

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Presentation on Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch alternatives

February 24, 2012

Diana Stram

North Pacific Fishery Mgmt Council

(907)271-2809

diana.stram@noaa.gov



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, AK Dept of Fish & Game, Washington & Oregon Depts of Fish & Wildlife)
- 7 seats appointed by respective Governors (5 Alaska & 2 Washington)

- 4 non-voting

- USCG, Pacific States, Dept of State, US Fish & Wildlife

Council meetings

- 5 meetings per year
- Typically: 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 member
- 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 for approval

NMFS rulemaking process

- NMFS publishes a proposed rule (PR) to implement the regulations
- 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 input

- During each Council meeting, written and/or oral testimony to:
 - Science and Statistical Committee
 - Advisory Panel
 - Council
- Through Council committees (e.g., Salmon Bycatch Workgroup)
- During rulemaking, to NMFS
 - Comment solicited on analysis and rule prior to approval
- During outreach meetings, to Council members and staff

Salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries

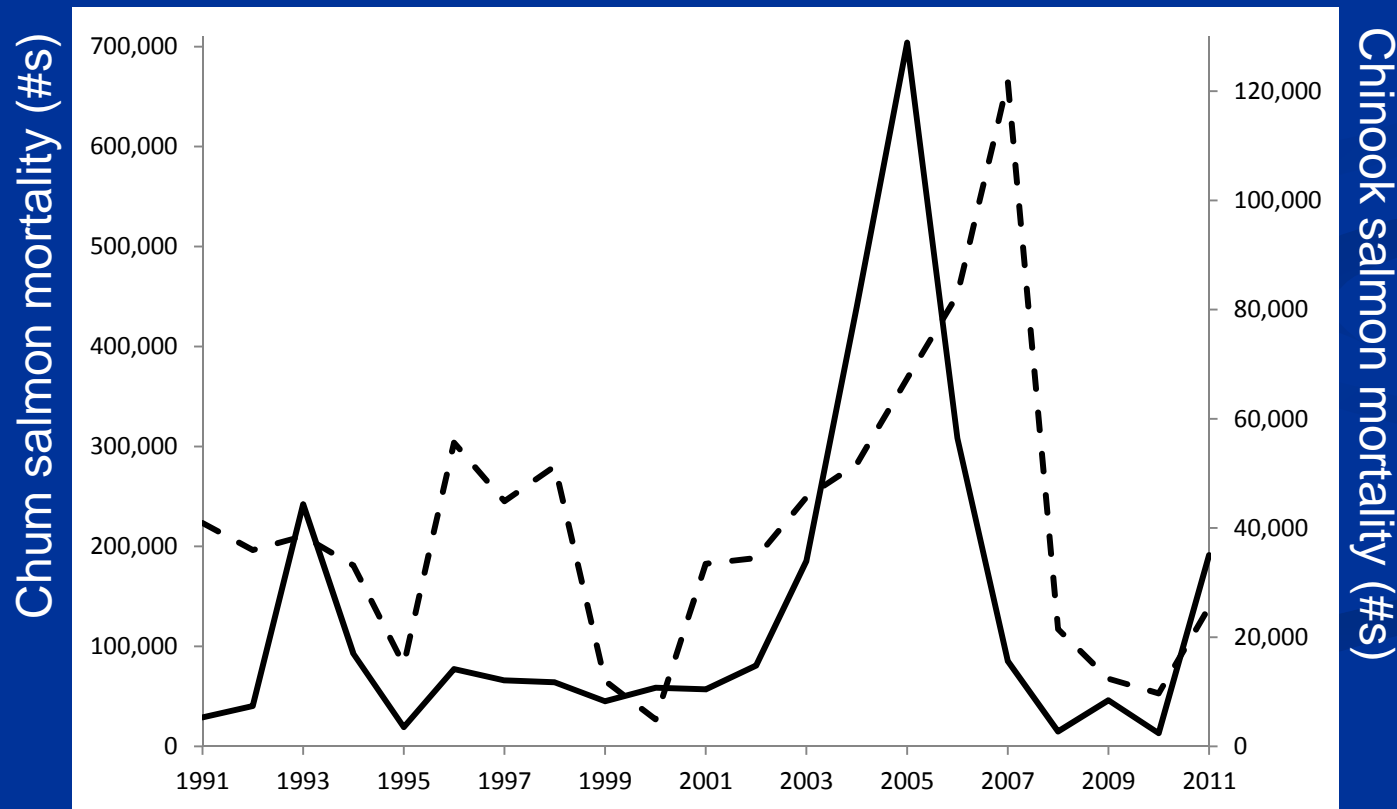
- Bering Sea pollock fishery catches salmon as bycatch (primarily Chinook and chum)
- Bycatch, by law, is counted but cannot be retained or sold
 - Some salmon is donated to food banks in WA
 - Distribution system of donated salmon to AK centers is being developed



Salmon bycatch trends

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

(Chinook is dotted line; chum is solid 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 addressed Chinook and non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch in separate actions

Status of Chinook salmon bycatch action (BSAI Am. 91)

- Council recommended Chinook hard cap
(Overall annual cap of 60,000 Chinook, with performance standard limit of 47,591. Lower cap cannot be exceeded 3 out of 7 years.)
- Final rule was effective Sept 29, 2010
<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/75fr53026.pdf>
- First year of implementation started Jan 2011
- 3 incentive plan agreements were approved by NMFS for 2011
- First year of implementation increase in Chinook from previous two years (25,451 salmon however much lower than high level in 2007)
 - some pollock left unharvested due to concerns with increased bycatch late in season

Council proposed action on non-Chinook (chum) bycatch

- Status quo: fixed time/area closures that the pollock fleet is exempt from because they voluntarily participate in a rolling hotspot (RHS) closure system
- Alternative management measures considered:
 - Revised Chum salmon savings area, exemption and modifications to RHS system
 - Hard caps: B-season or June-July(only)

Alternatives posted at:

http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/PDFdocuments/bycatch/ChumAIts_short212.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 to 353,000 non-Chinook salmon (B-season) and hard cap for June-July (only) based on relative proportion

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

Current chum alternatives: Alternative 3

Alternative 3: Triggered time/area closures with rolling hot spot system in regulation

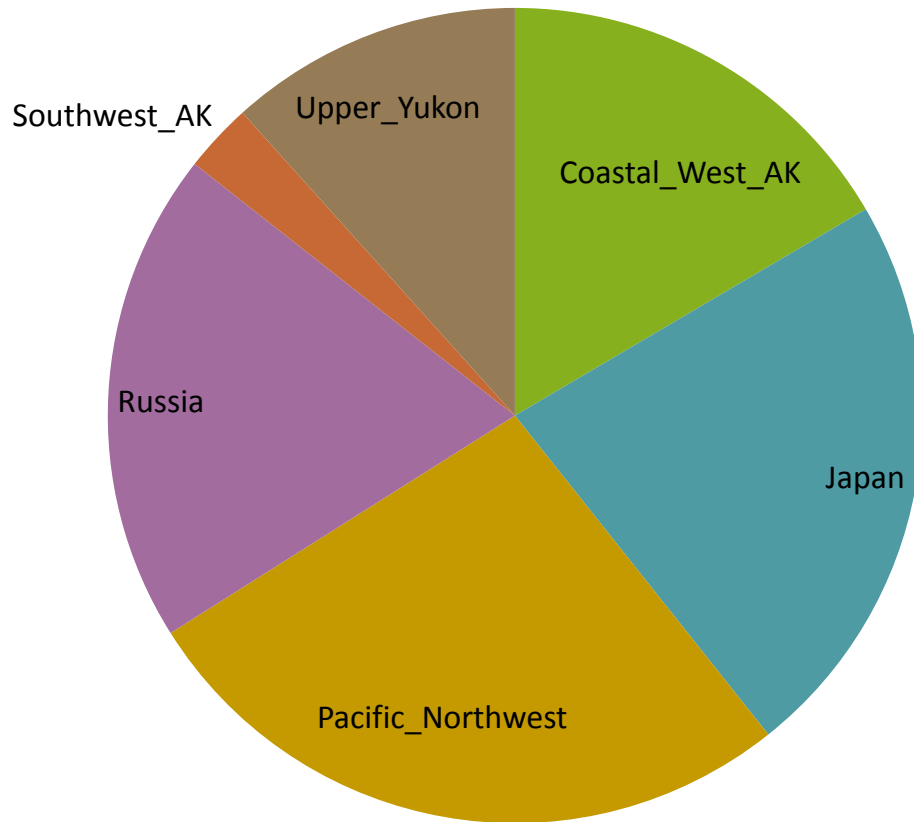
- Vessels not participating in RHS would be subject to a large area closure encompassing 80% of historical non-Chinook bycatch; various trigger cap level options
- Vessels participating in RHS would be subject to a trigger closure encompassing 60% or 80% of historical non-Chinook salmon bycatch in: 1) June and July; or 2) the entire B season (June 10 – Nov 1).

Current genetic breakouts: chum

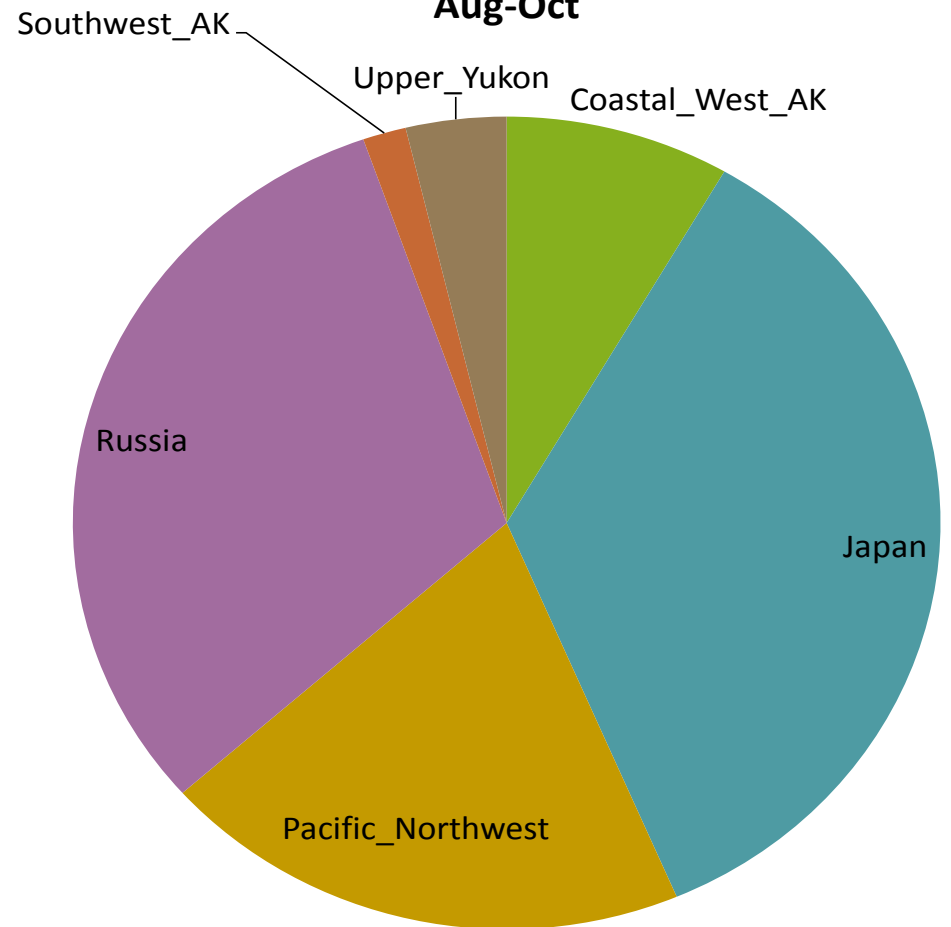
- Analysis uses observed bycatch stock composition using genetic samples from 2005 – 2009
- Stock composition currently available by aggregate groupings only (micro-satellite baseline):
 - Japan/Korea/China/southern Russia
 - Russia
 - Upper/Middle Yukon River
 - Coastal western Alaska/lower Yukon River
 - Alaska Peninsula
 - Southeast AK/PWS/British Columbia/Washington

Genetic breakout of bycatch by early and late B-season

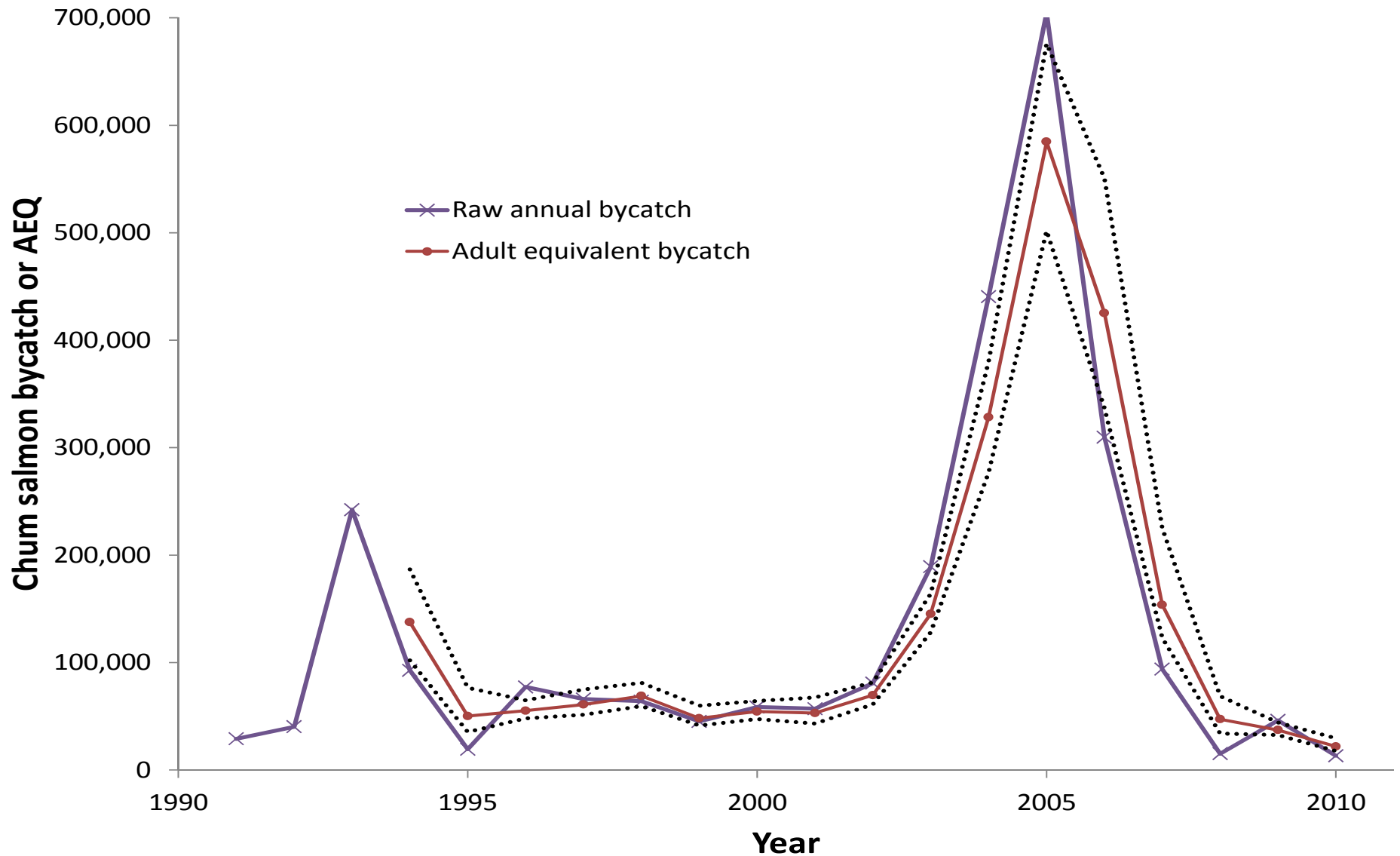
Jun-July



Aug-Oct



Adult equivalent bycatch



Considerations in analysis

- Analysis for Council review in March provides information on:
 - Relative catch constraints on pollock fishery of hard caps historically
 - Impact of layered area closures on bycatch of chum and Chinook under Alternative 3
 - Estimates of efficacy of current RHS system at minimizing chum bycatch
 - Trade-offs of June-July management measures to minimize catch of WAK chum with increased bycatch of Chinook fishing for more pollock later in season

Schedule for Council action on chum

- Dec 2010: Presentation to Yukon River Panel
- February 2011: Council review of preliminary analysis
- Feb/March 2011: 7 regional outreach meetings in western and interior AK communities
- June 2011 (Nome): Council review of initial review analysis; requests for further information
- **March 2012 (Anch): Council review of revised analysis**
- Mid to late 2012 (tentative): Council final action

Schedule for Council action on chum

- Action scheduled for **March 2012** in Anchorage:
 - Review revised analysis of alternatives
 - Review results of second statewide teleconference on proposed action
 - Schedule final decision for future meeting
- Analysis available on Council website by mid-March; contact Council office for hard copy

Rural community outreach: chum salmon bycatch

Council's Rural Community Outreach Committee helped develop an outreach plan for this issue, similar to Chinook outreach plan, with improvements

- Outreach plan includes:
 - Statewide mailings (throughout process)
 - Statewide teleconferences: May 4, 2010 and Feb 24, 2012
 - 8 regional meetings in western AK (winter 2011):
 - 5 Federal Subsistence RACs, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Bering Straits Conference, plus Yukon River Panel
 - Documentation of outreach results; report to Council throughout process and incorporate 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>