
 - GOA Pollock
 - GOA Pacific Cod
 - GOA Flatfish

(all GOA trawl fisheries except CGOA rockfish)

Historical Background of GOA Rationalization

- Congress recognized value of rationalized fishery management.
- As part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001, Congress directed the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to examine fisheries under its jurisdiction to determine whether rationalization is needed –

“The North Pacific Fishery Management Council shall examine the fisheries under its jurisdiction, particularly the Gulf of Alaska groundfish and Bering Sea crab fisheries, to determine whether rationalization is needed. In particular, the North Pacific Council shall analyze individual fishing quota, processor quotas, cooperatives, and quotas held by communities. The analysis should include an economic analysis of the impact of all options on communities and processors as well as the fishing fleets. The North Pacific Council shall present its analysis to the appropriations and authorizing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives in a timely manner.”

Attempts at GOA Rationalization

2003-2006:

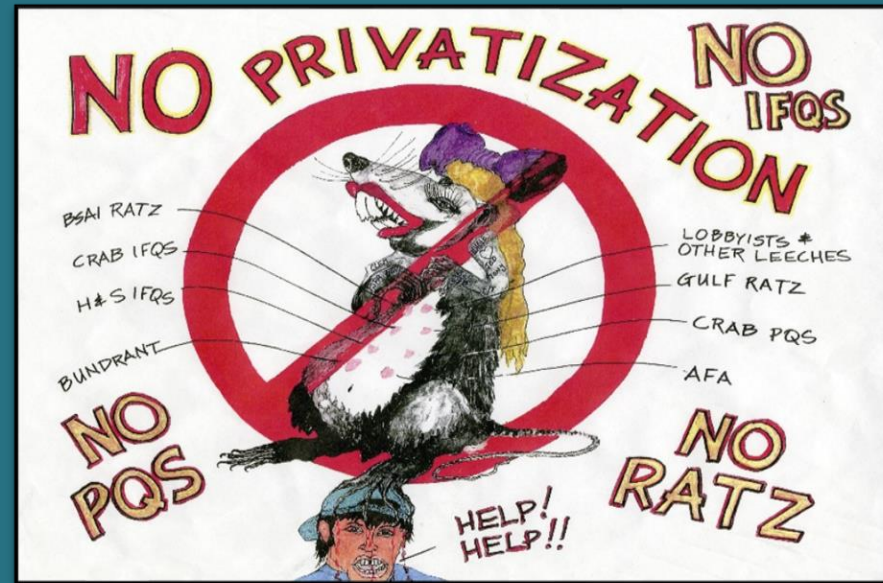
- Under the Murkowski Administration, consideration of a Gulf rationalization plan moved forward in 2003.
- Council progress was halted abruptly in 2006 when Sarah Palin became Alaska's next governor.

2012-2016:

- Under the Parnell Administration (2009 – 2014), the Council re-energized and focused their attention on Gulf trawl rationalization as a potential solution to bycatch management for the trawl fisheries (termed “Gulf Trawl Bycatch Management Program”).
- However, when Governor Walker was elected in 2014, the new administration lost focus and eventually tabled the trawl rationalization package indefinitely in December 2016.

Barriers to Developing GOA Rationalization Program

- Changes between Administrations (policies and priorities)
- Fear of consolidation within fleet and processors
- Perception of privatizing a public fishery resource
- Increased barriers and cost to enter fishery
- Unanticipated negative impacts on communities, processors, and fishermen
- Uncertainty around desirable market power dynamics



Kodiak's Trawl Fisheries

- High volume, low value, nearly year-round
- On average, 60% of Kodiak landings are from trawl
- Primarily Federal fisheries managed by NPFMC
- Target species: Pollock, cod, rockfish, flatfish, sablefish
 - Flatfish: arrowtooth flounder, rock sole, flathead sole, rex sole, dover sole, butter sole
- All have seasonal and/or fishery-specific PSC caps
 - PSC: halibut, chinook



Kodiak Shoreside Trawl Profile

CGOA Trawl Profile Statistics

- Species: pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish, rockfish, sablefish
- Average CV length: 86 feet
- Average Annual Participation: 40 CVs
- Vessels homeported in Kodiak: 25 CVs
- Vessels owned and operated by Kodiak Resident's: 18 CVs
- Most trawl skippers and crew are Alaska residents
- 4 shore-based processors take trawl deliveries (down from seven in 2018)



Typical CGOA Trawler

Economic impact on Kodiak

- Kodiak trawl fisheries create year-round resident processing jobs in Kodiak
 - Most processing workers are AK residents
 - Kodiak has the most year-round fisheries and shore-based processors in the state
- Kodiak is the 3rd port in US for lbs landed
- Fisheries taxes are significant to Kodiak Island Borough and City of Kodiak
- Trawl industry contributes to Kodiak's working waterfront:
 - Support businesses
 - Two fuel docks, 2 harbors, gear suppliers, hydraulic shops, mechanics
 - Kodiak Shipyard



Source: *Economic Impact of the Seafood Industry on the Kodiak Island Borough*, Prepared for Kodiak Island Borough & City of Kodiak, McDowell Group, May 2016.

WGOA Shoreside Trawl Profile

WGOA Trawl Profile Statistics

- Species: WGOA pollock & Pacific cod (some also do CGOA fisheries)
- Average CV length: <60 feet
- Average Annual Participation: 20 CVs
- CVs based in Sand Point and King Cove
- Most WGOA CVs also do state managed pot cod and salmon
- Shore-based processors in Sand Point, King Cove, Akutan and to tender vessels



Typical Western GOA Trawler

Present Trawl Fishery Stressors

- Substantial declines in the GOA Pacific cod TACs beginning in 2018 (70% reduction)
- Loss of shoreside flatfish markets (2021 & 2022)
- Increasing pressures for better bycatch performance
- Increasing cost structures for both harvesters and processors (labor, fuel, shipping, packaging, tariffs, insurance)
- Lower bycatch caps, without promised management tools

Takeaways

- The race for fish management system lacks the tools the fleet could use to more effectively minimize bycatch
- Racing for fish makes GOA catch less competitive in global trawl markets, which hurts Alaskan coastal communities
- Hard static bycatch caps are not the most effective tools to minimize bycatch
 - The fleet has limited ability to react to fishing conditions
 - Regulatory changes take years

Questions?

