

Salmon Bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska & Bering Sea Groundfish Fisheries

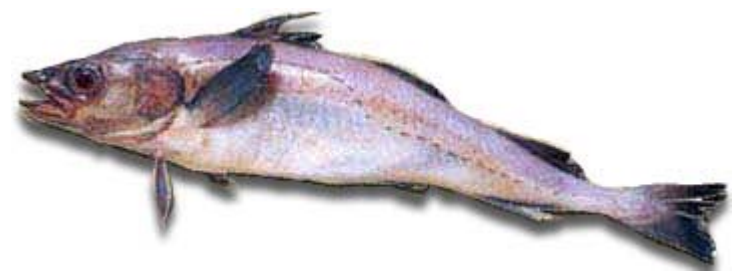
Alaska House Fisheries Committee
February 28, 2013

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Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Alaska Marine Conservation Council



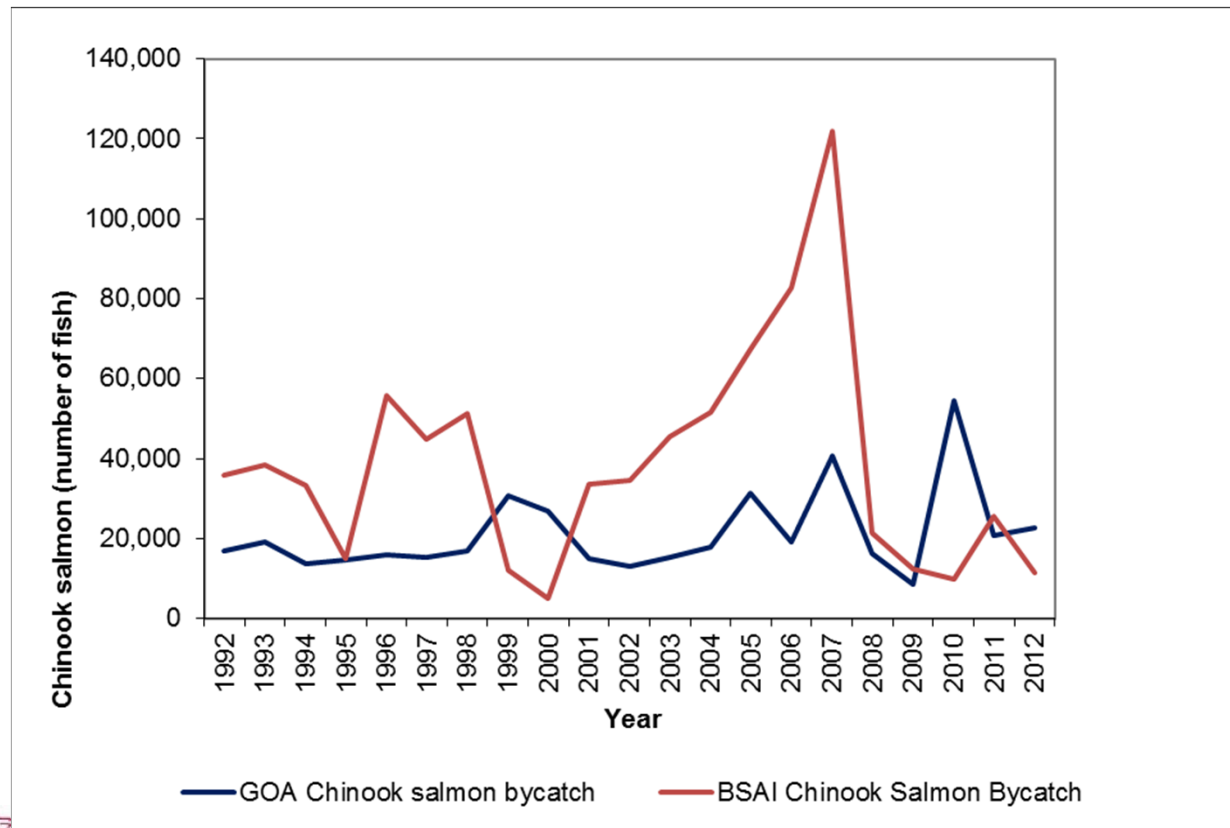
Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Background

- Pollock fishery catches salmon (mainly Chinook and chum) as bycatch.
- Salmon caught in the pollock fishery is a “prohibited species” and must be counted and then discarded or donated to food banks.
- Gulf of Alaska: Salmon caught as bycatch in the non-pollock fisheries as well.



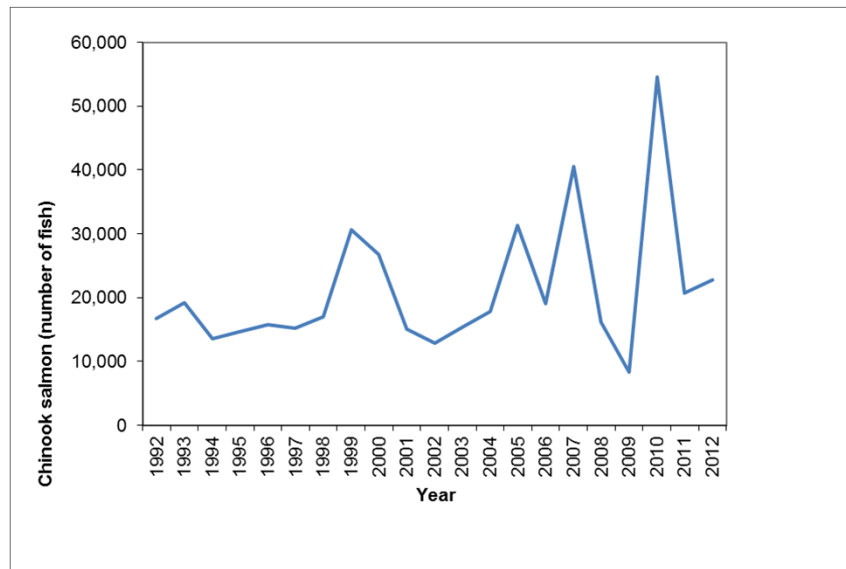
Walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*)

Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Gulf of Alaska & Bering Sea



Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Trends

Chinook Salmon Bycatch: GOA Groundfish Fisheries



Percentage of bycatch by fishery

Year	Pollock	Other Groundfish
1991	22%	78%
1992	49%	51%
1993	70%	30%
1994	53%	47%
1995	34%	66%
1996	72%	28%
1997	62%	38%
1998	84%	16%
1999	86%	14%
2000	69%	31%
2001	63%	37%
2002	40%	60%
2003	29%	71%
2004	74%	26%
2005	89%	11%
2006	84%	16%
2007	87%	13%
2008	66%	34%
2009	38%	62%
2010	82%	18%
2011	67%	33%

Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Stock of Origin

Stocks Present Include:

- Coastal southeastern Alaska
- Other
 - Includes Western GOA (stock grouping includes Deshka, Karluk, Kasilof, Kenai, Ninilchik, Willow)
- Pacific Northwest
- British Columbia

Because of limited samples: no percentage information, just presence / absence

Gulf of Alaska:

Chinook Salmon Stock Status

- 7 Stocks of Concern (6 Upper Cook Inlet & Karluk R.);
- 2012: setnet fishery almost completely shut down, Kenai River was closed to all recreational Chinook salmon fishing;
- 2012: Only 4 out of 12 escapement goals were met in Upper Cook Inlet;
- Disaster Declaration for Upper Cook Inlet: Economic losses estimated at almost \$27.7 million to commercial fisheries and direct and indirect losses to sport fisheries. Additional losses to subsistence.

Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Current Management

Pollock Fishery:

- Hard cap of 25,000, started in 2012.

Non-pollock Fishery:

- Council considering hard caps, range 5,000-12,500;
- Scheduled for final action June 2013.

Next Steps

- Central Gulf of Alaska trawl catch share program.

Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Recommendations

Pollock Fishery:

- Reduce hard cap of 25,000 by at least half;
- Current cap exceeds 10 year average bycatch of 18,400.

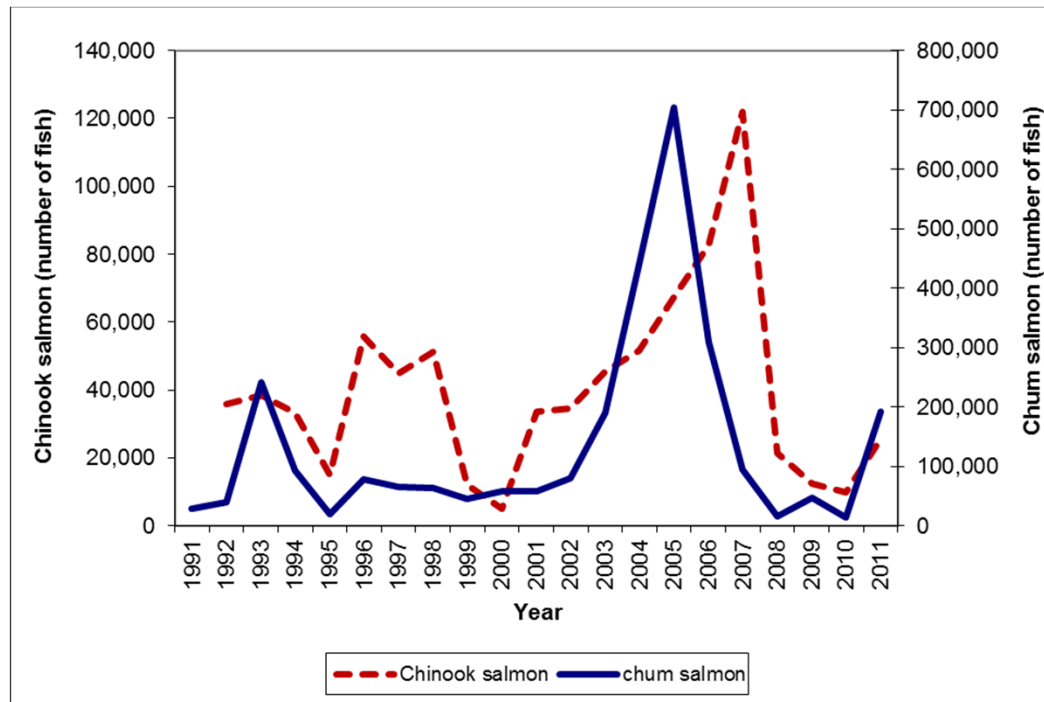
Non-pollock Fishery:

- Adopt hard cap of 5,000;
- Reduce bycatch from 10 year average of 5,800.

Trawl Catch Share Program

- Additional and **significant** reductions in salmon bycatch.

Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Trends



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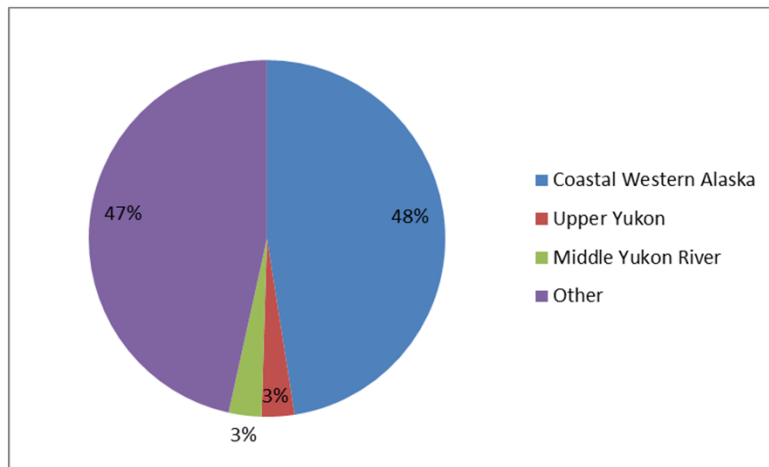
Promoting healthy, wild salmon fisheries on the Yukon River

* Chum salmon bycatch occurs in B season only

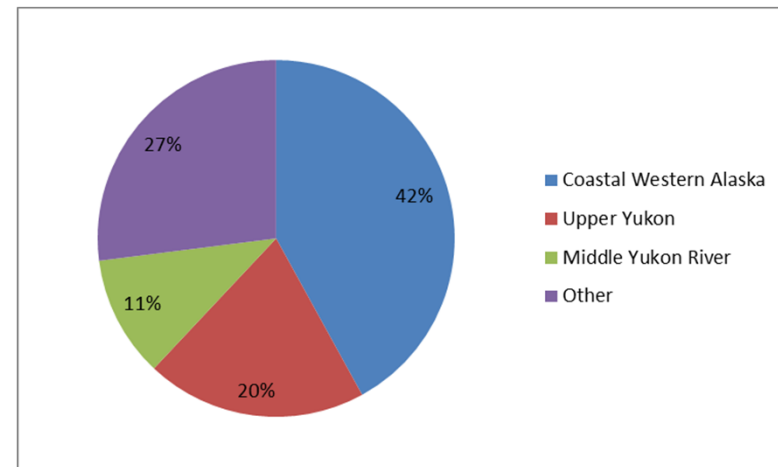
Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Stock of Origin

Genetic Stock Composition

2005-2007



2010



Coastal Western Alaska includes Kuskokwim, Lower Yukon, Norton Sound and Bristol Bay

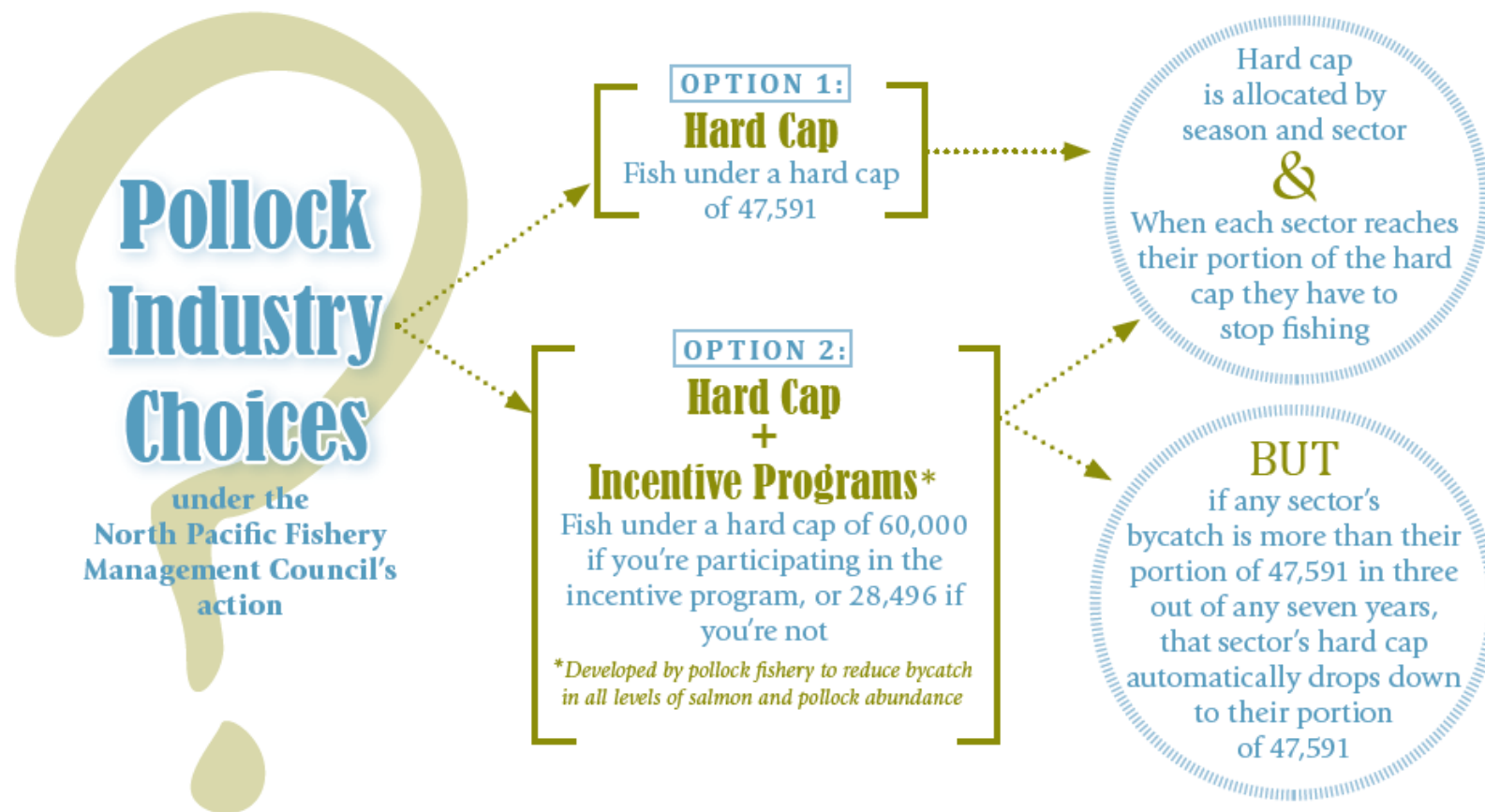
Other includes N. Alaska Peninsula, **Cook Inlet**, the Pacific Northwest, Southeast Alaska, the Pacific Northwest (lower 48) and Russia

Bering Sea: Chinook Salmon Stock Status

- 2 Stocks of Concern: Yukon River Chinook and Norton Sound;
- Disaster declarations for 2008-2012 for the Yukon River and 2011-2012 for the Kuskokwim River;
- Yukon River:
 - * Subsistence severely restricted: 2011 and 2012 harvest well below amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS);
 - * No directed commercial harvests of Chinook salmon;
 - * Canadian escapement goal only been met in 2 out of the last 5 years;
 - * Mean run size of Canadian-origin Chinook salmon) declined 45% for the period 1998-2010 compared to 1982-1997;
- 2012: severe subsistence restrictions due to low returns on the Kuskokwim as well.

Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch:

Current Management



Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

Promoting healthy, wild salmon fisheries on the Yukon River

Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch: Recommendations

Reduce overall cap by at least half

- Western Alaska groups, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, Federal Subsistence Board and many others requested a cap of 30,000 initially;
- 60,000 hard cap could result in catch of over 40,000 Western Alaska fish according to 2010 genetic data (without adjusting for marine mortality).



Pollock spills from a trawl net onto the deck of the Saga Sea, a factory trawler fishing in the Bering Sea, Alaska.
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Questions?

