

June 2008 Council motion on Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch EIS/RIR/IRFA

MOTION

The Council directs staff to provide analysis on the preliminary preferred alternative specified below in addition to those in the existing analysis and release the resulting EIS/RIR/IRFA for public review. For a complete description of alternatives in the existing analysis, see Chapter 2 of the BSAI Salmon Bycatch EIS Initial Review Draft (dated May 15, 2008).

Alternative 4: Preliminary preferred alternative

Alternative 4 would establish a Chinook salmon bycatch cap for each pollock fishery season which, when reached, would require all directed pollock fishing to cease for that season. Components 2-4 specify the allocation and transferability provisions associated with the cap.

Component 1: Hard cap with option for ICA regulated incentive system

Annual scenario 1: Hard cap with an ICA that provides explicit incentive(s) to promote salmon avoidance in all years

Hard cap if an ICA is in place that provides explicit incentive(s) for each participant to avoid salmon bycatch in all years:

Overall cap: 68,392, allocated by season and under Components 2-4 as described below

For those operations that opt out of such an ICA, the hard cap will be established as follows:

Overall cap: 32,482

CDQ allocation: 2,436

Non-CDQ cap: 30,046

All salmon bycatch attributed to the AFA pollock trawl fleet will accumulate against this lower cap, but only those operations not in the ICA will be required to stop fishing when the CDQ or non-CDQ cap has been reached. This backstop cap of 32,482 will not be allocated by sector, so all other components in Alternative 4 are not relevant to this backstop cap. (In absence of a sector allocation for this backstop cap a 7.5% allocation applies to the CDQ sector by default, and the remaining 92.5% is set as the non-CDQ cap.)

ICA requirements:

- An ICA must provide incentive(s) for each vessel to avoid salmon bycatch under any condition of pollock and salmon abundance in all years.
- Incentive measures must include rewards for salmon bycatch avoidance and/or penalties for failure to avoid salmon bycatch at the vessel level.
- The ICA must specify how those incentives are expected to promote reductions in actual individual vessel bycatch rates relative to what would have occurred in absence of the incentive program. Incentive measures must promote salmon savings in any condition of pollock and salmon abundance, such that they are expected to influence operational decisions at bycatch levels below the hard cap.

Annual reporting:

- The ICA must be made available for Council and public review.
- An annual report to the Council will be required and must include:
 - 1) a comprehensive explanation of incentive measures in effect in the previous year,
 - 2) how incentive measures affected individual vessels, and
 - 3) evaluation of whether incentive measures were effective in achieving salmon savings beyond levels that would have been achieved in absence of the measures.

Annual scenario 2: Hard cap in absence of an ICA with explicit incentive(s) to promote salmon avoidance

Hard cap in absence of an ICA that provides explicit incentive(s) to all participants to avoid salmon bycatch in all years:

Overall cap: 47,591, allocated by season and under Components 2-4 as described below

BS Chinook Salmon bycatch motion, as approved June 6, 2008

Seasonal distribution of caps

Any hard cap would be apportioned between the pollock A and B seasons. The seasonal distribution is ~~58/42~~ **70/30**, based on the average distributional ratio of salmon bycatch between A and B seasons in the 2000-2007 period.

Seasonal rollover of caps

Unused salmon from the A season would be made available to the recipient of the salmon bycatch hard cap in the B season within each management year at an amount up to 80% of the recipient's unused A season bycatch cap.

Component 2: Sector allocation

Separate sector level caps will be distributed within each season for the CDQ sector and the three remaining AFA sectors, the inshore catcher vessel (CV) sector, the mothership sector, and the offshore catcher processor (CP) sector, as follows:

A season: CDQ 9.3%; inshore CV fleet 49.8%; mothership fleet 8.0%; offshore CP fleet 32.9%

B season: CDQ 5.5%; inshore CV fleet 69.3%; mothership fleet 7.3%; offshore CP fleet 17.9%

This distribution is based on the 5-year (2002-2006) historical average of the annual proportion of salmon bycatch by sector within each season, adjusted by blending the bycatch rate for CDQ and non-CDQ partner sectors. It is also weighted by the AFA pollock allocation for each sector; in each season, the proportional allocation by sector comprises the adjusted 5-year historical average by sector weighted by 0.75 for the salmon bycatch history and the AFA pollock allocation by sector weighted by 0.25.

Component 3: Sector transfers

Allocate salmon bycatch caps to each sector and allow the entity representing each non-CDQ sector and the CDQ groups to transfer salmon bycatch ~~trigger~~ caps among the sectors and CDQ groups. (NMFS does not actively manage the salmon bycatch allocations).

Component 4: Cooperative provisions

Each inshore cooperative and the inshore open access fishery (if the inshore open access fishery existed in a particular year) shall receive a salmon allocation managed at the cooperative level. If the cooperative or open access fishery salmon cap is reached, the cooperative or open access fishery must stop fishing for pollock.

The initial allocation of salmon by cooperative within the shore-based CV fleet or to the open access fishery would be based upon the proportion of total sector pollock catch associated with the vessels in the cooperative or open access fishery.

Cooperative transfers

When a salmon cooperative cap is reached, the cooperative must stop fishing for pollock and may transfer salmon bycatch from other inshore cooperatives, CDQ groups, or entities representing non-CDQ groups (industry initiated).