

Steller Sea Lion EIS Draft Comment Analysis Report

Presentation to the North Pacific Fishery
Management Council

Alaska Region
Sustainable
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Presentation

- Setting
- Review of the PPA
- Draft CAR
- Next steps

What are we doing?

- Complying with the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska Order to prepare an EIS
- Revising Steller sea lion protection measures to reduce economic impacts to the extent practicable while providing necessary protection to Steller sea lions



Where are we?

- Completed the publication and public comment period on the draft EIS.
- Have a draft EIS and a draft Comment Analysis Report to inform Council's recommendation of a preferred alternative.



Preliminary Preferred Alternative

- Recommended by the Council in April 2013
- Mostly a combination of alternatives in the preliminary draft EIS
- Analyzed at Alternative 5 in the draft EIS

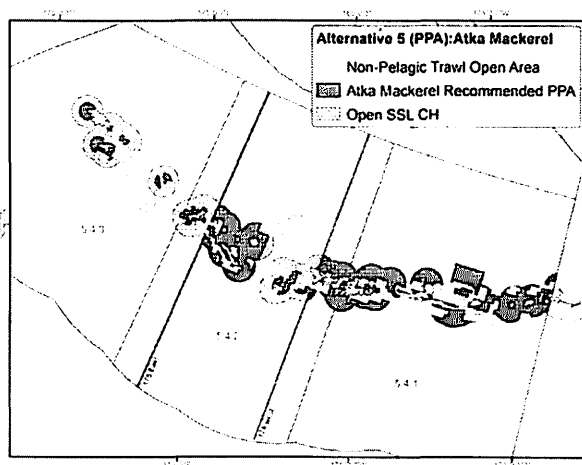
Common Elements for All Alternatives

- Management of the Pacific cod under Amendment 85
- Management of pollock under Amendment 82
- Groundfish 3 nm closure at Kanaga Island/Ship rock rookery
- VMS requirement- increased polling and transmission receipt for trawl vessels

Atka Mackerel PPA

- A season: 1/20-6/10, B season: 6/10-12/31.
- 50:50 seasonal apportionment including CDQ.
- Rollover from A to B season fished outside of critical habitat.
- Area 543: Critical habitat harvest limit 60% of TAC, distribute evenly between seasons. TAC \leq 65% ABC.
- Area 542: Critical habitat harvest limit 60% of TAC west of 178° W long, distribute evenly between seasons.
- Area 541/Bering Sea: For Amend. 80 coop and CDQ in BS, revise MRA calculation for Atka mackerel as an incidental species.

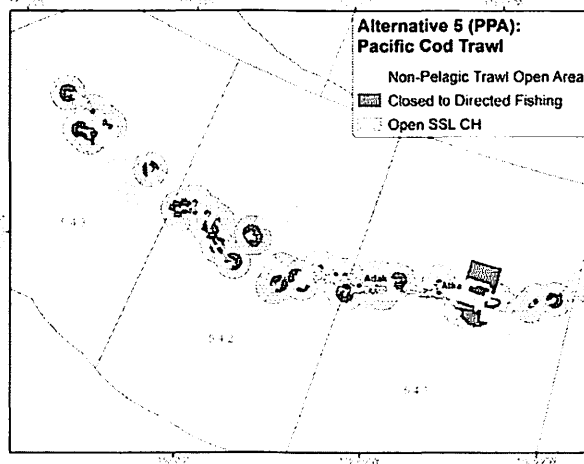
Atka Mackerel PPA Closures



Pacific Cod Trawl PPA

- A season: 1/20-4/1, B season: 4/1-6/10
- CVs and AFA CPs: C season: 6/10-11/1.
- Amend. 80 and CDQ: C season: 6/10-12/31
- Seasonal apportionment based on BSAI wide TAC level under Amend 85.
- Area 543: Catch limit in proportion to Area 543 abundance based on annual stock assessment.

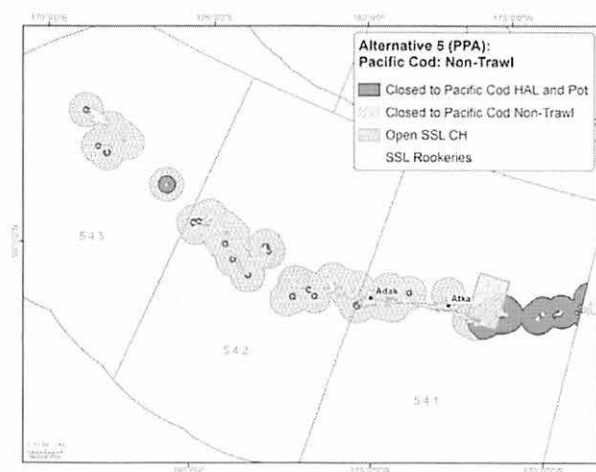
Pacific Cod Trawl PPA Closures



Pacific cod non-trawl PPA

- Hook-and-Line: A season: 1/1-6/10, B season: 6/10-12/31
- Pot: A season: 1/1-6/10, B season: 9/1-12/31
- Jig: A season: 1/1-4/30, B season: 4/30-8/31, C season: 8/31-12/31
- Seasonal apportionments based on BSAI-wide TACs under Amend 85.
- Area 543: Catch limit in proportion to Area 543 abundance based on annual stock assessment.

Pacific Cod Non-trawl PPA Closures



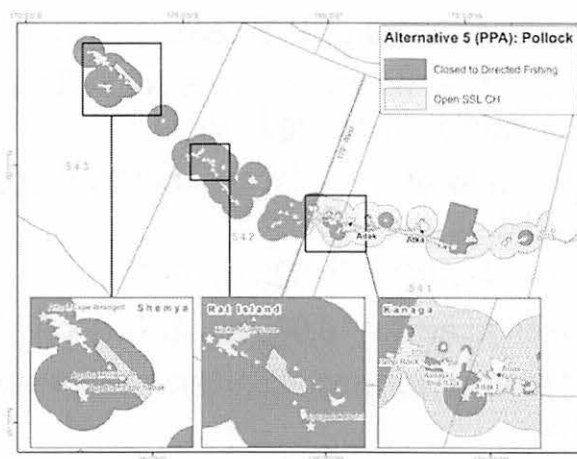
Pollock PPA

- A season: 1/20-6/10, B season: 6/10-11/1.
- Only CDQ and vessels registered with the Aleut Corporation in directed fishery.
- 50% of Aleut Corp. directed fishery allocation to vessels ≤ 60 ft.
- When AI ABC $\geq 19,000$ mt, AI TAC = 19,000 mt.
- When AI ABC $< 19,000$ mt, AI TAC \leq ABC.
- Total A season apportionment no more than 40% of ABC.

Pollock PPA continued

- Area 543: A season catch limit 5% of ABC.
- Area 542: A season catch limit 15% of ABC.
- Area 541: A season catch limit 30% of ABC.

Pollock PPA Closures



Summary of PPA disturbance and incidental take impacts on Steller sea lions

- For incidental takes and disturbance, none of the alternatives were expected to have population level effects.
- PPA for Atka mackerel and Pacific cod pose more potential for disturbance and incidental takes than Alternatives 1-3 but less than Alternative 4.
- PPA for pollock pose more potential for disturbance and incidental takes than Alternatives 1 and 2 but less than Alternatives 3 and 4.

PPA Potential Effects on Steller sea lion prey

- Atka mackerel: similar to Alternative 3 except less potential in Area 543.
- Pacific cod trawl and non-trawl: same as Alternative 4, except same as Alternative 2 in Area 543 due to catch limit.
- Pollock: more than Alternative 1 and 2 but less than Alternatives 3 and 4.



PPA and fleets

- Covered in Sections 8.18 and 8.20
- Atka mackerel and Pacific cod ranking based on gross revenue index
 - Trawl C/P: better than 1-3, and not as good as 4
 - Non-trawl C/P: better than 1, may be better than 2, similar to 3 and 4
 - Trawl CV: better than 1-3, similar to 4
 - Non-trawl CV: better than 1, similar to 2-4
- Pollock ranking: Trawl C/P and CV: better than 1-2, not as good as 3-4



PPA and communities

- Covered in Sections 8.15, 8.20 and Chapter 10
 - Adak:
 - most exposed
 - PPA (Atka mackerel and Pacific cod) better than Alts 1-3, not as good as Alt 4
 - PPA (pollock) is better than Alts 1-2, not as good as Alts 3-4
 - Atka
 - Hoping to expand shoreside Pacific cod processing
 - PPA better than 1-3, similar to 4
 - Unalaska
 - Net impacts of alternatives on Unalaska uncertain; possibly better than 1-3, not as good as 4



PPA and communities

- Covered in Sections 8.15, 8.20 and Chapter 10
 - Other Alaskan communities
 - CDQ effects, possible benefits to Sand Point and King Cove from pollock; other direct effects small
 - May be better than 1, 2; not as good as 4; uncertain for 3
 - Puget Sound communities
 - Many operations based here
 - Better than 1,2, 3; not as good as 4
 - Aleut Enterprise shareholders
 - Impact on Adak is a reasonable proxy



Draft Comment Analysis Report



Draft Comment Analysis Report

- Agency and stakeholders pull together information for decision making under NEPA
- 60 day comment period on the draft EIS
- CAR contains the summaries of the comments and the draft responses.
- Tool for identifying and responding to concerns and revising the EIS.
- Becomes Chapter 13 in the final EIS

Processing Comments

- Received 13 submissions, including attachments
- Submissions and attachments are available to the public at www.regulations.gov (Docket number NOAA-NMFS-2012-0013)
- Each comment in a submission was assigned an individual number. All treated equally.
- All comments organized by topic, summarized, and consolidated to 227 comments.
- Agency developed responses.



Types of responses in the draft CAR

- Supplement, improve, or modify the analysis
- Make factual corrections
- Explain why comment does not warrant further agency response.



Draft CAR Comment and Responses

- Comments and responses were organized by Chapter and topic
- Numbering shows the Chapter number and the comment number within the chapter.
- No comments in the draft CAR on Chapters 4 (nontargets), 6 (seabirds), or 9 (IRFA).

Chapter 1 Comments and Responses

- Mostly focused on compliance with statutes for development of EIS and for implementation of protection measures
 - NEPA
 - ESA
 - MSA

Chapter 2 Comments and Responses

- Lacking information to understand the alternatives
- Reasonable range of alternatives
- Preferred alternative

Chapter 3 Comments and Responses

- Combined non-target species issues with target issues
- Concerns with information used in analysis
- Multispecies modeling for groundfish stock assessments

Chapter 5 Comments and Responses

- Bulk of the comments received
- Wide range of issues of Steller sea lion biology and fisheries interactions
 - Foraging
 - Prey
 - Population trends
 - Natality
 - Nutritional stress
 - Fisheries and Steller sea lion overlap
 - Uncertainty or lack of information
 - Population level effects

Chapter 7 Comments and Responses

- Multispecies modeling
- Predator/prey relationships

Chapter 8 Comments and Responses

- Changes in fleet behavior
- Revenues-at-risk methodology
- Employment impacts
- Safety
- Freezer longline buyback
- Trawl vessels delivering to motherships
- Value of Steller sea lions



Chapter 10 Comments and Responses

- Impacts on affected communities (Adak)
- State of Alaska fish taxes
- CDQ royalties



Chapter 11 Comments and Responses

- Types of research to understand fisheries effects on Steller sea lions



What's next?

- EIS will be revised
- SFD will provide PRD the proposed action for the Section 7 consultation
- BiOp will inform the agency's final decision
- Final EIS published by March 2, 2014



JAM or No JAM?

- No JAM
 - Develop proposed regulations based on the preferred alternative
- JAM
 - Develop protection measures to address performance standards established in the RPA (cannot accommodate Council involvement under current court-ordered schedule)
 - Develop proposed regulations based on the measures developed per the RPA
- Implement revisions by January 1, 2015



Questions?