

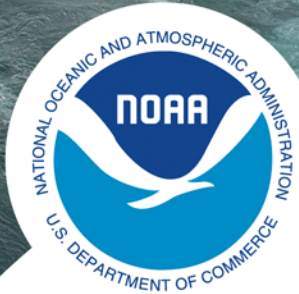
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Alaska Region

Alaska Overview

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September 29, 2016



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Topics for Discussion

- Background
- Protected Resources
 - Ice Seals
 - Cook Inlet Beluga
 - Stellar Sea Lions
 - Humpback Whale Delisting
- Sustainable Fisheries
 - Halibut Management/IPHC
 - Electronic Monitoring
- Habitat Conservation
 - Essential Fish Habitat
 - Habitat Blueprint
- Partnerships
 - State of Alaska
 - NPFMC
 - PSMFC
 - ANO's

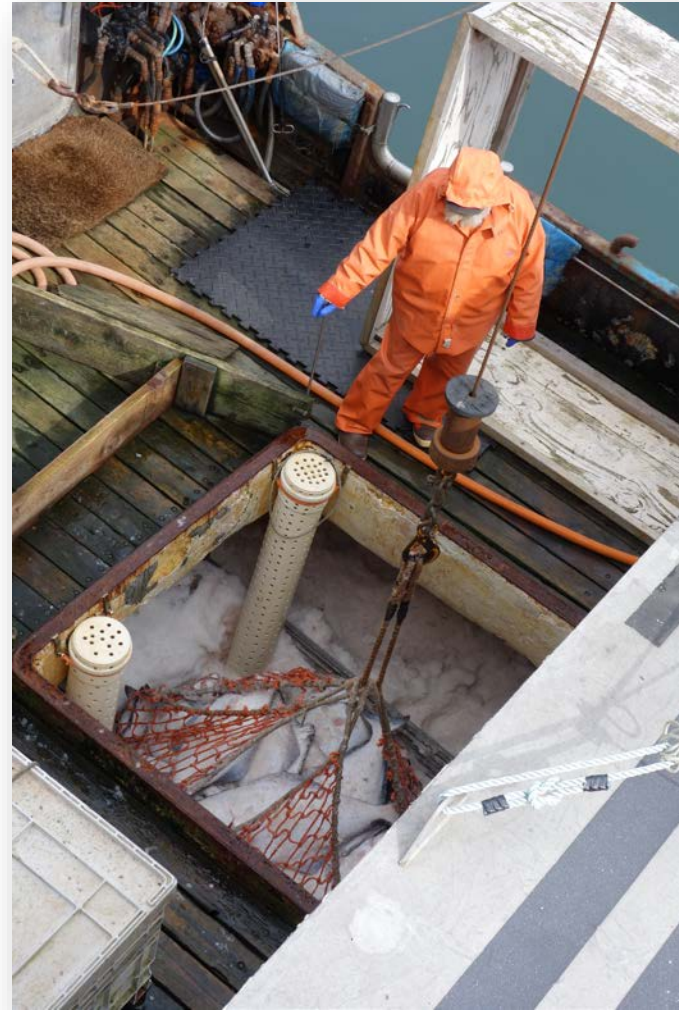
Map of Alaska



- 70% U.S. Continental Shelf
- 28% U.S. EEZ
- 50K miles of tidal shoreline

Alaska Fisheries – Catch and Value

- 60% of U.S. seafood harvested from Alaska waters
- 5.7B pounds landed
- Top 3 U.S. ports
- \$1.7B value of landings
- \$4.8B sales impacts





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Protected Resources

Responsible for conservation and recovery
of most marine mammals in Alaska
(polar bear, walrus, and sea otter
managed by USFWS)

Ice Seals

- 4 ice-associated species:
 - Ribbon
 - Spotted
 - Ringed
 - Bearded
- Status reviews for all 2008-2012
- Ringed and bearded listed as threatened under ESA in 2013
- Listings vacated
- Appeal is pending



Cook Inlet Beluga Whale: Species in the Spotlight



- Top priority critically endangered species
- 2014 abundance estimate was 340 animals
- Failing to recover
- NOAA Fisheries seeking partners

Steller Sea Lions



- Listed under ESA in 1990
- Divided into western (endangered) and eastern (threatened) DPSs in 1997
- Eastern DPS delisted in 2013
- Western DPS remains endangered. Proposal to revise critical habitat designation for western DPS
- Pending lawsuit on NOAA Fisheries BiOp on the effects of Aleutian Islands fisheries

Humpback Whale Recovery



- Final Rule to reclassify global listing
- 14 DPSs
 - 4 endangered
 - 1 threatened
 - 9 don't warrant listing
- In Alaska, 3 DPSs overlap:
 - Endangered Western N. Pacific DPS
 - Threatened Mexico DPS
 - Recovered Hawaii DPS
- NOAA Fisheries issued guidance on occurrence of listed humpbacks in waters off Alaska - specifies probabilities of encountering whales

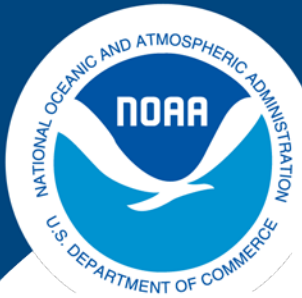


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Sustainable Fisheries

Implement the policy objectives of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and management of fisheries in the EEZ off Alaska.



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Halibut management

General

- Pacific halibut is managed under a treaty between the United States and Canada.
- NPFMC and NOAA fisheries coordinate with IPHC on regulations governing halibut fisheries off Alaska.
- The IPHC conducts an annual stock assessment and determines catch limits.
- Council and NOAA Fisheries develop management programs for the directed fisheries that are in addition to, and not in conflict with, IPHC regulations.
- The Council and NOAA Fisheries also manage groundfish fisheries in Alaska with halibut bycatch.



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Halibut management

IPHC issues - Halibut stock status

- Stock declined from the late 1990s to around 2010 due to decreasing size-at-age and smaller recruitments. Female spawning biomass has stabilized but increasing somewhat.
- Commercial halibut fishery catch limits have declined by 64% since 2006. In the past four years, the IPHC has set catch limits that result in a total fishing impact that is considered conservative.
- IPHC's current harvest policy has been controversial.
- In 2013, the IPHC initiated a harvest policy evaluation to address concerns with the current policy
- Unlikely IPHC would consider changes to harvest policy for 2017.



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Halibut management

IPHC issues - Halibut bycatch

- The Council/NOAA established bycatch limits in groundfish fisheries.
- NOAA Fisheries closes groundfish fishery to protect halibut resource from impacts of additional bycatch.
- Halibut allowed for commercial harvest determined after deducting removals other than directed commercial. The lower the amount of halibut taken as bycatch, the greater the harvest opportunity in the commercial fishery. In recent years, bycatch has been a larger %.
- Reduced halibut bycatch limits in groundfish fisheries in the Gulf (13%) and BSAI (21%). Currently considering action to replace bycatch limits in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.
- Council and IPHC identified *abundance-based bycatch limits* as management approach to address concerns about bycatch impacts on directed fisheries.
- Council developing “framework” for halibut management (IPHC)

Current Electronic Technologies in Alaska

- NMFS and Council have implemented EM/ER:
 - Catcher/processors and motherships
 - Flow scales to weigh catch; Video systems for compliance monitoring of catch handling
 - VMS in many fisheries
 - Comprehensive Electronic Reporting system jointly with ADF&G and IPHC
- Where next?
 - EM/ER Strategic Plan¹:
 - Integrate electronic monitoring and reporting tools into North Pacific fishery-dependent data collection to ensure that scientists, managers, policy makers and industry have relevant, high quality information, available when needed, that is obtained cost-effectively.
 - EM/ER Implementation Plan²
 - Identifies new Electronic Reporting & EM initiatives
 - High priority – develop EM for smaller fixed gear vessels

1 - <http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/Publications/AFSC-TM/NOAA-TM-AFSC-276.pdf>

2 - <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/akremerimplementationplan.pdf>

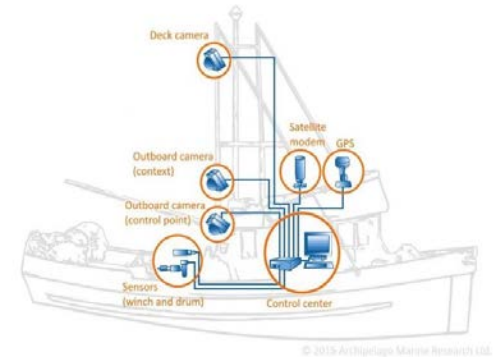
Developing EM for fixed-gear vessels

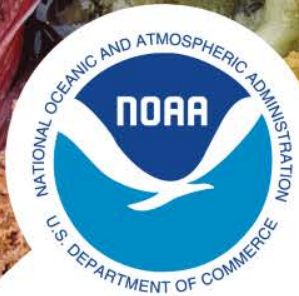
- Objective – use catch data from EM to manage fishery
 - Different approach from west coast - where logbook data used to manage fishery & EM is used to audit logbook
- Many small boats- limited crew space & challenges accommodating observer
- EM program being developed with Council's EM Workgroup
 - Forum for all stakeholders - fishing industry, EM service providers, agencies
 - Objective – cooperatively design, test, & develop EM system to meet Council goals to integrate EM into Observer Program



Developing EM for fixed-gear vessels

- Schedule for Council process & regulations
 - Initial Review of EM alternatives – Oct, 2016
 - Final action – Dec, 2016
 - Regulation development & publication – 2017
 - EM program in place – 2018
- EM Pre-implementation - throughout Council/regulation process
 - Testing of EM program design & identify key decision points for Council decision and development of regulations
 - EM Pre-implementation Plan developed by EM workgroup & presented to Council
 - Vessels voluntarily “opt-in” to EM & do not carry observers
 - **2016 – 58 hook and line vessels**
 - **2017 – up to 90 hook and line vessels; up to 30 pot vessels**
- Funding
 - Pre-implementation
 - Funded from NMFS & industry NFWF grants – to PSMFC
 - PSMFC contracting for EM service provider(s)
 - PSMFC staff conducting video review
 - Once regulated EM program in place then observer fees collected by NMFS from industry will pay for both EM and observer coverage





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Habitat Conservation

Responsible for conserving coastal, marine, and riverine habitat so that current and future generations can continue to benefit from sustainable commercial and recreational fisheries and resilient coastal communities

Essential Fish Habitat



- EFH - where fish spawn, breed, feed, or grow to maturity
- MSA requires FMPs:
 - Identify EFH
 - Identify adverse effects from fishing, non-fishing activities
 - Ensure conservation and enhancement of EFH
- EFH 5-year review
 - Upgrades to species descriptions
 - Modifications to Fishing Effects Model
 - Non-fishing effects

Habitat Blueprint: Habitat Focus Area

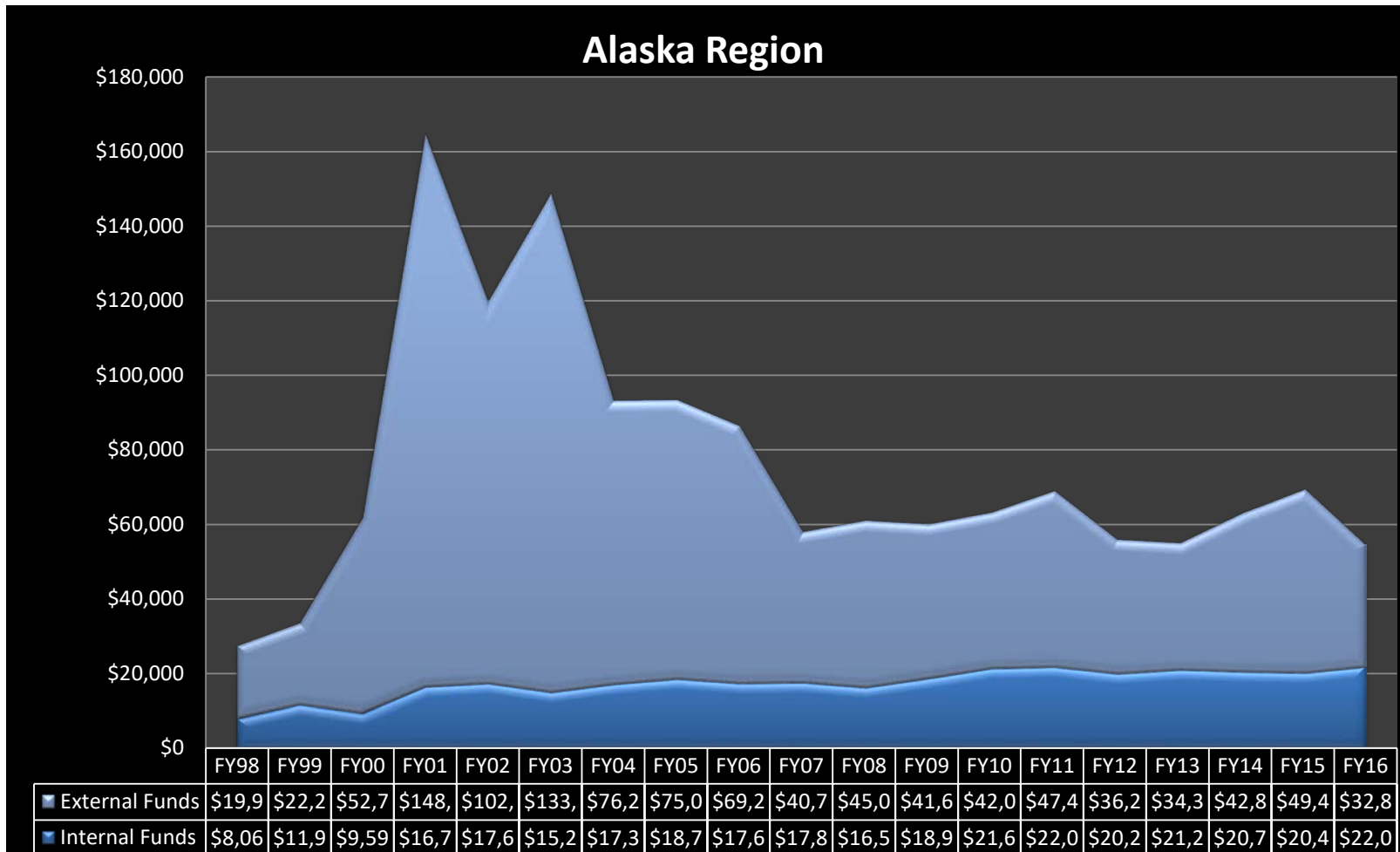


- Kachemak Bay
- Invasive Species
- Final report due Dec. 2016

Alaska Region Partnerships

- State of Alaska
- North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Alaska Native Organizations

Alaska Region Funding FY1998-FY2016



NOAA Grant & Cooperative Agreements w/ADF&G:



Grant Title	Funding
PCSRF (5 active awards)	\$ 19,400,000
Pacific Salmon Treaty	\$ 8,505,025
Transboundary River	\$ 1,073,044
Electronic Logbook Development	\$ 316,450
Bering Sea Crab Research	\$ 818,586
Halibut Subsistence Harvest Monitoring	\$ 129,000
Halibut IFQ Cost Recovery	\$ 178,148
Crab Rationalization Cost Recovery	\$ 4,281,337
FMP- Extended Jurisdiction	\$ 2,435,906
State Pinniped Research (2 active awards)	\$ 3,367,122
Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act	\$ 531,272
Saltonstall-Kennedy Program (5 active awards)	\$ 1,313,718
TOTAL	\$ 42,349,608

North Pacific Fishery Management Council



Grant Title	Funding
FY15 and FY16	\$8,543,932
TOTAL	\$8,543,932



Current Council Issues

- North Pacific Observer Program
- Electronic Monitoring
- Halibut management
- GOA trawl bycatch management
- Essential Fish Habitat
- Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

NOAA Grant & Cooperative Agreements w/PSMFC:



Grant Title	Funding
EDR Collection Program for the BSAI Rationalized Crab Fisheries, Amendment 80 & 91 (2 active awards)	\$ 1,826,074
Electronic Monitoring in the North Pacific	\$ 4,890,817
Monitoring and Estimating Catch and Bycatch	\$ 1,094,155
Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management, Science, and Administrative Support	\$ 10,402,765
AK Chinook Salmon Fish Disaster Relief Program	\$ 12,919,212
BSAI Crab Fisheries Cooperative Economic Data Program	\$ 583,928
AKFIN	\$ 9,392,390
TOTAL	\$ 41,109,341



NOAA Grant & Cooperative Agreements w/ANOs



Grant Title	Funding
Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission	\$ 561,434
Alaska Beluga Whale Committee (3 active awards)	\$ 521,334
Ice Seal Committee (2 active awards)	153,876
Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission (3 active awards)	\$978,210
Aleut Marine Mammal Commission (2 active awards)	\$271,426
St George Traditional Council	\$ 82,490
Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government (2 active awards)	\$ 235,000
Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals (2)	\$ 342,540
TOTAL	\$ 3,146,350



Questions?

