



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
P.O. Box 21668  
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May 30, 2025

## **Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report**

### **Status of Actions Report Online**

Updated daily at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akro/amendments.pdf>

### **Progress on Rulemaking**

Highlights on progress since the December 2024 meeting include:

- On **June 4, 2025**, NMFS published a notice of availability for amendment 125 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP). Amendment 125 would modify the BSAI Pacific cod jig sector to allow catch from catcher vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear that are less than or equal to 55 feet (ft) (16.8 meters (m)) length overall harvesting Pacific cod in the BSAI during the jig gear A season to accrue to the jig sector allocation. Comments are invited through **August 4, 2025**. NMFS anticipates publishing a proposed rule in the near future.
- On **June 3, 2025**, NMFS published a correcting amendment for the final rule that implemented the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (PCTC Program) to clarify language about cost recovery fee collection but not change the existing fee collection process or the elements of amendment 122 to the BSAI FMP. This action is necessary so that NMFS can continue to collect cost recovery fees in a way that is clear and consistent to the public.
- The comment period on the 2025 Cook Inlet salmon proposed harvest specifications ended on **May 5, 2025** (90 FR 14771). The final harvest specifications are under review and, if approved, would establish harvest limits for salmon during the 2025 fishing year, with an anticipated fishery start date of June 19, 2025.
- The 2025 Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program Cost Recovery Fee Notice published on **April 11, 2025** (90 FR 15450).
- Recreational Quota Entity charter halibut stamp final rule is under review and, if approved, NMFS intends to implement this action in January, 2026. NMFS published the proposed rule on October 31, 2024 (89 FR 86772).
- **The Status of Actions Report** provides additional detail.

### **Additional NMFS Documents**

In addition to this B2 NMFS Management Report, NMFS also posted the following documents on under this agenda item:

1. Discussion Paper on Review of Regulations under Executive Order 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness

Agenda B-2: NMFS Update, April 2025



2. Sustainable Fisheries Division 2024 By the Numbers poster
3. NMFS Tribal Engagement Report
4. Status of Amendments

### **Executive Order (EO) 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness**

On May 6, 2025, Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, sent a letter to Regional Fishery Management Council Executive Directors requesting each Council's recommendations pursuant to Section 4(a)(i) of EO 14276. This section tasks Regional Fishery Management Councils, within 180 days of the date of this EO, to provide NOAA Fisheries with updates to their recommendations submitted pursuant to Executive Order 13921 to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production, and commit to a work plan and a schedule for implementation to ensure these actions are prioritized.

Mr. Piñeiro-Soler also encouraged coordination with each Council's respective NOAA Fisheries Regional Office to align such recommendations and associated actions with other EO implementation efforts (e.g., EO 14192). The Council's deadline for submitting recommendations is September 30, 2025.

Concurrently, NOAA Fisheries will launch a public engagement process, including: a formal public comment period, listening sessions, and other targeted industry outreach.

### **Exempted Fishing Permit**

On May 23, 2025, NMFS issued an exempted fishing permit (EFP) 2025-01, to develop and test salmon excluders in the Bering Sea pollock fishery during summer fishing conditions, where chum salmon is the primary salmon bycatch species. The EFP is posted on the [NMFS AKR EFP webpage](#). The EFP application was submitted by Mr. John Gauvin and Ms. Andrea Keikkala of the North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation on March 11, 2025. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center reviewed an early draft of the application and supported this application with several modifications, which were addressed by the applicants in their final EFP application. In addition to public comments received at the April 2025 Council meeting, NMFS published a notice of receipt of the application in the *Federal Register* and invited public comments.

### **Data Confidentiality**

AKR is in the process of updating our handbook on data confidentiality. The updated handbook will guide staff on their responsibility to collect, maintain, and protect records and information that are protected as confidential. On December 17, 2024, NMFS published a final rule to revise existing regulations pertaining to confidentiality of information requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([89 FR 102000](#)). The updated AKR handbook will ensure that AKR data confidentiality practices are consistent with the NMFS final rule, while maintaining AKR's longstanding alignment with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) confidentiality practices.

### **BSAI FMP Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation update**

On May 15, 2025, AKR Sustainable Fisheries Division submitted to AKR Protected Resources Division (PRD) a Biological Assessment to reinstate formal consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on the effects of the BSAI groundfish fisheries on ESA-listed

species and designated critical habitat. The proposed action includes all groundfish fisheries managed under BSAI FMP and State of Alaska parallel groundfish fisheries. The next step in the process is for PRD to review the initiation package and determine if it meets the requirements identified under 50 CFR 402.14(c). Once reinitiation is agreed to, PRD will prepare a Biological Opinion.

### **Aquaculture Opportunity Areas**

NMFS published a Notice of Availability ([90 FR 07029](#)) for the identification of draft Aquaculture Opportunity Area Options (AOA Options) on April 23, 2025 and [collected public comment for 30 days](#). The notice announced the [preliminary results of the marine spatial planning study](#) identifying 97 draft AOA Options within Alaska state waters as part of the AOA identification process. The National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) provided a [WebMapper](#) where you can view the draft Alaska AOA Options and layers for each study area contained in the planning study.

In addition, NOAA and the State of Alaska held two public listening sessions to share information and gather oral comments. Transcripts will be posted online once available.

NOAA and the State of Alaska are currently reviewing public comments on the conditions, feasibility, historic or current activities within or around the Alaska draft AOA Options that may impact suitability. We will use this information to help finalize the results of the marine spatial planning study. After finalizing the marine spatial planning study, NCCOS will develop an Atlas—a technical document providing peer-reviewed geospatial planning information. This Atlas will assist NOAA and the State of Alaska in the National Environmental Policy Act review as we move forward in developing a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

More information on the Alaska AOA identification process can be found [here](#).

### **Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group**

On May 19, 2025, NMFS held a virtual meeting for members of the Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group. For the 2024 fishing year, there were no takes of ESA-listed seabirds in the groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska. The working group discussed current seabird bycatch data, reviewed the status of ESA-listed seabirds, and received updates on current monitoring in the fisheries with an emphasis on recent Electronic Monitoring developments. There was substantial discussion about staffing changes in the participating agencies and the resources available for seabird monitoring. Not all of the agencies that have historically participated in the working group were able to allocate resources to it this year. In light of these constraints, discussion focused on how existing data, monitoring, and review processes could be better focused on the specific times and places fishery interactions with ESA-listed seabirds are most likely. Membership in the working group was also updated. The working group intends to return to its normal schedule and meet again in March 2026. A written meeting report will be provided to the Council in the October NMFS B-2 Report.

## **Alaska Region (AKR) Personnel Changes**

The AKR had 115 Federal employees on January 1, 2025 which is now reduced to 87 accounting for a loss of 28 staff (24% of existing staff) due to a combination of probationary terminations, the Deferred Resignation Program, Voluntary Early Retirement, and voluntary separations in anticipation of a Reduction in Force. The following people have departed AKR since the April NMFS B-2 Report.

### **Sustainable Fisheries Division:**

**Jennifer Mondragon** - Jennifer spent 21 of her 26 years of Federal Service with SF. She was the Chief of the Catch Accounting and Data Quality Branch since 2007 and also served as SF's Deputy. Jennifer was so vital to SF being a successful division. Jennifer is valued and appreciated by all of us for her intelligence and problem-solving skills; her ability to clearly communicate complex issues; her positive energy and support for her colleagues; and her contributions to many important Regional initiatives. Her leadership and guidance as the Deputy made SF a more positive place to work. Jennifer extended her problem-solving and project management skills to projects that benefit the region and the nation. Every project she worked on was far better off with her involvement, and her ability to navigate a myriad of issues to get to a positive outcome.

**Kurt Iverson** - Kurt started in SFD in 2017. In his 8 years of Federal service, Kurt made significant contributions to the management of halibut fishing off Alaska as the Alaska Region's Recreational Fisheries Coordinator and through his work on the halibut management measures and other rulemaking. Kurt also had a substantial role in five Cost Recovery Fee programs. Kurt's past experience working in fisheries with the State of Alaska gave him a deep knowledge of fisheries across Alaska. Kurt was a valuable resource by responding to countless questions from members of the public on management and policy, and effectively communicating with the diverse group of fisheries stakeholders. Kurt always brought a positive, upbeat attitude, and sense of humor to every conversation.

**Gabrielle Aberle** - Gabrielle joined the Alaska Region in 2009. She served the Alaska Region first as our technical editor until 2018 when she became our Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) coordinator. As our PRA coordinator, she maintained approval for the Alaska Region's 30 information collections, including about 200 forms and thousands of data fields. Gabrielle has quietly and expertly provided essential support to all the work that is done in SF. Her work as technical editor improved the quality and consistency of countless documents. As PRA coordinator, she routinely ensured all of our information collection requirements are reviewed and approved under the ongoing PRA renewal and revision processes. Gabrielle has performed these essential functions with everlasting kindness, great communication, and dedication to teamwork. Gabrielle's excellent work has been recognized by the NOAA and NMFS PRA coordinators, and, in 2020, she received recognition from AKR as an employee of the year.

### **Protected Resources Division:**

**Aleria Jensen** - Aleria joined NOAA in 2002 as a Knauss Sea Grant Fellow with the Office of Protected Resources, working on North Atlantic right whale ship strike avoidance and recovery planning in Silver Spring. In 2004, she joined AKR Protected Resources as marine mammal stranding and entanglement coordinator, and program lead for harbor seal co-management and humpback whale issues. She has moved the needle on what NOAA does in Alaska. In 2015, Aleria took on the role of PRD deputy and branch chief to work to support the division in its conservation and recovery mission. PRD has benefited from Aleria's efforts to maintain a learning mindset.

**Julie Scheurer** - Julie earned a Master's Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University in 2002 and immediately launched her 23 year career in natural resource management by starting at the US Fish and Wildlife as a fish biologist snorkeling Lake Washington for chinook. Within a few months she moved to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center. In 2006 she joined the Alaska Region as the technical editor for the Sustainable Fisheries Division. In 2017 she transferred to the Protected Resources Division to specialize on interactions between protected species and commercial fisheries and aquaculture. She was an ESA Section 7 juggernaut analyzing the impacts of projects to protected species. She held many roles in her time with PRD and the loss of her expertise within PRD will be impactful.

### **Restricted Access Management Division:**

**Marie Beierly** - Marie joined NOAA in March 1995 at the beginning of the first Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) season. She began as a Data Clerk in NMFS Law Enforcement. In 1998, she transferred to RAM and worked as a Permit Assistant until 2025. Marie witnessed many changes and new fisheries programs take shape over the course of a 30 year federal career in fisheries. She will be missed for her sound permitting expertise and resoundingly positive nature.

**Alexander Kotlarov** - Alexander joined NOAA in 2004 as a Program Analyst for the Alaska Region's RAM Division. He provided operational support to the permit office, and worked with state and federal agencies, tribes, and other organizations to provide fisheries information and data analysis. Alexander received his PhD from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in Natural Resource in Sustainability, Resource Economics, completing his MSc from the London School of Economics in Sea Use Law Economics & Policy Making and his BS from Northeastern in Pre Law Criminal Justice.

**Susan Meyer** - Susan started with NOAA in 2004 as an Administrative Assistant for RAM. In 2007 she was promoted to RAM Permit Assistant, and in 2015 she joined Information Services Division (ISD) as an IT Specialist (Systems Administrator), where she was responsible for the maintenance of the Alaska Region's eDiscovery and document management software, ensuring end-users were well versed in the programs' functions and capabilities, as well as providing support to the Alaska Region's IT Help Desk. Susan completed her career as a Government Information Specialist in the RAM Division where she served as the Alaska Region's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator and Records Manager.

### **Information Services Division:**

**Daniel (Dune) Rothman** - Dune began working for NOAA Fisheries in December of 2017. During that time he served as the Director of the ISD, overseeing many changes to the information systems of the Alaska Region. Dune left government service on April 30, 2025.

**Clay Robidoux** - Clay began working for NOAA Fisheries in 2003, initially as a student, and now is the Network and Datacenter Engineer. Clay received his BS in Computer Information Systems from the University of Alaska, Southeast in 2006. Clay had worked his way to being the lead Network Administrator for the Alaska Region, in charge of all the network hardware, software, and configurations. He was vital to the functioning of the information systems for every regional employee. Clay left government service on April 14, 2025.

**Craig Millard** - Craig began working for the Alaska Region in May of 2021. During the time that Craig worked at the Alaska Region, he was the lead developer for the Catch Accounting System and associated data interfaces with external partners. Craig was also responsible for getting the Alaska Region involved with Openscapes, GitHub, Quarto, and Posit Connect. His leadership went well beyond the technical aspects of his job, and he was passionate about the mission and was an organizational leader as well. He left the region on April 10, 2025.

**Alex Burkhart** - Alex joined the Alaska Region on December 30, 2024. He came from ADF&G and was excited to advance his career and still support the conservation and economic development of Alaska's Fisheries. With the uncertainty surrounding probationary employees and an imminent Reduction in Force, Alex felt he had to leave the region to protect his livelihood. He left the region on April 1, 2025.

**Matt O'Dell** - Matt began working for the Alaska Region in May of 2023 after working with the ISD for two years as a contractor in operational support for all permitting, cost recovery, and web tools including Alders, Porcupine, and eFISH. Matt brought with him programming skills, previous knowledge and experience with our systems, and his bachelor's degree in biology and working knowledge of the field of fishery sciences, including performing sophisticated statistical analyses. He left the region on May 23, 2025.

### **Operations Management Division:**

**Kristie Balovich** - Kristie was a dedicated public servant with almost 30 years of service, all within the Alaska Region! Kristie joined the Restricted Access Management Division of AKR in 1995. She served as the IFQ Collection Coordinator, the IFQ Transfer Coordinator, and as a Permit Specialist. She was part of the team who implemented the IFQ cost recovery fee program in 2001. She moved over to the Operations Management Division in 2003 as the Alaska Region's lead Budget Analyst before serving as the Budget Officer, where she expertly oversaw our budget planning and execution responsibilities. For the last 5 years Kristie was the Assistant Regional Administrator for Operations providing leadership, expertise, and oversight of budget, cost recovery, grants, contracts, and human capital functions. Kristie is a big-picture thinker with a strategic approach to problem-solving and management of operations and people. AKR is losing a highly productive and engaged senior leader with extensive historical knowledge.

**Kristin Mabry** - Kristin came from ADF&G to start her Federal career with the Alaska Region in 2003 as a Fisheries Biologist for the Analytical Team. This interdisciplinary team completed analyses to ensure compliance with Federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act and the ESA. In 2014 Kristin moved over to the PRD as a Protected Species Biologist and continued her analytical career working on consultations under Section 7 of the ESA. In 2022 Kristin was promoted to supervisor of the Human Capital Branch in the Operations Management Division to fulfill her true calling of helping others learn and grow as AKR's Learning Officer. She was a professional coach, certified Emotional Intelligence EQ and DISC trainer, Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Victim Advocate Liaison, and participated on the NOAA Fisheries Wellness Council. Kristin is an ambitious and passionate person who provided support to many people across NOAA. Her absence will have a ripple effect that will be felt for many years to come.

### **Habitat Conservation Division**

**Doug Limpinsel** – Doug joined the Alaska Region in 2007 and spent the next 18 years of his 31 year federal career with Habitat Conservation. Previously, he worked on the Great Lakes as a merchant marine and as an observer with the Science Center. With Habitat Conservation, Doug led two rounds of the EFH 5-year review for non-fishing impacts. In reviewing federal actions affecting EFH Doug takes the time to learn and understand a problem; he would dive deep into any topic. Doug likes to be part of big-picture collaborative efforts supporting natural resource conservation. His work includes collaborating with the USEPA on the Bristol Bay biological characterization, and a USGS working group that produced five publications on the Resist-Direct-Accept framework.

**Julianne Rosset** – Julianne joined Habitat Conservation in 2024, a little more than one year ago. Julianne came to the Alaska Region from the USFWS where she spent 9 years completing environmental reviews of hydropower projects in Maine and New Hampshire. Her extensive experience in the Federal Power Act and environmental review generally, along with proven communication skills, made her an ideal fit for the Alaska Region. Julianne did not waste time when she arrived in the Region. She immediately took initiative to lead actions that promoted Habitat Conservation and NOAA Fisheries' mission. Just as important, Julianne helped build community in the Anchorage office.

### **NOAA General Counsel, Alaska Section (GCAK)**

Overall, GCAK is down 33% since the end of 2024: two support staff departed and we have one unfilled attorney position (due to an end-of-the-year retirement that we are unable to fill after the hiring freeze).

**Joe McCabe** - Joe joined the federal government in 1990 and has worked as a paralegal for 35 years, first with EPA and then with NOAA. During his time with GCAK, he worked on some high profile and time-consuming matters, including the 2004 Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and over the years continued to assist GCAK attorneys on NEPA matters, from conducting case law research to collaborating on

responses to comments on recent EISs and assisting with NEPA litigation. For years, Joe served as the lead reviewer of all in-season fishery actions, ensuring timely and accurate review to facilitate NMFS's continued flexible in-season management of the federal fisheries off Alaska. Finally, Joe was instrumental in responding to FOIA requests and preparing administrative records for filing in court. Joe's expert assistance in the preparation of administrative records greatly assisted GCAK and Department of Justice attorneys in the successful defense of several key Council actions over the years.

**Jennifer Norton** - Jennifer joined GCAK in 2020 as a Program Specialist. Prior to joining GCAK, Jennifer worked for several federal agencies including the National Weather Service. Among her many roles within GCAK, she oversaw and managed GCAK's annual budget and purchased all required supplies for our office, served as the Property Accountability Officer and undertook the annual inventories of GCAK's physical properties, served as the Master Timekeeper and ensured that timesheets were accurate and timely submitted so everyone could get paid, and was a wizard at maneuvering through NOAA's online travel platform and the complex maze of changing accounting codes to greatly assist staff's domestic and international trips. In short, Jennifer kept our little legal office functioning smoothly so that GCAK attorneys could continue to focus on providing expert legal counsel to NMFS and the Council.