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To: Alaska Board of Fisheries
UCI Meeting February 23 – March 6, 2024

February 8, 2024

From: Steve Reifenhohl, representing PNP Statewide Hatchery Group

Re: Opposition to Proposal 43 5 AAC 40.820 Basic Management Plans vis-à-vis Ocean Carrying Capacity

Dear Chair Wood and Board Members:

The BOF is currently considering Proposal 43, which if adopted, would reduce the production of pink salmon in Cook Inlet Aquaculture hatcheries. The proposer has sought to reduce chum and pink production in all Alaska PNP hatcheries for several decades and therefore Proposal 43 is a state-wide issue of critical importance. Several research papers were submitted at the October 2023 BOF Hatchery Committee meeting in Anchorage as a basis for reducing pink salmon hatchery production. Proposal 43 was submitted by Fairbanks AC as were the Ruggerone and McMillan papers which suggest reducing hatchery production with the following logic:

1. Hatchery fish and production have been shown to have negative interactions with wild fish.
2. Pink salmon in the North Pacific are at historically high abundance, and their feeding capacity is disrupting food webs at a basin scale, causing a “trophic cascade” with negative impacts to a wide range of species, including other salmon.
3. Hatchery pink salmon are released in large numbers, and thus are major contributors to the disruption of oceanic food webs.

The effort to reduce hatchery production is reminiscent of a similar proposed action in 2018/2019. In fact, concerns about ocean carrying capacity have been raised for decades. In response to these issues raised in 2018, a detailed alternative view was submitted to the BOF: High Ocean Biomass of Salmon and Trends in Alaska Salmon in a Changing Climate, by Alex Wertheimer and Willaim Heard (2018).¹ We are resubmitting this paper for your consideration, as its assessment and conclusions are still relevant to proposal 43. Wertheimer & Heard conclusions

¹ Wertheimer A. & Heard W., 2018 High Ocean Biomass of Salmon and Trends in Alaska Salmon in a Changing Climate, by Alex Wertheimer and Willaim Heard

are that Alaska salmon harvest over the past 25 (now 30) years has been characterized by sustained high production from **wild stocks and large contributions of hatchery fish**. Enhancement has made large net contributions to supplement wild stock harvest in some areas of the state. Density-dependent interactions have been observed at different life history stages of salmon and in nearshore and oceanic habitats during this period but have not constrained the recovery of Alaska salmon from its nadir in the 1970's, or its sustained high abundance in recent years. Rather, density independent responses to climatic factors affecting ocean conditions appear to have largely driven the high and variable productivity of Alaska salmon. Pink salmon have shown the greatest variation in abundance among Alaska salmon, especially in response to anomalous ocean conditions. Thus, rather than restructuring the food webs, they appear to be the most sensitive to changes in marine conditions.

Before addressing the pink salmon carrying capacity issues, we would note that concerns about hatchery and wild fish interactions are also not a new or recently discovered issue. The Alaska hatchery program was established and evolved with a system of policies and practices for managing enhancement in Alaska to minimize negative impacts on the sustainability and optimum production of wild stocks (Gaudet et al 2017).² The BOF has been intensively involved in this process. Negative interactions can and do occur, and in order to benefit from the high production potential of large-scale enhancement, strategic and effective policies and management are essential. This is analogous to the necessity to effectively manage commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries. Salmon harvest, both sport and commercial also have genetic, ecological, and demographic impacts on populations of salmon, and therefore also must be managed to minimize negative impacts while optimizing production.

To speak to the attack on pink salmon hatcheries based on papers such as the Ruggione et al (2023)³ review, we need some basic understanding of the scale of pink salmon biomass in relation to North Pacific food webs, and how much hatchery pink salmon contribute to this biomass. The correlation leap is quickly made in the Ruggione and McMillan papers that high abundance of pink salmon somehow equates to hatchery impacts because hundreds of millions of hatchery fish are released into the ocean. First and foremost, **hatchery pink** salmon (all Pacific

² Gaudet D., et.al. 2017. Precautionary Management of Alaska Salmon Fisheries Enhancement

³ Ruggione et.al. 2023. From diatoms to killer whales: impacts of pink salmon on North Pacific ecosystems

Rim countries) make up only **15% on average of the pink salmon in the North Pacific Ocean;** any impacts of pink salmon on oceanic food webs are predominately driven by wild pinks and other salmonids. Second, while pink salmon are typically the most abundant salmon in terms of numbers of adults each year, they make up only 22% of the total wild and hatchery biomass of salmon in the ocean, all countries combined. Chum salmon and sockeye salmon, which have multiple year classes, make up 60% and 18% respectively of oceanic salmon biomass. Third, while there are billions of salmon entering the North Pacific to rear and compete for food resources, there are trillions of other zooplanktivores such as herring, walleye pollack, cod, myctophids, and Japanese pilchards. Salmon have been estimated to make up 4-7% of the biomass of nekton feeding on zooplankton in the North Pacific. Pink salmon would thus compose 1-2% of this biomass, and hatchery pink salmon < 0.5%. The speculation that this small amount of biomass is causing the basin scale effects proposed by Ruggerone et al. (2023) is truly a case of the tail wagging the dog.

While density-dependent interactions, both intra- and interspecific, certainly exist and can be detected in the North Pacific ecosystem, this does not mean that such interactions are controlling abundance and run strength. Trends in populations of salmon and other species identified as impacted by high pink salmon abundance contradict the speculative doomsday hypothesis of basin-scale impacts. For example, sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay are identified as impacted by pink salmon abundance, but Bristol Bay sockeye salmon have been at sustained and record run strengths concurrent with high pink salmon abundance. Similarly, PWS pink salmon have been at sustained high levels of abundance in the past two decades, including the largest wild runs in the historical records. Sitka Sound herring, another population of concern noted by Ruggerone et al. (2023), has increased in spawning biomass simultaneously with high pink salmon abundance and concurrent with large-scale enhancement of chum salmon in Sitka Sound. The Sitka Sound herring stock had the highest spawning biomass ever recorded in 2023. The lack of recovery of PWS herring since the Exxon Valdez oil spill has also been attributed to pink salmon interactions, but current work on humpback whale predation of herring in PWS suggest that

increased numbers of whales are now removing more than 20% of the herring biomass annually, constraining recovery of the herring population (Straley et al. 2018).⁴

Perhaps the two most wildly speculative impacts of the “trophic cascade” hypothesis are the attributions of significant impacts to resident killer whales and humpback whales. Resident killer whales in the Gulf of Alaska have more than doubled in abundance concurrent with the increase and high abundance of pink salmon. The southern Puget Sound resident population of killer whales, cited by Ruggerone et al. (2023) as negatively impacted by pink salmon, is an exception to this trend. However, this population faces a wide array of factors affecting population recovery, ranging from Chinook salmon prey availability, historical disruption of social structure by aquarium captures and removals, as well as exposure to high levels of toxins in their environment. The proposed mechanism of interference of foraging behavior of killer whales by returning adult pink salmon seems highly unlikely, given the increasing numbers of northern resident whales in areas where pink salmon are much more abundant. Note also that the pink salmon interacting with southern resident killer whales are virtually all wild origin; there is no interaction with Alaska hatchery pink salmon.

Similarly, humpback whales have increased dramatically in the North Pacific Ocean since the cessation of commercial whaling for this species. This increase is also synoptic with the increasing abundance of pink salmon, and humpback whales in the eastern Pacific may now have reached or exceeded pre-whaling population sizes (Straley et al. 2018).⁵ Humpback whales are known to predate on juvenile salmon, which may provide the whales some foraging opportunities in coastal waters as the salmon migrate into the Gulf of Alaska. Juvenile salmon are not considered an important fish prey component of humpback whales, which is consistent with the relatively low biomass and abundance of juvenile salmon compared to other forage fish species such as herring, sand lance, and walleye pollack. The odd/even year effects Ruggerone et al. (2023) report on calf production for humpback whales is the opposite of the pattern they report for southern killer whales. Using similar logic would indicate some positive response to

⁴ Straley et.al. 2018. Seasonal presence and potential influence of humpback whales on wintering Pacific herring populations in the Gulf of Alaska

⁵ Straley et.al. 2018. Seasonal presence and potential influence of humpback whales on wintering Pacific herring populations in the Gulf of Alaska

higher abundance of pink salmon juveniles the year prior to calving. Instead, the pattern is made negative by speculating that mating behavior is affected, putting a year lag into the time series.

Pink salmon production and returns to Prince William Sound have been focal points of the discussion on the impacts of enhancement. PWS hatcheries release 600-700 million juveniles annually. As noted above, there have been sustained and even record returns of wild fish from PWS wild stocks as well as very large returns of hatchery fish. From 2010-2019, harvests in Prince William Sound have averaged 50 million pink salmon annually, of which 80% are of hatchery origin. From 1960-1976, prior to the establishment of the enhancement program, harvests averaged 4 million fish annually. Ocean conditions favoring higher productivity of pink salmon are a major factor contributing to the large returns. Several studies have indicated that wild stock production could be higher if hatchery releases were reduced or eliminated. However, such actions would also reduce or eliminate the hatchery returns which could severely impact the fishery and associated local economies.

The paper by Ohlberger et al (2021)⁶ is the latest in a series of analysis to examine factors affecting productivity of naturally spawning pink salmon in PWS. They found that the number of hatchery fry released negatively affected wild stock productivity and attributed this to competition of hatchery and wild juveniles in the nearshore environment. Using a similar spawner/recruit model but with different covariates, Wertheimer et al. (2004a)⁷ also found an effect of hatchery releases on wild stock productivity, but that most of the variation in productivity could be attributed to annual variations in ocean conditions affecting marine survival. The relatively small yield loss attributed to hatchery fish abundance was associated with smaller size of returning adults at high abundance, which results in reduced fecundity (Wertheimer et al. 2004b). These models can be used to estimate the degree to which hatchery production provides net gains to the PWS fishery. Wertheimer et al. (2004b)⁸ estimated a wild-

⁶ Ohlberger J., et.al. 2021. Non- stationary and interactive effects of climate and competition on pink salmon productivity

⁷ Wertheimer A. et.al. 2004a. Effects of hatchery releases and environmental variation on wild stock productivity: consequences for sea ranching of pink salmon in Prince William Sound, Alaska

⁸ Wertheimer A. et.al. 2004b. Does size matter: environmental variability, adult size, and survival of wild and hatchery pink salmon in Prince William Sound, Alaska

stock yield loss of 1 million fish at a time hatchery harvests average 24 million, for a net gain of 23 million fish to the total harvest over the time period 1990-2000.

Ohlberger et al. (2021) estimated that a 50% reduction in hatchery releases would result in a 50% increase in wild productivity. If we use a simple linear application of these percentages to the average annual harvest data for 2010-2019, hatchery harvest would be reduced to 20 million fish annually while wild harvest would be increased to 15 million fish annually. This would result in a total harvest of 35 million fish, a reduction of 15 million fish (30%) of the current average harvest.

Large scale enhancement as designed by the State of Alaska has greatly increased harvest and fishing opportunities for all citizens of the State. The most explicit examples are pink and chum salmon fisheries in PWS, and chum salmon in SEAK, where increased harvests have been compatible with sustained and **record-breaking wild stock production**, while concurrently achieving wild stock escapement goals (Gaudet et al. 2017).⁹ The economic benefits of these enhanced fisheries have large multiplier effects on local economies and employment. Large reductions in enhancement operations would seriously disrupt fisheries and associated economic benefits in the affected communities.

While the Ruggerone, McMillan, and Ohlberger papers are worthwhile explorations of salmon abundance and biomass as to how they may impact other species, they are a bridge too far vis-à-vis conclusions regarding humpback whales, Pacific herring, and the negative impacts of hatchery pink salmon. McMillan synthesizes many research papers heavily weighted by Pacific Northwest hatchery programs, programs which were designed to replace what has been lost due to elimination of habitat from dams, encroachment of riparian zones, human population growth, and industrialization. The Ohlberger paper focused on PWS wild and hatchery pink salmon but doesn't make the case that the hatchery pink simply replaces wild pink production. Alaska's enhancement program was designed to supplement harvest opportunities. Current harvest and escapement data proves it does just that.

⁹ Gaudet D., et.al. 2017. Precautionary Management of Alaska Salmon Fisheries Enhancement

Thank you for dedicating your time, your attention, and your commitment to securing long-lasting and healthy salmon populations for the citizens of Alaska. We value your pursuit to understand the intricate interplay within our freshwater and oceanic ecosystems.

Our perspective presented here is well grounded in rigorous science and deserving of your consideration in your deliberations on this issue.

Sincerely,

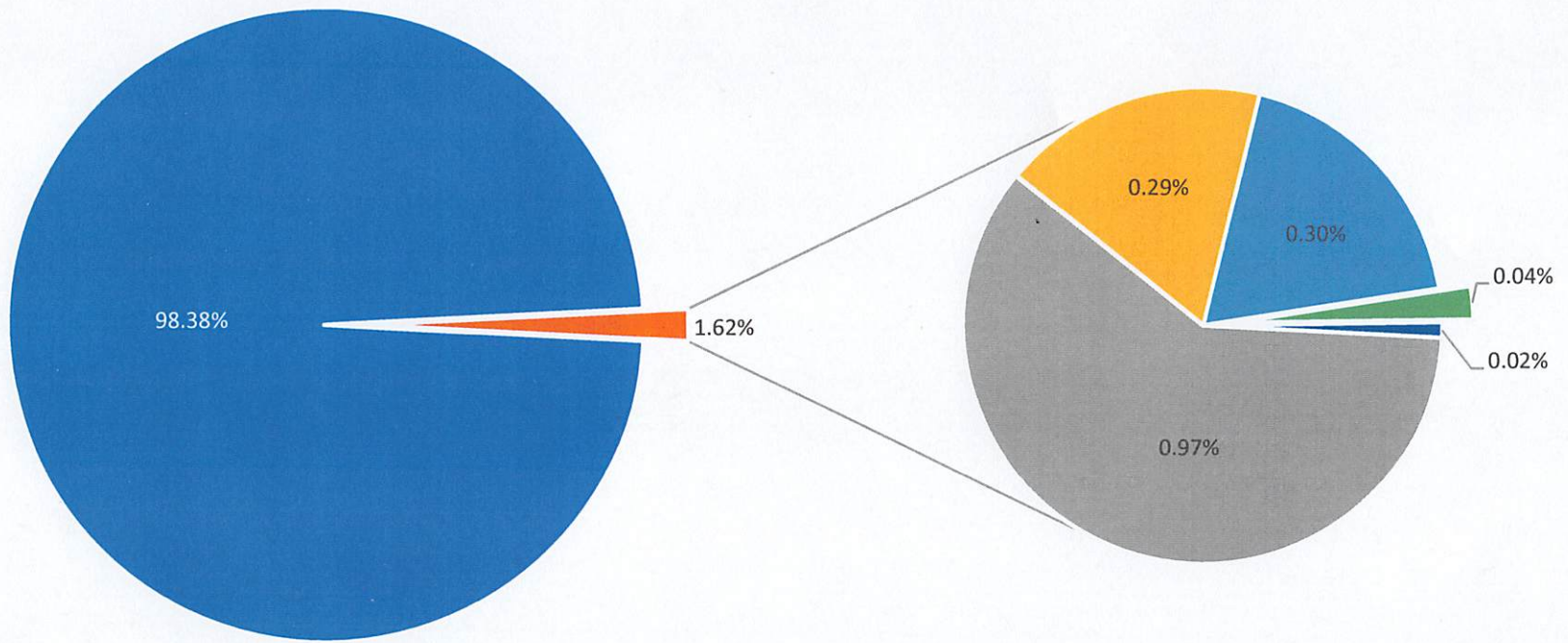
Steve Reifentstuhl, Fisheries Biologist, 45 years' experience, General Manager NSRAA, retired.

Steve Reifentstuhl, Sitka AK

Alex Wertheimer, NOAA Fisheries Research Biologist, retired. Juneau AK

John Burke Ph.D., Pathologist and Regional Supervisor FRED, Deputy Director SF Division, Fisheries Scientist Commissioner's Office, retired, SSRAA General Manager, retired and Senior Science Panel.

North Pacific Nekton Biomass



- All Nekton (Except Salmon)
- Chum Salmon
- Wild Pink Salmon
- Other Hatchery Pink Salmon
- All Salmon
- Sockeye Salmon
- Alaska Hatchery Pink Salmon

Source: Wertheimer & Heard 2018. High Ocean Biomass of Salmon and Trends in Alaska Salmon in a Changing Climate

ADFG Commissioner Doug Vincent Lang Comments to Board of Fish - Spring 2024

The decision to permit the source and number of eggs taken by hatchery operations is one of my authorities under Alaska statute. I want to assure you I take this responsibility seriously.

When I became Commissioner 6 years ago one of the numerous controversies I faced with was the issue of hatchery-wild interaction. To ensure we could sort out the science I made a policy decision that I would not permit an increased egg take for pink salmon. And I have not permitted an increase in egg takes over the past six years.

This past year I have spent considerable time reviewing the literature and talking with scientists and many stakeholders. What I have found is that the science is unclear. Yes, the Ruggerone paper says one thing, but much of it is based on correlation, not cause and effect. Other papers show the opposite.

I also reviewed the level of biomass from Alaska pink salmon hatchery releases. Alaska hatchery releases represent 2.1% of the total adult and immature pink biomass in the North Pacific. Also, I reviewed the preliminary data from the International Year of the Salmon marine cruises that showed little overlap in the distribution of marine rearing pink and chinook salmon.

Given this, I have concluded that the science regarding hatchery-wild is inconclusive at this point in time. As such, I will not be using my authority to reduce permitted pink salmon egg take levels at this time.

This said, I encourage further research on this topic with the hope of getting more definitive science. We will continue our efforts to finalize the study on genetic impacts of hatchery straying on wild stocks and continue our involvement to address the larger questions regarding hatchery food competition through the NPAFC.

Dow Jones **Factiva**

Analysis of Northwest, Other Salmon Hatcheries Finds Nearly All Hurt Wild Salmon Populations

Copyright © 2023 Portland Tribune
By Alex Baumhardt
December 27, 2023

For much of the last century, fish hatcheries have been built in Oregon and the rest of the Northwest, across the United States and around the world to boost fish populations where wild numbers have gone down.

But an analysis of more than 200 studies on hatchery programs meant to boost salmonid numbers across the globe — including salmon, trout and whitefish — shows that nearly all have had negative impacts on the wild populations of those fish. Most commonly, hatchery fish reduced the genetic diversity of wild fish, leading to poor health and reproductive outcomes.

The findings weigh into a sensitive topic with a big price tag. In the Northwest, hatcheries are supposed to be a solution to declining wild salmonid numbers, caused in large part by hydroelectric dams, overfishing, irrigation and climate change. In the Columbia River Basin alone, officials have spent billions of dollars on nearly 200 hatcheries as well as habitat restoration projects during the past 50 years to improve wild numbers, but research shows those programs are having an opposite effect.

The global studies, all undertaken between 1971 and 2021, were analyzed by scientists at the nonprofits Trout Unlimited, based in Virginia, and The Conservation Angler, out of Washington, along with the University of Washington, the University of Montana and the Université Laval, in Quebec, Canada. Their analysis was published in July in the journal Fisheries Management and Ecology.

Of the 206 studies the team analyzed, more than 80% revealed hatcheries programs had adverse effects on wild salmonids. Of the 3% of hatcheries globally that were found to benefit wild populations, the majority were stocked with wild fish that were bred and released in small numbers to boost severely depleted wild populations.

John McMillan, science director at The Conservation Angler who worked on the analysis, said the team wanted scientists all over the world who are studying the same fish species to see the impact of hatchery programs beyond their regions of study. He said that, despite an overwhelming body of research showing most hatcheries hurt wild fish populations, it's often controversial to criticize such programs.

"It's frustrating from a scientific point of view, because you can see what the science suggests, but it's understandable why we've been reluctant to move our position on hatcheries, because of the social implications," McMillan said. "This is one of those things, like climate change, where we have to sit back and think about our relationship with the animal, what it means to us and how much we want to give up so these animals can truly, potentially rebuild themselves."

Effect of big hatcheries

The 2023 Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 5509, which allocates \$1 million for a third-party assessment of hatchery programs in the state, including analysis of their costs and benefits.

Hatcheries in the Northwest and globally that release hundreds of thousands of fish each year had the worst effect on wild salmonid populations, according to the analysis.

"When you see really large releases of fish, they tend to swamp out the wild population," McMillan said.

An example is pink salmon released from hatcheries in Alaska. Unlike most salmon species, pink salmon spend two years rather than one in the ocean feeding before returning to their spawning grounds in rivers. They enter the ocean almost immediately after being released, and feed on vast amounts of microscopic plankton, which are the food for larger plankton eaten by other fish species such as Chinook, coho, steelhead and sockeye. When hundreds of thousands of pink salmon are released from hatcheries each year, they upset the balance of food available in the ocean for all those other species.

"It's not leaving enough food for other salmon in the ocean," McMillan said. "It's even negatively impacting orca populations, who feed on those other salmon species. You consume so much at the bottom of the food chain that it cascades to lower production at the top."

The best hatcheries, McMillan said, rear fish from wild stocks and release small but effective numbers to provide a short-term boost to the population.

McMillan said the analysis shows a need for more study of fish epigenetics — the study of how the environment in which a fish develops can change and affect the way its genes work, how it behaves and its ability to survive.

"There has been research coming out in the last four to five years indicating that, even though hatchery fish are representative of the population at large from which they're from, they're undergoing epigenetic changes due to the hatchery rearing process," he said.

Some of those changes are passed along to offspring. Scientists are trying to study that process and discover whether those traits are passed to wild species and whether that affects the ability of wild fish to survive, he said.

Recent studies found that some hatchery fish struggle in waters heavily affected by climate change. Wild fish have had millions of years to evolve through conditions that, at times, have resembled the present. Though they may have similar DNA, the influence of hatchery conditions on fish could make them less prepared to survive in volatile ocean conditions than wild fish.

"Many of these wild fish have the genes to deal with these changing environments. But it's unclear whether the hatchery fish do," McMillan said.

STORY TAGS:

[Oregon](#), [hatcheries](#), [salmon](#)

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Source: SeafoodNews.com

Dow Jones [Factiva](#)

OPINION: It's Time for a Difficult Discussion About Alaska's Salmon Hatcheries

Copyright © 2023 Anchorage Daily News
By Peter Westley
December 13, 2023

Unless we collectively acknowledge we might be wrong when it comes to Alaska hatcheries, there will be no true dialogue, only continued division and deadlock.

On a recent snowy day in Palmer, I presented a keynote lecture at the Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium, sharing some modest advice for managers. There I discussed some of the “big ideas” that have shaped modern salmon conservation science — but come question time, the focus narrowed to just one topic: salmon hatcheries.

As an integral thread in the fabric of Alaska’s salmon fisheries, hatcheries are a deserving source of substantial interest and examination. Unfortunately, far too often, discussions surrounding hatcheries have devolved into an “Us vs. Them” team-based microcosm of the politically polarized world in which we find ourselves. In simplest terms, teams have aligned themselves at opposing poles along a belief system continuum.

At one end, a team believes that hatchery fish can be added on top of wild fish production without any detrimental impacts to wild fish or ecosystems. At the other end, the team believes that hatchery fish negatively affect wild fish production and inevitably replace wild fish. I use the terms “belief” and “believe” here intentionally. The beliefs I hold as a scientist are rooted in the preponderance of vetted, peer-reviewed evidence that emerges from the scientific process. As the weight of evidence changes on a topic, so to have my beliefs.

Changing beliefs is not easy for me, nor is it easy for others. At best, changing beliefs can be deeply uncomfortable and disorienting, at worst it can be an existential threat to one’s identity and team affiliation. I believe today that the views held by those on the opposing sides of the hatchery debate are not entirely wrong, but also not entirely complete.

Hatcheries in Alaska have not completely replaced wild salmon. But they have also not yielded as much benefit to Alaskans as we have been led to believe — hatcheries have detrimentally affected wild salmon productivity and are reshaping ecosystems in unpredictable ways. I believe hatcheries are not dichotomous; they are not good or bad, right or wrong, but are tools that have beneficial purposes for specific objectives. But like any tool there are inherent risks in its use.

In a world where it feels that so many of the challenges facing salmon and salmon-dependent people are beyond our control, hatcheries are one of the few levers we can actually pull. We have control over when, where, and how many salmon are released from hatcheries. Given the scientific evidence, it is reasonable for fishery groups or policy makers to consider reducing numbers of hatchery releases. It is equally reasonable to consider what might be lost or gained — and by whom — in any scenario of reduced hatchery production.

The time has come for us to ask and to quantify what the trade-offs might be if we lower hatchery production. Here, science can guide us. This work begins with having the difficult, but honest, discussion about hatcheries' inherent risks and rewards. These conversations will be difficult and likely impossible to fully separate from emotions given that all of us are living, breathing, and feeling humans.

Dialogues about hatcheries must be rooted in humility, where all participants must accept that the beliefs they hold, and perhaps hold to tightly, might be — at least in part — incorrect. But unless we collectively acknowledge that we might be wrong when it comes to Alaska hatcheries there will be no true dialogue, only continued division and deadlock.

Peter Westley is a lifelong Alaskan. Some of his fondest childhood memories are sportfishing in Lake Bay near the Wally Noerenberg hatchery in Prince William Sound. He holds the Wakefield Chair of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences in the Department of Fisheries at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where he and his students conduct research with the goal of sustaining the relationships between salmon, people, and place. He has authored or co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications on salmon ecology and evolution, including extensive work on hatchery and wild salmon interactions.

The views expressed here are the writer's and are not necessarily endorsed by the Anchorage Daily News, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints.

STORY TAGS:

[opinion](#), [Alaska](#), [salmon hatcheries](#), [salmon](#)

Story Posted: 12/13/2023 2:49:49 AM

Source: SeafoodNews.com



ECONOMY & ENVIRONMENT

ALASKA IN BRIEF

New salmon study adds to evidence that pink salmon could be crowding out sockeye

BY: NATHANIEL HERZ, NORTHERN JOURNAL - MARCH 2, 2024

4:00 AM



Pink salmon are seen in an undated photo. (NOAA Fisheries photo)

A new analysis of nearly 25,000 fish scales offers more evidence that the millions of pink salmon churned out by Alaska fish hatcheries could be harming wild sockeye salmon populations when they meet in the ocean, according to the scientists who authored the study.

The new [peer-reviewed paper](#), published this week in the ICES Journal of Marine Science, analyzed growth

rates that could be deduced from the fish scales, similar to trees' yearly growth rings.

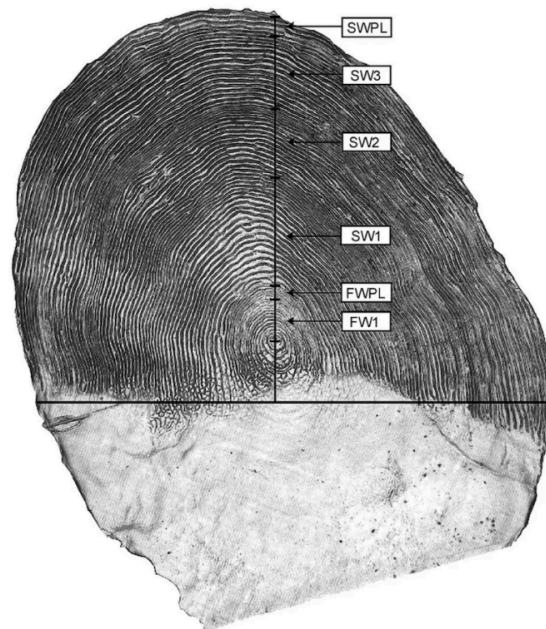


Fig. 1. Age-1.3 sockeye salmon scale from Bristol Bay showing the measurement axis and life stage zones corresponding with growth during the first (SW1), second (SW2), and third (SW3) years at sea, and during the homeward migration (SWPL).

📷 A sockeye salmon scale. (Image courtesy of Gregory Ruggerone)

The paper was built on a unique aspect of the life cycle of pink salmon, which are primarily targeted by commercial fishermen: Their abundance is high in odd-numbered years, and lower in even-numbered years. Those booms and busts allowed authors Peter Rand and Gregory Ruggerone to tease out whether sockeye salmon – which are more highly valued by sport and personal use fishermen – were growing at lower rates during odd years, when pink salmon are more numerous.

Their analysis showed that was the case across the Gulf of Alaska – a dynamic that Rand and Ruggerone describe as a “zero-sum game” between the two species. It found that yearly growth of sockeye was depressed by as much as 17% at times when pink salmon abundance was high.

“This is the first time we’ve looked at populations across coastal Alaska, and we see the same signal in all of them,” Rand said in an interview. “It’s quite compelling.”

There’s been increasing debate in recent years about the impacts on other salmon species of growing

populations of pink salmon, and Ruggerone last year [published a review paper](#) that documented what it called “consistent and strong” evidence of competition. The pinks have been benefiting from warming ocean waters and are also boosted by hatcheries around Alaska that raise them to bolster harvests by commercial fishermen.

The number of pinks returning annually from the North Pacific Ocean rose to nearly 800 million in 2021, up from 170 million in the early 1970s, with hatcheries contributing some 80 million fish each year, the authors wrote in their new study.

Some policymakers, Ruggerone said, have been holding out for more documentation of competition between hatchery pinks and wild salmon, and the new paper should serve as additional evidence, he added.

A spokesperson for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, whose [commissioner has said](#) it’s an “open question” if there’s a relationship between hatchery-raised pinks and wild king salmon populations, said no one was available Thursday to comment on the new study.

Nathaniel Herz welcomes tips at natherz@gmail.com or (907) 793-0312. This article was originally [published in Northern Journal](#), a newsletter from Herz. [Subscribe at this link.](#)



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Anti Hatchery advocates in Homer & Fairbanks – Looking to affect DIPAC’s production by opposing land use permits for net pen sites and storage buoys. See below for comments opposing DIPAC’s Thane net pen storage at Sheep Creek

STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MINING, LAND AND WATER
Southeast Regional Land Office
Memorandum of Decision
LAS 18770
DOUGLAS ISLAND PINK & CHUM INC
Amendment for Land Use Permit
AS 38.05.850

Mr. Virgil Umphenour: a member of the public, called expressing his concerns regarding the additional use. He mentioned impacts to the ecosystem, fish spawning, cross contamination between hatchery fish and wild fish, impacts to the fishing industry, and the economy. Mr. Umphenour was provided an email address where he could submit comments in writing. A comment was not received from Mr. Umphenour.

DNR DMLW Response: No response needed.

Ms. Nancy Hillstrand: a member of the public, asked for a copy of the amendment application via email. She was provided with the form to submit a Public Records Request and was then sent the application in full, with no redactions. The comment period was extended to December 21st, 2023, at 5pm, to make up for time lost due to correspondence delays. A comment was submitted in a timely manner.

Ms. Hillstrand commented with concerns regarding the proposed change, stating that the increase in use could have negative impacts on the surrounding area. These concerns include an increase in diseases, pollutants entering the water causing an adverse effect on water quality, increase in turbidity, and eutrophication, specifically to how these issues relate to wild fish and their environment.

DNR DMLW Response: Majority of the comments made by Ms. Hillstrand lie outside the scope of the permit issued by DMLW and would be addressed by a different local, state, or federal agencies permitting processes. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation provided a copy of the Alaska Pollutants Discharge Elimination System (APDES) General Permit for DIPAC which was forwarded to Ms. Hillstrand. The APDES permit addresses questions asked by Ms. Hillstrand such as water quality and discharge.

The permit amendment authorized by the Division of Mining, Land, and Water, is only for the additional months of the placement of the net pens, crew barge, feed storage float, and associated anchors in the water. Any additional details regarding the operation of the hatchery, discharge of water, waste, or byproduct, would be the result of a different authorization from a federal, state, or municipality, and would be required to be compliant with regulations put forth by that organization.

Dow Jones **Factiva**

Washington Conservation Group Proposes Listing Alaska King Salmon Under Endangered Species Act

Copyright © 2024 Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman
By Nathaniel Herz
January 12, 2024

A Washington state-based environmental group says it's filing a petition asking the Biden administration to list southern Alaska king salmon as an endangered species — following through on notice of intent it filed last year.

The Wild Fish Conservancy's 68-page petition says that the king salmon, also known as Chinook, are threatened by climate change and competition from hatchery-raised fish, and that existing state and federal management are failing to stem their decline.

The petition targets all populations that use the Gulf of Alaska, including fish that spawn in the Kenai and Kasilof rivers outside Anchorage, in the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers in Southeast Alaska and in the Alaska Peninsula's Chignik River. It does not include populations that have crashed in Southwest Alaska's Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers, however.

"While Alaska is often perceived as having abundant salmon populations, scientists have been sounding the alarm for decades that Alaska's Chinook are in dire trouble," the conservancy said in a statement emailed to supporters Thursday. "Despite existing management plans and years of efforts by state resource managers, Alaska's own data shows the majority of Chinook populations throughout the state have experienced significant decline, not only in abundance, but also in size, diversity, and spatial structure."

In a press release, a conservancy biologist and petition co-author, Conrad Gowell, added: "Ironically, certifiers and the seafood industry are leading concerned consumers to believe Chinook from Alaska are sustainable, when in fact they are disappearing before our very eyes. No one wants to be eating the last wild Chinook from any river."

The conservancy's executive director, Emma Helverson, did not respond to a request for additional comment.



The organization's petition is likely to be politically polarizing.

It could lead to sharp restrictions on Chinook fisheries, and on other types of salmon fisheries that accidentally harvest or encounter Chinooks, said Doug Vincent-Lang, the Alaska commissioner of fish and game. Alaska's government has previously fought the listing of many other species, citing the potential for impacts on resource development, like oil and gas drilling.

While declines in some rivers have forced management actions to restrict Chinook harvests, that's very different from the type of existential threat that merits Endangered Species Act listing, Vincent-Lang said.

"The question is: Have these stocks reached the level where you're concerned about their extinction? That's where the ESA needs to kick in," he said. "It doesn't need to kick in as a precautionary measure."

The conservancy has already drawn intense criticism from Southeast Alaska small boat troll fishermen and some Alaska-based conservation groups for a federal lawsuit it filed in 2020.

The lawsuit, which is still playing out on appeal, challenged a key federal authorization that was needed for state managers to open the troll Chinook harvest each year.

The conservancy says the lawsuit aims to protect an endangered population of orca whales. But the Alaska trollers and their allies say it could force an economically devastating closure of their fishery.

The conservancy's petition will start what could be a lengthy review process.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, or NMFS, has 90 days to decide whether or not to accept the petition, which would happen if it deems the conservancy's request to present "substantial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted."

If it accepts the petition, the service will begin a comprehensive review of the Alaska king salmon's status, analyzing the "best available scientific and commercial information" on the species' biology, population trends and threats.

Within a year, the agency will decide whether that review supports listing the salmon as threatened or endangered, and if so, it will publish a proposed rule and request for public comments before making a final decision, typically within another year.

Vincent-Lang said the state of Alaska will work with the Biden administration to "demonstrate the sustainability of our fisheries." But, he added, "I can't predict with any certainty what NMFS will do."

Asked about two of the primary threats listed by the conservancy in its petition — global warming and competition in the ocean from hatchery-raised fish — Vincent-Lang acknowledged that "everyone should be concerned about climate change." But he said he doesn't see the science on hatchery fishes' effects on wild stocks — a subject of ongoing political and academic debate — as settled.

"I think it's an open question as to the impact hatcheries are having on Chinook salmon out in the ocean," he said. "We've been very clear in our statements that we have concerns about it — but it's premature to draw a conclusion."

Photo Credit: Shutterstock / Dec Hogan

STORY TAGS:

[Washington](#), [Alaska](#), [National Marine Fisheries Service](#), [salmon](#), [Alaska King Salmon](#)

Story Posted: 1/12/2024 9:58:41 AM



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

2023 was the world's warmest year on record, by far

Antarctic sea ice coverage hit record low

Focus areas: Climate, Satellites

Topics: temperature rankings , global average temperatures , State of the Climate

January 12, 2024



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Photo Credit: Shutterstock / Dec Hogan

STORY TAGS:

[Washington](#), [Alaska](#), [National Marine Fisheries Service](#), [salmon](#), [Alaska King Salmon](#)

Story Posted: 1/12/2024 9:58:41 AM

July 3, 2023: July 3, 2023: An aerial view of low water levels at Woodhead Reservoir in Glossop, England, after the United Kingdom sweltered through its hottest June on record. 2023 was the world's warmest year on record, beating the next warmest year (2016) by a record-setting margin of 0.27 of a degree F (0.15 of a degree C). (Image credit: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images)
[Download Image](#)

It's official: 2023 was the planet's warmest year on record, according to an analysis by scientists from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

Along with the historic heat, Antarctic sea ice coverage dropped to a record low in 2023.

"After seeing the 2023 climate analysis, I have to pause and say that the findings are astounding," said NOAA Chief Scientist Dr. Sarah Kapnick. "Not only was 2023 the warmest year in NOAA's 174-year climate record — it was the warmest by far. A warming planet means we need to be prepared for the impacts of climate change that are happening here and now, like extreme weather events that become both more frequent and severe.

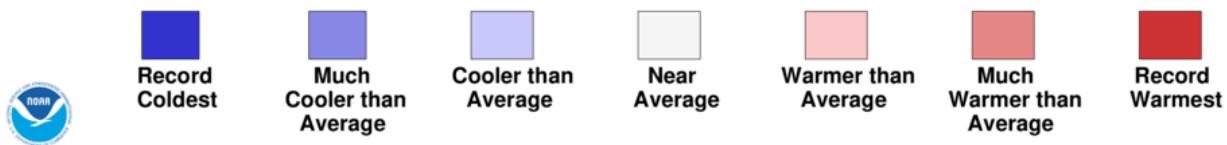
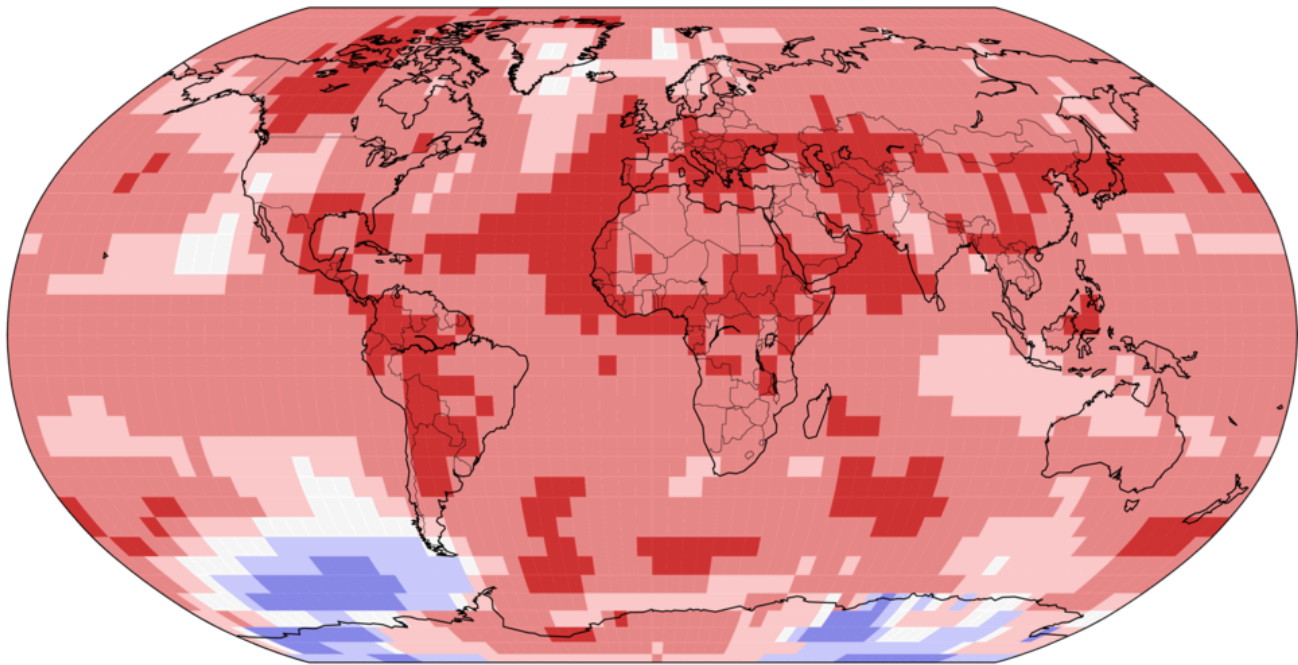
"We will continue to see records broken and extreme events grow until emissions go to zero," Kapnick said. "Government policy can address both emissions, but also actions to reduce climate impacts by building resilience."

Below are highlights from NOAA's 2023 annual global climate report:

Land & Ocean Temperature Percentiles Jan–Dec 2023

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information

Data Source: NOAAGlobalTemp v5.1.0–20240107



A world map plotted with color blocks depicting percentiles of global average land and ocean temperatures for the full year 2023. Color blocks depict increasing warmth, from dark blue (record-coldest area) to dark red (record-warmest area) and spanning areas in between that were "much cooler than average" through "much warmer than average." (Image credit: NOAA NCEI)

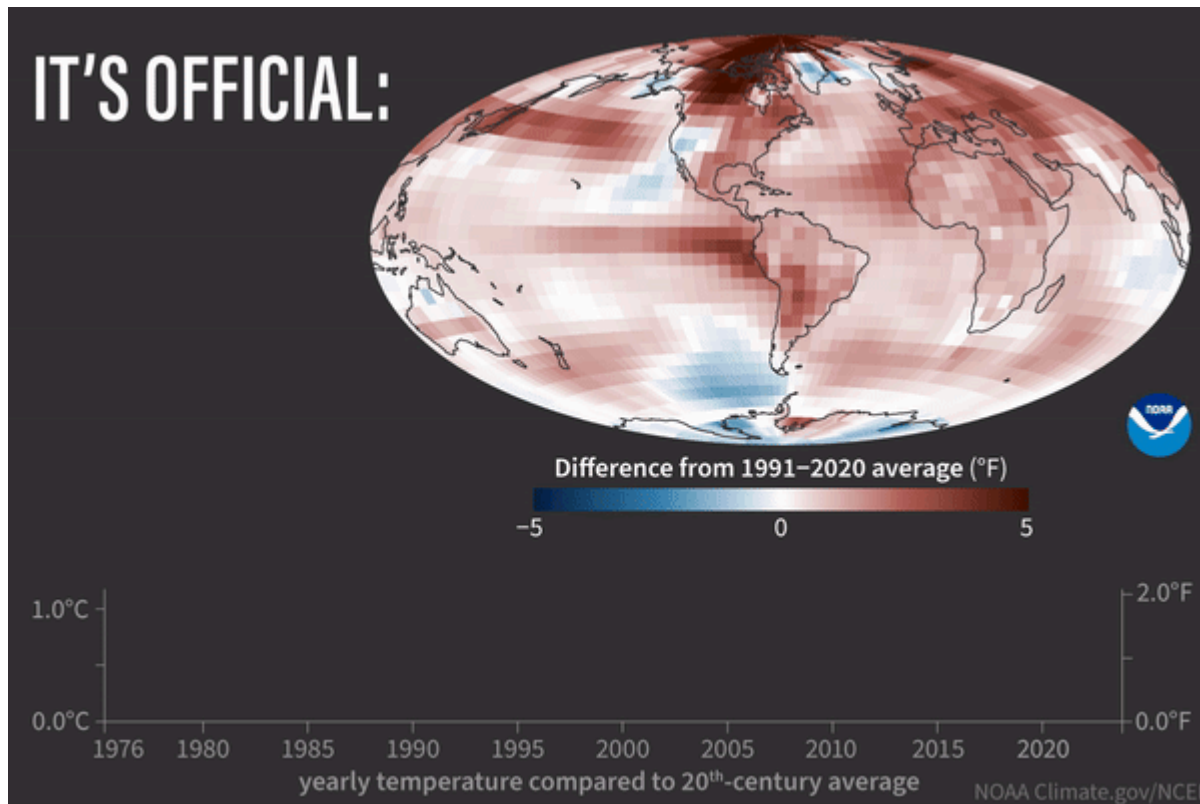
[Download Image](#)

Climate by the numbers

Earth's average land and ocean surface temperature in 2023 was 2.12 degrees F (1.18 degrees C) above the 20th century — the highest global temperature among all years in NOAA's 1850-2023 climate record. It also beats the next warmest year, 2016, by a record-setting margin of 0.27 of a degree F (0.15 of a degree C).

The 10 warmest years since 1850 have all occurred in the past decade. In fact, the average global temperature for 2023 exceeded the pre-industrial (1850–1900) average by 2.43 degrees F (1.35 degrees C).

Looking ahead, there is a one-in-three chance that 2024 will be warmer than 2023, and a 99% chance that 2024 will rank among the top five warmest years.



Map of global average surface temperature in 2023 compared to the 1991-2020 average, with places that were warmer than average colored red, and places that were cooler than average colored blue. The bars on the graph shows global temperatures compared to the 20th-century average each year from 2023 (right) back to 1976 (left)–the last year the world was cooler than average. Based on data from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. (Image credit: NOAA Climate.gov, using NOAA NCEI data)

[Download Image](#)

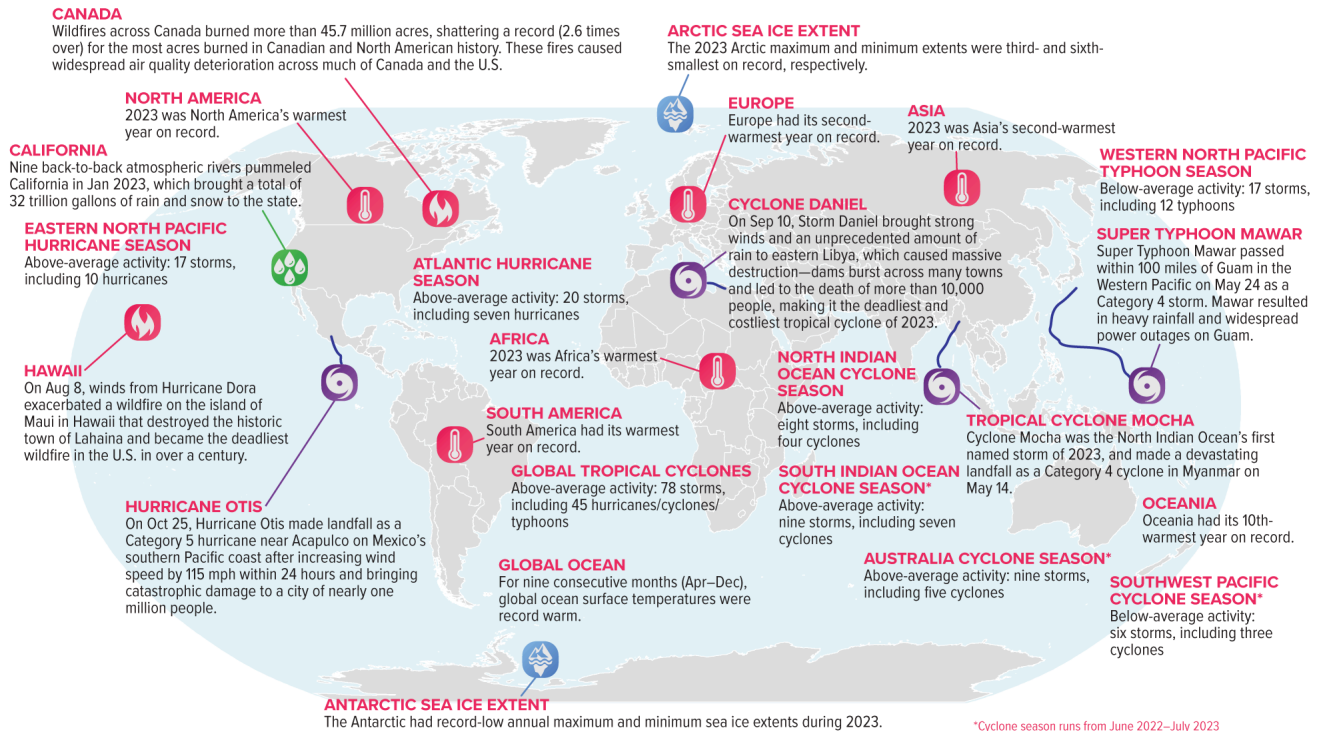
2023 as ranked by other scientific organizations

Other scientific organizations, including [NASA](#), the [Copernicus Climate Change Service](#) [↗](#) and the [UK Met Office](#) have conducted separate but similar analyses that also rank 2023 as the warmest year on record.

Selected Significant Climate Anomalies and Events: Annual 2023



GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE
The Jan–Dec 2023 average global surface temperature was the highest since global records began in 1850.



Please note: Material provided in this map was compiled from NOAA's State of the Climate Reports. For more information please visit: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/>

An annotated map of the world plotted with the year's most significant climate events. Please see the story below as well as the report summary from NOAA NCEI at <http://bit.ly/Global202312>. (Image credit: NOAA NCEI)

[Download Image](#)

Other notable climate findings and events

- Global ocean heat content set a new record high:** The 2023 upper ocean heat content, which addresses the amount of heat stored in the upper 2,000 meters of the ocean, was the highest on record. Ocean heat content is a key climate indicator because the ocean stores 90% of the excess heat in the Earth system. The indicator has been tracked globally since 1958, and there has been a steady upward trend since approximately 1970. The five highest values have all occurred in the last five years.

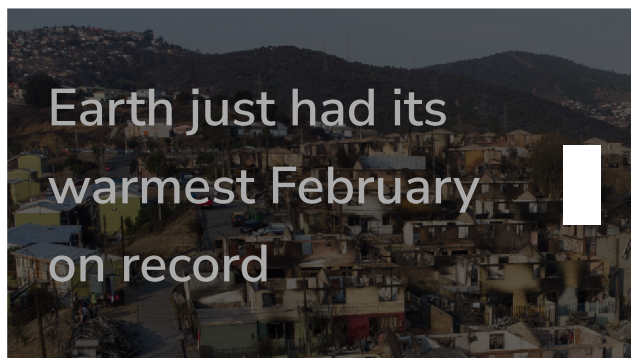
- **Polar sea ice was scant:** The 2023 annual Antarctic sea ice extent (coverage) averaged 3.79 million square miles in 2023, the lowest on record. The maximum extent in September was 6.55 million square miles, which was the lowest by a record margin. The minimum extent in February was 690,000 square miles, which set a record low for the second consecutive year. Arctic sea ice coverage averaged 4.05 million square miles in 2023, ranking among the 10 lowest years on record. The maximum extent in March was 5.64 million square miles, which ranked fifth lowest, while the minimum extent in September was 1.63 million square miles, which ranked sixth lowest.
- **December 2023 set records:** Global surface temperature in December 2023 was 2.57 degrees F (1.43 degrees C) above the 20th-century average — the warmest December on record. For the ninth consecutive month, the global ocean surface temperature was also record warm. Looking regionally, North America and South America both had their warmest December on record.

More: [Access NOAA NCEI's year-end 2023 global climate report and images.](#)

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Last updated January 12, 2024

Dow Jones **Factiva**

Perfect Storm Hits Alaska Seafood Industry

Copyright © 2024 Kodiak Daily Mirror
By Steve Williams
January 23, 2024

The trade organization that represents Alaska seafood processors is out with a pretty ugly take on the health of the industry heading into the new year.

In a new report, titled "2023: A perfect storm of economic circumstances hits Alaska seafood," the Pacific Seafood Processors Association estimated that coastal communities lost \$2 billion in wholesale revenues and decreased spending last year, and that 2024 isn't likely to be much better.

The industry is far and away Kodiak's largest employer, according to a 2022 McKinley Research Group report, with 5,800 fisheries, processing and related jobs among the Kodiak Island Borough's population of 12,720.



"The Alaska seafood industry is facing economic conditions unlike any since the collapse of salmon value in the 1990s, except this time, it's across multiple species," the report states.

PSPA wrote that the globalization of commodity markets has left the U.S., and with it Alaska, behind in a worldwide race to the lowest cost.

"Higher standards in the U.S. for fisheries management, environmental and social considerations and worker safety means it costs more to produce seafood compared to countries with lower standards," the report noted. "These safeguards help keep our fisheries sustainable and ethical, yet we face an uneven playing field from countries that harvest food without similar regulatory costs. In Alaska, those costs are even higher due to the remote location of most of the fisheries and processing operations."

Specifically, increased costs include a doubling of labor costs from 2002 to 2020, followed by another 30 percent increase from 2021 to 2022. Record inflation coming off the COVID 19 pandemic in 2021 and 2022 increased operational costs for fishermen and processors.

International shipping costs increased by as much as 1,000 percent between 2020 and 2022, and domestic shipping rates increased approximately 20 percent during the same time.

Plus, the report noted, supply chain custody costs — in place to differentiate U.S. products from cheaply produced Chinese and Russian fish — have increased, as has cost of compliance with U.S. environmental standards relative to other countries. Excess inventory of frozen sockeye and pink salmon, cod and pollock will likely continue into 2024, the report states.

All those costs add up quickly to lessen the value of Alaska products in today's cheap-at-any-cost international market. And the same inflation that raises production costs limits consumer demand for U.S. seafood, the report states.

It's taken some time to get to this point, said PSPA President Julie Decker.

"This didn't just happen overnight, and there's no simple answer to it," she said. "We all have to try to work together to get through this."

One bright spot may be a recent Biden administration decision to ban U.S. imports of Russian cod, pollock and salmon processed in China and Vietnam.

The measure fulfills a multi-year push by U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, to curtail the import of Russian fish, especially pollock, caught by Russian ships in the Bering Sea and elsewhere and processed for sale in the U.S. by shoreside Chinese plants.

According to the Tradex market report, the move will increase the amount Alaska pollock trawlers receive for their fish this year, with Chinese processors, which were sending Russian pollock to the U.S., now competing for a share of Alaska-caught pollock so they can hold on to their U.S. market share.

That same report said Chinese processing of Russian fish has surged this month in an effort to fulfill orders leading up to the Feb 21 cutoff for export to the U.S.

In 2023, Russian fishermen delivered 1.8 million metric tons of pollock, compared to 1.44 million metric tons caught by American druggers.

Tradex noted that the long-term impact of the Russian fish ban is uncertain, and that U.S. marketers may seek North Sea or Chilean fish to make up the volume loss of the Russian/Chinese product.

"We need to do what we can to increase support for domestic marketing by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to align with this opportunity," Decker said. "There may be a net benefit here, but nobody has a crystal ball."

PSPA's new report isn't all doomsaying. The association also offers a list of measures the federal government could take to reverse the industry's downward trend.

Those include expanding NOAA's and the U.S. Agriculture Department's involvement in new product development and marketing, recapitalization of fishing fleets and infrastructure planning and increased government purchasing of seafood.

The trade group also backs creation of an office of seafood policy at USDA, and fully involving seafood production in USDA policy strategies and low-interest loan programs and loan guarantees for fishermen and processors.

Decker sees the potential of increased USDA involvement in fisheries as a bright spot on the horizon.

"There is a lot against us right now, and we're educating people about what's causing the problem and gaining support on the federal level," Decker said. "It's important to work together as an industry and get on the same



Dow Jones [Factiva](#)

Leading Alaska Legislators Propose Task Force to Help Rescue a Seafood Industry ‘In a Tailspin’

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By Yereth Rosen

March 11, 2024

Russian fish flooding global markets and other economic forces beyond the state’s border have created dire conditions for Alaska’s seafood industry.

Now key legislators are seeking to establish a task force to come up with some responses to the low prices, lost market share, lost jobs and lost income being suffered by fishers, fishing companies and fishing-related communities.

The measure, Senate Concurrent Resolution 10, was introduced on March 1 and is sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee.

“Alaska’s seafood industry is in a tailspin from facing unprecedented challenges,” said the measure’s sponsor statement issued by the committee’s co-chairs: Sen. Bert Stedman, R-Sitka; Sen. Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel; and Sen. Donny Olson, D-Golovin. The measure is also being promoted by Senate President Gary Stevens, R-Kodiak.

The industry’s troubles caused a loss to Alaska’s economy of more than \$2 billion in 2023, the sponsor statement says.

The resolution got its first hearing on Thursday in the committee that introduced it.

The Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force task force idea is modeled after one created 20 years ago to help the then-struggling Alaska salmon industry, Tim Lamkin, a Stevens staff member working on the subject, told the finance committee.

Then, Alaska salmon fishers and sellers were facing low prices and a shrunken global market share caused by booming production of cheap farmed salmon. That 15-member task force needed two years to complete its work, Lamkin said.

In contrast, the Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force would consist of seven members and would present its findings and recommendations to the legislature in less than a year, by Jan. 21, 2025, according to the resolution wording.

However, the measure is still a work in progress, with the size and makeup of the task force among the details to be worked out during the rest of the session, Lamkin told the committee.

Testifying in favor were the chief executive of OBI, one of Alaska’s major seafood processing companies; the president of the Pacific Seafood Processors Association; the executive director of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, a state-owned corporation funded in part by the industry; the head of United Fishermen of Alaska, a large trade association of commercial fishers; the head of the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; and the mayor of the Kodiak Island Borough.

That mayor, Scott Arndt, said industry woes have caused severe strain in his region. He mentioned the pending closure or sale of Trident Seafood plants, which have been economic pillars in the region, and a looming 12.5% increase in Kodiak Electric Association rates – the first increase in 30 years – that is needed, in part, because of reduced sales to seafood processors.

“We have stress in all species, along with all markets for seafood prices. In my 60 years as a resident of Kodiak, I have never seen it this bad. It is scary for a lot of families,” he said.

UFA Executive Director Tracy Welch, who said her association in February voted unanimously in support of such a task force, ran through a list of industry troubles.

“Alaska’s seafood industry is facing unprecedented challenges in every area of the state and across every fishery. Alaskan fishermen, processors, processing workers, support businesses, communities are confronted with low prices, plant closures, lost markets and foregone fishing opportunities,” she said.

The more than \$2 billion in losses in 2023 affect communities and state government as well as the private sector, she noted.

“I cannot sum up the situation more succinctly than by saying the Alaska seafood industry is in crisis,” she said.

Russia is the source of a significant amount of trouble for the industry, said ASMI Executive Director Jeremy Woodrow.

He cited a dramatic example. While Alaska’s 2023 pink salmon harvest of nearly 200,000 metric tons was large, Russia harvested over three times that much, he said. And while sales of Russian fish are banned in the United States, Alaska still competes with Russian fish in the global marketplace, he said.

Global inflation is another challenge, causing demand for seafood to slide, he said, while high interest rates are squeezing harvesters and processors.

“There is no silver bullet to solve the challenges we face, and this situation certainly will not turn around overnight,” Woodrow said.

John Hanrahan, OBI’s chief executive, identified some potential state actions that could provide some relief. He suggested increased funding for ASMI to broaden markets, loan guarantees to help offset the impact of high interest rates, and purchases of Alaska seafood for state food-assistance programs – similar to the recently announced U.S. Department of Agriculture commitment to buy large quantities of salmon and pollock for federal nutrition and school lunch programs.

The salmon task force work of the early 2000s resulted in some legislation and policy changes. In general, industry and state efforts at that time started to focus on differentiating Alaska wild salmon as a premium product. Within a decade, that focus on higher quality, more niche marketing and new markets was showing some success, according to a 2012 analysis by Gunnar Knapp of the University of Alaska Anchorage’s Institute for Social and Economic Research.

STORY TAGS:

[Alaska](#), [Russia](#), [salmon](#), [OBI](#)

Silver Bay Seafoods Acquiring Trident’s Ketchikan Processing Facility; Everything You Need To Know

March 14, 2024

Silver Bay Seafoods is in the final stages of acquiring Trident Seafoods’ Ketchikan processing facility, the companies confirmed Wednesday afternoon.

Trident announced late last year that it planned on selling four shore-based processing plants in Alaska — Kodiak, Ketchikan, Petersburg, and False Pass. The seafood giant gave an update last week that it was close to finalizing sales of the plants in Petersburg, Ketchikan and False Pass. Now, the company has confirmed that the Ketchikan plant will be sold to Silver Bay Seafoods.

“We are excited to add this facility to the Silver Bay family and appreciate Trident’s focus on finding the best solution for the community, employees, and fleet,” commented Silver Bay Seafoods President and CEO Cora Campbell. “We look forward to operating the Ketchikan facility, along with our Southeast facilities in Sitka and Craig, for the 2024 salmon season.



The Ketchikan plant, which is dedicated entirely to processing salmon, is located approximately 100 miles north of the Canadian border in the Southeast panhandle of Alaska. The company noted that in addition to canned and frozen salmon, the plant also packs and ships fresh salmon in season for direct distribution.

Silver Bay Seafoods’ purchase of the plant comes a little more than a year after the fishermen-owned processor purchased Seattle-based [Orca Bay Foods](#). Campbell said in a statement in January 2023 that it was a strategic acquisition which “provides opportunity for our fishermen owners to not only own their own primary processing plant but own the secondary processor as well.”

As SeafoodNews’ Peggy Parker reported at the time, fifteen years ago Silver Bay was an upstart group of fishermen armed with the temerity to want a broader role in processing, distribution and marketing. Today, that initial vertical integration has positioned them as one of Alaska’s top salmon buyers with six large processing facilities. They also own three processing plants and several offload sites along the California coast serving a robust squid fleet.

Silver Bay and Trident are currently engaged in a “standard due diligence process and negotiating final deal documents.”

“Trident and Silver Bay are structuring the transaction around a shared goal of ensuring a seamless transition that supports the fleet, employees, and the Ketchikan community,” said Joe Bundrant, CEO of Trident Seafoods. “As difficult as it is to part with the Ketchikan operation, it will be a great addition to Silver Bay’s portfolio. More importantly, Silver Bay will be a great partner to the many stakeholders dependent on this plant.”

The sale of Trident’s plant is expected to be finalized next month. As noted above, the company said that they are also entering final stages for its other Alaska shoreside plants, although the potential buyers have not yet been identified.

“We know this is an unsettling time, but the company has not been standing still,” said Jeff Welbourn, Senior Vice President of Alaska Operations. “We’re moving as quickly as possible to minimize the impacts on the fleet, our employees, and the communities.”

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STORY TAGS:

[mergers and acquisitions](#), [Trident Seafoods](#), [Silver Bay Seafoods](#)

Story Posted: 3/14/2024 8:42:32 AM

Source: SeafoodNews.com

Trident Seafoods Confirms Sale of Petersburg Facilities To E.C. Phillips & Son

March 15, 2024

A second buyer of one of Trident Seafoods' four plants for sale has been named. The seafood giant announced Friday that it has reached an agreement to sell its processing plant, bunkhouse, galley and two housing units in Petersburg, Alaska, to E.C. Phillips & Son Inc.

E.C. Phillips & Son currently operates year-round out of Ketchikan and Craig, Alaska. Trident's sale of their Petersburg facilities to E.C. Phillips & Son is expected to close in April.

“E.C. Phillips & Son is a well-established family company with an almost 100-year history in the Alaska fishing industry,” said Trident CEO Joe Bundrant. “The company has an excellent reputation for quality and support, making it a great fit for Petersburg.”



Trident had [announced in December](#) that it would be putting its seasonal plants in Ketchikan, Petersburg and False Pass up for sale, as well as its year-round shoreside plant in Kodiak. Bundrant said at the time that “bold action is necessary to deliver fair value to fleet, communities, and all stakeholders into the future.”

[Earlier this month](#) the company gave an update revealing that it was close to finalizing the sale of the plants in Petersburg, Ketchikan and False Pass. The company also noted that it had “multiple parties” interested in the facility in Kodiak, which is more extensive than the others.

“We have been intentional about finding buyers who will take great care of the fleet and employees and who will integrate themselves into the communities,” Bundrant said.

Since then, Silver Bay Seafoods has been [named as the buyer](#) of the Ketchikan processing facility. The company is said to be in the final stages of acquiring the plant, with Silver Bay Seafoods President and CEO Cora Campbell commenting that they are looking forward to operating the Ketchikan facility, along with their Southeast facilities in Sitka and Craig, for the 2024 salmon season.

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OBI Seafoods, Peter Pan Seafood Awarded USDA Section 32 Salmon Contract

March 13, 2024

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service put out a request in early February that it was seeking 1,139,999.976 cases of canned pink salmon. Now, the PCA Report has been released, revealing that two companies — OBI Seafoods and Peter Pan Seafood Company — received the Section 32 salmon contract.

OBI Seafoods was awarded 1,083,760 cases of 24/14.75 oz canned pink salmon with a weighted average price of \$48.0600, not to exceed the award value of \$53,992,923.20. Peter Pan Seafood Company was awarded 367,840 cases of 24/14.75 oz canned pink salmon with a weighted average price of \$45.0500, not to exceed an award value of \$17,240,660.80.



This award for canned pink salmon follows a recent award for canned red salmon under CCC Fish. The CCC Fish bid, which opened on February 9, was seeking 173,599.908 cases of 24/7.5 oz canned red salmon and 148,959.804 cases of 24/14.75 oz canned red salmon. According to the PCA Report released by the USDA, Kanaway Seafoods, OBI Seafoods and Peter Pan Seafood Company have all been awarded bids. Kanaway was awarded 2,800 cases of 24/7.5 oz canned red salmon with a weighted average price of \$56.4800, not to exceed an award value of \$158,144. OBI Seafoods was awarded 100,320 cases of 24/14.75 oz canned red salmon with a weighted average price of \$105.4999, not to exceed an award value of \$10,718,188.80. OBI was also awarded a contract for 24/7.5 oz canned red salmon; 61,600 cases with a weighted average price of \$58.0540, not to exceed an award value of \$3,639,328.00. Peter Pan Seafood Company was also awarded contracts for both 24/14.75 oz and 24/7.5 oz. For 14.75 oz the company was awarded 51,680 cases with a weighted average price of \$104.6492, not to exceed an award value of \$5,695,652.80. For 7.5 oz Peter Pan was awarded 218,400 cases with a weighted average price of \$42.1123, not to exceed an award value of \$10,339,056.00.

Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, along with Representative Mary Peltola, applauded the seafood purchase request when it was announced last month.

“USDA’s Section 32 purchase announcement is great news for Alaska — almost \$100 million of Alaska seafood for people experiencing food insecurity,” commented Senator Murkowski. “This purchase won’t just bolster Alaska’s seafood industry and support our coastal communities, but will help bring the highest-quality and

healthiest seafood products in the world to families in need. I am grateful for the USDA's investment in our fishermen and the health of Americans."

Senator Sullivan added that "we will continue to work on many fronts to advance policies and legislation that provide greater stability and more opportunities for the thousands of Alaskans who make up our world-class, sustainable seafood industry."

"Salmon have supported Alaskan communities for centuries with nutritious food, good jobs, and a fishing tradition that binds us together," said Representative Peltola. "This purchase builds on the momentum of last year's major Section 32 order and shows that the federal government is recognizing the unique quality and importance of Alaskan seafood. I'm grateful to my colleagues in the Alaska Delegation for continuing to highlight this issue with me, supporting our fisheries, and feeding those in need. I'm excited to see USDA make this step and will keep working to get more Alaskan seafood in federal programs and supermarkets across the country."

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) had also commented on the purchase request last month, saying that this purchase "will be a boon for Alaskan fishermen, processors and communities who have faced challenging conditions in 2023."

Photo Credit: Shutterstock/ Il. studio

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STORY TAGS:

[USDA](#), [salmon](#), [OBI Seafoods](#), [Peter Pan Seafood Company](#)

Story Posted: 3/13/2024 10:54:29 AM

Source: SeafoodNews.com

Import Ban on Russian Seafood Into U.S. Receives Extension To May

February 21, 2024

In the final days of 2023, President Joseph R. Biden [signed an Executive Order](#) on “taking additional steps with respect to the Russian Federation’s harmful actions.” The U.S. had already banned imports of Russian seafood, but the latest Executive Order closed a loophole that allowed Russian-caught seafood, processed in China, to enter the country. The government gave U.S. importers a deadline of February 21 to bring in any Russian-origin seafood that was already under contract or written agreement prior to December 22. Now, importers have an extension to bring in Russian-origin products.



To briefly backtrack, [in March 2022](#), President Biden issued an Executive Order prohibiting the importation of “fish, seafood and preparations thereof” from the Russian Federation. The ban was part of a move to hold Russia accountable following the country’s attack on Ukraine. Seafood items with the following HTSUS classifications were banned: 0301.11.00 to 0301.99.03; 0302.11.00 to 0302.99.00; 0303.11.00 to 0303.99.00; 0304.31.00 to 0304.99.91; 0305.20.20 to 0305.79.00; 0306.11.00 to 0306.99.01; 0307.11.00 to 0307.99.03; 0308.11.00 to 0308.90.01; 0309.10.05 to 0309.90.90; 1603.00.10; 1603.00.90; 1604.11.20 to 1604.32.40; 1605.10.05 to 1605.69.00; 0508.00.0000; 2301.20.0010; 2310.20.0090; 1504.10.20 to 1504.20.60; and 2106.90.9998. However, this did not include seafood from Russia that had been processed in China. That Executive Order initially required seafood products to enter the country before March 25, 2022 — but later received an extension to June 23, 2022.

Then, in December 2023, Biden announced his plans to further prohibit Russian pollock, cod, salmon and crab from entering the country. As mentioned above, importers were granted until February to get already contracted product into the country. However, some members of the industry pushed for an extension — and ultimately got one.

The latest update from the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control reads:

“(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this general license, all transactions prohibited by the determination of December 22, 2023 made pursuant to section 1(a)(i)(B) of Executive Order (E.O.) 14068, as amended by E.O. 14114 (“Prohibitions Related to Imports of Certain Categories of Fish, Seafood, and Preparations Thereof”), that are ordinarily incident and necessary to the importation into the United States of seafood derivative products that were loaded onto a vessel at the port of loading prior to 12:01 a.m. eastern standard time on February 20, 2024,

pursuant to written contracts or written agreements entered into prior to December 22, 2023, are authorized through 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time, May 31, 2024.”

In plain terms, this means that product that was loaded onto a vessel prior to 12:01 a.m. EST on February 20, 2024, and had a contract in place prior to the Executive Order on December 22, 2023, will be allowed to enter the country through 12:01 EST on May 31, 2024. [You can find the notice here.](#)

Urner Barry market reporters say that they are not seeing immediate impact so far, but that there are indications from some market participants that upward pricing pressure is noted. Prior to this additional ban, the groundfish market as a whole has been quiet and under downward pricing pressure. Inventories are reported to be adequate to long by most. However, all are watching the situation closely, as replacement product or substitutions could be at a much different pricing level.

While the recent notice doesn't explain the reasoning behind the extension, there is no ignoring the impact that the attacks in the Red Sea have been having on shipping. As J.P. Morgan noted in a recent blog post, 30% of global container trade passes through the Suez Canal, so the Red Sea shipping crisis is “upending supply chains.”

“The lengthening of supplier delivery times acts as an adverse supply shock” said J.P. Morgan Senior Economist Nora Sentivanyi. “The rerouting of ships around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope equates to a roughly 30% increase in transit times, and this implies an approximately 9% reduction in effective global container shipping capacity.”

Most shipping companies are rerouting their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope. But just earlier this week the Iran-backed Houthi militant group launched an attack on a general cargo ship, Rubymar, sailing under the flag of Belize. A Houthi spokesperson said that the ship “suffered catastrophic damage” and is at risk of potentially sinking in the Gulf of Aden.

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[Russia](#), [Imports](#), [Pollock](#), [Crab](#), [cod](#), [salmon](#)

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Other interesting articles of note:

Access the links to these articles on the DIPAC website version of the Board book for easy reading:

1. NOAA Arctic Report on Salmon 2023: <https://arctic.noaa.gov/report-card/report-card-2023/divergent-responses-of-western-alaska-salmon-to-a-changing-climate/#:~:text=Changes%20in%20salmon%20abundance,2>).
2. USDA Climate Change & Wild Foods in Alaska: <https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northwest/topic/climate-change-and-wild-foods-alaska>
3. DIPAC Collaboration with NOAA on eDNA study: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/new-study-sheds-light-detection-range-edna>
4. Chinook Genetic Study – Andrews Creek NOAA: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/cracking-code-scientists-use-dna-examine-differences-between-hatchery-and-wild-chinook>