



Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) GOA Salmon and Halibut Subcommittee August 23 9:00 a.m. (AST) Meeting Minutes

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Committee members: Brian Gabriel, Kevin Delaney, Mike Flores, Raymond May, Duncan Fields, Linda Kozak

1. Call to order at 9:00 a.m Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Gulf of Alaska halibut and salmon committee meeting called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Brian Gabriel
2. Roll call of committee and ABRT members
 - Committee members present: Brian Gabriel (Chair), Kevin Delaney, Duncan Fields, Raymond May, Linda Kozak
 - ABRT Members present: John Jensen, Erik Velsko, Stephanie Madsen
3. Approve agenda: August 23, 2022, Approved
4. Approve minutes: May 24, 2022, moved to next meeting and August 10, 2022, Approved
5. Old business: Research Recommendations
 - *These general 3 bullets were adopted by the subcommittee.*
 - Develop state bycatch research priorities to share with funding entities that would help identify and acquire research funds.
 - Implement strategies to encourage and facilitate industry/agency cooperative research to reduce bycatch and associated mortality; *as well as better bycatch utilization.*** There was a motion to add this language which was withdrawn.*
 - Create methods for collaboration with other research entities to better track proposed or funded bycatch research, along with developing opportunities for cooperative projects and combined reporting of findings.
 - *A further 3 specific recommendations*
 - A better way to estimate total removals to include discard mortality
 - Fund and support Gear modification research relative to gear types used to catch Halibut and Salmon in GOA

- Annual genetic and spatial assessment of GOA Chinook bycatch
 - Member Delaney laid out a tiered system to prioritize and focus on criteria to help judge the individual research projects. Projects should be screened through certain criteria, such as projects designed to develop avoidance strategies, mainly to reduce dead loss. Mortality reduction such as handling, and encounter mortality should also be one of the criteria. Reiterated in response to Member Fields that this is a general criterion to help focus and judge potential research projects in regard to bycatch. Criteria should also include a score keeping aspect that focuses research on industry groups with more bycatch rather than focusing on less bycatch heavy fisheries. Communication between managers, researchers and fleet on a real time basis would be very helpful and this could be something researched into how this could be implemented. Responded to Chair Gabriel that yes these criteria could be used as a way to weed out research suggestions that don't meet something having to do enough with bycatch to be considered as a final recommendation by the Task Force.
 - Member Fields asked if mortality recommendation by Member Delaney can be more surgical and less general. Likes the general statements that have been made but does want some more specific things to be defined. Feels the committee should review the suggestions and bring forth prioritized recommendations from the committee. Recommended that there be a phrase added to the end of one of the general to address the overabundance of waste of Halibut specifically.
 - Member Kozak has modified the three general bycatch research recommendations based on discussion at recent ABRT meeting. Notes that these general recommendations should be used as a framework moving forward to change the way the State and other agencies address bycatch overall and research on the topic. Member Kozak also notes that many research recommendations are already on going and that should be noted in the recommendations, that these recommendations should be more process driven to provide an avenue and process in which this research can be done currently and moving forward. Specifically points out that handling during a catch and release in the Sport Fish industry should be considered as a bycatch issue since it includes handling mortality. Promotes a looser organization of the list to not discern categories or highest vs. lowest priority but just to make very general recommendations in no particular grouping or order of importance. Defended the general statements and suggested that the phrase to be added by Member Fields might better be something that would be a sub point under the main general phrase.
 - Chair Gabriel asks if Member Delaney thinks these criteria should be used to help determine if the current suggestions would meet the level of a bycatch issue. Agrees that while the general recommendations are a place to start it is very difficult to separate bycatch out as the only limiting factor to the decline in the species of subject. Supports the group including any additional research recommendations that they can send on in no specific order or prioritization.
 - ABRT Member Madsen commented that other committees have not laid out research and management priorities in the way that is being suggested here and wants the committees work to be similar so that it can be compared and combined.
 - Member May requested data on accountability for Sport Fish handling data in the open ocean that is open all year.
6. New business: Management and State engagement recommendations
- *Management Suggestions*
 - Bycatch Utilization

- Rationalization of the fleet in some manner tailored to reducing bycatch and dead loss
 - Examination of utility of hard caps vs. other methods of limiting bycatch
 - Sharing of allocation within the cap and if that works or why it does or does not work.
 - Abundance based management
 - Observer coverage in the Gulf of Alaska
 - Gear conversion to less bycatch heavy gear types
 - Trawl speeds
 - Essential fish habitat areas and avoidance of those areas
 - Assess near shore spatial depletion of species in smaller areas more inline with how and where the fish are being caught
- *State Engagement Suggestions*
 - Making the bycatch task force in a reduced form a more permanent body
 - Bycatch policy advisor to the Governor
 - State to develop a bycatch policy over and beyond the Magnussen Stephens act
 - Better communicate information regarding bycatch to the public at large in a way that it can be understood
 - Member Kozak Suggests 2 meetings to discuss recommendations on management and state engagement of each species Halibut and Salmon laid out points to state engagement regarding addressing bycatch. Surprised that the public engagement with this committee and lack of interest of effected fleets is interesting.
 - Member Madsen remembers the State used to have a meeting with the public before the Council meetings and ask for input from the public on what the State would be focusing on during the Council process.
 - Chair Gabriel suggests the state could put out more easily understood information regarding bycatch and wastage. Suggests publishing the agenda along with discussion topics to provide the public notice of the topics so as to better engagement in the discussion.
 - Member Fields suggests a clear list of what might be the points of discussion for the next meeting. Chair Gabriel responded with how he thinks the process will move forward.
 - Member Delaney supports a more narrowed view of management and engagement suggestions to avoid allocative implications and try to mostly focus on bycatch.
7. Public comment: three-minute (3) limit to individual comments
- No Public comment
8. Committee comments discussion on future meeting information requests
- Member Fields noted he left out a topic raised by Member Delany as it was more suppositive of a future occurrence that might not come to pass. Member Delaney is fine to leave that suggestion out due to the fact that it has no bearing on the current situation.
9. Next Meeting Dates: August 31 and September 7, 2022, at 9:00 am
10. Adjournment by 11:01 am