

**Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT)  
Western Alaska Salmon Subcommittee  
May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 9:00 a.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88941664449?pwd=d0thTThtdXVRRVY2TIQ2Z2x3MGM1dz09>

Meeting ID: 889 4166 4449

Passcode: 633916

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**Committee members:** George Guy, Co-Chair, Stephanie Madsen, Co-Chair, Ragnar Alstrom, Representative Bryce Edgmon, Karma Ulvi



1. Call to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. Roll call: introduction of committee and ABRT members: Geroge Guy, Stephanie Madsen, Karma Ulvi, Ragnar Alstrom, Laib Allensworth for Representative Edgmon. ABRT members: Linda Kozak.  
ADF&G: Karla Bush, Rachel Baker and Forrest Bowers.  
  
Public: Laine Welch, Anne Vanderhoeven, Paul Matyas, James Mize, Jon Kurland, Jennifer Williams, John Gruver, Austin Estabrooks, Heidi de Laubenfels, Heather Mann, Ernie Weiss, Brent Paine, Paul Wilkins, Chris Barrows, Cody Larsen, DIA, Eric Osborne.
3. Approve agenda: May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Amended to include items under committee comments. Motion to approve from Ulvi, seconded by Alstrom. Approved without objection
4. Approve minutes: April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Motion to adopt from Madsen, seconded by Alstrom. Approved without objection.
5. Old business: Review workplan for May 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. A presentation on salmon excluders was

requested and will be presented on the 26<sup>th</sup>. No other updates or presentations have been identified.

6. New business: Industry Presentations on Salmon Incentive Plans:

a. Inshore Cooperatives- John Gruver, United Catcher Boats, presented the *Inshore Salmon Savings Incentive Plan (SSIP)* – Salmon are distributed to individual vessels so that each vessel starts with a salmon limit, at the performance standard level, that is proportional to the amount of their pollock allocation. Salmon credits that can be used in future years are earned by good performance below the vessel's salmon allocation. Fleet also participates in a salmon hotspot reporting program (rolling hotspots) which are updated weekly. Few chum salmon are caught during the A season, so avoidance is focused on Chinook salmon. In the B season rolling hotspots apply to both Chinook and chum salmon with a priority to avoid Chinook salmon. Chinook bycatch increases late in the B season (October), so most vessels try to catch all their pollock before the end of September.

b. Mothership Fleet Cooperative – James Mize presented on the *Mothership Salmon Savings Incentive Plan (MSSIP)*. The MSSIP is characterized by catcher vessels organized in fleets that deliver their catch, still in the nets, to mothership processing vessels which have 100% observer coverage and video monitoring of all catch. Real-time salmon bycatch information is shared amongst the fleet and group decisions are made on fishing locations, allowing the entire fleet to be highly responsive to salmon avoidance. In addition to other incentives and penalties, a set of Best Management Practices – including mandatory use of salmon excluders, rapid communication protocols, and adjustment of fishing operations in response to on-the-grounds conditions – comprise the core components of the plan to reduce bycatch in all levels of abundance of both pollock and salmon.

c. Offshore Cooperative- Austin Estabrooks, At-sea Processors Association, presented the *Catcher Processor Chinook and Chum Salmon Bycatch Reduction Incentive Plan Agreement (CPIPA)* Incentive plan agreements create rewards for avoiding salmon and penalties for failure to avoid salmon at the vessel level under all conditions of pollock and Chinook abundance in all years. The primary mechanism for avoiding bycatch is through a rolling hot spot closure of areas with known high bycatch. Catcher Processor vessels have strong incentives to avoid being closed out of areas because factories require a constant flow of fish and moving fishing grounds is costly. IPAs must be approved by NMFS and must include incentives that cause operators to change the behavior of fishing vessels to prioritize Chinook avoidance. Information on an Active Selection salmon excluder was provided; the CP fleet is working towards mechanisms to actively exclude salmon. A preview of the most recent 2021 chum salmon genetics was provided. It was noted that lower proportions of WAK chum salmon than the long term average were present in the bycatch from 2019-2021. Efforts towards real-time genetic sampling – shipside salmon stock identification using mitochondrial DNA sequencing are underway through PCCRC funded research. Species distribution modeling for Chinook is also underway through another Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center project. Similar species distribution modeling efforts are underway for chum salmon through an AYK-SSI grant proposal. The CP sector has been developing three proposed amendments to the CP IPA for this coming B season: More frequent updates to chum salmon hotspots (bi-weekly instead

of weekly), outlier provision for chum IPA (in addition to Chinook IPA), and application of some high bycatch closures to all vessels, even those with good performance.

7. Public comment: three-minute (3) limit to individual comments: none
  
8. Committee comments:
  - a. Updates on Federal management inriver: Federal subsistence regional advisory committee for Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Copper Rivers received a special action request from villages requesting to restrict fishing on the Kuskokwim.
  - b. Fishery Disasters: NOAA Fisheries announced allocations for fishery disasters last week. ADFG is working on behalf of the State to develop spend plans for the funds. Listening sessions were held yesterday on categories and eligibility criteria. An email address has been sent up to receive comments.
  - c. Request presentation on effects of Fukushima radiation on the Bering Sea ecosystem.
  - d. Request information on changes to management of Area M/False Pass salmon fisheries.
  - e. Member Ulvi requested more specific information on bycatch amounts.
  - f. Links provided for NFPMC agenda in June.
  
9. Next Meeting Date: May 26<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am. (Salmon Excluder presentations)  
July 8<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m.
  
10. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn meeting at 11:12 a.m. made by Karma, seconded by Ragnar and approved without objection.