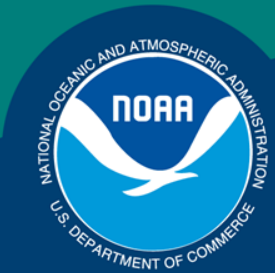


Science, Service, Stewardship



65th Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting

Alaska Updates

Pete Jones

Chief of Operations, NMFS Alaska Region

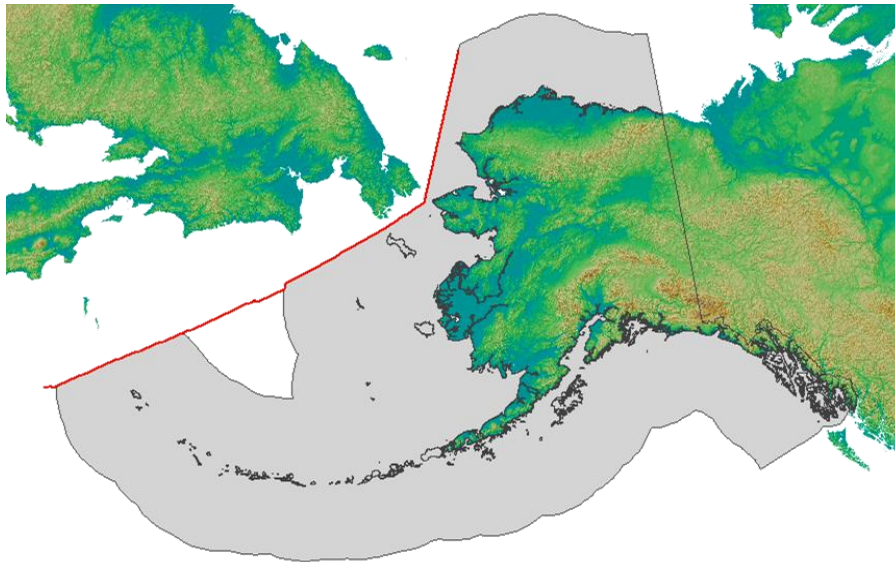
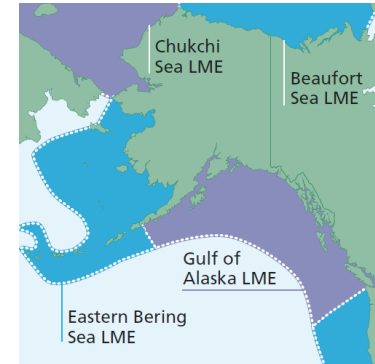
August 30, 2012

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**



Physical Environment:

- 28% of the USEEZ
- 66% of the U.S Continental Shelf
- 47,300 miles of tidal shoreline
- 4 Large Marine Ecosystems

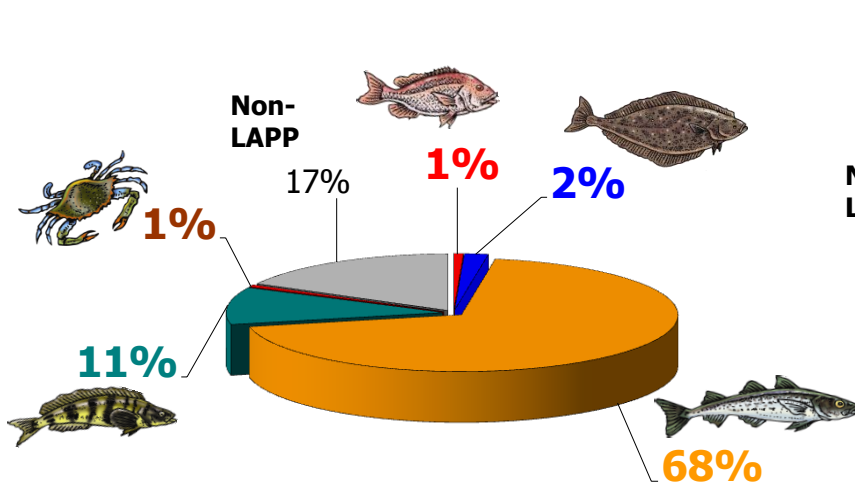


Alaska Fisheries:

- 55% of total U.S. catch
- Largest private sector employer
- Significant fishery-dependent communities

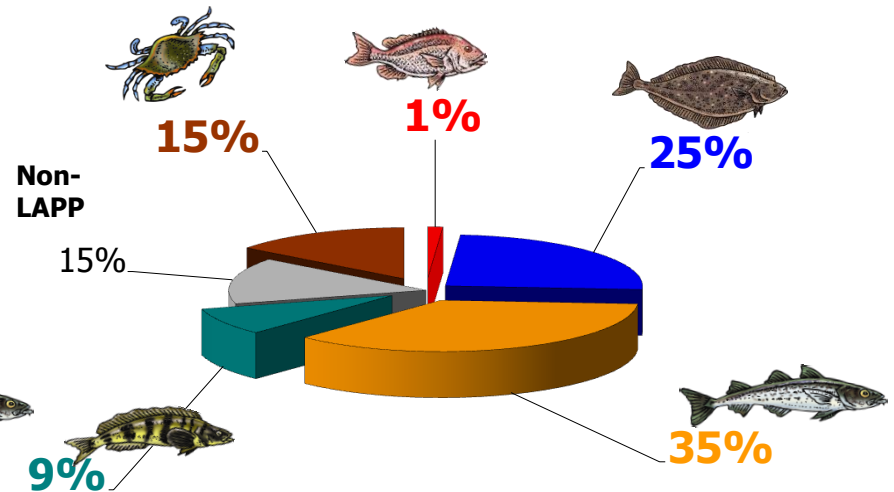


~85% of Federal fisheries off Alaska managed under Catch Share Program



% Catch in Catch Share
2,144,000 mt total catch

Source: AFSC (2005 baseline equivalent)



% Exvessel Value in Catch Share
\$1.1 billion total value

Source: AFSC (2005 baseline equivalent)

**BSAI/GOA
Halibut & Sablefish
Began: 1995**



**BSAI Pollock
Began: 1998**



**BSAI Crab
King and
tanner crab
species
Began: 2005**



**Central GOA Rockfish
Trawl rockfish,
sablefish, and some
Pacific cod
Began: 2007**

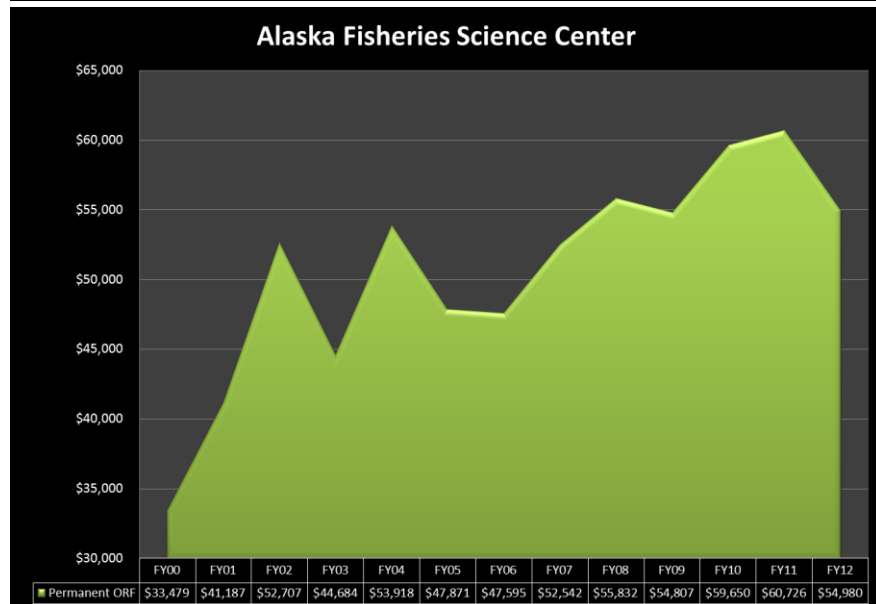
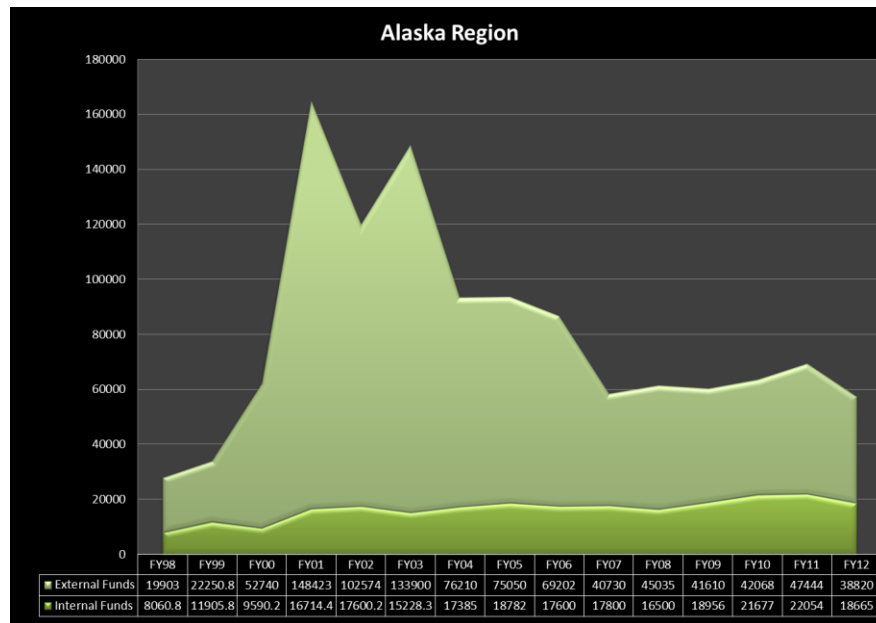


**BSAI Amendment 80
Flatfish, Pacific cod, Atka
mackerel, Aleutian Island
Pacific Ocean Perch
Began: 2008**





NOAA Fisheries Alaska Budget History





Region and Science Center Updates

Sustainable Fisheries:

- Observer Program Restructuring
- Halibut Catch Sharing Plan
- Chinook Bycatch

Endangered Species Act:

- Delisting of eDPS SSL
- Protection Measures wDPS SSL
- Proposed listing of ringed and bearded seals

Emerging Arctic Mission



Implementing the Restructured Observer Program

- Expands coverage to over 50,000 observer days/year
- New controls to reduce bias and fill gaps
- Now targeting smaller vessels
- Fee based beginning in 2014: Federal start-up funding given for 2013.
- Final Rule is being drafted with program implementation in 2013.
- Contracts for observer deployment have been bid and are in review with an award expected soon.
- Electronic monitoring is a component of this effort.



The Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP)

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled to recommend a new catch sharing management approach for southeast Alaska and the central Gulf of Alaska to:

- Establish allocations of halibut for the guided recreational (charter) and commercial fishing sectors;
- Annually implement harvest restrictions for charter anglers that are intended to limit charter harvests to the annual charter catch limit; and
- Authorize annual transfers of commercial halibut IFQ, called Guided Angler Fish (GAF), to charter halibut operators to provide anglers additional harvest opportunities.

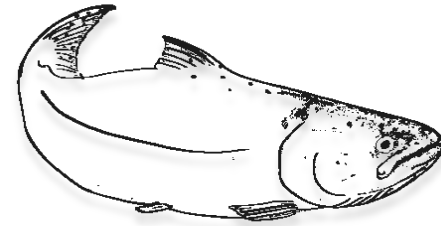


What's Next?





Chinook Salmon Bycatch Research



- **Stock composition analysis**
- AFSC Genetics Program provides stock composition estimates for both the Chinook and chum salmon bycatch annually to the NPFMC
- 2010 samples were collected by observers as part of their species composition samples, not randomly, hence the stock composition estimates apply to the sample set; they may not represent the entire salmon by catch
- Nonetheless, 2010 results show higher proportions for Coastal Western Alaska and Upper Yukon
- In 2011, the AFSC implemented a statistical sampling design for salmon bycatch commensurate with the implementation of BSAI Groundfish Plan Amendment 91 and these samples are being currently analyzed



Proposed Delisting of the Eastern Distinct Population Segment of Steller Sea Lions

- Removal from the list of threatened species appears to be warranted because the population has met the criteria identified in the Recovery Plan and no longer meets the definition of a threatened species
- Proposed rule published April 18, 2012
- Currently reviewing public comments (~1150 received)
- Expect to make a final decision by spring of 2013



Reviewing Protection Measures for the Western Distinct Population Segment of Steller Sea Lions

- NMFS is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate the effects of measures to protect endangered sea lions in the Aleutian Islands, per a U.S. District Court order
- NPFMC's Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee will advise on alternative measures to be analyzed
- Center for Independent Experts is completing its review of the 2010 NMFS Biological Opinion that examined the effects of groundfish fisheries on sea lions; Report due in September



Proposed Listing of Ringed and Bearded Seals Under the Endangered Species Act

- The biggest threat to ice-associated seals is habitat alteration due to global climate change, which is expected to affect seal populations by mid-century
- On December 10, 2010, NMFS published proposed rules to list ringed and bearded seals as threatened
- NMFS completed two rounds of external peer review due to the degree of scientific uncertainty
- NMFS is currently developing the final determination as to whether to list the species, with a decision expected very soon



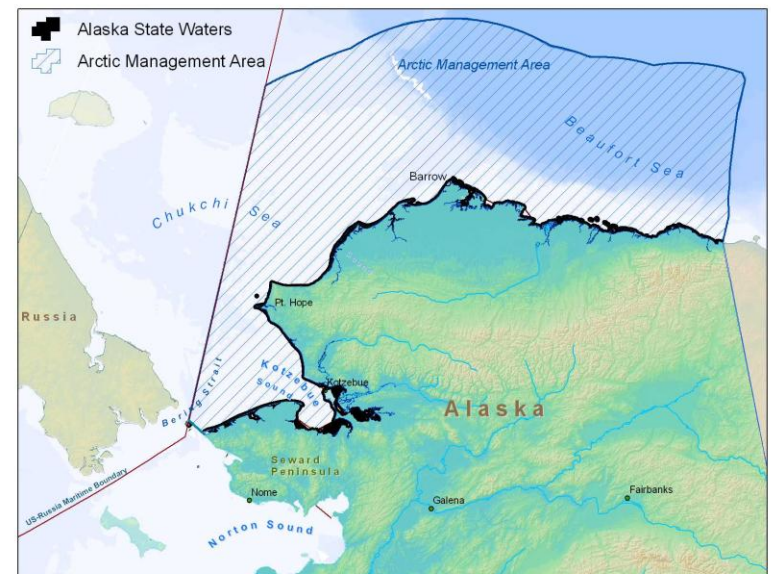
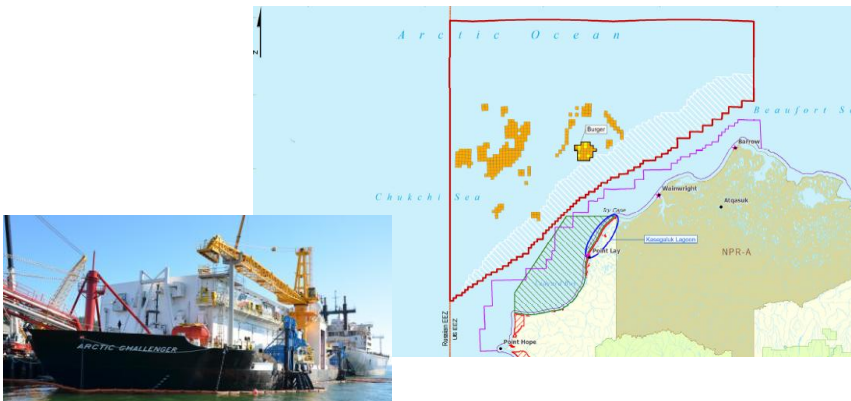
Responding to a Changing Arctic

Evidence of Change:

- Atmosphere
- Sea Ice
- Ocean

Near Term Mission Driver:

- OCS Energy Exploration





Alaska Fisheries Science Center's Arctic Research Portfolio

- Driven by NOAA's need to understand potential effects of oil/gas activities in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas
- Mostly funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- FY12 Activities (10+ projects with over \$10M in funding) include:
 - ❖ Ice seal abundance surveys
 - ❖ Ecosystem surveys in the Chukchi Sea
 - ❖ Bottom-trawl survey in the Chukchi Sea
 - ❖ Aerial surveys of Arctic marine mammals
 - ❖ Arctic whale ecology study (passive acoustics, oceanographic sampling, satellite tagging , visual surveys)
 - ❖ Chukchi acoustics, oceanography, and zooplankton study
 - ❖ Nearshore surveys and arctic cod ecology and toxicity work



alaskafisheries.noaa.gov