

RC40

COOPER LANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ALASKA DEPT. OF FISH & GAME

RESOLUTION 2013-01

A RESOLUTION URGING THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHER MANAGEMENT COUNCIL TO ADOPT MEASURES THAT REDUCE THE CHINOOK SALMON BYCATCH IN THE GULF OF ALASKA AND BERING SEA TRAWL FISHERIES

WHEREAS, Chinook salmon is the official fish of Alaska and a cultural icon for both native and nonnative Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, Chinook salmon is a significant source of food in both the subsistence and recreational fisheries and a key component of the State's commercial and charter fisheries; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2012, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce determined that a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster exists for three regions of the Alaska Chinook salmon fishery, including Cook Inlet; and

WHEREAS, economic losses to the State of Alaska for commercial and recreational fisheries alone was over \$34 million, which does not include the significant impacts to subsistence users; and

WHEREAS, closures in the 2012 Cook Inlet set net fishery caused by low Chinook salmon returns resulted in a sockeye harvest with an ex-vessel value that was about 10 percent of the recent five-year average; and

WHEREAS, the sport fish harvest of late-run Kenai River Chinook was 103 fish, which was 99 percent below the recent five-year average; and

WHEREAS, these same Chinook salmon are caught and discarded in the Pollock fisheries in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska and other trawl fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, by-catch by the trawl fleets can be regulated to protect the mortality of this extremely valuable resource; and

WHEREAS, the Chinook by-catch cap in the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery is set at 25,000 Chinook salmon, which exceeds the ten-year average by-catch in the fishery; and

WHEREAS, the non-pollock Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries currently operate under no by-catch limit; and

WHEREAS, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council is considering a cap on the non-pollock fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and is initiating a catch share program for Central Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries which should reduce by-catch further;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COOPER LANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CLAC):

SECTION 1. That the CLAC urges the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to adopt and implement management measures that reduce the Chinook salmon by-catch in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) trawl fisheries by setting new limits.

SECTION 2. That the CLAC urges NPFMC to lower the existing Chinook by-catch limits in the GOA and Bering Sea pollock fisheries to 5,000 Chinook salmon.

SECTION 3. That the CLAC urges the NPFMC to further reduce Chinook by-catch in any catch share program.

SECTION 4. That the CLAC urges NPFMC to require 100 Percent observer coverage in all trawl fisheries in the GOA to provide accurate estimates of by catch.

SECTION 5. That a copy of this resolution shall be provided to all members of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

SECTION 6. That this resolution takes effect immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE COOPER LANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ADF&G THIS 26TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013.

ATTEST:

George Heim, Chairman, Cooper Landing Advisory Committee