

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC, and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver *DO*
Executive Director *for*
DATE: January 31, 2011
SUBJECT: GOA Chinook salmon bycatch

ESTIMATED TIME
8 HOURS

(for all C-3 items)

ACTION REQUIRED:

(b) GOA Chinook salmon bycatch in the pollock fisheries: Review workplan and discussion paper on cooperative provisions.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2010, the Council initiated two amendments to address GOA Chinook salmon bycatch. The first amendment package addresses Chinook salmon bycatch in the GOA pollock fisheries through a hard cap or a mandatory cooperative requirement, and is intended for expedited review and rulemaking. A longer-term amendment package will address comprehensive salmon bycatch management in all the GOA trawl fisheries, and will evaluate a broader suite of management measures to reduce bycatch.

Staff is currently working on the first analysis, which evaluates amending the GOA Groundfish FMP either to create a PSC limit for western/central GOA pollock fisheries, which would close the fishery once reached, and/or require all vessels participating in the western/central GOA pollock fisheries to be a member of a salmon bycatch conservation cooperative. The cooperative would include contractual requirements to retain all salmon until counted by an observer, and other salmon bycatch reduction measures. The Council requested that this action be completed on an expedited timeframe, ideally to be implemented within twelve months, and indicated that this action was an extremely high priority.

A workplan was distributed to the Council in mid-January, and is attached as Item C-3(b)(1). The workplan addresses some outstanding issues on which staff is requesting Council direction. It is not possible for this amendment to be implemented in time for the beginning of the 2012 fishing year. Whether the Council chooses a hard cap (Alternative 2), a mandatory cooperative provision (Alternative 3), or both, the earliest these could be effective would be for GOA pollock fishing in the fall of 2012, the C and D pollock seasons. The workplan identifies some considerations that must be taken into account if the Council wishes to consider midyear implementation. Staff is requesting feedback from the Council as to whether it is advisable to continue to adhere to the most expedited timeline given these considerations.

Additionally, the workplan addresses Council expectations for outreach on this project, identifies factors to consider in adopting a hard Chinook salmon bycatch cap for the western and central GOA pollock fisheries, and requests clarifications on the range of options included for apportioning the cap under Alternative 2 between the western and central regulatory areas. The Council's December 2010 motion is also included as an appendix at the end of this workplan (pages 13-15).

A discussion paper on cooperative provisions was also distributed to the Council in mid-January, and is attached here as Item C-3(b)(2). As a part of the development of alternatives, the Council requested staff to prepare a discussion paper concerning certain aspects of a proposed system of cooperatives that would be intended to reduce Chinook salmon prohibited species catch (PSC). The paper addresses issues of cooperative formation, cooperative size, the need to create fishing opportunities for non-members of cooperatives, and cooperative reporting requirements. In addition, the paper briefly addresses the proposal that cooperatives require full retention of Chinook salmon to improve information concerning bycatch and its effects on stocks, and the interaction of the cooperative system with a proposed a Chinook bycatch hard cap in the fisheries.