

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Presentation on Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch alternatives

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Who are we?

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council
(Council) and National Marine Fisheries Service
(NMFS):

- Together manage U.S. Federal fisheries off Alaska (3-200 miles)
- Management is coordinated (and in some cases jointly managed) with the State of Alaska
- Council makes recommendations to NMFS
- NMFS approves, implements, and enforces them

Who is on the Council?

15 total members

- 11 voting
 - 4 designated seats (heads of: NMFS, ADF&G, Washington & Oregon Depts of Fish and Wildlife)
 - 7 appointed seats (5 Alaska & 2 Washington)
- 4 non-voting
 - USCG, Pacific States, Dept of State, US Fish & Wildlife

Council meetings

- 5 meetings per year
- 3 in Anchorage, 1 in AK fishing community, 1 in Seattle or Portland
- Each meeting is ~8 days
- All meetings open to the public
- Many opportunities for public comment, including written and oral testimony on each agenda item
- Audio link available to listen to Council meetings remotely (real-time)

Magnuson Stevens Act

- Council management of fisheries is governed by the Magnuson-Stevens Act (Federal law)
- Council primarily manages groundfish (Pacific cod, pollock, flatfish, sablefish, rockfish, etc); shellfish; halibut allocations
- Management areas: Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska
- Includes management of bycatch in these fisheries

Magnuson Stevens Act

10 National Standards – Council and NMFS must consider several factors, including:

- Minimizing bycatch to extent practicable (e.g., salmon bycatch),
- Preventing overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery (e.g., the Bering Sea pollock fishery),
- Providing for the sustained participation and minimize adverse impacts on fishing communities.

Council Decision Process

- Proposal presented to Council from public, stakeholder group, or Council
- If desired, Council initiates analysis of alternatives and options
- Council receives input on draft analyses and issues from its Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, various issue-specific committees, and the public at each meeting

Council Decision Process (cont.)

Analysis proceeds through:

- Initial review draft
 - further refine alternatives if necessary
- Public review draft
 - final council decision (selection of preferred alternative)
- Final Council decision is then submitted to the Secretary of Commerce

NMFS rulemaking process

- NMFS publishes a proposed rule to implement the regulations (**status of Chinook bycatch measures under Am. 91**)
- Comments received on PR
- Secretary can approve, disapprove, or partially approve the Council's decision
- If approved by Secretary, NMFS publishes final rule (responds to comments from PR)
- Final rule establishes effective date

Opportunities for public comment

- During each Council meeting
 - Science and Statistical Committee
 - Advisory Panel
 - Council
- Council committees (e.g., Salmon Bycatch Workgroup)
- During rulemaking
 - Comment solicited on analysis and rule

Salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries

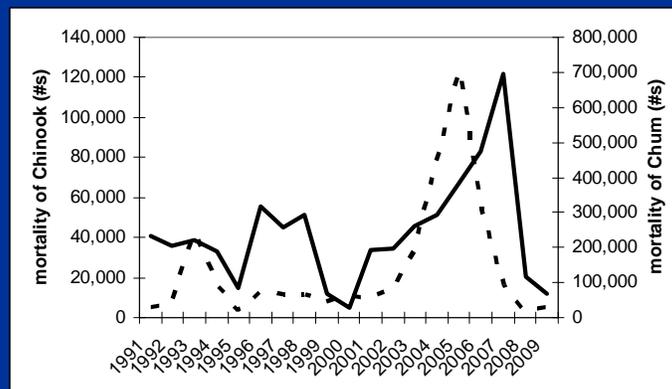
- Bering Sea pollock fishery catches salmon as bycatch (primarily Chinook and chum)
- Bycatch, by law, is counted but cannot be retained or sold
 - Some salmon is donated to food banks



Salmon bycatch trends

- 4 sectors in pollock fishery: offshore catcher processors, inshore catcher vessels, motherships, CDQ
- Differential bycatch by sector

(Chinook is solid line; chum is dotted line in graph below)



Council action

- The Council has been managing salmon bycatch using time-area closures since the mid-1990s
- Fixed time-area closures are not responsive to changing conditions
- Since 2005, Council has been evaluating different management measures
- The Council is addressing Chinook and non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch in separate actions

Status of Chinook bycatch action (BSAI Am. 91)

- Council recommended hard cap
- Proposed rule was published March 23, 2010
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/prules/75fr14016.pdf>
- Comments on FMP language were due April 19; comments on proposed rule due to NMFS by **May 7**
- Expected implementation by January 2011

Council proposed action on non-Chinook (chum) bycatch

- Status quo: time/area closures that the pollock fleet is exempt from because they voluntarily participate in a rolling hotspot closure system
- Alternative management measures considered:
 - Revised time/area closure system
 - Hard caps

Alternatives posted at:

www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/ChumBycatchMotion210.pdf

Current chum alternatives: Alternative 1

Alternative 1 (Status quo): voluntary rolling hotspot closure system

- Provides exemption from current salmon savings area since 2006
- System of short-term (3 to 7 day) moving, discrete area closures based on real-time high bycatch areas
- Closures apply to 10 pollock sectors or cooperatives with the highest bycatch

Current chum alternatives: Alternative 2

Alternative 2: Hard caps ranging from 50,000-353,000 non-Chinook salmon

- Range initially based on historical bycatch trends 1997-2009; rounded and lowered by Council in December 2009
- Divided by sector similar to Chinook
- No incentive program included at present

Current chum alternatives: Alternative 3

Alternative 3: Triggered time/area closures

- Staff developing proposed discrete closure system based on recent bycatch patterns
- Zonal approach being considered:
 - 3 zones in EBS which when triggered would enact discrete closure system
 - Areas, zones and appropriate trigger thresholds being revised for Council consideration in June

Schedule for Council action on chum (short-term)

- Action in June 2010: Review/revise alternatives and initiate analysis
- Information to be provided to Council in June:
 - Cap calculations based on Council motion (sector allocation changes)
 - Proposed area closures and zonal trigger approach
 - Review results of statewide teleconference on alternatives (May 4)
 - Update on genetics, both Chinook and chum

Current genetic breakouts: chum

- Analysis will consider observed bycatch stock composition using genetic samples from 2005 – 2009
- Stock composition currently available by aggregate groupings only (micro-satellite baseline):
 - Japan/Korea/China/southern Russia
 - Russia
 - Upper/Middle Yukon River
 - Coastal western Alaska/lower Yukon River
 - Alaska Peninsula
 - Southeast AK/PWS/northern British Columbia
 - Skeena River
 - British Columbia/Washington
- Future stock composition may be reported on finer scale, capability no sooner than 2011 (two marker systems: SNPs + micro-satellite)

Schedule for Council action on chum (long-term)

- June 2010: Development of preliminary analysis starts
- Dec 2010: Presentation to Yukon River Panel
- February 2011: Council review of preliminary analysis
- Feb/March 2011: Regional outreach meetings in western AK
- June 2011 (Nome): Council review of initial review analysis (select prelim preferred alt)
- Late 2011: Tentative Council final action

Rural community outreach: chum salmon bycatch

Council's Rural Community Outreach Committee has helped develop a chum salmon bycatch outreach plan, similar to Chinook plan, with improvements

- Outreach plan includes:
 - Statewide mailings (throughout process)
 - Statewide teleconference: May 4
 - 9 regional meetings targeted in western AK (2010/early 2011): Association of Village Council Presidents, 5 Subsistence RACs, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kawerak, plus Yukon River Panel
 - Documentation of outreach results; report to Council early in process

Rural community outreach: chum salmon bycatch

9 regional meetings possible in western AK
(primarily Feb/March 2011):

- 2 Council members and Council analysts
- Working with regional organizations to be on agenda of their meetings
- Timing of regional meetings is prior to Council's selection of preliminary preferred alternative (June 2011, Nome)
- Timing of regional meetings will allow input to be considered and incorporated into analysis

How to provide public input to the Council

- **Write a letter to the Council.** Send letters by mail or fax to:
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W 4th Ave Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax: (907) 271-2817; Phone: (907) 271-2809
- **Testify at a Council meeting** when the Council will discuss a particular action. Each agenda is posted on the Council website the month before the Council meeting. You may send a letter by mail or fax to the Council to the address above. If sent at least a week prior to the meeting, your letter will be in the Council notebooks.
- **Check the Council website below, or contact us to find out about upcoming agenda items.**
Council website: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc>