



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of
Fish and Game**

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
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December 1, 2016

Mr. Chris Oliver, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
604 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Chris:

This letter provides an estimate of the mature biomass of Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*) in the eastern Bering Sea for the purposes of establishing the 2017 prohibited species catch (PSC) limit per Amendment 16A of the Bering Sea/Aleutians Islands Groundfish FMP. Due to State budget cuts, there were no surveys in 2016 for any of the eastern Bering Sea herring management stocks. In the absence of biomass projections for management stocks, the department recommends using a general indication of eastern Bering Sea population size based on long-term medians of aerial survey biomass estimates for each of the management stocks as the basis for the 2017 PSC limit. While using the long term median of aerial survey estimates results in a decrease in the estimate of eastern Bering Sea herring biomass for 2017 compared to that provided for 2016, the value is within the range of biomass estimates provided over the last 10 years. Values for 2017, as well as the values provided to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council from 2008 to 2017, are contained in the attached tables. The combined biomass for 2017 is 221,872 short tons, equivalent to 201,278 metric tons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sherri Dressel".

Sherri Dressel
Statewide Herring Fisheries Scientist

Addressee's name

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Date

Table 1. Estimates of Pacific herring mature biomass for spawning aggregations in the eastern Bering Sea, Alaska, for purpose of establishing the 2017 prohibited species catch limit.

| Spawning area | short tons | metric tons |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Norton Sound | 34,180 | 31,007 |
| Cape Romanzof | 5,157 | 4,678 |
| Nunivak Island | 3,902 | 3,540 |
| Nelson Island | 5,275 | 4,785 |
| Cape Avinof | 3,446 | 3,126 |
| Goodnews Bay | 5,207 | 4,724 |
| Security Cove | 5,270 | 4,781 |
| Togiak | 157,028 | 142,453 |
| Port Moller/Port Heiden | 2,408 | 2,184 |
| Total | 221,872 | 201,278 |

Table 2. Pacific herring mature biomass projections for spawning aggregations in the eastern Bering Sea, Alaska, provided to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council for the purpose of establishing the 2008-2017 prohibited species catch limits per Amendment 16A of the Bering Sea/Aleutians Islands Groundfish FMP.

| Spawning area | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Norton Sound | 33,930 | 33,491 | 34,434 | 38,534 | 39,396 | 48,035 | 47,299 | 48,794 | 48,794 | 31,007 |
| Cape Romanzof | 3,512 | 4,402 | 3,606 | 5,024 | 4,349 | 4,349 | 2,634 | 4,366 | 4,366 | 4,678 |
| Nunivak Island | 3,346 | 2,849 | 4,176 | 3,014 | 2,612 | 2,612 | 2,068 | 5,132 | 140 | 3,540 |
| Nelson Island | 3,106 | 4,674 | 4,187 | 4,765 | 4,267 | 4,266 | 3,882 | 27,422 | 27,422 | 4,785 |
| Cape Avinof | 731 | 2,042 | 1,789 | 2,171 | 1,901 | 1,901 | 1,200 | 9,456 | 9,456 | 3,126 |
| Goodnews Bay | 2,957 | 5,204 | 6,259 | 33,393 | 29,944 | 29,944 | 7,116 | 16,812 | 8,263 | 4,724 |
| Security Cove | 5,844 | 5,158 | 9,696 | 11,901 | 11,061 | 18,144 | 7,852 | 11,681 | 8,540 | 4,781 |
| Togiak | 118,402 | 110,495 | 133,152 | 127,786 | 112,260 | 152,169 | 142,834 | 148,306 | 147,185 | 142,453 |
| Port Moller/Port Heiden | 816 | 1,361 | 136 | 680 | 3,629 | 3,382 | 2,268 | 2,268 | 8,932 | 2,184 |
| Total | 172,644 | 169,675 | 197,435 | 227,269 | 209,419 | 264,802 | 217,153 | 274,236 | 263,098 | 201,278 |

cc: Steve Whitney, NOAA
 Mary Furuness, NOAA
 Diana Stram, NPFMC
 Scott Kelley, ADF&G
 Chris Siddon, ADF&G
 Trent Hartill, ADF&G

