

available information, the SSC recommended slightly higher ABCs for sablefish and Atka mackerel and slightly lower ABCs for Bogoslof pollock and the "other species" category than the Plan Team recommended. For sablefish, the SSC increased the ABC from the Plan Team's recommendation based on the projected 5-year average of catches under the Council's $F_{40\%}$ policy. For Atka mackerel, the SSC recommended a higher, yet still conservative, ABC compared to the Plan Team. The SSC's recommendation was based on an ABC option presented by the stock assessment author that should maintain stock biomass at or near $B_{40\%}$. For Bogoslof pollock, the SSC recommended using a procedure that reduces the ABC proportionately to the ratio of current stock biomass to target stock biomass. For "other species", the SSC recommended for the 5th year, a procedure that moves gradually to a higher ABC over a 10-year period instead of a large increase in one year.

For all species, the AP endorsed the ABCs recommended by the SSC, and the Council adopted them. The final ABCs, as adopted by the Council, are listed in Table 1. For northern rockfish, the SSC concluded that a reliable Bering Sea biomass estimate was not available and therefore used a more conservative procedure than the Plan Team for calculating OFLs and ABCs. This resulted in establishing separate OFLs and ABCs for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands subareas. At the Council meeting in January 2003, the SSC and Council received additional reports on northern rockfish biomass estimates and concluded that although variability in the estimates is high, the estimates are considered to be conservative. Thus both the SSC and Council recommended that NMFS consider following the historical approach of BSAI-wide northern rockfish OFL and ABC amounts. This was the approach proposed by NMFS (68 FR 76362, December 12, 2002) and

is determined to be appropriate for this stock.

The final TAC recommendations were based on the ABCs as adjusted for other biological and socioeconomic considerations, including maintaining the total TAC within the required optimum yield (OY) range of 1.4 million to 2.0 million mt. The Council adopted the AP's TAC recommendations. None of the Council's recommended TACs for 2003 exceed the final ABC for any species category. NMFS finds that the recommended ABCs and TACs are consistent with the biological condition of groundfish stocks as described in the 2002 SAFE document that was approved by the Council.

Table 1 lists the 2003 OFL, ABC, TAC, ITAC and CDQ reserve amounts of groundfish in the BSAI. The apportionment of TAC amounts among fisheries and seasons is discussed below.

TABLE 1.—2003 OVERFISHING LEVEL (OFL), ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL CATCH (ABC), TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC), INITIAL TAC (ITAC), AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUOTA (CDQ) RESERVE ALLOCATION OF GROUNDFISH IN THE BSAI¹

[Amounts are in mt]

Species	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	ITAC ²	CDQ reserve ³
Pollock ⁴	Bering Sea (BS)	3,530,000	2,330,000	1,491,760	1,342,584	149,176
	Aleutian Islands (AI)	52,600	39,400	1,000	1,000	
	Bogoslof District	45,300	4,070	50	50	
Pacific cod	BSAI	324,000	223,000	207,500	176,375	15,563
Sablefish ⁵	BS	4,290	2,900	2,900	1,233	399
	AI	4,590	3,100	3,100	659	523
Atka mackerel	Total	99,700	63,000	60,000	51,000	4,500
	Western AI		22,990	19,990	16,992	1,499
	Central AI		29,360	29,360	24,956	2,202
	Eastern AI/BS		10,650	10,650	9,053	799
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	136,000	114,000	83,750	71,188	6,281
Rock sole	BSAI	132,000	110,000	44,000	37,400	3,300
Greenland turbot	Total	17,800	5,880	4,000	3,400	300
	BS		3,920	2,680	2,278	201
	AI		1,960	1,320	1,122	99
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	139,000	112,000	12,000	10,200	900
Flathead sole	BSAI	81,000	66,000	20,000	17,000	1,500
Other flatfish ⁶	BSAI	21,400	16,000	3,000	2,550	225
Alaska plaice	BSAI	165,000	137,000	10,000	8,500	750
Pacific ocean perch	BSAI	18,000				
	BS		2,410	1,410	1,199	106
	AI Total		12,690	12,690	10,787	952
	Western AI		5,850	5,850	4,973	439
	Central AI		3,340	3,340	2,839	251
	Eastern AI		3,500	3,500	2,975	263
Northern rockfish	BSAI	9,468	7,101			
	BS			121	103	9
	AI			5,879	4,997	441
Shortraker/rougheye	BSAI	1,289	967			
	BS			137	116	10
	AI			830	706	62
Other rockfish ⁷	BS	1,280	960	960	816	72
	AI	846	634	634	539	48
Squid	BSAI	2,620	1,970	1,970	1,675	
Other species ⁸	BSAI	81,100	43,300	32,309	27,463	2,423