

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

www.ADFG.Alaska.Gov



Department of
Fish and Game

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Alaska Responds to Endangered Species Act Petition on Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon

January 11, 2024 (Juneau) –

The Wild Fish Conservancy, a Washington state based environmental group, has filed a petition asking NOAA Fisheries to list Alaska Chinook salmon as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The petition identifies Chinook populations that use the Gulf of Alaska which includes fish that spawn in the rivers of Southeast Alaska, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and the Alaska Peninsula.

“This petition is a targeted attack on Alaska by the same organization that sued to shut down the Southeast Alaska troll fishery,” said Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang. “As the resource manager, ADF&G is both constitutionally obligated and committed to sustainable fisheries management. The State has taken aggressive management measures to conserve these stocks which have been proving successful. The ESA is the wrong tool to address a downturn in Chinook productivity, and this group is using it as a weapon to further their own interests.”

Populations of Chinook salmon across their range have been returning in lower numbers in recent years, which in Alaska has been largely attributed to changes in the marine environment. The State of Alaska has invested substantially in marine salmon research to better understand the causes of these declines and identify potential solutions, while continuing to limit fishery impacts on these stocks.

The State of Alaska is currently reviewing the petition and will work with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to the extent allowable to ensure they have the best available information to inform their decision. NMFS has up to 90 days to either accept or reject the petition. If its accepted, within a year, the agency will begin a review of Alaska’s king salmon using available scientific and commercial data and decide if that information supports listing the salmon as threatened or endangered and if so, publish a proposed rule to put out for public comment before making a final decision.

###

Media Contact: Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, 907-465-4719