

C-4 BSAI chum salmon bycatch

Council motion

October 8, 2023

The Council revises the alternatives for an initial review analysis as follows. Alternatives and options are not mutually exclusive unless otherwise indicated below.

Alternative 1: Status Quo

All action alternatives apply to the entire Bering Sea pollock B season, the season in which chum salmon are taken as bycatch (prohibited species catch or PSC).

Alternative 2: Overall bycatch (PSC) limit for chum salmon

Option 1: Chum salmon PSC limit based on historical total bycatch numbers: range of 200,000 (~35,400 Western Alaska chum salmon) to 550,000 (~97,350 Western Alaska chum salmon).

Option 2: Chum salmon PSC limit triggered by Western Alaska chum salmon abundance indices based on the prior years' chum salmon abundance. Suboptions below are mutually exclusive.

Suboption 1: Three-area chum salmon index based on Yukon River summer + Yukon River fall run abundance (950,000 + 575,000); Kuskokwim River composed of the Bethel test fishery CPUE (2,800); Norton Sound composed of summed escapement for the Snake, Nome, Eldorado, Kwiniuk, and North Rivers and total Norton Sound harvest (57,000)

If 3/3 areas are above index threshold, no chum salmon PSC limit the following year.

If 2/3 areas are above index threshold, chum salmon PSC limit the following year is X.

If 1 or no areas are above index threshold, chum salmon PSC limit the following year is X.

Suboption 2: Chum salmon index based on Yukon River summer + Yukon River fall run abundance

Suboption 2a: Yukon River summer chum salmon (950,000)

If index is above threshold, chum salmon PSC limit the following year is X.

If index is below threshold, chum salmon PSC limit the following year is x.

Suboption 2b: Yukon River summer chum salmon (950,000) and fall chum salmon (575,000)

If 2/2 areas are above index threshold, no chum salmon PSC limit the following year.

If 1 or no areas are above index threshold, chum salmon PSC limit the following year is X.

Option 3 (must be selected with Option 1 or 2): PSC limits are apportioned among CDQ, catcher processor, mothership and inshore sectors (using a blended adjusted CDQ bycatch rate as with Amendment 91) based on:

Suboption 1: historical total bycatch by sector using the 3-year average (2020 – 2022)

Suboption 2: historical total bycatch by sector using the 5-year average (2018 – 2022)

Suboption 3: pro rata 25% AFA pollock allocation and 75% historical total bycatch (2020 – 2022)

Suboption 4: pro rata based on AFA apportionment

The sector limits are further apportioned at the cooperative level in proportion to each cooperative's pollock allocation. Chum salmon PSC can be transferred between sectors and among vessels within a cooperative. Reaching a limit closes the pollock fishery sector to which the limit applies.

Alternative 3: Chum salmon PSC limit with an associated Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch annual limit

Establish an annual limit of 40,000 to 53,000 Western Alaska chum salmon PSC based on the 3-year average 2020-2022 range of historical bycatch numbers and an overall chum salmon PSC limit from Alternative 2. Both the overall PSC limit and the Western Alaska chum salmon annual limit will be apportioned according to the options considered under Alternative 2.

Each sector's portion of an overall chum salmon PSC limit of (option 1: 450,000 and option 2: 550,000) is in effect. If a sector exceeds its western AK chum salmon PSC annual limit in any three of seven consecutive years, the sector's portion of an overall chum salmon PSC limit of (option 1: 200,000 and option 2: 300,000) is in effect until Western Alaska chum salmon PSC does not exceed the sector annual limit for three years.

Alternative 4: Additional regulatory requirements for Incentive Plan Agreements (IPAs) to be managed within the IPAs

Option 1: Require a chum salmon reduction plan agreement to prioritize avoidance in genetic cluster areas 1 and 2 for a specified amount of time based on two triggers being met: 1) an established chum salmon incidental catch rate and 2) historical genetic composition (proportion) of Western Alaska chum salmon to non-Western Alaska chum salmon.

Option 2: Additional regulatory provisions requiring Incentive Plan Agreements to utilize the most refined genetics information available to further prioritize avoidance of areas and times of highest proportion of Western Alaska and Upper/Middle Yukon chum salmon stocks.

Industry should submit a detailed proposal of IPA changes under Alternative 4 for inclusion into the Initial Review analysis prior to the February Council meeting. The proposals should consider a process to include local and traditional knowledge from Western and Interior Alaska salmon users in the development of IPA measures. The following is a list of potential measures that could be developed for incorporation into the IPAs and/or through regulation.

- Option 1 trigger 1 and trigger 2 values
- Adjusted base rates to implement a closure
- Adjusted closure area size
- Adjusted closure duration
- Application of the closures to all vessels not just those above the base rate
- Genetic data
- Genetic cluster thresholds
- Additional vessel level incentives/penalties for chum salmon avoidance