

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is Evaluating Measures to Limit Chum Salmon Bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery

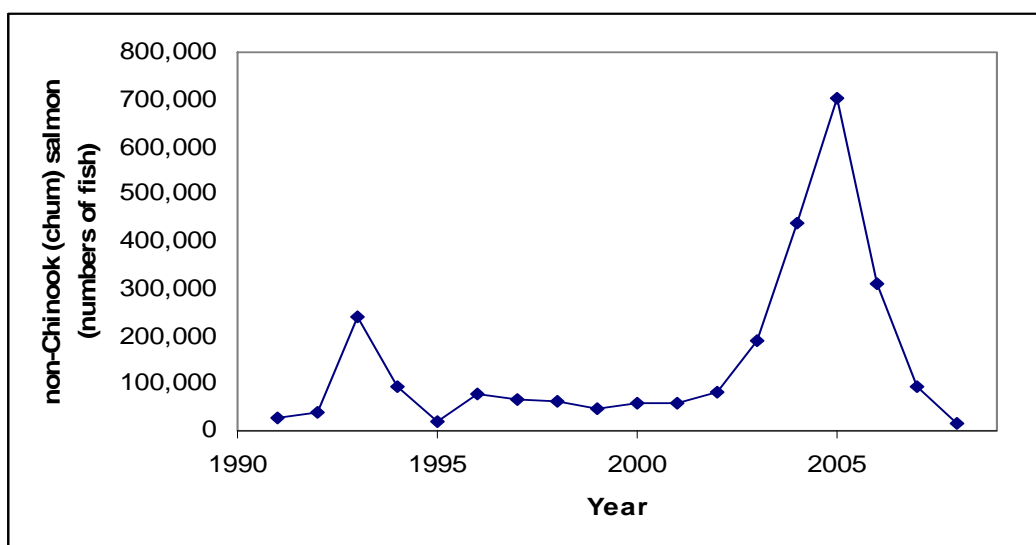


Salmon and pollock are both important fisheries for Alaska. Salmon support large and critically important subsistence, commercial, and recreational fisheries throughout Alaska and elsewhere, and are the basis of a cultural tradition in many parts of the state. At the same time, the commercial pollock fishery produces significant revenue for participants in the fishery, the State of Alaska, and other states. In addition, participation in the fishery (through royalties and employment) is important for the western Alaska Community Development Quota communities.

Salmon are caught unintentionally in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery, and may not be kept by regulation. Despite bycatch control measures implemented in the pollock fishery since the mid-1990s, chum (non-Chinook) salmon bycatch reached a historic high of 704,590 in 2005 (see figure below). Levels since that time have been lower, about 46,000 in 2009. Current fishery regulations attempt to control bycatch through fixed area closures, triggered by a cap of 42,000 chum salmon. These are areas with historically high chum salmon bycatch. However, current regulations include an exemption to these fixed area closures for vessels that participate in a program that requires more frequently adjusted closures for vessels with high bycatch rates. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to balance minimizing salmon bycatch, to the extent practicable, with allowing full harvest of the pollock total allowable catch.

Current trends in non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch

Salmon bycatch in the groundfish fisheries is grouped as Chinook bycatch and non-Chinook bycatch (comprised of chum, sockeye, pink, and silver salmon species). Over 99% of non-Chinook bycatch is comprised of chum salmon. Chum bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery from 1991 - 2008 is shown below. Chum bycatch is taken almost entirely in the summer/fall ('B') pollock fishery.



Non-Chinook salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery, 1991 - 2008

Note: 1991 - 1993 values do not include CDQ fisheries.

NOTICE: *Chum Salmon Bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery*

The Council is considering whether new measures are needed to limit chum salmon bycatch

The Council is beginning the process of considering modifying management measures to limit chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery. The current range of alternatives is on the Council website: http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/ChumBycatchMotion210.pdf. Measures currently under consideration include:

- caps on the amount of chum salmon bycatch allowed in the pollock fisheries, that when reached, would prevent further harvest of pollock
 - limits under consideration range from annual caps of 50,000 to 353,000 chum salmon (overall for the pollock fishery or divided by processing sector with options for transferable bycatch allocations among sectors or components of sectors).
- closure of areas where high chum salmon bycatch has historically occurred

Next steps & schedule for action

The Council will review a discussion paper in June 2010 on area closure options, as well as the full suite of alternatives for analysis. The Council may choose to modify the suite of alternatives at this meeting.

The Council's Rural Community Outreach Committee identified this action as an important project for outreach efforts to rural communities. An outreach plan has been developed for the proposed action, available here: http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/ChumOutreach210.pdf. The outreach plan includes attending several regional meetings in rural Alaska, in order to explain the proposed action, provide preliminary analysis, and receive feedback from rural communities. The majority of these meetings will occur in early 2011. The outreach plan also includes a public teleconference, as noticed on the following page. The current schedule is as follows:

<i>May 4, 2010</i>	<i>Community teleconference, prior to Council final review of alternatives.</i>
<i>June 7 – 15, 2010</i>	<i>Council meeting, Sitka. Council review and opportunity to revise alternatives prior to preliminary analysis; review of expanded discussion paper on area closure options; report on community teleconference.</i>
<i>October 2010</i>	<i>Outreach meeting on proposed action (AVCP, Bethel; tentative)</i>
<i>December 2010</i>	<i>Presentation to Yukon River Panel (Anchorage)</i>
<i>June – Dec 2010</i>	<i>Preparation of preliminary review analysis.</i>
<i>Mid-January 2011</i>	<i>Preliminary review draft analysis available.</i>
<i>February 2011</i>	<i>Council meeting, Seattle. Council preliminary review of analysis.</i>
<i>Feb/March 2011</i>	<i>Rural community outreach meetings on Council preliminary review draft. Potentially 7 regional meetings.</i>
<i>Feb - April 2011</i>	<i>Preparation of revised analysis for initial review.</i>
<i>May 2011</i>	<i>Initial review draft analysis available.</i>
<i>June 2011</i>	<i>Council meeting, Nome. Council initial review of analysis; review of outreach report; Council selection of preliminary preferred alternative.</i>
<i>Oct or Dec 2011</i>	<i>Council meeting, Anchorage. Council takes final action, selects final preferred alternative.</i>

TELECONFERENCE NOTICE

The Council is evaluating measures to limit chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery

Learn about the alternatives being considered, the Council process, and voice your questions and concerns

May 4, 2010, from 9 am - 11 am

Please call: (888)248-0699, code: 9589

This process is open to the public. Council analysts will be on the line to share information and answer questions. The call will be recorded and moderated.

If you plan to ask a question, please RSVP via email (nicole.kimball@noaa.gov) or call the Council (907-271-2809) with your name, location, and question. Due to the potential for a large number of participants, the RSVP list will have first priority for questions. We ask each participant to limit their question to 2 minutes.

A short powerpoint presentation will be given at the beginning of the call. If you wish to follow the powerpoint presentation, it will be posted here one week prior to the call: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

Hosted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, and EventBuilder.com.