



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
P.O. Box 21668  
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March 28, 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>

Consistent with the January 20, 2025 Presidential memorandum titled Regulatory Freeze Pending Review ([90 FR 8249](#), January 28, 2025), NMFS has submitted all rules to the Federal Register after review and approval by persons appointed by the President.

### **Progress on Rulemaking**

Highlights on progress since the December 2024 meeting include:

- On **December 26, 2024**, NMFS published two notices, the 2024 Cost Recovery Fee Notice for Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program (89 FR 105006), and the Observer Program Fee Notice of Standard Ex-Vessel Prices for 2025 (89 FR 104997).
- On **March 14, 2025**, the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Commerce, accepted the 2025 International Pacific Halibut Commission Fishery Regulations, thereby making them effective.
- On **March 18, 2025**, NMFS published the final 2025 and 2026 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish harvest specifications.
- On **March 18, 2025**, NMFS published the final 2025 and 2026 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish harvest specifications.
- On **March 18, 2025**, NMFS published a notice to open the sablefish fishery at 12:00 pm (noon) on **March 20, 2025**.
- NMFS issued halibut and sablefish IFQ on **March 18**, and the commercial halibut and sablefish fishery opened on **March 20, 2025**.
- On **March 21, 2025**, NMFS published notice of the halibut annual management measures (90 FR 13293).
- On **March 27, 2025**, NMFS published notice of the exempted fishing permit to develop salmon excluders specific to summer pollock fishing conditions where chum salmon is the primary salmon species encountered as bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery (90 FR 13856). The public comment period closes on **April 7, 2025**.
- On **March 27, 2025**, NMFS published the final rule to authorize hook-and-line catcher processors to use longline pot gear in the Bering Sea Greenland turbot fishery (90 FR 13842). **Effective April 28, 2025**.

Agenda B-2: NMFS Update, April 2025



- 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).
- All inseason actions for 2025, including fishery closures and reallocations, have been published in the Federal Register. Sustainable Fisheries Inseason Branch continues to work to ensure inseason fishery management actions are published in the Federal Register as close to real time as possible.
- **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 the Council agenda:

1. NMFS Tribal Engagement Report
2. Status of Amendments
3. Salmon Excluder Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Application
4. NMFS Annual Essential Fish Habitat Report
5. NMFS Protected Resources Division Presentation on Endangered Species Updates and Marine Mammal Hot Topics
6. Proposal for a Tribal Salmon Fishery in Cook Inlet

### **February 2025 A2 Report topics**

In February, 2025, NMFS provided an [A2 Report](#) with brief updates on the following actions that occurred since December 2024 Council meeting.

- Data Confidentiality Final Rule
- Memorandum of Agreement between NMFS and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
- Chinook Salmon Endangered Species Act Listing Petition Update
- National Academies of Sciences Study

### **AKR Phone numbers**

The Alaska Regional office in Juneau has replaced our phone system and the majority of our staff now have new phone numbers. A list of updated contact numbers can be found on the AKR Staff Directory webpage:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/staff-directory/alaska-regional-office-staff-directory>.

### **Exempted Fishing Permit**

NMFS received a final application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) from Mr. John Gauvin under contract with North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation on March 11, 2025. The proposed EFP is focused on developing salmon excluders specific to summer pollock fishing conditions in the Bering Sea, where chum salmon is the primary salmon bycatch species. A draft application was submitted to NMFS on September 1, 2024, which was reviewed by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC). The AFSC supports this application with several modifications, which were addressed by the applicants in their final EFP application. In addition to public comments received at this Council meeting, we published a notice of receipt of the application in the *Federal Register* with a brief description of the proposal and invited public comments.

### **Cook Inlet Tribal Salmon Fishery**

For the past year, Sustainable Fisheries staff have been working with Tribes on a potential management framework and options for management measures for a Tribal salmon fishery in the Cook Inlet EEZ Area under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. After the February Council meeting, NMFS received a letter from the involved Tribes represented by the Tikahtnu Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (Tikahtnu Commission) on February 18, 2025. The Tikahtnu Commission represents the federally recognized Tribes of Chickaloon Native Village, Native Village of Eklutna, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Knik Tribe, Ninilchik Village Tribe, Salamatof Tribe, and Seldovia Village Tribe. NMFS provided a written response to this letter on February 24, 2025 and met with representatives from the Tikahtnu Commission on March 7, 2025 to continue discussions on the development of their proposal for a Tribal salmon fishery in the Cook Inlet EEZ Area. The letter, as well as other letters related to this consultation can be found [here](#). These conversations focused on continued development of the Tikahtnu Commission's tribal salmon fishery proposal for introduction to the Council, including process and technical elements. NMFS advised the Tikahtnu Commission to provide additional specifics and details for each management measure the Tikahtnu Commission is considering including in its proposal. The Tikahtnu Commission sent NMFS a letter with proposal on March 26, 2025 for a Tribal salmon fishery and this proposal is posted under this B2 report.

### **Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Interim Final Rule**

The regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), maintained and issued by the CEQ, have been rescinded. The NEPA statute remains in place, along with our existing NEPA procedures in NOAA's Companion Manual (link below). Agencies have 12 months to revise their own procedures for implementing NEPA. The NOAA NEPA office is spearheading this effort for us. In the meantime, our work as it relates to NEPA will not look very different. We are still mandated to comply with NEPA and CEQ's interim guidance is for agencies to:

*“continue to follow their existing practices and procedures for implementing NEPA consistent with the text of NEPA, EO 14154, and the issued guidance for any ongoing analyses in the interim and “should consider voluntarily relying on those regulations in completing ongoing NEPA reviews or defending against challenges to reviews completed while those regulations were in effect.”*

Additional details on NEPA changes:

- [EO 14154](#)
- [Interim Final Rule Rescinding CEQ Regulations](#)
- [CEQ Guidance](#)
- [NOAA's Companion Manual](#)

### **Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC)**

Effective February 28, 2025, the Secretary of Commerce determined that the purposes for which MAFAC and the Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee were established had been fulfilled. Two other NOAA advisory committees, Advisory Committee on Excellence in Space and the Climate Services Advisory Committee, were also terminated.

### **Aquaculture Opportunity Areas**

NMFS is preparing for publication in the Federal Register, a Notice of Availability for the identification of draft Aquaculture Opportunity Area Options (AOA Options). The notice will announce the preliminary results of the marine spatial planning study to identify draft AOA Options within Alaska state waters as part of the AOA identification process.

The draft AOA Options were identified using a site suitability scoring and ranking process to narrow the results to areas that have high relative suitability scores. The notice will invite public comment on the conditions, feasibility, historic or current activities within or around the Alaska Draft AOA Options that may impact suitability. This notice is anticipated to be published in spring 2025. The public comment period will be open for 30 days from the date of publication.

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

### **NMFS Annual Essential Fish Habitat Report**

As part of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation policy, the Council requested regular reports from NMFS on EFH consultations that may be of interest to the fishing industry, and/or that may affect habitats of direct concern to the Council. This report developed by our Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) focuses on major consultations, with a brief summary of routine activities with minor effects on EFH. We also provide advance notice for those activities that could have major effects on EFH and where the Council may consider a consultation action.

### **Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Biological Opinion**

The NMFS Protected Resources Division (PRD) completed a Biological Opinion on the effects of all groundfish fisheries managed under the GOA FMP, including State of Alaska parallel groundfish fisheries, on species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and designated critical habitat, on December 23, 2024. NMFS concluded that the GOA groundfish fisheries analyzed in that opinion are likely to adversely affect some, but not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any, threatened or endangered species or critical habitats under our jurisdiction. PRD will present the key findings of this biological opinion at the this meeting. The biological and conference opinion for the GOA groundfish fisheries is available on our website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/biological-opinion-national-marine-fisheries-service-alaska-region-sustainable>

### **Protected Resources Endangered Species Update and Marine Mammal Hot Topics**

PRD will provide a brief overview of ESA-listed marine mammal species in Alaska, focusing on basic population information, threats, and fisheries interactions of interest to the Council. The presentation will also highlight select topics including killer whale bycatch, work on fur seal and fisheries interactions, and marine mammal subsistence harvest eligibility.

## **Personnel Changes**

The AKR lost the following people since the NMFS [A-2 Report](#) for the February 2025 Council meeting.

### **Sustainable Fisheries Division:**

**Bill Donaldson** - Bill started his position with NMFS with a wealth of experience in fisheries after many years of work in research and management for ADF&G and as a port sampler for the IPHC. Bill ran our Kodiak field office, and over the past 13 years, Bill represented AKRO in Kodiak and organized monitoring for the Rockfish Program. As part of his rockfish duties, Bill was a common sight in Kodiak processing plants where he worked with plant managers and processing crew to ensure high quality data was collected. In addition to his rockfish duties, Bill was part of the vessel inspection team and inspected scale and video systems on catcher processors. He was well known and vital to supporting our groundfish fisheries off Alaska.

**Aaron Lambert** - Aaron worked for the Alaska Region for 6 months as a fishery management specialist. Aaron led the quantitative aspects of the 2025 SAFE report for the Cook Inlet EEZ Area salmon fishery, including presenting to the SSC and Council during the February meeting. The Alaska Region very much appreciates Aaron's outstanding contributions.

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

**Sabrina Donnellan** - Sabrina worked for the Alaska Region for 4 months as Branch Chief for the Records and Technical Services team within RAM. She led work in response to the Region's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, records management, and administrative record gathering in response to litigation. Additionally, she performed data analysis to help improve fisheries permitting decisions, data reporting capabilities, data sharing, and privacy and confidentiality practices. Sabrina was a vital part of the RAM and Alaska Region team and made significant contributions.

### **Information Services Division:**

**Dave Hanson** - Dave Hanson began working for the Alaska Region in 2017 as the lead DevOps in the Information Services Division. His job was supporting, building, maintaining, and planning for the infrastructure needed to support the custom software and databases necessary for the Alaska Region to manage fisheries. Eventually, Dave was promoted to the Supervisor of IRO, where he continued to perform the DevOps work as well as supervise the user support, security, and network infrastructure staff. Dave retired in November. His work was vital to the Alaska Regions IT Infrastructure and all data processing operations.

**Stacy Katasse** - Stacy Katasse worked for the Alaska Region for 7 years. She started at the region as a software developer leading an effort to modernize our internal applications. Her passion for Project Management, Quality Management, and Continuous Improvement quickly led her to a supervisory role in the Applications Office. As the supervisor, she led a team of 4 developers and several contractors in maintaining operations, including all permitting systems, quota share management tools, and reporting. Stacy was integral in the functioning of permitting and quota

share management for the region, as well as a force in modernizing the region's business process improvement.

**Will Davies** - Will worked for the Alaska Region for 3 months as a software developer. He was on the Integrated Fisheries Application team and the Operational Support team. Will was building a bridge of knowledge between our legacy systems and our new cloud systems and was making vital contributions to AKR's efforts to fully "operationalize" our cloud services.

Operations Management Division:

**Debra Cruz** - Deb worked for the Alaska Region for 11 months and was the Travel Coordinator for all our employees. In addition to travel support, she served as backup Timekeeper, completed AKR's labor audits, and supported the management of our accountable property.

**Carl Greene** - Carl worked for the Alaska Region for 9 years, first as our Cost Recovery Fee Coordinator and then as a Budget Analyst. At the beginning of January we lost our Cost Recovery Fee Coordinator, Charmaine Weeks, and Carl stepped in to provide support to keep those programs moving.

**Attachment 2 -- Inseason Management Report**

Catch during 2025 is through March 22, 2025 and is compared to catch during 2024 through March 23, 2024. All catch amounts are in metric tons. Additional information is available from [daily catch reports and information bulletins](#).

From January 1 through March 22, 2025, NMFS closed 11 fisheries to directed fishing through inseason actions. Following President Trump’s January 20, 2025, memorandum titled [Regulatory Freeze Pending Review](#), NMFS paused publishing actions in the Federal Register, including temporary rules to prohibit directed fishing. NMFS continued to manage fisheries as required in 50 CFR 679.20 and advised fishery participants when a TAC was reached through information bulletins. In all 11 fisheries, vessels stopped fishing when NMFS advised that a TAC was reached, preventing the risk of overfishing. All 11 fishery closures have now been published in the Federal Register. NMFS will continue to work to ensure fishery actions are published in the Federal Register as close to real time as possible.

**Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands**

**Bering Sea Pollock**

The 2025 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,375,000 mt which is higher than the 2024 TAC of 1,300,000 mt. For 2025, NMFS reallocated the projected unharvested AI CDQ pollock TAC (1,900 mt) and Aleut Corporation TAC (12,100 mt) from the Aleutian Islands to the Bering Sea AFA sectors.

Bering Sea	2025 A season allocation	2025 A season catch	Percent taken
Inshore	270,810	192,823	71%
CP	198,233	187,028	94%
Mothership	54,162	39,383	73%
CDQ	62,730	61,311	98%
Total	585,935	480,545	82%

### Salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock Fisheries

NMFS has determined that 2024 was a low Chinook salmon abundance year, based on the State of Alaska’s estimate that Chinook salmon abundance in western Alaska is less than 250,000 Chinook salmon. Therefore, the 2025 Chinook salmon PSC limit is 45,000 Chinook salmon, allocated to each sector as specified in 50 CFR 679.21(f)(3)(iii)(A).

Species	Chinook				Non-Chinook			
	2025		2024		2025		2024	
Year	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>	#	Rate <sup>1</sup>
CDQ	1,351	0.022	694	0.012	45	<0.001	71	0.001
AFA	10,706	0.025	3,595	0.009	405	<0.001	823	0.002
Total	12,057	0.025	4,289	0.009	450	<0.001	894	0.002

<sup>1</sup>Rate is total salmon per groundfish in the pollock target.

### Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish

For 2025, the maximum species specific catch recommended in the Western Aleutian Islands is 100 mt. All sectors are requested to avoid blackspotted/rougheye rockfish. A [weekly report](#) is available to monitor total catch of blackspotted/rougheye rockfish in the Western Aleutian Islands.



### BSAI Pacific cod by Sector

The 2025 Pacific cod TAC is 133,602 mt in the Bering Sea and 8,694 mt in the Aleutian Islands compared to the 2024 Bering Sea TAC of 147,753 mt and Aleutian Islands TAC of 8,080 mt.

BSAI Sector	2025				2024			
	A season allocation <sup>1</sup>	Catch Mar 22	A season closed <sup>2</sup>	# of vessels Mar 22	A season allocation <sup>1</sup>	Catch Mar 23	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 23
CDQ	9,135	5,297	na	18	10,005	2,531	na	23
Hook-and-line CP	31,356	17,377	na	16	34,359	21,331	na	18
Pot CP	966	937	Mar 12	<3	1,058	0	na	0
Pot CV >= 60 ft	5,408	5,707	Feb 6	13	5,926	3,134	na	4
Hook-and-line CV >= 60 ft	129	0	na	0	141	0	na	0
Hook-and-line/Pot CVs < 60 ft	3,525	3,447	Jan 21	19	3,867	4,120	Jan 25	17
Jig	67	0	na	0	69	0	na	0
Trawl CV	20,781	18,457	na		22,758	19,794	na	72
AFA CP	2,192	641	na	13	2,400	516	Jan 20	14
Amendment 80 CP	12,771	8,173	na	14	13,985	7,008	na	14
Total	86,330	60,036		Conf.	94,568	58,434		133

<sup>1</sup>In 2025, NMFS reallocated 1,000 mt, and in 2024 NMFS reallocated 1,100 mt of the A season jig allocation to the hook-and-line or pot gear less than 60 ft length annual allocation.

<sup>2</sup>For 2025 the fishery “closed” date is the date NMFS advised the fleet that the TAC would be reached. Closures in the Federal Register occurred after these dates.

**BSAI Flatfish (includes CDQ)**

In 2025 relative to 2024, overall BSAI flatfish catch is about 2,613 mt lower. In 2025, rock sole has the largest increase in catch and flathead sole has the largest decrease in catch.

Species	2025			2024		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Alaska plaice	1,402	15,903	9%	2,221	21,752	10%
Arrowtooth flounder	567	14,000	4%	361	14,000	3%
Flathead sole	3,776	36,000	10%	7,041	35,500	20%
Greenland turbot	4	1,678	0%	0	3,188	0%
Kamchatka flounder	44	6,800	1%	24	7,498	0%
Other flatfish	1,693	4,500	38%	755	4,500	17%
Rock sole	14,462	75,000	19%	11,532	66,000	17%
Yellowfin sole	15,297	135,000	11%	17,917	195,000	9%
Total	37,245	288,881	13%	39,858	347,438	11%

Note: Directed fishing for Arrowtooth flounder, Kamchatka flounder, and Greenland turbot opens at noon, May 1.

**BSAI Atka mackerel, Pacific ocean perch (POP) includes CDQ, and Trawl Sablefish**

The 2025 Atka mackerel catch is more than 2024. POP, and trawl sablefish catch decreased slightly in 2025 compared to the same timeframe in 2024.

Species	2025			2024		
	Catch	TAC	% Taken	Catch	TAC	% Taken
Atka mackerel	14,447	82,000	18%	10,143	72,987	14%
Pacific ocean perch	95	33,458	0%	425	37,626	1%
BS non-CDQ Sablefish-Trawl	5	3,398	0%	17	3,398	1%
AI non-CDQ Sablefish-Trawl	3	1,687	0%	5	1,794	0%

## Gulf of Alaska

### Pacific cod - Western GOA

The 2025 jig gear allocation remained at 3.5 percent, and the other sectors decreased to account for the jig gear allocation.

Sector	2025				2024			
	A season allocation	Catch Mar 22	A season closed <sup>1</sup>	# of vessels Mar 22	A season allocation	Catch Mar 23	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 23
Hook-and-line CP	641	489	na	<3	644	486	na	<3
Hook-and-line CV	41	0	Jan 1	0	41	0	Jan 1	0
Jig	128	89	na	8	129	17	na	4
Pot CV/CP	1,165	1,205	Feb 7	6	1,170	1,184	Feb 19	4
Trawl CV	1,856	1,899	Mar 4	15	1,863	1,231	na	16
Trawl CP	53	0	Jan 20	0	53	0	Jan 20	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,884</b>	<b>3,682</b>		<b>Conf.</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>2,918</b>		<b>Conf.</b>

<sup>1</sup>For 2025 the fishery “closed” date is the date NMFS advised the fleet that the TAC would be reached unless otherwise closed in the harvest specifications. Closures in the Federal Register occurred after these dates.

### Pacific cod - Central GOA

The 2025 jig gear allocation increased from 2 percent to 3 percent, and the other sectors decreased to account for the jig gear allocation.

Sector	2025				2024			
	A season allocation	Catch Mar 22 <sup>2</sup>	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 22	A season allocation	Catch Mar 23	A season closed	# of vessels Mar 23
Hook-and-line CP	613	382	na	<3	622	493	na	3
Hook-and-line CV <50 ft	1,389	1,271	Feb 23	22	1,410	1,066	Mar 26	28
Hook-and-line CV ≥50 ft	836	604	Mar 10	6	849	683	Mar 22	9
Jig	277	76	na	13	185	2	na	<3
Pot CV/CP	2,660	3,020	Feb 7	17	2,698	3,014	Feb 9	20
Trawl CV <sup>1</sup>	3,773	1,382	Jan 21	34	3,828	2,144	na	37
Trawl CP	299	0	Jan 20	0	303	0	Jan 20	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,847</b>	<b>6,735</b>		<b>Conf.</b>	<b>9,895</b>	<b>7,402</b>		<b>Conf.</b>

<sup>1</sup>In 2024, Central GOA trawl CV sector was closed January 20 to February 5, 2024.

<sup>2</sup>For 2025 the fishery “closed” date is the date NMFS advised the fleet that the TAC would be reached unless otherwise closed in the harvest specifications. Closures in the Federal Register occurred after these dates.

## Pollock

For Area 610, 10 CVs targeted pollock in the A season and voluntarily limited fishing activity primarily during non-daylight hours.

For Area 620, the vessels voluntarily waited to fish until February 10, 2025. Thirty-five CVs have targeted pollock in the A season.

For Area 630, the vessels voluntarily waited to fish until February 20, 2025. Twenty-three CVs have targeted pollock in the A season.

2025 A season	610	620	630	640
A season allocation	5,589	63,267	16,751	5,282 (annual)
A season catch	4,251	51,866	3,583	1,851
A season closure	na	na	na	na

## Chinook Salmon PSC Limits in the GOA

Chinook Salmon	2025 Limit	2025 PSC (Rate <sup>1</sup> )	2024 PSC (Rate <sup>1</sup> )
Total	n/a	4,135	5,333
Western GOA pollock	6,684	438 (0.10)	1,011 (0.19)
Central GOA pollock	18,316	3,697 (0.07)	4,336 (0.08)
Western/Central trawl CV <sup>2</sup>	3,060	0	0
Central Rockfish Program CV	1,200	0	0
Western/Central trawl C/P <sup>2</sup>	4,080	0	0

<sup>1</sup>Rate is number of salmon per metric tons of groundfish.

<sup>2</sup>The limit includes the incentive buffer for 2024 and 2025 Western/Central trawl C/P limit (480 Chinook) and Western/Central trawl CV (360 Chinook).

## Halibut PSC Data

In 2025 relative to 2024, the total halibut PSC and groundfish are greater in the BSAI than in the GOA.

Area, Gear, and Sector	2025			2024		
	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate	Halibut mortality	Groundfish	Rate
BSAI Total	651	230,608	0.28%	654	241,326	0.27%
Amendment 80	448	104,754	0.43%	493	110,177	0.45%
BSAI trawl limited access <sup>1</sup>	84	23,196	0.36%	81	26,211	0.30%
Non-trawl Pacific cod	34	22,958	0.15%	39	30,973	0.13%
Non-trawl Other	0	0	0%	0	338	0%
CDQ	85	79,700	0.11%	41	73,627	0.05%
GOA Total	95	27,798	0.34%	19	53,305	0.03%
Trawl, Deep-water	8	1,407	0.57%	0	0	0%
Trawl, Shallow-water	25	21,847	0.11%	5	49,874	0.01%
Hook-and-line	62	4,544	1.36%	14	3,431	0.41%

<sup>1</sup>Includes halibut mortality for the PCTC Program.