

C-4 Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch
Council motion 4-11-15

The Council selects the following as its preferred alternatives for Chinook and chum salmon bycatch measures in the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

Alternative 2. Remove BSAI Am 84 regulations and incorporate chum salmon avoidance into the Am 91 Incentive Plan Agreements. An annual exemption from the Chum Salmon Savings Area is contingent upon participation in an incentive plan agreement that includes the provisions below. Revise regulations at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(13) to include associated reporting requirements for chum salmon. Revise regulations at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(12)(iii)(B)(3) to include chum salmon bycatch avoidance as follows:

(3) Description of the incentive plan.

The IPA must contain a written description of the following:

(i) The incentive(s) that will be implemented under the IPA for the operator of each vessel participating in the IPA to avoid Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch under any condition of pollock and Chinook salmon abundance in all years;

(ii) The incentive(s) to avoid chum salmon should not increase Chinook salmon bycatch;

(iii) The rewards for avoiding Chinook salmon, penalties for failure to avoid Chinook salmon at the vessel level, or both;

(iv) How the incentive measures in the IPA are expected to promote reductions in a vessel's Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch rates relative to what would have occurred in absence of the incentive program;

(v) How the incentive measures in the IPA promote Chinook salmon savings and chum salmon savings in any condition of pollock abundance or Chinook salmon abundance in a manner that is expected to influence operational decisions by vessel operators to avoid Chinook salmon and chum salmon;

(vi) How the IPA ensures that the operator of each vessel governed by the IPA will manage that vessel's Chinook salmon bycatch to keep total bycatch below the performance standard described in paragraph (f)(6) of this section for the sector in which the vessel participates;

(vii) How the IPA ensures that the operator of each vessel governed by the IPA will manage that vessel's chum salmon bycatch to avoid areas and times where the chum salmon are likely to return to Western Alaska; and

(viii) The rolling hot spot program for ~~chum~~ salmon bycatch avoidance and an agreement to provide notifications of closure areas and any violations of the rolling hot spot program to at least one third party organization representing western Alaskans who depend on ~~non-Chinook~~ salmon and do not directly fish in a groundfish fishery.

Alternative 3. Revise Federal regulations **at 50 CFR 679.21(f)(12)(iii)(B)(3)** to require that IPAs include the following provisions, **with associated reporting requirements added to 50 CFR 679.21(f)(13)**:

Option 1. Restrictions or penalties targeted at vessels that consistently have significantly higher Chinook salmon PSC rates relative to other vessels fishing at the same time. Include a requirement to enter a fishery-wide in-season PSC data sharing agreement.

Option 2, Suboption. Required use of salmon excluder devices, with recognition of contingencies, from Jan 20 – March 31, and Sept 1 until the end of the B season.

- Option 3. A rolling hotspot program that operates throughout the entire A and B seasons.
- Option 4. Salmon savings credits last for a maximum of three years for savings credit based IPAs.
- Option 5. Restrictions or performance criteria used to ensure that Chinook salmon PSC rates in the month of October are not significantly higher than those achieved in the preceding months.

Alternative 4. Revise the Bering Sea pollock fishery seasons:

- Option 1. Change the start date of the Bering Sea pollock B season to June 1.
- Option 3. Reallocate pollock A and B season apportionments to:
Suboption: 45% (A) and 55% (B), with A to B season rollovers

Alternative 5. Revise Federal regulations to lower the performance standard **and hard cap** under Am 91 in years of low Chinook salmon abundance per the options below. Low abundance is defined as $\leq 250,000$ Chinook salmon, based on the post-season inriver Chinook salmon run size index of the Unalakleet, Upper Yukon, and Kuskokwim aggregate stock grouping in a ~~option: year or average of two years~~. **The performance standard and hard cap would be lowered in the year following the year in which the index was $\leq 250,000$ Chinook salmon.** Sectors that exceed the applicable performance standard, in 3 out of 7 years, would be held to their proportion of the annual applicable performance standard in future years (for example, either 47,591 or the lowered performance standard, whichever is in place that year). ~~If an option is selected under Alternative 5 that establishes a performance standard lower than the opt-out cap, then in a year in which the lowered performance standard is in place, the opt-out cap would be equal to the lower performance standard.~~ In a year in which the lowered performance standard is in place and there are no approved IPAs, the PSC limit allocated to sectors would equal the lower performance standard.

Option: 31,000

Suboption: Reduce the 60,000 hard cap in years of low Chinook salmon abundance to 40,000.

The preferred alternative includes the regulatory amendments recommended by NMFS in Section 2.6 of the public review draft analysis. It also includes reporting requirements as necessary to implement the Council's preferred alternative, the removal of the chum ICA annual report, and the consolidation of chum and Chinook salmon IPA reporting.