

**GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch in the Non-Pollock Trawl Fisheries
Final Council motion, December 9, 2012**

The Council forwards the analysis for public review with changes to the alternatives and options described below. The Council requests staff revise the analysis to address SSC minutes and requests in the AP motion to NMFS and Council staff. Additions to the original motion are underlined.

Problem statement:

Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards require balancing achieving optimum yield with minimizing bycatch, while minimizing adverse impacts on fishing dependent communities. Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC) taken incidentally in GOA trawl fisheries is a concern, and incidental take is limited in the Biological Opinion for ESA-listed Chinook salmon stocks. The Council recently adopted a PSC limit of 25,000 Chinook salmon for the Western and Central GOA pollock trawl fisheries, while also indicating an intent to evaluate Chinook salmon bycatch in the non-pollock GOA trawl fisheries, which currently do not have a Chinook salmon bycatch control measure.

The following alternatives apply to non-pollock trawl fisheries in the Central and Western GOA.

Alternative 1: Status quo.

Alternative 2: 5,000, 7,500, 10,000, or 12,500 Chinook salmon PSC limit (hard cap).

Option 1: Apportion limit between Central and Western GOA.

Option 2: Apportion limit by directed fishery operational type (CV vs. CP).

Applies to both options 1 and 2:

a) Apportion proportional to historic average bycatch of Chinook salmon (5- or 10-year average).

b) Apportion proportional to historic average harvest of non-pollock groundfish (5- or 10-year average).

Option 3: No more than 50% or 66% of the annual hard cap limit can be taken before June 1.

Option 4: Separate Chinook salmon PSC limit (hard cap) to the CGOA rockfish program:

a) 1,500

b) 2,500

c) 3,500

Suboption 1: Divide by sector (CV and CP) based on actual Chinook salmon PSC usage by sector for the rockfish catch share program years of 2007 – 2012.

Each LLP holder within sector will receive an allocation of Chinook salmon PSC equivalent to the license's proportion of the sector's target rockfish catch history from the program's initial allocations. Member LLP allocations will be allocated to their respective cooperative.

Suboption 2: On October 1st, rollover all but 200, 300, or 400 remaining Chinook salmon to support other fall non-pollock trawl fisheries.

Suboptions 1 and/or 2 can be selected for Option 4.

Alternative 3: Full retention of salmon.

Vessels will retain all salmon bycatch until the number of salmon has been determined by the vessel or plant observer and the observer's collection of any scientific data or biological samples from the salmon has been completed.

Note, both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 could be selected by the Council in their preferred alternative. Likewise, under Alternative 2, both Option 1 and Option 2, or Option 2 and Option 3, could be selected by the Council; Option 4 can be selected with any of the other options.

Analytical requests to staff, from the AP motion:

The AP requests that NMFS:

- Assess how the different fisheries and sectors could be segregated based on present monitoring infrastructure to collect as much Stock of Origin information as practicable.
- Investigate other genetic sampling methodology besides the Pella and Geiger protocol as discussed in the October 2009 SSC minutes.
- Explain what monitoring would be required to develop full census accounting by sector and fishery for salmon PSC estimates for management purposes.

The AP requests that Council staff:

- Develop scatter plot (or frequency table) that displays the extrapolated number of salmon per haul for all observed hauls by fishery and sector by year (or groupings of years) for the years covered in the data for this analysis. Display same for bycatch rates per haul for the fisheries/sectors/years or groups of years as above.
- Clarify how these basket salmon amounts are extrapolated to represent catch at the vessel haul level and the vessel trip level.
- Add discussion of the status of Chinook salmon runs for British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California – recent trends versus historic.
- Status of Chinook survival for hatchery runs for British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California – recent trends versus historic.
- Investigate whether the scientific literature can build some type of perspective of natural mortality for the 5 to 9 lb. average Chinook caught as bycatch in the non-pollock fisheries.
- Describe the fishery performance for the new Chinook salmon hard cap in the GOA pollock fisheries and qualitatively address successes and failures of the new regulation in comparison Council objectives, the cost to the pollock industry, and benefits to Chinook salmon stocks.
- Section 4.4.7 utilization of the TAC, expand this discussion to evaluate the ability of the fleet to expand TACs to more closely meet available ABCs especially with regards to flatfishes.
- Report residency of the GOA trawl vessel permit holders (i.e. operators).

Analytical revisions recommended by the SSC are included in their minutes, available on the Council website: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/resources-publications/meeting-minutes.html>.