

# NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL: UPDATES FROM WESTERN & INTERIOR ALASKA

---

**KUSKOKWIM RIVER**  
INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION



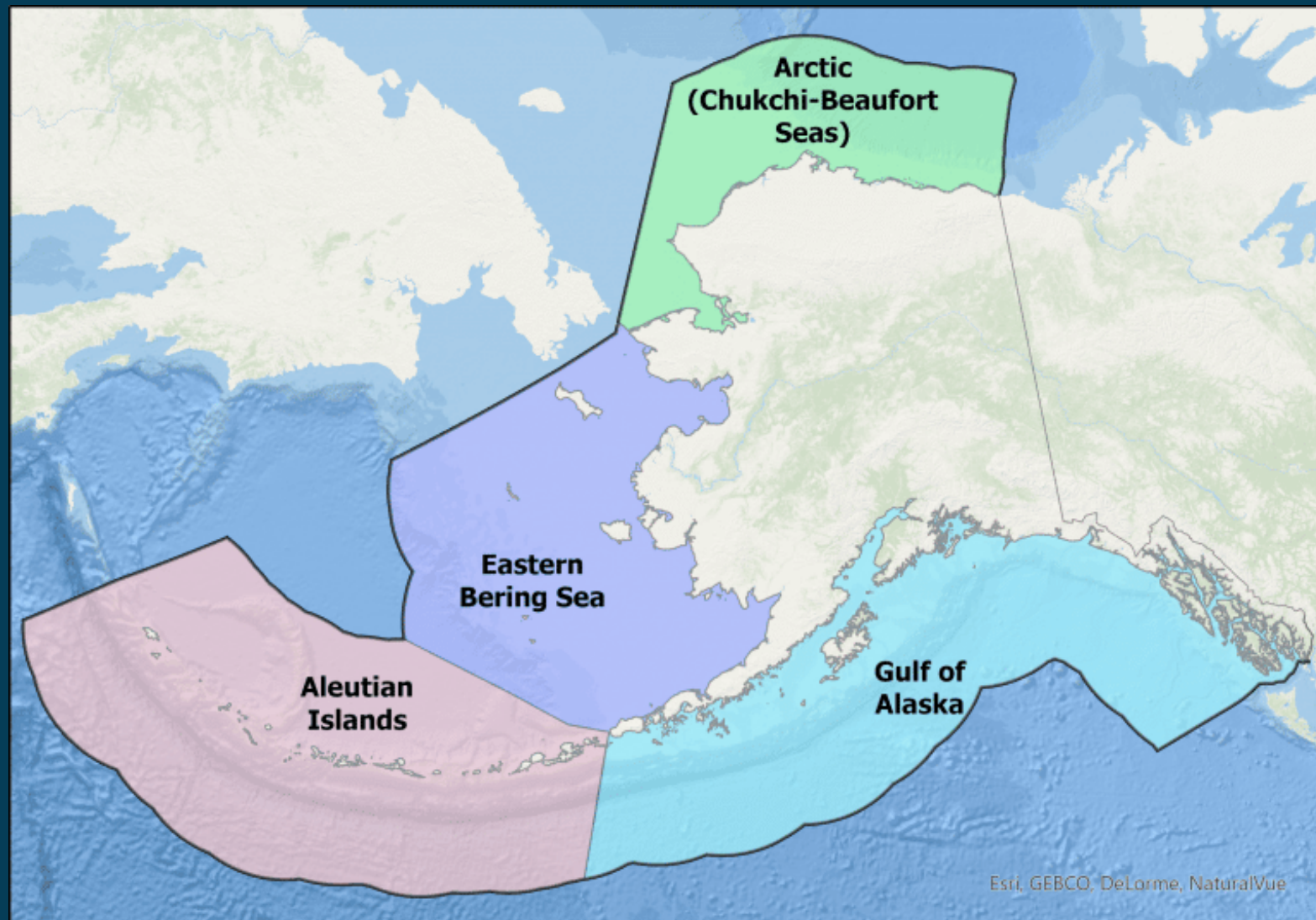
Terese Vicente

Programs Manager, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
terese@kritfc.org | 907-545-7388

May 3, 2024

# What is the North Pacific Fishery Management Council?

---



The NPFMC is an advisory body for NOAA Fisheries' management in the North Pacific.

- Fisheries 3-200 mi off the coast of Alaska
- **Bodies:** Council, Advisory Panel (AP), Scientific & Statistical Committee (SSC), Plan Teams, and other Committees
  - Eva Dawn Burk of Nenana holds the sole designated Tribal seat on the AP.
- **Meetings:** February (as needed), April, June (in a fishing community), October, and December

# Who is on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council?

---



There are 15 people sitting on the NPFMC.

- 11 voting seats
  - 7 fishery reps (5 from AK, 2 from WA)
  - 4 state/fed officials (AK, WA, OR, National Marine Fisheries Service)
- 4 non-voting seats
  - Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Dept. of State, US Coast Guard
- Currently, there are no designated Alaska Native Tribal seat or members.

# Chum Salmon Bycatch

Chum salmon, including from Western/Interior AK (WIAK), are caught and discarded as bycatch in Bering Sea groundfish fisheries, especially the pollock trawl fishery.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT

There are no caps on chum salmon bycatch. Pollock industry's Incentive Plan Agreements (IPAs) have led avoidance management since ~2016.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- ~99% of chum bycatch taken by pollock trawlers
- ~12-20% of all chum bycatch are from WIAK
- Primarily caught June–August
- 2007 = 712,000 chum (1991–present record)
- 2021 = 550,000 chum
- 2022 = 245,000 chum
- 2023 = 116,000 chum
- As of April 25, 2024 = 1,300 chum

(Overall  
bycatch  
levels)

# Recent Chum Bycatch Management Actions

2021-2023

Spike in chum salmon bycatch causes significant increase in testimony & pressure for new management, policies, and analyses.

JULY 2023

Notice of Intent (NOI) published to begin NEPA process for chum salmon bycatch action.  
Start of 2-year timeline to final action.

OCT. 2023

Council sets 4 alternatives for first Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) analyses.  
KRITFC becomes cooperating agency.

APRIL 2024

Council reviews EIS/SIA; hears from over 100 testifiers; and revises alternatives—now 5—for next EIS/SIA analysis.

# CHUM SALMON BYCATCH EIS/SIA: APRIL 2024 ALTERNATIVES

## ALT. 1: NO ACTION/STATUS QUO

ALT 2: OVERALL  
PROHIBITED  
SPECIES CATCH  
(PSC) LIMIT, OR CAP.

Based on historical  
bycatch levels.

Cap range from  
100K – 550K.

ALT 3: OVERALL  
PSC LIMIT BASED  
ON WIAK CHUM  
ABUNDANCE.

Yukon summer/fall +  
Kuskokwim + Norton Sound  
OR

Yukon summer/fall  
to determine low abundance  
threshold

No cap at high abundance.

ALT 4: CHANGES TO  
INDUSTRY'S IPAS

Including using salmon  
excluders, reporting  
bycatch #s more often,  
describing bycatch  
avoidance.

About the same as  
status quo.

ALT 5: INSEASON  
CORRIDOR CAP

Time/area closures in  
areas of high WIAK chum  
migration, regulated  
outside the IPAs.

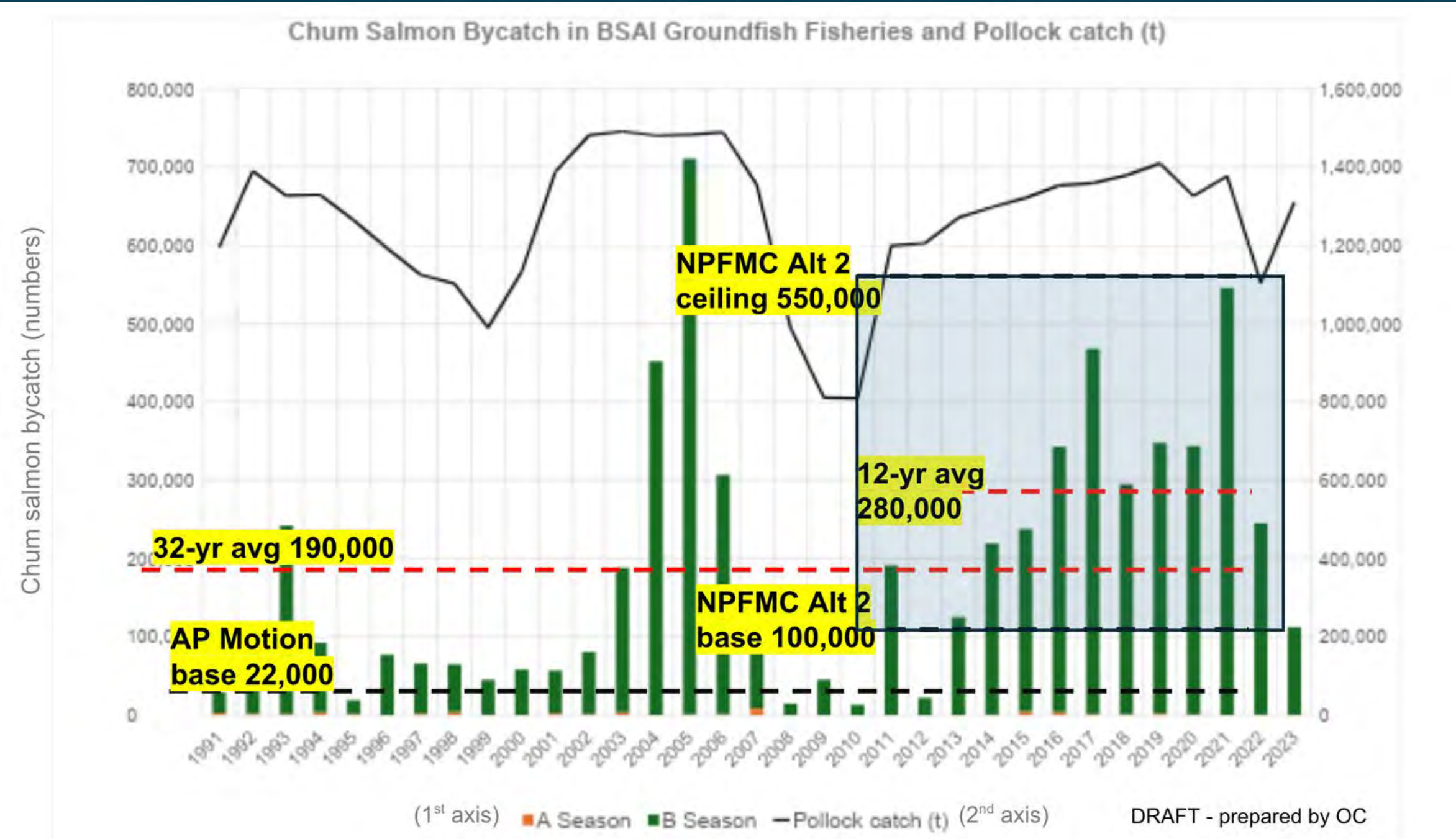
Regional cap range 50K –  
200K.

# CHUM SALMON BYCATCH EIS/SIA: APRIL 2024 ALTERNATIVES

ALT 2: OVERALL PROHIBITED SPECIES CATCH (PSC) LIMIT, OR CAP.

Based on historical bycatch levels.

Cap range from 100K – 550K.

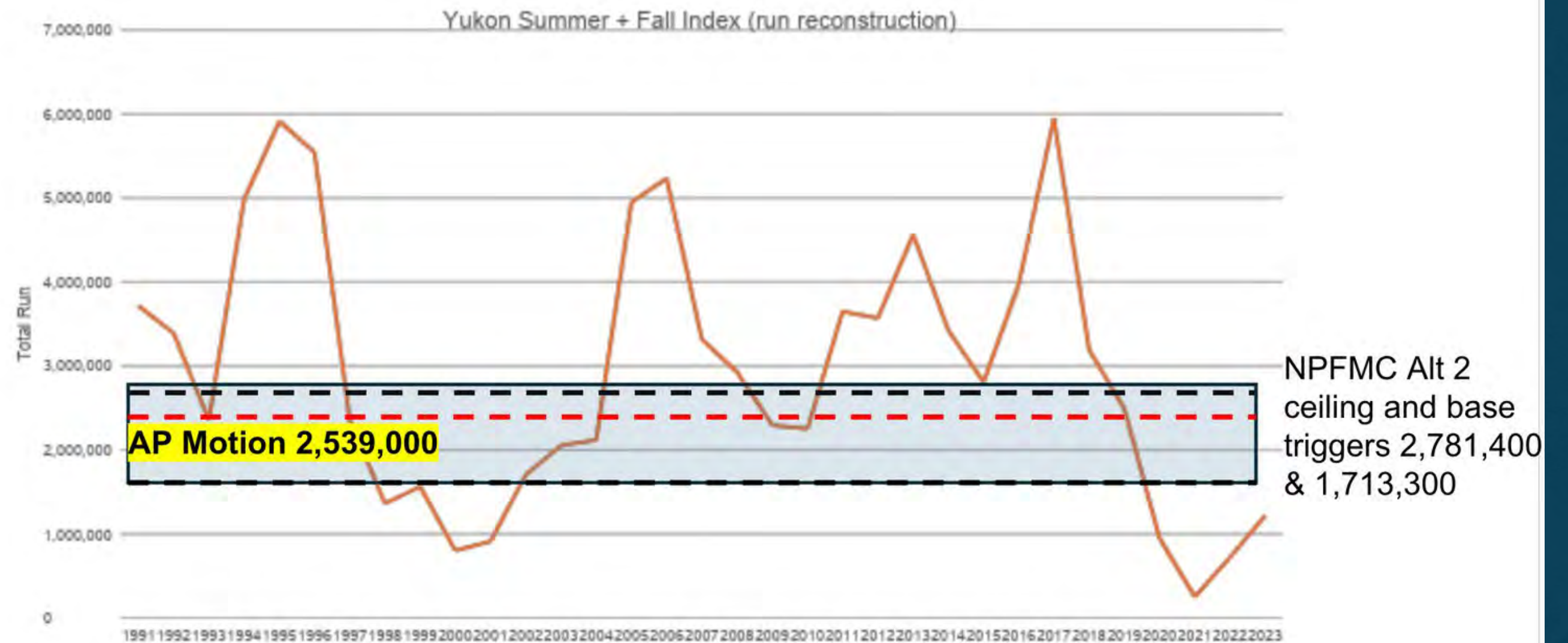


# CHUM SALMON BYCATCH EIS/SIA: APRIL 2024 ALTERNATIVES

ALT 3: OVERALL  
PSC LIMIT BASED  
ON WIAK CHUM  
ABUNDANCE.

Yukon summer/fall +  
Kuskokwim + Norton Sound  
OR  
Yukon summer/fall  
to determine low abundance  
threshold.

No cap at high abundance.



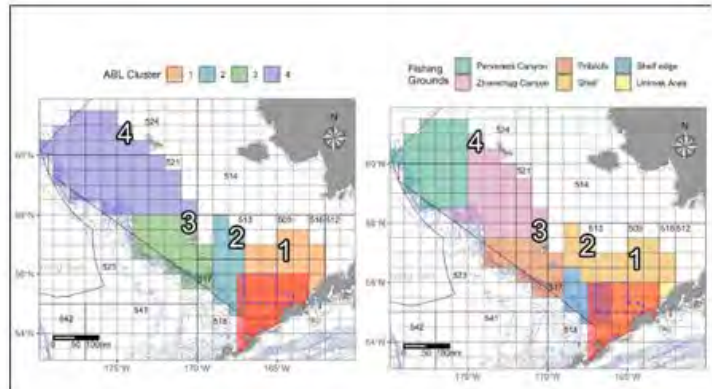


# CHUM SALMON BYCATCH EIS/SIA: APRIL 2024 ALTERNATIVES

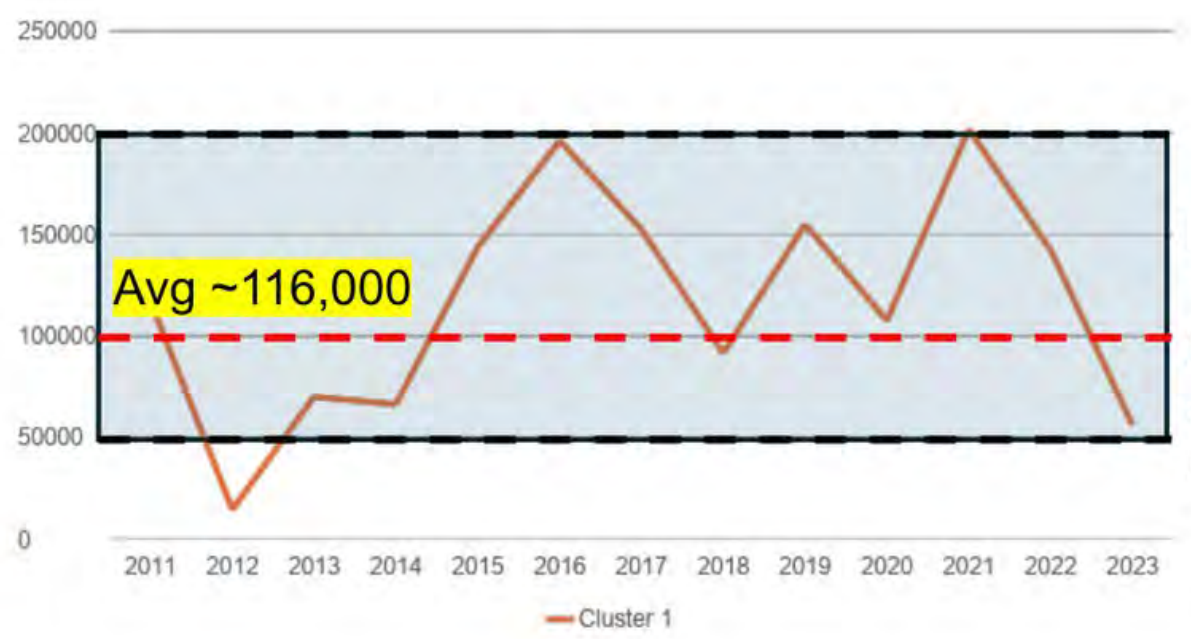
## ALT 5: INSEASON CORRIDOR CAP

Time/area closures in areas of high WIAK chum migration, regulated outside the IPAs.

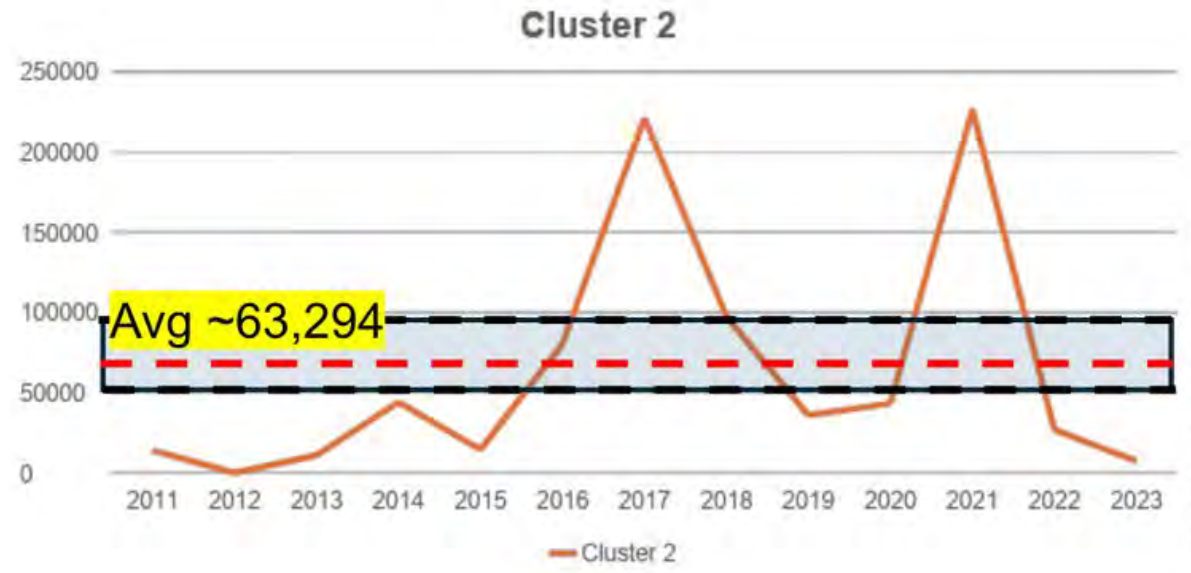
Regional cap range 50K – 200K.



Cap Example	Cluster 1	Cluster 2
Average	116,476	63,294
10th	58,306	8,030
25th	70,079	14,027
35th	94,624	17,033
45th	111,328	30,606
Median	117,015	35,958



NPFMC Alt 5 opt 1 ceiling and base 200,000 and 50,000 6/10-8/31



NPFMC Alt 5 opt 1 ceiling and base 100,000 and 50,000 6/10-8/31

# Next Steps: Chum Bycatch

N O W

Analyze new alternatives in updated EIS/SIA.

Opportunities for Tribal Consultation with NMFS and discussions with staff analysts.

DEC. 2024 OR FEB. 2025

Council likely to discuss chum bycatch and choose preferred preliminary alternative.

Opportunities to Consult with NMFS, write comments, provide oral testimony.

J U L Y 2 0 2 5

NEPA process concludes.

Final action implemented.

# Chinook Salmon Bycatch

Chinook salmon, including from Western/Interior AK (WIAK), are caught and discarded as bycatch in Bering Sea groundfish fisheries, especially the pollock trawl fishery.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Chinook salmon are the priority avoidance species in the pollock industry. The annual Three River Index (Unalakleet + Yukon + Kuskokwim) sets fleet-wide cap of 45,000 or 60,000 kings in following year.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- ~40-50% of all Chinook bycatch are from WIAK
- Primarily caught Feb–April and Sept–Oct
- 2007 = 130,000 Chinook (1991–present record)
- 2021 = 16,000 Chinook
- 2022 = 8,300 Chinook
- 2023 = 14,600 Chinook
- As of April 25, 2024 = 7,000 Chinook

(Overall  
bycatch  
levels)

# Jan. 2024: Petition for Emergency Action to Set Chinook Salmon Bycatch Cap of 0 in 2024

AVCP + KRITFC + TCC +  
YRDFA + YRITFC



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

## April 2024: Denied by Secretary of Commerce

Rationale: Did not meet criteria for emergency;  
climate change is lead cause of decline; less  
bycatch not likely to increase Chinook stocks.

**NEXT STEPS ...**

# Other NPFMC Issues of Interest

More info at  
[www.npfmc.org](http://www.npfmc.org)

## PROGRAMMATIC EIS

There is movement to update the management framework for the Council with a new Programmatic EIS (PEIS). The recent AVCP & TCC vs. NMFS lawsuit is pushing this along. No set date or action right now.

## CLIMATE SCENARIOS WORKSHOP

- June 5-6 in Kodiak and online.
- Discuss different, hypothetical climate possibilities and explore ideas for improving climate resiliency in North Pacific.
- Informing PEIS process as part of scoping process.

# NPFMC Calendar (in brief)

---

[www.npfmc.org/three-meeting-outlook/](http://www.npfmc.org/three-meeting-outlook/)

- June 3-11, 2024: June NPFMC Meeting @ Kodiak and online
- June 5-6, 2024: Climate Scenarios Workshop @ Kodiak and online
- Sept. 30-Oct. 8, 2024: October NPFMC Meeting @ Anchorage and online
  - Review Chinook Three River Index
- December 2-10, 2024: December NPFMC Meeting @ Anchorage and online
  - Set groundfish/pollock harvest levels for 2025
  - Chum salmon bycatch?
  - Begin PEIS scoping?
- February 2024: Chum salmon bycatch special meeting?
- July 2025: Chum salmon bycatch EIS complete

Quyana, Tsen'anh, Chin'an, Dogidinh,  
Baasee', Maasee', Mahsi'

---

TERESE VICENTE, KRITFC

TERESE@KRITFC.ORG | 907-545-7388

WWW.KUSKOSALMON.ORG | FACEBOOK: @KUSKOSALMON

