

## AK Cook Inlet Salmon Drift Gillnet Fishery

**Fishing gear type:** Gillnet

**Current category:** Category II\*

**Basis for current classification on the LOF:** The total annual mortality and serious injury of harbor porpoise (Gulf of Alaska [GOA] stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's 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):** Beluga whale, Cook Inlet; Dall's porpoise, AK; Harbor porpoise, GOA <sup>(1)</sup>; Harbor seal, GOA; Steller sea lion, Western U.S.

**Estimated number of current participants:** 571

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

**Year added to the LOF:** 1996

**Category when originally listed:** Category II

**Basis for original classification on the LOF:** This fishery was categorized as a Category II based on logbook data. Observer coverage levels were inadequate to determine mortality and serious injury levels across all fisheries, but available data suggested that, if observer data were available, the data would likely indicate that serious injury and mortality were more than 10% of PBR for each stock with which this fishery interacts. Data suggests that levels of mortality and serious injury would be similar to those in other Category II drift gillnet fisheries which interact with similar marine mammal species.

**Estimated number of participants when originally listed:** 576

**Past names, if any:** AK Cook Inlet drift gillnet (until 1999).

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**Gear description/method for fishing:** This fishery uses drift gillnet gear with soak times of 15 minutes to 3 hours, or continuously. The gear is set during the day, with 6-18 sets per day.

**Target species:** Salmon.

**Spatial/temporal distribution of effort:** This fishery generally operates from June 25 to end of August in the Central District of the Upper Cook Inlet. Drift gillnet fishing effort for sockeye salmon peaks in mid to late July. Currently, drift gillnet fishing for salmon in the Cook Inlet occurs in the Central District area only for the two regular 12-hour openers<sup>†</sup> on Mondays and Thursdays.

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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> Salmon may only be fished commercially during periods known as openers established by the AK Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) in-season. Openers may last days or weeks. The ADFG posts weekly notices of fishing openers and announces the openers on regular radio channels. Fishing periods are often extended by emergency order during the last 24 hours of the opener.

**Levels of observer coverage each year<sup>‡</sup>:** Observer coverage is calculated by the percentage of fishing days observed. Observer coverage was 1.8 % and 3.7% in 1999 and 2000, respectively. The fishery was not observed from 1990-1998, and 2001-2005.

**Management and regulations:** This fishery is managed by the AK Department of Fish and Game as a limited entry fishery with gear restrictions on the mesh and net size, and area closures.

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**History of Changes on the LOF**

2009 LOF: Estimated number of participants was updated from 554 to 571.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “1” in Table 1 after harbor porpoise (GOA), indicating that takes of this stock are driving the classification of the fishery.

2003 LOF: NMFS proposed downgrade this fishery to a Category III, but retained the Category II classification based on analysis completed after the proposed rule. One mortality of a harbor porpoise in 2000 extrapolates to a mortality estimate of 27 animals in 2000, or an average of 13.5 animals/year for 1999 and 2000, which is adequate to retain the fishery as a category II.

2001 LOF:

- Estimated number of participants updated from 560 to 576.

1999 LOF:

- Beluga whales (Cook Inlet) added to list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery because the stock was designated as a strategic stock in 1998. An observer program was instigated in 1999-2000 to observe interactions with Cook Inlet beluga whales.
- Renamed the fishery the "AK Cook Inlet salmon drift gillnet" to specify the target species.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 577 to 560.

1998 LOF:

- The stock of harbor porpoise on the list of species killed/injured in this fishery was changed from “AK” to “Gulf of Alaska.”
- Estimated number of participants updated from 554 to 577.

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