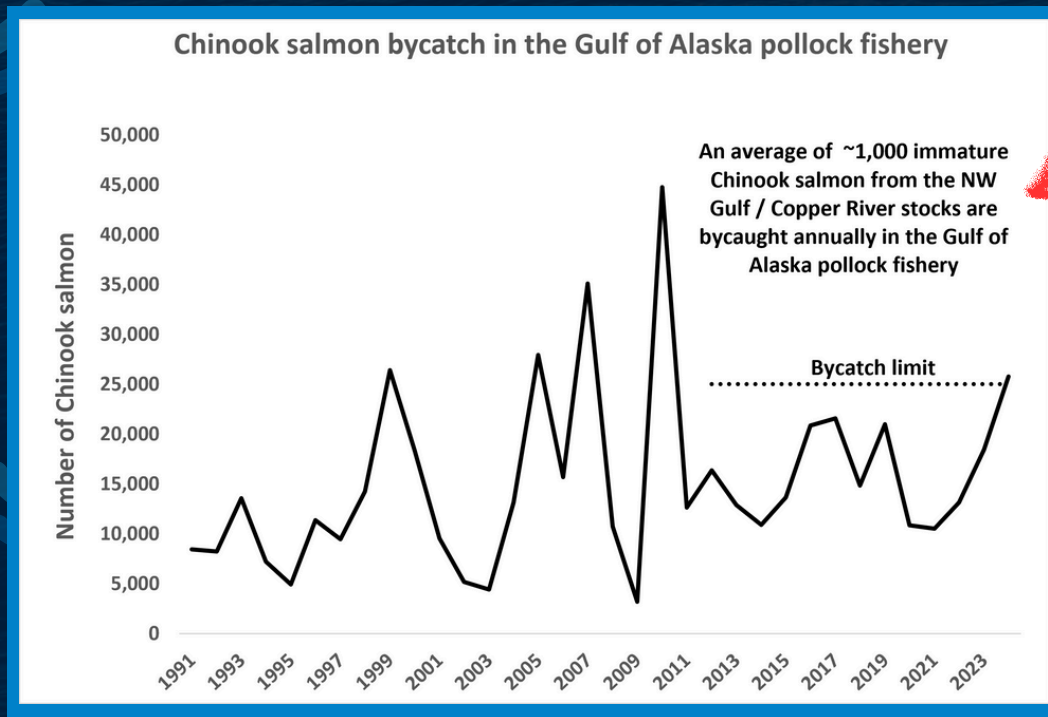


# SALMON BYCATCH OVERVIEW

## GULF OF ALASKA FEDERAL TRAWL FISHERIES

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to minimize bycatch while also allowing for optimum yield in the fisheries. The Council has implemented new measures or refined existing measures to reduce bycatch of prohibited species: Pacific halibut, crab, chum salmon, and in this case, Chinook salmon in the Federal fisheries.

Chinook salmon are an integral part of subsistence, sport, and commercial harvests in Alaska. The Council has established Chinook salmon bycatch limits for all groundfish trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. The majority of Chinook salmon bycatch caught in trawl fisheries occurs in the pollock fisheries, but the NPFMC has established bycatch limits for all trawl fisheries.



### THINGS TO KNOW:

- Chinook salmon bycatch is closely monitored across Alaska to ensure that bycatch limits are not exceeded.
- An average of around 1,000 immature Chinook salmon from the North West Gulf/Copper River stocks are bycaught annually in the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery. In the Gulf of Alaska, genetic data have consistently shown that the vast majority of salmon bycatch is not of Alaska origin.
- While a contributing factor, bycatch does not appear to be the largest factor impacting low productivity. We are still trying to determine what factors are causing the decline in marine productivity.



# SALMON BYCATCH OVERVIEW

WHEN CONSIDERING THE IMPACTS OF BYCATCH ON SPECIFIC SALMON STOCKS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT BYCATCH IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE NUMBER OF RETURNING ADULTS TO ALASKAN RIVER SYSTEMS.

## HOW IS BYCATCH MONITORED? HOW ACCURATE ARE THE SALMON BYCATCH ESTIMATES?

Very accurate. By regulation, all salmon are retained until counted by an independent, scientifically trained observer, which occurs onboard catcher-processors or shoreside at the plants for catcher vessels. In the Gulf of Alaska, every pollock vessel must retain all Chinook salmon caught as bycatch. All Chinook salmon are counted and genetic samples and other biological data are collected from a portion of the bycatch by certified observers. All Chinook salmon are counted and genetic samples and other biological data are collected from a portion of the bycatch by certified observers.

### CAPS

Federal law requires minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable. The Gulf of Alaska Pollock fishery operates under area-specific hard caps: 18,316 Chinook salmon in the Central Gulf of Alaska and 6,683 Chinook salmon in the Western Gulf of Alaska. Non-pollock trawl fisheries targeting Pacific cod, rockfish, and flatfish have a hard cap of 7,500 Chinook salmon.

## INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE INDUSTRY

The Council promotes voluntary bycatch reduction programs, where fishing vessels adopt selective fishing methods to avoid salmon. The industry is encouraged to use tools like excluder devices, which allow salmon to escape from trawl nets.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SCAN BELOW FOR  
NPFMC'S WEBSITE**

