



Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Western Alaska Salmon Subcommittee Friday, July 8th 9:00 a.m (AST)

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

1. Call to order at 9:03 a.m. Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Western Alaska salmon committee meeting called to order at 9:03 AM by Co- Chair George Guy
2. Roll call of committee and ABRT members
 - o Committee members present: George Guy-Co chair, Stephanie Madsen Co-chair, Ragnar Alstrom, Karma Ulvi, Representative Edgemon
 - o ABRT Members present: Tommy Sheridan, and Linda Kozak
 - o ADF&G Staff: Kari Winkel, Deputy Commissioner Rachel Baker, David Loomis

Public: Cody Larson, Jennifer Williams, Nissa Pilcher, Laine Welch, Jennifer Hooper, Amory LeLake, Chris Barrows, Patty Kaercher, Rebecca Skinner, Rep. Mike Cronk, Rep. McCabe, Tiffany Andrew, Brooke McDavid, Paul Matyas, Steve Marx, MK, Diane Fitka, Tiffany, John Aqwlick, James Johnson, Al Fournier, Rep. Sara Vance, Rich Slat, George Rauscher, Martin Nicolai, Natasha Hayden, Ben G. and several telephone numbers without names.
3. Approve agenda: Alstrom moved to approve the July 8, 2022 agenda. Madsen seconded and motion was approved without objection.
4. Approve minutes: Madsen moved to approve the minutes of May 26, 2022. Ulvi seconded and motion was approved without objection.
5. Old business: Review workplan for July/August
 - Co-Chair Madsen noted- After today's overview presentation, members will identify additional detailed reports they wish to receive to further inform their work. Specifically for the next meeting on July 29.

6. New business:

- Overview Presentation-NPFMC Salmon reports-June 2022 meeting NPFMC Staff- Dr. Diana Stram.
- Link to NPFMC site for additional materials
<https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/2934> Power point will be posted on the ABRT site for this committee.

i. Dr. Stram provided an overview of the salmon reports received by the NPFMC at the June meeting. Presentations given to the council were listed, and the topics briefly discussed. Abundance of juvenile chinook salmon has been below average since 2017. NOAA and ADF&G are studying this by looking at diet, as well as other factors. Provided a quick recap of genetic trends in bycatch and how the industry and council use that to determine rolling hot spot closures to try to specifically avoid Western Alaska salmon. Trends in both time and space have been indeterminate and difficult to use to make management decisions. Dr. Stram indicated that terminology for warm and cold years are not specific to “numbers” but it is consecutive years called regimes that they use to compile data as one year is not indicative of a trend. Discussion occurred on potential reasons for changes in levels of bycatch and in river return levels. It was noted since Amendment 91 was put in place in 2011, bycatch limits have never been close to being reached. An overview was given of the impact on Chinook bycatch to the salmon population by stock. Genetic data cannot be untangled from the lower Yukon/Kuskokwim area. This is since those fish are all so genetically close, they cannot be separated. A historical review of regulatory actions regarding bycatch was provided. The action/motion the NPFMC took in June was discussed.

ii. Council Motion Overview:

*The Council requests the pollock industry implement additional chum salmon bycatch avoidance measures beginning immediately.

*The Council requests a discussion paper updating the 2012 analysis of chum salmon bycatch.

*The Council intends to consider the findings and recommendations of the State of Alaska’s Bycatch Task Force as it considers how to improve salmon bycatch Management.

*The Council intends to collaborate with western Alaska salmon users by forming a working group of Tribal members, scientists, industry representatives, and other experts.

*The Council prioritizes research on Bering Sea salmon

Co-Chair Madsen will work with the ABRT to insure the public is aware of the call for nominations by the Council for their working group. Madsen noted Kate.haapala@noaa.gov is the tribal liaison for the NPFMC and could assist the public with any information needs..

Committee Member Comments on Presentation:

Karma Ulvi: There are many things affecting the chum/Chinook declining numbers like warming oceans, hatchery fish, bycatch, and disease but many of the others

will take years to fix. Bycatch is one that we can manage right now. Wanting to point out that the bycatch being discarded, when Villages along the Yukon can't even fish and get one Chinook to feed our families, is hard to comprehend.

Co-Chair Guy: Noted that genetics and research have been done before but that not being able to feed their families is a hard thing to deal with. Wants the people on the Yukon and Kuskokwim to get a fair chance to harvest food for their families.

Ragnar Alstrom: Noted that industrial fishing is causing issues over bycatch and wants to know if there is a study on predation on salmon that are left after fishing has completed. Dr. Stram responded that there is not a study regarding this particularly but over all oceanic mortality rates are looked at for bycatch not retained.

Tommy Sheridan: Asked if carrying capacity paper will also look at space used by other salmon species taking up space in the ocean and food resources. Dr. Stram noted that the report to the council will include information regarding carrying capacity and how that may be affecting runs in Alaska.

Rep Edgemon: Requested information on Governor Duneavy's vetoes of several salmon research projects.

7. Public comment: three-minute (3) limit to individual comments

- MK: ADF&G has been studying and noting returns of salmon for several years now. sustainable. Does not believe NPFMC or ADF&G is managing this resource correctly.
- Martin Nicolai: Fact that this is the second year in a row that Yukon river users have not been allowed to fish. Fact the fishing industry is ruining the runs. Opinion this is not fair. Fact current policy makers are not managing correctly. Opinion has council members replaced with people that listen to Alaskan's so as to make better decisions.
- Rep McCabe: Wants to focus on what we can control to make sure fish can get in the river no matter what.
- Laine Welch: I realize the importance of genetics and determining where salmon originate. Likewise understanding the impacts of international salmon hatchery releases and ocean carrying capacity. But if I was a villager upstream, I couldn't care less about where the salmon come from all long as I could catch some. It seems like discussions of genetics and hatchery fish are a deflection from discussions on actions that could be taken now.
- Cody Larson: On the presentation which specific fisheries do the salmon bycatch numbers represent, which fisheries do they not represent. (Bering Sea Pollock Fishery)
- Rep. Vance: Requests an analysis of the economic and socioeconomic impact if salmon bycatch were reduced. (Amendment 91 had some analysis about social economic impacts of the limit levels as required by MSA.
- Stanis Law Shepard: There is no aid for subsistence even though the federal government is supposed to be on the side of subsistence, and this is causing issues for the people on the river. The last historical subsistence harvest for Chinook was 12,000. No one took any action when these catches occurred and now the salmon runs are very poor. Co- Chair Guy asked about the Area M fleet make up --if they are mostly Alaska residents or from outside

of the state. Also noted that some western AK communities have ownership of these catcher vessel fleets.

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8. Committee comments:
 - Member Ulvi: Requested contact information for Task Force members and information on research funding needs.
 - Chair Guy: Noted do not forget about Katie John case.
 - Several members requested updated presentations on the salmon research being conducted by ADF&G and AFSC.
9. Next Meeting Date: July 29, 2022, at 9:00 am
August 12th (To be confirmed at next meeting....possibly two meetings in August.)
10. Adjournment by 10:58 am

DRAFT