

Alaska State Legislature

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House Fisheries Committee

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair

Timeline:

Salmon Bycatch Management Measures in Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fisheries

- 1982: “foreign fishing days,” when the groundfish harvest was primarily taken by foreign boats: catch limit of 55,250 Chinook salmon. This limit was allocated among the nations participating in the fishery, and any nation which exceeded their limit was not allowed to fish in much of the Bering Sea for the rest of the season
- 1990: “penalty box” system put in place. Individual vessels with high bycatch rates were to be prohibited from fishing for a set period of time. This program was never put into place because of due process issues and observer data concerns.
- 1994: Bering Sea Chum salmon savings area adopted: fixed area closure which is closed to all trawling Aug. 1-31 and remains closed if 42,000 chum salmon are caught in the Catcher Vessel Operating Area (CVOA) between August 15 and October 14. Regulation still in place, but all vessels are currently exempt under the rolling hot spot system (Amendment 84).
- 1995: Bering Sea Chinook salmon savings area adopted: areas closed when 29,000 Chinook salmon are caught. Timing of closures varied based on when the trigger was exceeded. This regulation is not in place since 2011 when Amendment 91 went into effect.
- 2006: Bering Sea Rolling Hot Spot system put in place. Vessels are exempt from salmon savings areas if they are participating in the rolling hot spot program. The rolling hot spot program, administered by the pollock fisheries, is designed to move pollock boats away from the areas of highest salmon bycatch throughout the season. The areas are not fixed in location, but adjust through time to the changing location of high bycatch areas.

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2011: Amendment 91 with hard caps on Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch goes into effect.

Amendment 91 includes an overall cap of 60,000 Chinook salmon if the pollock fishery is participating in approved incentive plans, or an overall hard cap of 47,591 if the industry is not participating in approved incentive plans. If they are participating in approved incentive plans, they may exceed the performance standard of 47,591 in two out of any seven years (but only up to 60,000 Chinook salmon). If they exceed the performance standard in a third year out of any seven the cap drops to 47,591 permanently. Amendment 91 also requires that all participants in the pollock fishery must have at least 100% observer coverage: those vessels which were previously required to have 200% observer coverage are still required to do so.

2012: Cap of 25,000 Chinook salmon goes into effect for the Gulf of Alaska pollock fleet.