

3-1. Migration and Distribution of Salmon (Poster-14)

Management of Salmon Bycatch in the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock Fishery

Diana L. Stram*¹ and James N. Ianelli²

¹*North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 West 4th, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501, USA; E-mail, Diana.Stram@noaa.gov*

²*Alaska Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4, Seattle WA 98115, USA*

The Magnuson-Stevens Act emphasizes the importance of minimizing bycatch, to the extent practicable, as part of the goal to achieve sustainable fisheries. Measures to reduce Pacific salmon bycatch (*Oncorhynchus* sp.) have been developed and implemented resulting in specific closed (no-fishing) areas when established bycatch limits for Pacific salmon are reached. As a result of increased Chinook salmon bycatch in recent years, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has been evaluating alternative management measures for the eastern Bering Sea pollock fishery, including establishing limits on the total amount of salmon that may be caught by the fleet in a given season. In order to evaluate the impacts of these management measures under consideration, the effectiveness of the previous closed-area management system is evaluated in conjunction with proposed limits on the fleet. Bycatch patterns are qualitatively characterized using fishery observer data. Results show that the spatial and temporal salmon bycatch patterns are highly variable between years. Salmon size and sex composition of the bycatch adds to the complexity of developing effective management options aimed at minimizing the bycatch impacts of the Eastern Bering Sea pollock fishery. Bycatch patterns show consistent diel patterns and on broader scales, may be impacted by oceanographic conditions.