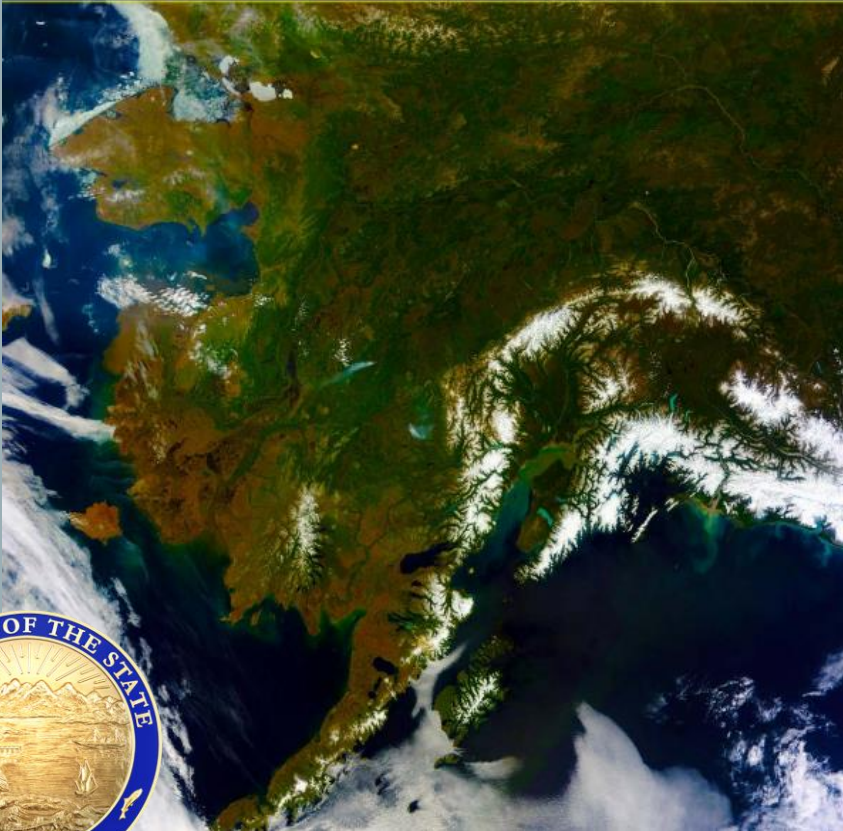


Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

Recommendations for Western Alaska Salmon Bycatch

ALASKA BYCATCH REVIEW TASK FORCE
FINAL REPORT — NOVEMBER 2022



Presented by Karla Bush ADF&G

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bycatchtaskforce.main>

Structure and Objectives

- *Comprised of 15 voting and 2 non-voting members from all areas of the state representing diverse interests.*
- *Work requested by Governor Dunleavy:*
 - *Study what impact bycatch has on fisheries*
 - *Evaluate and recommend policies*
 - *Ensure state agencies are leveraging available resources*
 - *Utilize the best available science to inform policy makers and the public*
- *Organized into 3 species/area committees:*
 - *Western Alaska Salmon Committee*
 - *Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab*
 - *Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon*



Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

Process for developing recommendations

Subject matter experts provided presentations and information

Presentations to the Western Alaska Salmon Committee:

https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bycatchtaskforce.committees#meetings_wasc

- *Western Alaska Chinook and chum salmon stock status*
- *Regulatory structure of salmon bycatch measures for the Bering Sea pollock fishery*
- *Salmon bycatch reduction Incentive Plan Agreements (IPAs)*
- *Research on salmon excluders used in pollock trawl nets*
- *Updated chum and Chinook salmon bycatch genetic information; Adult Equivalent (AEQ) estimates and impact rate analysis for Western AK Chinook salmon; and North Pacific Fishery Management Council actions.*
- *Current and future research by ADF&G Salmon and Ocean Ecology Program and Alaska Fishery Science Center*

Presentations to full Task Force relative to Western Alaska salmon bycatch:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bycatchtaskforce.meetinginfo>

- *Overview of bycatch in state and federal fisheries*
- *Genetic stock identification of salmon bycatch in groundfish fisheries*
- *Overview of SeaShare and how salmon/halibut bycatch are utilized for hunger-relief*
- *Federal groundfish observer and monitoring programs*

Research recommendations were forwarded to the Science, Technology, and Innovation committee then to full Task Force. Recommendations for Management and State Engagement were forwarded to the full Task Force from each committee.

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force – Salmon Bycatch

Research Recommendations

Improve our ability to determine the stock of origin of chum and Chinook salmon taken as bycatch.

Reduce bycatch through improved understanding of distribution and migration of Western Alaska chum and Chinook salmon stocks migration patterns to better predict and therefore avoid bycatch “hot spots” in the BSAI region.

Relative importance of mechanisms that drive salmon abundance and fishery impacts:

- Marine migration patterns relative groundfish fisheries*
- Improved stock-specific information (e.g. age data)*
- Improved understanding of fishery impacts (e.g. Adult equivalent modeling)*

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force – Salmon Bycatch

Research Recommendations

Research on additional non-adult abundance estimates:

Critical survival periods for western AK salmon

- *Nearshore pelagic trawl surveys*
- *Integrated ecosystem assessment surveys*

Understand how ocean/climate conditions impact future runs

- *International Year of the Salmon – immature AYK chum salmon in winter*
- *Immature salmon surveys in the Bering Sea and North Pacific*

Role of diet, health, disease, on survival and spawning success

- *Vectors of Ichthyophonus infection and impact on mortality*
- *Diet, nutrition, and condition of salmon at different life stages*

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force – Salmon Bycatch Management Recommendations

The full Task Force reached consensus on the two recommendations that were proposed by the Western Alaska Salmon Committee:

- The State should work to achieve real time genetic reporting that provides the composition of Western Alaska salmon in the bycatch. This can then be used in management of the pollock fishery to avoid areas and times when Western Alaska salmon are on the grounds in the Bering Sea.*
- The State should work to establish a scientific-based chum salmon cap to reduce bycatch of Western Alaska salmon in the pollock fishery in the Bering Sea.*

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force

Western Alaska Salmon Committee

The WAK Salmon Committee did not develop additional management measure recommendations since work is currently underway that includes most of the comments received from the public.

The Committee noted, but did not forward, the following recommendations from the public due to the lack of analysis identifying impacts of the suggested measures:

- Western Alaska and communities along the Yukon River believe that if there is no fishing on the Yukon or Kuskokwim Rivers, there should be no pollock fishing in the Bering Sea.*
- One member of the public called for a moratorium on trawling for an unspecified time.*

The Committee encouraged the State to retain focus on salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery and make it the number one priority to monitor to determine when action is necessary.

Questions?

