

Three-River Index for EBS Pollock fishery Chinook PSC threshold

Under BSAI groundfish FMP amendment 110, in addition to other bycatch reduction measures, the Council recommended, and NMFS implemented, a reduction to overall Chinook PSC levels for the EBS pollock fishery sectors in times of low western Alaskan Chinook salmon abundance. The PSC limits are specifically reduced (from a performance standard of 47,491 to 33,318, and a PSC limit from 60,000 to 45,000 Chinook overall) when an index of western Alaskan and Upper Yukon Chinook salmon abundance is below a 250,000 Chinook salmon threshold. This reduction in cap levels in times of low abundance is designed to provide for increased incentives to the pollock fleet to reduce bycatch to the maximum extent practicable to help in efforts to rebuild critically low western Alaskan Chinook stocks. These reduced cap levels are enacted in all years where the index for assessing the status of western Alaskan Chinook stocks is below a designated threshold (of 250,000 fish) that indicates very poor run sizes. All other provisions of bycatch management will also be in place in those years.

Has established under Amendment 110, historically low Western Alaskan Chinook salmon abundance is assessed annually using a 3-system index of inriver adult Chinook salmon run sizes from the Unalakleet, Upper Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers combined. Under the Council’s specified process, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) provides post-season abundance estimates to NMFS by October 1 to determine if adult Chinook abundance in the index systems falls at or below the threshold level of 250,000. The performance standard and hard cap applicable to the Bering Sea pollock fishery will be lowered in the year following the year in which the index was $\leq 250,000$. A letter from ADFG to NMFS is posted under Agenda Item B3 which reports that the estimated Chinook abundance is below the threshold. As a result, for 2019, the PSC caps will drop to the lower level. These caps (with seasonal and sector apportionments) are shown below:

2019 Overall PSC Limit

AFA sector	A season		B season		Annual total	
	% Allocation	# of Chinook	% Allocation	# of Chinook	% Allocation	# of Chinook
(1) Catcher/processor	32.9	10,363	17.9	2,415	28.4	12,780
(2) Mothership	8	2,520	7.3	987	7.8	3,510
(3) Inshore	49.8	15,687	69.3	9,355	55.6	25,020
(4) CDQ Program	9.3	2,930	5.5	743	8.2	3,690

2019 Performance Standard

AFA sector	A season		B season		Annual total	
	% Allocation	# of Chinook	% Allocation	# of Chinook	% Allocation	# of Chinook
(1) Catcher/processor	32.9	7,673	17.9	1,789	28.4	9,462
(2) Mothership	8	1,866	7.3	730	7.8	2,599
(3) Inshore	49.8	11,615	69.3	6,926	55.6	18,525
(4) CDQ Program	9.3	2,169	5.5	550	8.2	2,732