

Salmon Bycatch Workgroup meeting minutes

The NPFMC Salmon Bycatch Workgroup convened at 9am on October 29th, 2009 at the Clarion Suites Hotel in Anchorage, AK.

Members of the workgroup were the following:

Eric Olson, co-chair
Stephanie Madsen, co-chair
Becca Robbins Gisclair
Karl Haflinger
John Gruver
Robin Samuelson (for Paul Peyton)
Michael Smith
Jennifer Hooper
Vince Webster

Staff: Diana Stram (NPFMC)

Members of the public and state and agency staff in attendance included the following:

Kevin Keith (NSEDG), Dani Evenson (ADF&G), Ragnar Alstrom (YDFDA), Gene Sandone (Sandone Consulting), Don Rivard (FWS/OSM), Paul Manumik Sr. (YDFDA), Frank Alstrom Jr. (YDFDA), Simon Andrews (YDFDA), Emanuel Keyes (YDFDA), Carl Walker (YDFDA), Stefanie Moreland (ADF&G), Neil Rodriguez (CVRF), Brent Paine (UCB), Charlie Lean (NSEDG), Mary McDowell (PSPA), Paige Drobny (TCC), Scott Miller (NMFS), Anne Vanderhoeven (BBEDC), Chris Oliver (NPFMC), Verner Wilson (WWF), David Witherell (NPFMC), Paul Peyton (BBEDC), Nicole Kimball (NPFMC), Seanbob Kelly (NMFS), Angelique Anderson (CVRF), Kris Norosz (Icicle), Thomas C. Stark (BSFA), Bill Karp (NMFS/AFSC), Doug DeMaster (NMFS/AFSC).

The agenda (attached) was agreed upon for the meeting.

Dani Evenson provided an overview of Western Alaska chum and Chinook stock status.

These powerpoint presentations are available at:

http://fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/DecMtg/WAKchum.pdf,

http://fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/DecMtg/WAKchinook.pdf

Committee members questioned whether total runs could be compared against total bycatch for estimation of relative impacts. Dani noted that this comparison is problematic as these estimates are not available for all river systems. Questions were posed regarding the age classes of chum returning to natal streams. She noted that 4 to 5 year old fish dominate the runs, with an every-other year switching between the predominance of these age-classes. 3 and 6 year old however also contribute to the runs despite the dominance of either 4 year olds or 5 year olds in each year.

Committee members requested clarification on differences between projected returns early in October and reported returns later in the month. Dani reviewed the issued and noted that the Pilot Station sonar had difficulties enumerating fish until the third week of June due to high water and silt. Hence, it would be difficult to estimate a total run from Pilot Station. The Eagle station sonar was more accurate for estimating the Canadian portion of the stock. Total run can also be estimated by adding passage at Eagle sonar and harvests downstream and applying the proportion of Canadian origin fish to expand out to the whole system.

Poor returns of Chinook were not limited to western Alaska as other areas of the state also experienced poor returns this past year. Robin Samuelson requested that future update report for Bristol Bay should include rivers in addition to the Nushagak. He noted that despite good returns to the Nushagak there are many rivers in Bristol Bay that have experienced poor Chinook returns. Committee members requested that consistency in reporting status and averages across areas would be helpful in comparing stock status. Dani noted that while desirable this is not possible given the disparity of information available and length of time series by region. Eric Olsen requested that a similar presentation on chum stock status be presented in conjunction with the Council review of the staff discussion paper at the December Council meeting.

Jeff Guyon provided an overview of progress towards genetically delineating chum stock of origin. This powerpoint is available at:
http://fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/DecMtg/GuyonNPFMC_stockcomposition.pdf
He also provided an overview of a proposal to examine the homogeneity in stock of origin within hauls for Chinook. While progress continues toward this end, information is currently unavailable at present for determination of chum to stock of origin in groundfish bycatch. However, while updated studies have not yet been completed, information on aggregate region of origin (e.g., western Alaskan aggregates, Asian component, etc) could be done on recent bycatch samples. Currently the most recent published studies (as noted in the section of the staff discussion paper) date back to bycatch from the 1990s.

Committee members questioned to what extent genetic baselines are proprietary by the researchers who developed them. Jeff indicated that while researchers are generally willing to make them available for analyses, distribution of these databases is usually after they have been published. Public availability of both the genetic baselines and genotypes from the salmon bycatch are important for data transparency and for the full acceptance of future results.

A discussion was held of the availability of updated information on region of origin for use in the analysis of impacts of any bycatch management measures. Doug DeMaster indicated that the current schedule has results from the 1988-2005 chum bycatch being made available in 2011, although preliminary results for some year(s) could possibly be made sooner should the Council indicate that this was a priority. Committee members indicated that this was, in fact, a priority and the Council should alert NMFS to that effect.

Diana Stram reviewed the staff discussion paper which provided information on chum bycatch in the EBS pollock fishery, summary of published reports on chum stock of origin, hatchery information around the Pacific Rim and the current suite of alternatives modified by the Council in June 2009.

Suggestions for further inclusion and/or clarification in the paper include the following (note actual motion on revising alternatives is contained in the "Committee Recommendations" section and not included here):

- Repeat Table 11 for individual years to look at persistence of patterns
- Separate discussion of annual reporting requirements from data collection requirements
- Clarification on the ability of management to enforce or reopen closure based upon threshold allocation levels
- Clarification on the distinction between the affect of a rollover on a triggered closure and a post-delivery transfer option
- Include information on carrying capacity in the North Pacific
- Check for whether there are additional sources of information on Pacific Rim hatchery release estimates than just those from NPAFC
- Include hatchery returns as well as releases

- Clarification on the roll-over provision as it relates to a sector that has already reached its allocation. What is the outcome for cooperative rollovers (within CV cooperative rollovers)? How to determine when a sector or cooperative has ceased fishing?
- Clarification on allocation to CDQ sector and group level (and that once allocated to the CDQ group it cannot then be reallocated otherwise)
- Additional information should be provided on Area M chum stock status and chum catch

Committee recommendations

- 1. The Committee recommended that the Council write a letter to the Board of Fisheries to express concern over the bycatch of chum in the Area M fisheries.**
- 2. The Committee passed the attached motion.** Note this motion passed 5-3. Discussion on specific aspects of the motion (and differences of opinion) are reflected below by topic of the motion.
 - a. Cap levels:** Committee members expressed arguments both for and against limiting the range of numbers for the hard cap. Those arguing against restricting this range noted that there is no analysis supporting restricting this range nor genetic information or indication of what role hatchery releases may have played in high bycatch years. Absent any analysis it was noted that lowering the high end of the range merely instigates a sector-level battle with no supporting justification for this. Committee members arguing for this range restriction noted that this was more consistent with recent bycatch averages and removed equally the lowest years of bycatch as with the highest years. Others noted that region of origin should not be a definitive consideration as the purpose of any action is to decrease overall bycatch regardless of whether it is Asian-origin or western Alaskan-origin fish. A lower number at the high end is more responsive to this notion. It was also noted that using the most recent data complies with the Council's general practices of using best available data.
 - b. Closure configurations:** The committee discussed difficulties with only the current closure configurations and timing option. Members noted that fixed closure dates are problematic, particularly pre-determined closure dated (i.e. with current closure August 1-31). Closures should be restructured to allow for individually triggered areas (discrete areas as moved with separate caps) as well as consideration of timing options which allow the opportunity to re-open an area based upon some criteria such that once closed it is not necessarily closed for the remainder of the fishing year. The committee requested that staff explicitly consider appropriate timing options for reopening all proposed closures based upon available data.
- 3. Request that the Council consider some additional opportunities for input from rural Alaskan communities prior to finalizing alternatives for analysis.**
 - a.** Committee members noted that this type of recommendation was more appropriate coming to the Council from its Outreach committee which will be meeting on November 20th. Members further noted that scoping was done on this forthcoming analysis and that people should be directed to the scoping document that summarizing input from the public on the range of alternatives. Note this document is available on the Council website at: [insert link from June meeting document].

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Salmon Bycatch Workgroup motion 10/29/09 for modification to proposed chum salmon bycatch alternatives
(changes from original alternatives in strike-out for deletions and underline for additions)

Alternative 1 – Status Quo

Alternative 1 retains the current program of the Chum Salmon Savings Area (SSA) closures triggered by separate non-CDQ and CDQ caps with the fleet's exemption to these closures per regulations for Amendment 84 and as modified by the Amendment 91 Chinook bycatch action.

Alternative 2 – Hard Cap

Component 1: Hard Cap Formulation (with CDQ allocation of 10.7%)

Options:

- i. 3 Year Average 2007-2009: 51,633
- ii. 5 Year Average 1997-2001: 58,156
- iii. 10 Year 1992-2001: 76,242
- iv. 10 Year 2000-2009 drop high: 143,405
- v. 10 Year 2000-2009: 199,524
- vi. 10 Year 2000-2009 drop low: 219,979
- vii. 5 Year 2005-2009: 233,844

For Analysis:

- a) ~~58,000~~ 51,633
- b) ~~206,000~~ 76,242
- c) ~~353,000~~ 143,405
- d) ~~488,000~~ 233,844

Component 2: Sector Allocation

Option (applies to all): use blend of cdq/cdq partner bycatch numbers for historical average calculations.

- a) No sector allocation
- b) Allocations to Inshore, Catcher Processor, Mothership, and CDQ
 - 1) Pro-rata to pollock AFA pollock sector allocation
 - 2) Historical average
 - i. ~~2004-2006~~ 2007-2009
 - ii. ~~2002-2006~~ 2005-2009
 - iii. ~~1997-2006~~ 2000-2009
 - 3) Allocation based on 75% pro-rata and 25% historical
 - 4) Allocation based on 50% pro-rata and 50% historical
 - 5) Allocation based on 25% pro-rata and 75% historical
- c) Allocate 10.7% to CDQ, remainder divided among other sectors

Component 3: Sector Transfer

- a) No transfers or rollovers
- b) Allow NMFS-approved transfers between sectors
Suboption: Limit transfers to the following percentage of salmon that is available to the transferring entity at the time of transfer:
 - 1) 50%

- 2) 70%
- 3) 90%
- c) Allow NMFS to roll-over unused bycatch allocation to sectors that are still fishing

Component 4: Cooperative Provision

- a) Allow allocation at the co-op level for the inshore sector, and apply transfer rules (Component 3) at the co-op level for the inshore sector.
Suboption: Limit transfers to the following percentage of salmon that is available to the transferring entity at the time of transfer:
 - 1) 50%
 - 2) 70%
 - 3) 90%
- b) Allow NMFS to roll-over unused bycatch allocation to inshore cooperatives that are still fishing

Alternative 3 – Trigger Closure

Component 1: Trigger Cap Formulation

- a) ~~45,000~~ 30,000
- e) ~~58,000~~ 51,633
- f) ~~206,000~~ 76,242
- g) ~~353,000~~ 143,405
- h) ~~488,000~~ 233,844

Application of Trigger Caps

- a) Apply trigger to all chum bycatch
- ~~b) Apply trigger to all chum bycatch in the CVOA~~
- c) Apply trigger to all chum bycatch between specific dates

Component 2: Sector allocation

Option (applies to all): use blend of cdq/cdq partner bycatch numbers for historical average calculations.

- a) No sector allocation
- b) Allocations to Inshore, Catcher Processor, Mothership, and CDQ
 - 1) Pro-rata to pollock AFA pollock sector allocation
 - 2) Historical average
 - iv. ~~2004-2006~~ 2007-2009
 - v. ~~2002-2006~~ 2005-2009
 - vi. ~~1997-2006~~ 2000-2009
 - 3) Allocation based on 75% pro-rata and 25% historical
 - 4) Allocation based on 50% pro-rata and 50% historical
 - 5) Allocation based on 25% pro-rata and 75% historical
- c) Allocate 10.7% to CDQ, remainder divided among other sectors

Component 3: Sector Transfer

- a) No transfers or rollovers

- b) Allow NMFS-approved transfers between sectors
Suboption: Limit transfers to the following percentage of salmon that is available to the transferring entity at the time of transfer:
 - 1) 50%
 - 2) 70%
 - 3) 90%
- c) Allow NMFS to roll-over unused bycatch allocation to sectors that are still fishing
Suboption: Limit transfers to the following percentage of salmon that is available to the transferring entity at the time of transfer:
 - 1) 50%
 - 2) 70%
 - 3) 90%

Component 4: Cooperative Provisions

- a) Allow allocation at the co-op level for the inshore sector, and apply transfer rules (Component 3) at the co-op level for the inshore sector.
Suboption: Limit transfers to the following percentage of salmon that is available to the transferring entity at the time of transfer:
 - 1) 50%
 - 2) 70%
 - 3) 90%
- b) Allow NMFS to roll-over unused bycatch allocation to sectors that are still fishing

Component 5: Area Option

- a) Area identified in October, 2008 discussion paper
- b) Existing Chum Salmon Savings Area (differs from status quo with application of other components)
- c) New areas [to be identified by staff] which are small, discrete closure areas, each with its own separate cap whereby bycatch in that area only accrues towards the cap.

Component 6: Timing Option – Dates of Area Closure

- a) ~~Existing closure dates (August 1 – August 31 and September 1 through October 14 if trigger is reached.)~~
- b) New closure dates

Component 7: Rolling Hot Spot (RHS) Exemption – Similar to status quo, participants in a vessel-level (platform level for Mothership fleet) RHS would be exempt from regulatory triggered closure(s).

- a) Sub-option: RHS regulations would contain an ICA provision that the regulatory trigger closure (as adopted in Component 5) apply to participants that do not maintain a certain level of rate-based chum salmon bycatch performance.

NPFMC Salmon Bycatch Workgroup meeting
October 29, 2009
Clarion Suites Downtown (formally Hawthorn Suites),
1110 West 8th Avenue, Ballroom B, Anchorage, AK.
Draft Agenda 10/13/09

9:00am -5:00pm

9:00 am Welcome and Introductions

9:15am Review meeting objectives

9:30am Overview of chum salmon stock status Western Alaska:
Dani Evenson ADF&G

10:15 am Overview of chum bycatch stock of origin (and on-going progress
for evaluation of trawl samples), update on Chinook bycatch stock
of origin sample evaluation: *Jeff Guyon, AFSC-ABL*

11:15 am Overview of staff discussion paper: *Diana Stram-NPFMC*

12:30pm -1:30pm LUNCH

1:30pm-5:00pm Committee discussions and recommendations