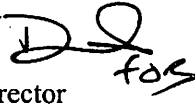


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director

DATE: March 30, 2010

SUBJECT: Misc groundfish issues - GOA Chinook salmon bycatch

ESTIMATED TIME 6 HOURS ALL D-3 ITEMS
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ACTION REQUIRED

- (b) Review updated discussion paper on GOA Chinook salmon bycatch

BACKGROUND

In October 2009, the Council reviewed a discussion paper on Chinook salmon and *Chionoectes bairdi* Tanner crab bycatch in the GOA groundfish fisheries occurring in the central and western GOA. At that meeting, the Council separated the Tanner crab bycatch portion into a separate analysis, and asked staff to bring back updates to the discussion paper specifically for Chinook salmon.

The discussion paper was mailed to the Council in late March. The paper provides updated bycatch levels of Chinook salmon in groundfish fisheries through 2009, and more information on Chinook species abundance and directed fisheries. The paper also includes elements from previous iterations of the discussion paper, including preliminary alternatives that have been proposed for Chinook bycatch management measures, and strawman closures representing areas with high bycatch.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to review the discussion paper, and take action as necessary.

AGENDA D-3(b)
Supplemental
APRIL 2010

March,29 2010
Eric Olsen, Chair
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
605 w. Forth St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

RE: Agenda Item D-3(b) Review discussion paper on GOA Chinook bycatch

Mr. Olsen

I would like to encourage you to initiate an analysis to examine management options to reduce King salmon bycatch in the GOA by the trawl fleet, both pelagic and non-pelagic.

As you know a suite of draft alternatives for reducing salmon bycatch in the Gulf was first proposed in 2003. Since then, there has been a near collapse of the King salmon runs in the Kodiak management area. Minimum escapement goals have not been met in the Karluk or the Ayakulik systems for the last three years. Projections for 2010 are even more dire.

User groups have had restrictions put on them. Subsistence fishing for Kings was closed by emergency order in 2008 and 2009 on both the Karluk and Ayakulik rivers. Sport fishing for Kings is closed and will remain closed for 2010 on the two systems. Restrictions have been put on the commercial salmon fleet as well. In 2009 there were no commercial openings allowed in the inner and outer Karluk, or in the inner Ayakulik. Returns outside the Kodiak area are also substantially down.

In the face of these depressed King salmon numbers are some rather disturbing trawl bycatch numbers. Over 40,000 King salmon in 2007 were taken as bycatch. For the years 2003-2009 the average bycatch of King salmon was over 20,000 fish. I believe these numbers threaten the sustainability of many King salmon runs in the Gulf.

As you know, presently there are no caps or limits put on the trawl fleet pertaining to salmon bycatch. I am concerned that with out some kind of incentive for the trawl fleet to lessen it's impact on the King salmon runs in the GOA, the runs will continue to decline with possible catastrophic outcomes.

I am respectfully asking you and the Council to take the appropriate steps to address these concerns before it's too late.

Sincerely,
Kip Thomet

Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association Board Member
Northwest Setnetters Association Board Member
Member of Kodiak Advisory Committee to the Board Of Fish



March 29, 2010

Eric Olson, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. Fourth Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Agenda Item D-3 (b) Review Discussion Paper on GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch

Dear Chairman Olson,

We appreciate the NPFMC's dedication in considering bycatch controls for Chinook salmon taken incidentally in GOA groundfish fisheries. We believe the paper is a good starting point to move into initial review.

The paper identifies that pelagic and non-pelagic trawl gears are almost entirely responsible for Chinook salmon bycatch. The paper shows GOA Chinook bycatch numbers run a consistent average. The average of Chinook salmon bycatch in the years 1990-2009 was 20,395 and the average from 2003-2009 was 20,793. (GOA Chinook discussion paper, table 4, p. 12). This represents a higher rate than experienced in the Bering Sea and warrants action.

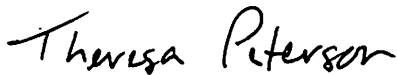
On all of the three streams that support a viable Chinook salmon return in Kodiak, the Karluk, Ayakulik, and Dog Salmon, escapement has been down. Although Dog Salmon has no escapement goal set, only 90 fish were counted through the weir in 2008, down substantially from the 370 fish average from 1998-2007. In the Karluk River, the escapement goal range is between 3,600 and 7,300 and in 2007-09 escapement has been below this. 2008 was extremely low with only 752 returning to the Karluk system. (Discussion paper, p. 20)

In the Kodiak area, there is no target fishery but Chinook are harvested in both the seine and setnet fisheries and sold or used for personal use. To reduce interactions, no commercial openings were allowed in the inner or outer Karluk or the inner Ayakulik sections in June and July 2009. Due to low returns, non retention of Chinook was implemented for the one opening allowed in the outer Ayakulik in July 2009. All Chinook subsistence fishing on the Karluk and Ayakulik was closed by emergency order in June, 2008. (Discussion paper, p. 23)

We encourage the Council to move forward with initial review of management measures to appropriately address the problem. This will necessitate working with existing data in

the groundfish fisheries to determine how to reduce impacts on Chinook salmon populations in the GOA. As directed Chinook salmon fishermen are subject to measures to reduce their interactions with Chinook, so should the groundfish fleet. The trawl fleet has demonstrated its ability to network on stand downs, in cooperative structures, delivery schedules and gear modifications to improve price and reduce bycatch. We hope these skills could help enable the fleet to meet effective Chinook bycatch reduction measures while minimizing economic impact.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Theresa Peterson

Kodiak Outreach Coordinator

4/10

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET

Agenda Item: D-3(b) GOA Chinook bycatch discussion paper

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:
1	Bob Krueger	AWTA
2	Julie Renny	AEDB
3	Darby Childers	Amcc
4	Jerome Pitus	FLV Polar Star
5	George PISTNIKOFF	AITC / Grace
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.