The Outlook for Russian Pollock Supply

The global market for Russian pollock
Russian pollock stocks are undoubtedly large, and could play a significant role in global pollock markets, posing serious competition for Alaska pollock. But little reliable information is available about Russian pollock harvests and markets.

Why Is PCCRC Interested?
As an organization largely centered on the harvest of groundfish, primarily pollock, the Pollock Conservation Cooperative is interested in furthering its members’ understanding of global pollock markets.

What Scientists Did
The researcher reviewed publicly available data and information, and conducted interviews during a visit to Vladivostok in September 2001.

What Scientists Learned
Limitations imposed by language, out-of-date data, and unreported/illegal harvests, make it difficult to reach any definitive conclusions about Russian pollock harvests in 2001 or what harvests would be in 2002. Nevertheless, it appeared likely that Russian pollock quotas would be substantially reduced in 2002 by 748,000 metric tons, from about 1,678,000 tons to 930,000 tons. Even if this quota were fully harvested, which seemed unlikely given recent harvest rates of about eighty percent of total quotas, Russian harvests were predicted to decline substantially in 2002, presumably by several hundred thousand tons.

Objectives
What is the outlook for Russian pollock harvests in 2002?
How can the American pollock industry assess the outlook for the future Russian pollock supply?

Bottom Line
The Russian pollock harvest quota likely will decline in 2002. U.S. federal fisheries managers should build on their current relationships with Russian fishery regulators to improve the quality of fisheries data being compiled and shared with the United States.
Further Study

The United States should plan and hold formal and informal information-sharing meetings with their Russian counterparts, and make the proceedings of these meetings available to U.S. interests.

Dutch Harbor–Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands is a hub for international shipping, including shipment of pollock and crab harvested from the Bering Sea. The ship in the background is likely bound for East Asia with a load of frozen groundfish.

Credit: Kurt Byers, Alaska Sea Grant