

## **AK Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Pollock Trawl Fishery**

**Fishing gear type:** Trawl

**Current category:** Category II\*

**Basis for current classification on the LOF:** The total annual mortality and serious injury of humpback whales (Central North Pacific and Western North Pacific stocks), killer whales (Eastern North Pacific, GOA, Aleutian Islands, and Bering Sea transient stock), and Steller sea lions (Western U.S. stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of each of the stocks' Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

**Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a<sup>(1)</sup> indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification):** Dall's porpoise, AK; Harbor seal, Bering Sea; Humpback whale, Central North Pacific; Humpback whale, Western North Pacific; Killer whale, Eastern North Pacific, GOA, Aleutian Islands, and Bering Sea transient<sup>(1)</sup>; Minke whale, AK; Ribbon seal, AK; Spotted seal, AK; Steller sea lion, Western U.S.<sup>(1)</sup>

**Estimated number of current participants:** 95

**Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery:** None.

**Year added to the LOF:** 1996

**Category when originally listed:** Category III

**Basis for original classification on the LOF:** This fishery was proposed for Category II listing because incidental take of killer whales (transient and resident stocks unknown) was 8% of the stock's PBR. However, population estimates of both stocks were known to be biased low (because estimates were based on direct counts) and NMFS had good estimates of incidental take in this fishery as a result of 60% observer coverage. Therefore, the levels of take were not thought to have a significant effect on the population and the fishery was listed as Category III.

**Estimated number of participants when originally listed:** 490

**Past names, if any:** AK BSAI groundfish trawl (until 2004).

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**Gear description/method for fishing:** This fishery uses trawl gear. The use of non-pelagic trawl gear in the directed fishery for pollock is prohibited.

**Target species:** Pollock.

**Spatial/temporal distribution of effort:** Fishing effort in this fishery takes place in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone of the Eastern Bering Sea and the portion of the North Pacific Ocean adjacent to the Aleutian Islands, which is west of 170°W. long. up to the U.S.-Russian Convention Line of 1867.

**Levels of observer coverage each year<sup>†</sup>:** Observer coverage is calculated by the percentage of observed biomass (percentage of tons caught which were observed). Observer coverage in groundfish fisheries is assigned according to vessel length: vessels greater than 125 ft (30.5 m) have 10% coverage; vessels 60-125 ft (18.3-30.5 m) have 30% coverage; and vessels less than 60 ft (18.3 m) are not observed. Observer coverage in groundfish fisheries varies by statistical area and the pooled percent coverage for all areas is provided in the SARs and is reported here. Pooled

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\*The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

<sup>†</sup> Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

observer coverage for all areas from 1998-2005 were 66.9%, 75.2%, 76.2%, 79.0%, 80.0%, 82.2%, 92.8%, and 77.3%, respectively.

**Management and regulations:** Management measures for the BSAI groundfish fisheries constrain fishing both temporally and spatially. This fishery is federally managed under the BSAI FMP. The authorized gear, fishing season, criteria for determining fishing seasons, and area restrictions by gear type are defined in the regulations implementing the BSAI FMP (50 CFR 679).

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**History of Changes on the LOF**

2010 LOF: Removed the superscript "1" after humpback whale (Central North Pacific) and humpback whale (Western North Pacific). While there are known historical interactions with these stocks, these interactions are not the basis for classifying the fishery as a Category II fishery (i.e., the level of serious injury and mortality of these stocks in the "BSAI Pollock trawl" fishery is below 1 percent of the stocks' PBR levels). The continued inclusion of the superscript following these stocks in this fishery on Table 1 was a typographical error.

2009 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 120 to 95.

2006 LOF:

- Added the following species/stocks to list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery to update the stocks associated with the fisheries delineated fisheries in 2004: Harbor seal (Bering Sea), Dall's porpoise (AK), Spotted seal (AK), Ribbon seal (AK), and Minke whale (AK)
- Changed the name of the killer whale transient stock from "Eastern North Pacific transient" to "Eastern North Pacific, GOA, Aleutian Islands, and Bering Sea transient" to reflect the stock name in the 2005 SAR.
- Deleted killer whale (Eastern North Pacific resident) from list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery. Since the 2005 LOF, NMFS performed genetic testing on biopsy samples of killer whales incidentally killed/injured in this fishery and determined that the fishery only interacts with the transient stock of killer whales.
- Added a superscript "1" in Table 1 after humpback whale (Central North Pacific), humpback whale (Western North Pacific), killer whale (Eastern North Pacific, GOA, Aleutian Islands, and Bering Sea transient) and Steller sea lion (Western U.S.), indicating that takes of these stocks are driving the classification of the fishery.

2005 LOF: Elevated to Category II based on interactions with Steller sea lions (Western U.S. stock), killer whales (Eastern North Pacific resident and transient stocks), and humpback whales (Central and Western North Pacific stocks). Estimated serious injury and mortality of Steller sea lions (Western U.S. stock) was 2.5 animals/year, or 1.2% of PBR (PBR=209); estimated serious injury and mortality of killer whales (Eastern North Pacific resident stock) was 0.6 animals/year, or 8.33% of PBR (PBR=7.2); estimated serious injury and mortality of killer whales (Eastern North Pacific transient stock) was 0.6 animals/year, or 21.43% of PBR (PBR=2.8); estimated serious injury and mortality of humpback whales (Central North Pacific stock) was 0.3 animals/year, or 4.05% of PBR (PBR=7.4); estimated serious injury and mortality of humpback whales (Western North Pacific stock) was 0.3 animals/year, or 42.86% of PBR (PBR=0.7).

2004 LOF:

- The "AK BSAI Pollock trawl" fishery was split from the Category III "AK Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish trawl" fishery. NMFS recognized that the large fishery groups in AK included in the LOF up through 2004 were not homogenous, instead these represented a diverse group of fisheries with different interactions with marine mammals. The larger fishery was delineated into more discrete fisheries according to area, gear and target species to reflect fisheries as managed under the BSAI Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The newly delineated fishery was listed as a Category III until the completion of analyses of serious injury and mortality in the new fishery, with an estimated 120 participants.
- The list of marine mammal species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in the larger fishery was also delineated to correspond to the more discrete fisheries listed for the first time in 2004. The list of

species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in the “AK BSAI Pollock trawl” fishery included: Steller sea lion (Western U.S.), Killer whale (Eastern North Pacific resident), killer whale (Eastern North Pacific transient), humpback whale (Central North Pacific), and humpback whale (Western North Pacific).

*Changes on the LOF when the “AK BSAI Pollock trawl” fishery was included in the larger “AK BSAI groundfish trawl” fishery*

2003 LOF:

- NMFS proposed to elevate this fishery to Category II, but did not elevate the fishery at that time based on public comments and the fact that this fishery is made up of a diverse group of trawl fisheries targeting different groundfish. NMFS stated its intent to propose fishery delineations within this fishery to accurately reflect the fishing regimes, and evaluate incidental take, in the 2004 LOF.
- Added fin whale (Northeast Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery because this stock is known to interact with the fishery and was inadvertently omitted from lists of species in the past. NMFS proposed to delete harbor seals (Gulf of Alaska) from the list, but decided not to do so after verifying that the species range overlapped with the fishery range.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 166 to 157.

2001 LOF:

- Added humpback whale (Central North Pacific) and humpback whale (Western North Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on the mortality of a single whale in 1998. The stock identification for the whale was uncertain; therefore, the mortality was attributed to both the Central and Western North Pacific stocks.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 193 to 166.

1999 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 186 to 193.

1998 LOF: Estimated number of participants updated from 490 to 186.