



Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council (ABAC)

September 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

1. Call to order

The Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council meeting was called to order by Chair Megan O'Neil at 9:04 am

Roll call: acknowledge Advisory Council participants

Members present: Megan O'Neil (Chair), Kevin Delaney (Vice-Chair), Chelsae Radell, Karma Ulvi, Erik Velsko, Brian Gabriel, Eva Dawn Burk

Other attendees: ADF&G staff: Art Nelson, Deputy Commissioner Rachel Baker, Kari Winkel

2. Approve Agenda: September 23, 2025, Approved

3. Approve Minutes: April 24, 2025, Approved

4. Progress Report

- **Chair O'Neil:** Provided comments on the Progress report (also posted on the Bycatch Advisory Council site in the references section)
- **DC Baker:** Provided an update on providing resources to the public about bycatch in an easily consumable format to the public.

5. Presentation on the effects of crab injury on the survival rate for BBKC

- Dr. Ben Daly ADF&G provided a brief introduction and then presented a power point presentation to the group which is available on the BAC website.
- Advisory Council members asked questions about the presentation and made comments.

6. Presentation on Innovation for Bycatch Mitigation

- Dr. Noelle Yochum Trident Seafoods provided a brief introduction and then presented a power point presentation to the group which is available on the BAC website.
- Advisory Council members asked questions about the presentation and made comments.

7. Update on Bering Sea chum salmon distribution and survival

- Dr. Curry Cunningham UAF provided a brief introduction and then presented a power point presentation to the group which is available on the BAC website.
- Advisory Council members asked questions about the presentation and made comments.

8. Public Comment

- **Chris Woodley, Executive Director of Groundfish forum:** Good idea to review previous 101 presentations about the fisheries. Provided comments on questions about presentations. It would be useful to go back and cover the introductory aspects of Bycatch Management. Agreed to present some information following a BAC request.

- **Tillila Beetus Healy lake Village Council:** Are members the still same? Response yes they are correct
- **Martin Parent, Marshall Alaska:** Will the presentations be available? Yes will be posted to the BAC website.

9. BAC discussion and motions

- **Chair O'Neil:** Called for topics still left to be addressed by BAC at next meeting. Outstanding recommendations with most votes. Determine relative fecundity of Halibut and estimate halibut stock, study diet, health and disease on western AK spawning chum, investigate better ways to better to estimate total removals and discards mortality, and increase tagging studies to better understand movement between areas. Reached out to IPHC regarding tagging. Rationalization of GOA. Recommend for Bering sea trawl area prohibited species caps in relation to crab to be supported by AK and examine research to how this would look applied to whole Bering sea. Offered to help member Ulvi find bycatch numbers. Called for input on Member Ridell's rationalization ask. Concur rationalization of GOA is a good topic to move forward. Reminded Member Ulvi the Bac can only consider recommendations made by the ABRT. Mentioned new IPHC research that could be available next year.
- **Member Ulvi:** Overall bycatch amount for each species (chum, chinook) to date. Wants to start meetings with a review of overall bycatch numbers by species for the year so far. Brought up previous meeting and wants to bring forward new recommendations that are more current to the fisheries.
- **Member Radell:** Request to focus on GOA trawl rationalization, to include a presentation from NPFMC or AK staff to summarize the history of existing rationalization and how they would benefit and be implemented. Provided input and reasoning for this request. Second motion BAC receive presentation from Amendment 80 sector at an upcoming 2026 meeting.
- **Vice Chair Delaney:** Seconds Member Radell's motion to use next meeting to review and discuss GOA rationalization. Supports discussion of rationalization with no opposition. BAC has t be careful about what presentations we are showcasing and what recommendations are brought to the forefront.
- **Member Velsko:** Wants the State to explain the pitfalls related to rationalization in the GOA as it was tried before.
- **Member Gabrial:** Seconds this recommendation for rationalization.
- **Member Burk:** Requested that information regarding bycatch numbers be presented in a map so that it can be more easily viewed. Puts presentations together for tribal fisheries managers and requests this be done for the BAC.

10. Final BAC member comments

- **Member Gabriel:** Reminded regarding annual report.
- **Chair O'Neil:** Mentioned that a final report was done this spring for 2025.

11. Set next meeting date and agenda topics

- **Chair O'Neil:** Called to discuss upcoming number of meetings either another this winter or in the fall and asked for members thoughts on that.
- **Member Radell:** Spoke to not meeting in the winter and focusing on another meeting in Spring 2026
- **Vice Chair Delaney:** Indicates agreement to an April meeting date.

12. Adjournment by 11:45 am Next meeting April 29, 2026, at 9am