

Aleutians East Borough Proposed Alternative 1
for Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Measures in the current EIS.
Submitted for Consideration by the
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee

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Statement of Proposed Alternative

Reallocate the WGOA Pollock seasonal TAC distribution from the D-season evenly between the A, B and C seasons, so that each remaining season has an equal allocation of 33.3 %.

Objectives of Proposal

The first objective for this alternative is to increase the value of the pollock harvest. Pollock roe is a valuable product that is only available in the winter months before spawning. Making more pollock available for harvest in those months inherently increases the value of the harvest. This proposed alternative increases opportunities to harvest valuable pollock roe.

The second objective for this alternative is to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch. The highest occurrence of Chinook salmon bycatch is in the GOA pollock D-season. Eliminating the D-season and redistributing the TAC to the other A, B and C seasons should reduce bycatch. This proposed alternative eliminates the WGOA D-season.

The final objective for this alternative is to mitigate potential SSL nutritional stress. By distributing the pollock harvest equally over the A, B and C seasons, rather than concentrating fishing effort on any one season, less strain is put on the resource during any one period of time. This proposed alternative allocates harvest equally to the A, B and C seasons.

Impacts of Proposal

The proposed change may have little or no impact on the wDPS of the SSL or designated critical habitat. However, opportunities for local communities may improve by giving fishermen better fish to market, resulting in better higher prices paid to fishermen and higher raw fish taxes for municipalities, positively impacting communities. Chinook Bycatch in the WGOA Pollock fishery will be reduced by eliminating the D-season, which currently has the highest rate of

bycatch. Reducing Chinook Salmon bycatch may positively impact human and Steller Sea lion populations.

Supporting Data and other documentation

The following discussion paper was presented to the Council at the February 2012 meeting:

GOA Pollock D-Season Redistribution available online at:

http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/PDFdocuments/catch_shares/GOApollockTACreallocDP0212.pdf

Table 5 on page 6 of 14 of the discussion paper shows the rate of Chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery of the Central and Western GOA from 2003-2011 (excluding 2010) is highest in the D-season:

Table 5. Metric tons of pollock, number of Chinook salmon caught, and rate of Chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery in the Central and Western GOA from 2003-2011 excluding 2010.

Season	A	B	C	D	Total
Central Gulf					
Pollock	65,818	133,876	45,468	59,000	301,125
Chinook	19,347	44,365	9,328	25,467	98,527
Chinook/mt pollock	0.294	0.331	0.220	0.432	0.327
Western Gulf					
Pollock	24,856	37,364	46,033	53,366	187,365
Chinook	3,784	3,412	2,873	12,850	54,800
Chinook/mt pollock	0.152	0.097	0.062	0.243	0.292

The GOA pollock trawling seasons are currently:

A season : January 20 – March 10

B season : March 10 – May 31

C season : August 25 – October 1

D season : October 1 – November 1

Alternative Solutions

An alternative solution would be to redistribute the D-season Pollock to the A, B and C seasons in uneven proportions of A-season 30%, B-season 30% and C-season 40%.

Justification for Council Action

The Council is currently establishing a program to provide tools for comprehensive bycatch reduction in the CGOA. This proposal by the AEB was originally introduced as a homegrown alternative to catch shares that reduces bycatch and increases harvested catch value. Considering this proposal and revisiting the discussion paper is warranted in light of the current bycatch tools discussion and requests by the Council for WGOA fishermen to propose program goals and objectives for the WGOA groundfish fisheries.