



D1 Salmon Reports

December 2022 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Dr. Diana Stram

Other Presenters: Karla Bush (for State Bycatch Task Force report if available)

Action Required: 1. Receive range of reports, action as necessary
2. Adopt terms of reference for Salmon Bycatch Committee; provide Committee direction

Background

In June 2022, the Council received a range of reports related to western Alaskan salmon and salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. The Council requested a number of items for presentation at this December Council meeting, including an overview of the findings of the State of Alaska Bycatch Taskforce, a staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch, a report from the newly formed Salmon Bycatch Committee, and an update from the Bering Sea pollock industry on additional efforts in 2022 to avoid chum salmon bycatch.

Review findings of the State of Alaska Bycatch Review Taskforce (T)

Recommendations from the State of Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) as it relates to improvements to salmon bycatch management will be reviewed and discussed by the Council should the final report from the ABRT be available in time for Council review.

Chum Salmon Bycatch Discussion paper

Per Council request, a staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch is posted to the eAgenda. This paper reviews and builds upon information from the 2012 chum bycatch analysis with additional items as requested by the Council. Additional items in the paper are an updated chum salmon bycatch and genetic stock composition data, a description of the Council's rationale for establishing the current Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch management program; a discussion of tradeoffs in the Bering Sea pollock fishery associated with avoiding different PSC species (e.g., chum salmon, Chinook salmon, herring); and a summary of conditions that have changed since the 2012 analysis (e.g., increased Asian hatchery releases and western Alaska chum salmon stock status).

Salmon Bycatch Committee report

The Council appointed a Salmon Bycatch Committee comprised of Tribal members, industry representatives, and other experts to provide recommendations on: 1) the discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch; 2) the findings and recommendations from the State of Alaska's Bycatch Task Force and the work of the Western Alaska salmon subcommittee; and 3) current information, including Local, Traditional, and Subsistence knowledge, and needed research to determine what is driving western Alaska salmon declines.

The Committee held its first meeting virtually on November 28th with the primary goal to review a draft terms of reference for the committee as well as to review and provide recommendations on the staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch as well as suggestions for committee considerations moving forward. The report from that meeting as well as the draft terms of reference are posted to the eAgenda. The Council should review the report, provide further direction and adopt a terms of reference for the committee.

Pollock Incentive Plan Agreement (IPA) representative feedback on chum salmon bycatch avoidance efforts in 2022

The Council requested the pollock IPA representatives institute additional measures to reduce chum bycatch during the 2022 summer fishery and report back to the Council on those efforts following the end of the B season. Time will be provided at the conclusion of the Council staff report (prior to public comment) for any pollock IPA representatives who wish to voluntarily provide information to that effect.