

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver *DO for*  
Executive Director

DATE: November 28, 2011

SUBJECT: GOA Chinook salmon bycatch – all trawl fisheries

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| ESTIMATED TIME<br>8 HOURS<br>All D-1 Items |
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

Review Discussion Paper on GOA Chinook salmon bycatch in trawl fisheries

**BACKGROUND**

In December 2010, the Council initiated two amendments to address GOA Chinook salmon bycatch. The first amendment package was expedited, and established PSC limits for the Western and Central GOA pollock fisheries. Additional provisions ensured some form of observer coverage on all vessels fishing for pollock no later than January 1, 2013, and required full retention of all salmon taken in the pollock trawl fishery, in order to allow NMFS to implement a robust sampling protocol for Chinook salmon, and allow for genetic stock identification of Chinook salmon taken as bycatch. The Council took final action in June 2011, and a notice of availability and the proposed rule for GOA Groundfish Amendment 93 were recently published.

The Council also initiated a second amendment package that was intended to be more comprehensive, and on a longer-term track. With respect to this second amendment package, the Council has expressed several intentions. The analysis was initiated with a specific suite of alternatives, addressing the implementation of PSC limits for the GOA non-pollock trawl fisheries, the establishment of a bycatch cooperative for these fisheries, and full retention of salmon in all the GOA trawl fisheries. Additionally, the Council identified several other items for which they requested further information, presumably with a view to determining whether those items should be included in the suite of alternatives. Finally, during the development of Amendment 93, the Council discovered that an element of the original amendment analysis for pollock PSC limits, namely a requirement for membership in a mandatory bycatch cooperative by pollock fishery participants, could not be implemented in the straightforward manner conceived of in the alternative. Therefore, the Council deferred discussion of this proposal, along with any other comprehensive tools that could improve the ability of pollock fishery participants to avoid Chinook salmon, to the current amendment package. A discussion paper on this proposed amendment analysis was mailed to the Council in mid-November, and is attached as Item D-1(b)(1). Table 4 in this discussion paper has been revised, and is attached as Item D-1(b)(2).

Given these diverse intentions, staff deemed it advisable to present the Council with a discussion paper addressing these various issues, and to ask for clarification with respect to the alternatives for moving ahead with this second Chinook salmon bycatch amendment package for the Central and Western GOA trawl fisheries. At the December 2011 Council meeting, the Council may wish to consider revising the alternatives, and perhaps the problem statement, for this analysis.