Species Fact Sheet:
Atka mackerel

*MSC certified May 2010

- **Latin Name:** *Pleurogrammus monopterygius*
- **Location:** Aleutian Islands
- **Fishing Gear:** Otter trawls rigged to fish over generally rougher substrates. Rockfish nets are designed to stay off the bottom as much as possible by employing numerous floats to buoy the net body and codend.
- **Season:** "A" Season is January 20 - April 15; "B" Season is September 1 - November 1.
- **Catch/TAC:** 2014 trawl catch = 30,947 metric tons / 2015 TAC = 70,000 metric tons. *The Atka mackerel fishery is managed by dividing TAC between three different management areas. Catch and TAC information above is reported in aggregate.
- **Products:** H&G (headed and gutted)
- **Size:** Average length to 37-47 cm (depending on management area)Average H&G weight 300-600 grams (depending on management area)
- **General Information:** Atka mackerel are mostly harvested in the Aleutian Islands at depths greater than 200 meters. These fish are semi-pelagic, and occur in large schools, resulting in very little catch of incidental species. Seasonal apportionments between A and B seasons are thought to distribute catching effort to decrease fishery effects on Steller sea lions. Atka mackerel is harvested mostly by catcher processors, and to a lesser extent, smaller catcher vessels. Catcher processors harvest multiple species, conduct primary processing aboard the vessel, and freeze their products on board.
- **Management:** In 1976, the U.S. established management for Atka mackerel stocks out to 200 miles. Federal fishery management plans, adopted through an open and transparent public process and based on sound science, govern the harvest of Atka mackerel. The plan has been amended numerous times to achieve continuous improvement in the performance of the fishery. Fishery managers and scientists follow a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach.
- **Improvements:** Industry participants have worked with NMFS scientists to better understand Atka mackerel as a Steller sea lion prey species. Tagging studies have been conducted to research small-scale changes in abundance and distribution. Results indicate that trawl exclusion zones are effective at minimizing disturbance to Steller sea lion prey fields within study areas.