

Council motion on Bering Sea Non-Chinook Salmon Prohibited Species Catch
June 11, 2011

The Council requests staff revise the analysis as described below and bring it back for initial review.

Add the following option under Alternative 2, Component 1:

Option: Apply a hard cap (non-Chinook PSC limit) to vessels participating in the directed pollock fishery during June and July, in aggregate. This hard cap, if exceeded, would require all vessels affected by the cap to stop fishing until August 1.

The components under Alternative 2 for cap level, sector allocation, sector transfer, cooperative allocation, and cooperative transfer options would apply (see June 2011 EA pages 28-35). A hard cap applicable only to June and July will be derived from the range of options for B-season hard cap levels, adjusted to reflect the average proportion of non-Chinook salmon PSC in June and July relative to the B-season total.

Remove current Alternative 3 as a stand-alone alternative, and incorporate elements in the alternative as described below.

1. Revise Alternative 4 to read:

(new) Alternative 3:

Rolling Hot Spot (RHS) system – with RHS in regulation, participants in a vessel-level (platform level for Mothership fleet) RHS would be exempt from:

a large area trigger closure encompassing 80% of historical non-Chinook prohibited species catch with the trigger cap level options under what was formerly Alternative 3 (see June 2011 EA pages 35-36). This closure would apply to vessels that are not in an RHS system when total non-Chinook salmon PSC from all vessels (those in an RHS system and those not in an RHS system) reaches the trigger cap level, and would not be subject to sector or cooperative level allocations.

In addition to the RHS, vessels in the RHS system would be subject to:

Option 1: a trigger closure encompassing 80% of historical non-Chinook salmon PSC estimates in

Suboption 1: the June and July pollock fishery, in aggregate. This trigger closure would only apply in June and July.

Suboption 2: the B season pollock fishery. This trigger closure would apply for the full B season.

Option 2: a trigger closure encompassing 60% of historical non-Chinook salmon PSC estimates in

Suboption 1: the June and July pollock fishery, in aggregate. This trigger closure would only apply in June and July.

Suboption 2: the B season pollock fishery. This trigger closure would apply for the full B season.

Apply the components under what was formerly Alternative 3 for trigger cap levels, sector allocations, and cooperative provisions (see June 2011 EA pages 35-43). Trigger closures that are applicable only to June and July will be derived from the range of options for B-season trigger cap levels, adjusted to reflect the average proportion of non-Chinook salmon PSC in June and July relative to the B-season total.

Alternatives 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive.

2. Analyze parameters of the RHS program under Alternative 3 that could be adjusted by the council including:
 - Modification of RHS to operate at a vessel level, instead of at the cooperative level;
 - Faster reaction/closure time (shorter delay between announcement and closure);
 - Amount of closure area;
 - Adjustments that would address timing and location of bycatch of Western Alaska chum stocks;
 - Base rates;
 - Possibilities by which the tier system may be amended to provide further incentives to reduce chum bycatch.

3. Make the following revisions to the Draft EA:
 - Add caveats to all sections describing the impacts to specific stocks describing the limitations of the stock identification and AEQ information;
 - Where run size impacts are presented for aggregated stocks (i.e. Western Alaska, coastal Western Alaska), clarify that these aggregations may mask impacts on smaller runs (i.e. Norton Sound);
 - Revise the analysis of pollock fishery impacts and potential foregone revenue for trigger area closures to present actual numbers for each year;
 - Include the discussion previously requested by the Council ~~of~~ for “a discussion of the meaningfulness of fines, including histograms of number and magnitude of fines over time as well as a comparison of penalties under the RHS program to agency penalties and enforcement actions for violating area closures.”
 - Include a qualitative discussion of the impacts on salmon fisheries, i.e. impacts of fishing restrictions on drying fish, lower CPUEs, gas costs, increased travel time, fish camps and culture;
 - Include an expanded discussion of Norton Sound salmon fisheries by district including escapement and harvest information for an expanded time period and a full discussion of the tier II fishery.
 - Expand discussion of cumulative effects of the Area M commercial fishery on other western Alaska stocks.