

# **Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force**

## *State Engagement and Management Recommendations*

From

Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee

Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee

Western Alaska Salmon Committee

## STATE ENGAGEMENT

***One recommendation with differing language came from all three committees***

*Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee*

Establish a way to better communicate bycatch information to the public, including website development, outreach and possible forums

*Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee*

Recommend the State of Alaska create a process for providing bycatch-related information and resources for Alaskans in a way (or format) that is understandable and easily accessible

*Western Alaska Salmon Committee*

State of Alaska should establish a method to communicate bycatch information (numbers and fisheries) in both State and Federal fisheries for easy access to the public. This could be a page on the ADF&G website with links to NMFS Alaska Region and NPFMC or other communication tools.

***One recommendation with differing language came from two committees***

*Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee*

Request the State of Alaska establish a permanent advisory committee

*Western Alaska Salmon Committee*

State should establish a permanent bycatch advisory body using the ABRTF as a template.

*NOTE: The Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee sent the following statement to the Task Force without a recommendation from the committee:*

Use the Task Force as a template to create a permanent bycatch advisory body

## State Engagement Continued...

### Western Alaska Salmon Committee Unique Recommendations

- State should provide the public assistance in understanding the BOF and NPFMC process with flyers or training so public can effectively participate. It was noted that the NPFMC has held training and has materials that could be modeled.
- State of Alaska Federal Fisheries staff should continue to offer the public an opportunity to provide input on NPFMC issues before each NPFMC meeting. Consideration should be given to additional methods to seek input from stakeholders, tribal entities and communities on bycatch issues. Suggestions from committee include: Advisory Councils or Federal Regional Advisory Councils.
- State should support legislative action to remove sunset of the Education Tax Credit Program and consider expanding program to specifically allow gear modification or technology improvements that would help reduce bycatch.
- State should work with other entities, including the State Department, to request that the State Department, through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic channels with Russia, request information on the bycatch of Chinook salmon and chum salmon taken in Russian domestic fisheries (specifically, the number of salmon caught in their groundfish and salmon fisheries, and the genetic origin of these salmon).

### Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee - Forwarded to the Task Force without recommendation

- Create a bycatch policy advisor position in the governor's office or as a part of ADF&G
- Develop a State of Alaska bycatch policy

### Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee - Failed Motion

- Appoint a bycatch policy advisor to the governor

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Western Alaska Salmon Committee

- The State should work to achieve real time genetic reporting that provides the composition of Western Alaska salmon in the bycatch. This can then be used in management of the pollock fishery to avoid areas and times when Western Alaska salmon are on the grounds in the Bering Sea.
- The State should work to establish a scientific-based chum salmon cap to reduce bycatch of Western Alaska salmon in the pollock fishery in the Bering Sea.

### Western Alaska Salmon Committee Management Statement

The committee received a thorough report on the presentations and action the North Pacific Fishery Management Council took in June. The NPFMC is the regulatory body responsible for managing the groundfish fisheries. It is our understanding that the Council has requested and will be reviewing the chum data to determine if a chum cap could be a tool that would provide incentives to reduce chum bycatch. Additionally, they continue to monitor the genetics of the Western Alaska salmon composition in the bycatch that would indicate the need for further requirements in the Incentive Plan Agreements required by the pollock fishery.

The Council's call for the formation of a Salmon Bycatch Committee will provide the public additional opportunities to directly address their work. The committee did not develop additional management measures since work is underway that includes most of the comments received from the public comment.

It is important to note that Western Alaska and communities along the Yukon River believe that if there is no fishing on the Yukon or Kuskokwim Rivers there should be no pollock fishing in the Bering Sea...one public member called for a moratorium on trawling for an unspecified time. The committee did not forward these recommendations due to the lack of analysis identifying impacts of the suggested measures but **encourage the State to retain focus on salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery and make it the number one priority to monitor to determine when action is necessary.**

## **MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED...**

*Recommendations with differing language came from two committees*

### **Rationalization – Gulf of Alaska trawl catcher vessels**

#### *Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee*

Consider Gulf of Alaska trawl rationalization as a tool to manage bycatch.

#### *Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee*

Recommendation of consideration of rationalization-type management tools as a means of possibly reducing and managing salmon and halibut bycatch.

### **Observer program - Gulf of Alaska trawl catcher vessels**

#### *Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee*

Require 100% observer coverage on all Gulf of Alaska non-pelagic trawl catch vessels.

#### *Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee*

For a period of three years, the committee recommends 100% observer coverage be required on non-pelagic trawl vessels in the Gulf of Alaska.

## **MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED...**

### **Gulf of Alaska Halibut and Salmon Committee – Unique Recommendations**

- Committee recommends a regulatory requirement that the Gulf of Alaska pelagic trawl fleet, including any tenders of pelagic trawl caught fish, have 100% electronic monitoring. The committee further recommends that the State of Alaska work with National Marine Fisheries Service, our federal delegation and others to work to acquire funding to install electronic monitoring equipment on all GOA catchers and tenders.
- Recommend the State of Alaska consider support of the development of an abundance-based management program for halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska.

Tabled/Failed Motion: Committee recommends that the state review spatial trawl patterns and halibut bycatch intensity as a basis to consider areas that should be considered to spatially reduce halibut bycatch.

### **Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee – Unique Recommendations**

#### ***Gulf of Alaska***

- Following gear modification research, consider regulations for the directed crab fishery and pot cod fishery to reduce incidental take and discard mortality.
- Address lack of monitoring in the directed Tanner crab and state waters pot cod fisheries.
- Review and consider revising open and closed areas for bottom trawl in the Gulf of Alaska.

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED...

### *Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Crab Committee – Unique Recommendations*

#### *Bering Sea – Fixed Gear*

- Recommend a rationalization program for the >60' pot cod vessels as a way to manage bycatch and examine prohibited species caps as part of a rationalization program.
- Evaluate observer coverage and monitoring for the directed crab and pot cod fisheries.
- Evaluate possible seasonal closures in hot spot areas to pot gear both inside and outside of state managed waters.

#### *Recommendation without consensus:*

Examine the impact of retaining all legal crab and counting toward IFQ.

#### *Bering Sea – Trawl Gear*

- Review effectiveness of fixed open and closed areas for trawling and continue to examine methods to develop flexible spatial management.
- Examine impacts of counting prohibited species caps for the entire Bering Sea area.

#### *Recommendation without consensus:*

Consider revising the pelagic gear definition to limit bottom contact.