

North Pacific Fishery Management Council – Update on Chinook Bycatch



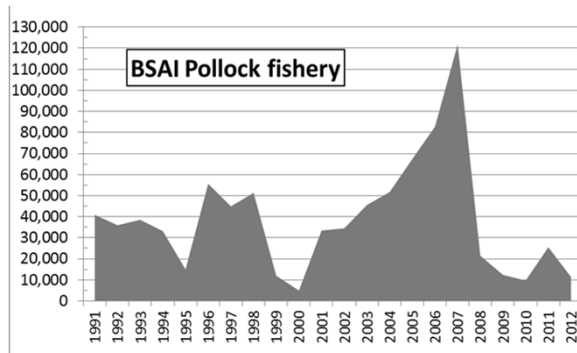
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

- manages offshore Federal fisheries off Alaska (3-200 miles) with NMFS
- Management governed by the Magnuson-Stevens Act (U.S. Federal law). Balance of 10 National Standards, including:
 - Minimize (salmon) bycatch to extent practicable
 - Prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery (e.g., the Alaska groundfish fisheries)
 - Provide for the sustained participation of and minimize adverse impacts on fishing communities

Salmon bycatch in the Alaska groundfish fisheries

NOTE: Council does not regulate any salmon fisheries (State of Alaska), only salmon bycatch occurring in offshore groundfish fisheries

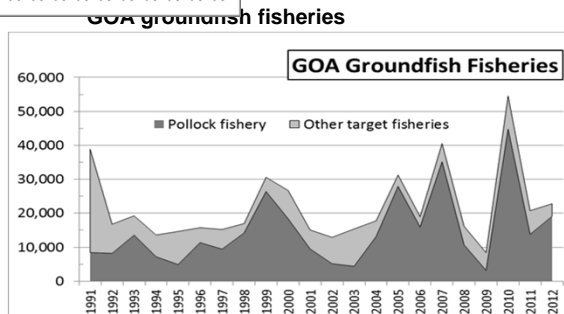
- Trawl fisheries catch Chinook salmon as bycatch
 - In the Bering Sea, bycatch is in the pollock fishery
 - In the GOA, it is mostly in the pollock fishery (~75%), but also in flatfish, Pacific cod, and rockfish fisheries
- By law, bycatch is counted, but cannot be retained or sold



Chinook bycatch 1991-2012

(number of salmon)

- Note difference in scale between BSAI and GOA
- Most recent 5-year averages (2008-2012):
 - BSAI pollock: 16,079
 - GOA pollock: 18,325
 - GOA other: 6,217



What action has the Council taken? Bycatch limits that close the fishery

- **Bering Sea pollock fishery**
 - 60,000 Chinook salmon bycatch limit, with incentive plans to remain below 47,951 salmon (*implemented 2011*)
 - Apportioned by sector (catcher vessel, catcher processor, mothership, CDQ) and inshore cooperative
 - If sector exceeds its apportionment of 47,591 Chinook salmon 3 times in 7 year period, sector's limit will permanently reduce to lower cap
 - Council receives annual report on incentive programs

What action has the Council taken? Bycatch limits that close the fishery

- **GOA pollock fishery**
 - 25,000 Chinook salmon bycatch limit (*implemented mid-2012*)
 - Apportioned between the central and western regulatory area pollock fisheries
- **GOA non-pollock fisheries**
 - Limits currently under review range from 5,000-12,500 Chinook salmon
 - Council final action scheduled for June

What action has the Council taken? Stock of origin research

- Purpose:
 - to understand relationship between Chinook salmon bycatch in the groundfish fisheries and the status of individual Chinook stocks

What action has the Council taken? Stock of origin research

- Bering Sea
 - Basis of Council action in 2009 (PSC limit)
 - bycatch and genetics information from 2005-2007
 - AEQ model provided information on proportional stock of origin of bycatch, broken out to regional and western Alaska river systems
 - Coastal western Alaska is largest component of bycatch
 - Since 2011: systematic sampling procedure for Chinook
 - including full census and increased observer coverage (min. 100%)
 - genetic breakdown of samples presented each April
 - April 2013 is first time will receive complete annual report based on full census and systematic sampling protocol (for 2011)
 - Best information on impact rate to western Alaska
 - bycatch was between 0.7% - 2.4% of combined run sizes in 2011
 - See *Stram and Ianelli paper from AYKSSI, December 2012*

What action has the Council taken? Stock of origin research

- **GOA**
 - Very limited information to date
 - Insufficient samples for stock composition analysis
 - Indication of presence of stocks from limited samples (primarily from pollock fishery) and coded wire tags
 - Systematic sampling procedure now underway in pollock fishery (result of Council action)
 - Census from observed and unobserved pollock deliveries, but lower observer coverage than Bering Sea
 - Genetic breakdown of available samples each April
 - awaiting 2011 results; 2010: stocks present predominantly Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, and coastal southeastern AK
 - Full retention under review in non-pollock fisheries
 - Census sampling will likely not be possible, but other sampling methodology may be used.

What action has the Council taken?

- Extensive outreach to coastal and interior communities
 - Purpose: solicit input on salmon bycatch actions prior to Council action, promote 2-way dialogue
 - Community meetings, participation at subsistence regional advisory council meetings, regional large forums (e.g., AVCP, YRDFA, YRP), statewide teleconferences
- Food bank donations
 - Council amended requirements in 1996 to allow donation of bycaught salmon to food banks
 - Voluntary industry program; heightened participation in recent years, in Bering Sea and GOA
 - Donations of salmon and halibut in 2012:
 - BSAI: 73,000 lbs; ~85% salmon
 - GOA: 30,000 lbs; ~15% salmon

What action is the Council taking? Chinook salmon bycatch reduction in other management actions

- Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch reduction
 - Measures to reduce chum salmon bycatch in pollock fishery need to be tempered by concurrent objective to not increase Chinook salmon bycatch
 - To date, measures under consideration have been shown to exacerbate Chinook bycatch reduction. Council is developing more adaptive approaches.
- Development of bycatch management tools for GOA underway
 - Council considering cooperative management and bycatch avoidance incentives for trawl fisheries
 - Necessary in context of Chinook salmon PSC limits as well as recent halibut and crab protections

Summary

- Chinook salmon bycatch reduction is continuing priority for Council
- Management achieved through hard cap limits as well as incentive programs
- Regular reporting of Chinook salmon bycatch levels allows the Council to react to potential problems

