

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

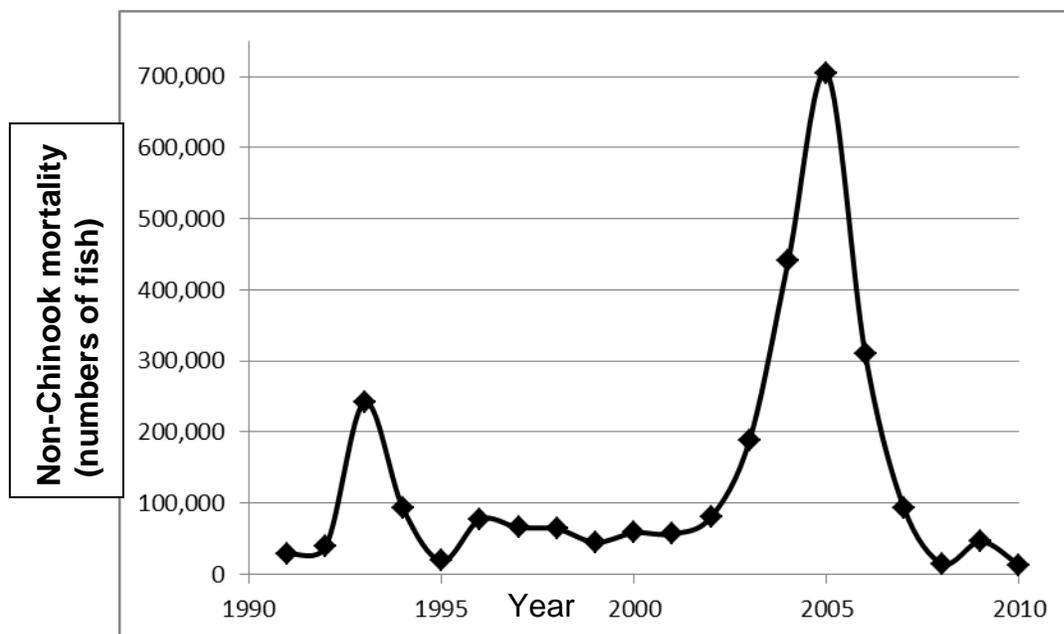


Salmon and pollock are both important fisheries for Alaska. Salmon support large and critically important subsistence, commercial, and recreational fisheries throughout Alaska and elsewhere, and are the basis of a cultural tradition in many parts of the state. At the same time, the commercial pollock 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, most recently 13,300 in 2010. 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 - 2010 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 - 2010**

Note: 1991 - 1993 values do not include CDQ fisheries. 2010 data is preliminary.

## 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.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current\\_issues/bycatch/Chumbycatchmotion610.pdf](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/Chumbycatchmotion610.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).
- Rolling closure of areas where high chum salmon bycatch has historically occurred

### Next steps & schedule for action

The Council reviewed a discussion paper in June 2010 on area closure options, as well as the full suite of alternatives for analysis. The Council modified the suite of alternatives at that meeting. The preliminary impact analysis of the current alternatives is scheduled for review at the February 2011 Council meeting, with the draft analysis released to the public in mid-January. The Council's initial review of a comprehensive analysis is scheduled for its June 2011 meeting, in Nome.

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/ChumOutreach1010.pdf](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/ChumOutreach1010.pdf). The outreach plan includes attending several regional meetings in rural Alaska, in order to explain the proposed action, provide preliminary analysis, and receive direct feedback from rural communities. The majority of these meetings will occur in early 2011. The current analytical 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>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-Jan 2011</i>	<i>Preliminary review draft analysis available.</i>
<i>February 2011</i>	<i>Council meeting, Seattle. Council preliminary review of impact 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>

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

### Outreach meetings:

The general components of the outreach plan for the proposed action on chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries include: direct mailings to stakeholders; community outreach meetings; additional outreach (statewide teleconference, radio/newspaper, press releases); and documentation of rural outreach meeting results. The entire outreach plan is provided on the Council website.

The approach for community outreach meetings is to work with established community representatives and Native entities within the affected regions and attend annual or recurring regional meetings, in order to reach a broad group of stakeholders. The timing is such that outreach would occur prior to the Council's selection of a preliminary preferred alternative (tentatively scheduled for June 2011 in Nome). This would allow the public to review and provide comments directly on the preliminary impact analysis, such that changes could be made prior to completion of the final analysis, and allow the Council to receive community input prior to its selection of a preliminary preferred alternative.

In sum, through coordination with the meeting sponsors, the Council has been offered time on the agenda of each of the following regional meetings. All of these meetings are open to the public. The lead Council staff analyst and at least two Council members are scheduled to attend.

<b>Yukon River Panel</b>	<b>Dec 6 - 9, 2010; Anchorage</b>
<b>Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn annual meeting</b>	<b>Feb 14 – 17, 2011; Mountain Village</b>
<b>Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council</b>	<b>Feb 23 – 24, 2011; Mountain Village</b>
<b>Bering Strait Regional Conference (Tentative)</b>	<b>Feb 22 – 24, 2011; Nome</b>
<b>Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council</b>	<b>March 3 - 4, 2011; Fairbanks</b>
<b>Western Interior Regional Advisory Council</b>	<b>March 1 – 2, 2011; Galena</b>
<b>Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council</b>	<b>March 9 – 10, 2011; Naknek</b>
<b>Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting</b>	<b>Mar 15 – 19, 2011; Fairbanks</b>
<b>North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting</b>	<b>June 6 – 14, 2011; Nome</b>