

**Homer Advisory Committee  
Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Kachemak Research Reserve Building**

**I. Call to Order:** 18:00 by Douglas Malone

**II. Roll Call:**

First Name	Last Name	Present	Excused/ Unexcused
Douglas	Malone	x	
Dan	Miotke	x	
Lauren	Wolford	x	
Dave	Lyon	x	
Wesley	Humbyrd		Unexcused
Cory	DeCook	x	
Cory	Loos		Excused
Andy	Fetterhoff		Unexcused
George	Matz	x	
Bill	Brock		Excused
Josh	Wickboldt	x	
Dan	Anderson	x	
Tom	Young		Excused
Matt	Hakala	x	
Thomas	Hagberg	x	
Sid	Wolford	x	
Billy	Hayden	x	

**Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8**

12 Members Present

**III. Fish and Game Staff Present:**

Mike Booz - Lower Cook Inlet Area Management  
Jason Herreman - Wildlife Biologist

**IV. Guests Present:**

Jamie O'Connor - Deputy Director of Alaska Marine Conservation Council  
Loretta Brown - Salmon State  
Steve Brown - Proposal 186 / ACR 5  
Eric Lehm - Charter Fisherman  
Lynn Whitmore - Coho Management Plan

**V. List of User Groups Present:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**VI. Approval of Agenda:** Approved

**VII. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Approved

**VIII. Reports:**

**a. Chair's report: Douglas Malone**

Thank you to Vice Chair Dan for running a successful meeting last month. We will discuss game proposals tonight if we have time.

**b. ADF&G: N/A**

**IX. New Business**

- a. 2026 Cook Inlet Proposals
- b. Board of Fisheries Agenda Change Request 5
- c. Board of Fisheries Statewide Finfish Proposals
- ~~d. Board of Game Southcentral Proposals~~
- e. Other Fish and Game Business as Needed

## **1. 2026 Cook Inlet Proposals**

**Lynn Whitmore:** New Proposal for Coho Management Plan for Lower Cook Inlet (see proposal attached to email)

There is currently no formal coho management plan for Lower Cook Inlet, despite declining numbers. Lynn would like to pursue development of a plan through the Homer AC, including coordination with the Ninilchik AC. Dave was contacted, but no meeting is scheduled until January. The hope is that this proposal could also influence coho management discussions in other regions. The proposed 4,000 fish escapement goal reflects the current 10-year average.

### **Discussion:**

Question (Matt Q.): Is there currently a forecast for coho?

Answer (Mike, ADF&G): Coho forecasts are very loose and largely unreliable. Because coho return after only one year at sea, there is no effective way to forecast runs ahead of time. Management is handled in-season.

Question (Doug Q.): Do we have baseline numbers for the Anchor River?

Answer (Mike, ADF&G): Escapement has historically ranged from under 2,000 fish to over 30–40,000. In recent years, runs have been relatively low. The region is funding a weir to better monitor coho going forward. The department is proposing an escapement goal range of 2,500–6,000 in the next proposal cycle. This proposal would support a more conservative fishery even

when escapement falls within that goal range.

Question (Dan A.): What about personal boats and charter boats fishing outside of state waters (Silver Ridge area)?

Answer (Mike, ADF&G): Everything south of the Alaska Peninsula (AP) line, even in federal waters, is still considered a state fishery for departmental decision-making.

Question (Tom): What about catch and release as a management option?

Answer (Mike, ADF&G): Catch and release is an option the department could use. On the Anchor River, fishing is only open for two miles, so coho are only briefly exposed to catch-and-release pressure. Unlike king salmon management—where the river can be fully closed when escapement is low—coho management is complicated by mixed-species fisheries. As a result, retention may be closed while catch and release remains open.

Question (Dan M.): What are the charter representatives' opinions on this proposal?

Answer (Josh): It feels like the department has already been moving in this direction, so the proposal would not be unexpected.

### **General Feedback & Recommendations**

- Matt suggested revising the proposal to start with a one-fish limit and increasing limits incrementally if escapement goals are met.
- Lynn recommended avoiding explicit catch-and-release language in the proposal to reduce the risk of it being rejected by the Board.
- Dan A. expressed concern that even with retention closures, catch-and-release fisheries still interact with coho stocks. He referenced king salmon management on the Kenai as a cautionary example and emphasized the need for stricter measures now to avoid worse outcomes in 10 years.

Lynn asked for a motion to continue refining the proposal and potentially co-authoring it once it is formally scheduled. Dan M. will continue working on revisions.

## **2. Board of Fisheries Agenda Change Request 5**

### **Steve Brown: Proposal 186 / ACR 5**

The Board has a policy outlining the criteria for accepting ACRs. The Department reviewed ACR 5 against that policy and determined it did not meet the criteria. The Department was also unable to state definitive escapement numbers, and biologists were not prepared to say there was a conservation issue. Despite this, the Board placed the issue on its own agenda. This has created the potential for a major Cook Inlet issue in March that was not anticipated by the public. There is also another meeting scheduled next year, making this process a disservice to public participation.

This proposal would not accomplish meaningful conservation outcomes and would instead push fishing effort into the EEZ. Vessels that currently stay in state waters would likely move

into the EEZ, resulting in the same overall fishing effort, just displaced a few miles offshore. Even if there is a conservation gain, it would primarily be a redistribution of effort rather than a reduction.

This is only the second year of the EEZ fishery. Many fishermen have stayed in state waters due to the added cost and record-keeping requirements associated with fishing in the EEZ. If this proposal passes, it would impose additional costs on the fleet.

The Department is expected to state that it will not take a position on the proposal because it considers this an allocation issue rather than a conservation issue. This proposal should have been addressed at a regular meeting next year, rather than being taken up out of cycle.

### **3. Board of Fisheries Statewide Finfish Proposals**

#### **Proposals 163, 164, 165**

##### **Jamie O'Connor: Rep from HHA/Deputy director of Alaska Marine Conservation Council**

Asking for AC support for 163, 164, and 165

There has been a long-standing discussion regarding pelagic trawling and its interaction with the seafloor. There is concern about how frequently pelagic trawl gear may be contacting or spending time on the seabed.

Participants in the fishery have stated that based on descriptions provided by some pelagic trawl operators regarding their fishing practices, the activity appears to resemble bottom trawling rather than midwater trawling, potentially indicating the use of improper gear or noncompliance with existing regulations. Observations of trawl scars on the seafloor were cited as evidence of seabed interaction.

The objective of these proposals is not to create new regulations, but to ensure enforcement of rules that already exist. Specifically, pelagic trawling is defined as midwater trawling and should remain off the seafloor. We would like to see the existing definition of pelagic trawling enforced. These would include requiring sensors to verify gear position in the water and mandating the use of salmon excluders in state waters.

##### **Loretta Brown: Salmon State**

Asking for AC support for 163, 164, and 165

There is no dispute that pelagic trawl gear is contacting the seabed during fishing operations. Pelagic trawl operators have testified before federal authorities that their gear does, in fact, touch the seafloor. Fishing effects models used by NOAA to evaluate seafloor habitat impacts are based, in part, on information provided by trawl operators regarding bottom contact. These models indicate that approximately 40–80% of the affected area experiences some level of seafloor contact. Pollock are typically targeted within approximately 3–9 meters of the seafloor.

The intent of these proposals is not to change fisheries or gear types, but to increase transparency and accountability so that both the public and the Department have a clear understanding of fishing practices and their actual habitat impacts. Most Alaska state waters

prohibit bottom trawling, and enforcing the existing definition of pelagic trawling would support and reinforce those prohibitions.

At the meeting in Cordova a primary concern raised regarding the Prince William Sound trawl fishery was the difficulty of enforcing the pelagic trawl definition due to the lack of observers. The use of bottom-contact sensors was discussed as a potential tool to improve accountability and enforceability.

# Alaska Board of Fish Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues Meeting

March 17-March 20, 2026 | Anchorage, AK | Comment Deadline March 2, 2026

Proposal Number	Proposal Description		
Support, Support as Amended, Oppose, No Action	Number Support	Number Oppose	Comments, Discussion (list Pros and Cons), Amendments to Proposal, Voting Notes
<p><i>Note: Effective September 2019, when abstentions occur, the action or decision of a majority of the remaining members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is an act of the committee. For example, a vote tally of 7-6-2 means the motion carries. Members abstaining from voting must provide an explanation that is included in the committee record.</i></p>			
<p><i>Commercial Fisheries</i></p>			
<p><i>Groundfish Gear and Closed Waters</i></p>			
163	<p>Define all trawl gear operated inside state waters as non-pelagic and develop new performance and monitoring standards to allow state-waters pelagic trawling to occur on a case-by-case basis, as follows</p>		
Support	12	0	<p>Heard from Jamie O'Connor: Rep from HHA/Deputy director of Alaska Marine Conservation Council &amp; Loretta Brown: Salmon State as stakeholders</p> <p><b>Question (Tom H):</b> Does Senator Kronk's proposal would address these concerns.</p> <p><b>Jamie Response:</b> The proposal pertains to a different type of gear and does not directly regulate pelagic trawl operations. While the legislation could allow for determinations that some pelagic trawl gear functions as bottom trawling, the proposal leaves significant details undefined. The legislation does not address the specific issue of pelagic trawl fisheries that are managed as midwater trawlers but are operating in contact with the seafloor, leaving this issue unresolved</p>

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			<p><b>Question (Dan M.):</b> What would be the cost of the salmon excluder and sensors?</p> <p><b>Answer (Jamie):</b> Salmon excluders are fairly economical. The cost of sensors would need to be determined through agreement on specifications.</p> <p><b>Question (Doug Q.):</b> How long have salmon excluders been in use?</p> <p><b>Answer (Loretta):</b> Approximately 15–20 years, with introduction around 2012.</p> <p><b>Josh:</b> Federal waters already require salmon excluders,, so most operators likely already have them.</p> <p><b>Billy:</b> Use of salmon excluders has become standard practice.</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> Opinion that this is a federal issue</p> <p><b>Response (Jamie):</b> Salmon excluders are not solely a federal issue, and the state process has an opportunity to lead with these proposals.</p>
164	Establish bottom contact monitoring requirements for pelagic trawl gear operated inside state waters, as follows		
Support	12	0	<p>Heard from Jamie O’Connor: Rep from HHA/Deputy director of Alaska Marine Conservation Council &amp; Loretta Brown: Salmon State as stakeholders</p> <p><b>Question (Tom H):</b> Does Senator Kronk’s proposal would address these concerns.</p> <p><b>Jamie Response:</b> The proposal pertains to a different type of gear and does not directly regulate pelagic trawl operations. While the legislation could allow for determinations that some pelagic trawl gear functions as bottom trawling, the proposal leaves significant details undefined. The legislation does not address the specific issue of pelagic trawl fisheries that are managed as midwater trawlers but are operating in contact with the seafloor, leaving this issue unresolved</p> <p><b>Question (Dan M.):</b> What would be the cost of the salmon excluder</p>

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165	Establish salmon excluder requirements for all pelagic trawl gear operated inside state waters, as follows		
Support	12	0	<p>Heard from Jamie O’Connor: Rep from HHA/Deputy director of Alaska Marine Conservation Council &amp; Loretta Brown: Salmon State as stakeholders</p> <p><b>Question (Tom H):</b> Does Senator Kronk’s proposal would address these concerns.</p> <p><b>Jamie Response:</b> The proposal pertains to a different type of gear and does not directly regulate pelagic trawl operations. While the legislation could allow for determinations that some pelagic trawl gear functions as bottom trawling, the proposal leaves significant details undefined. The legislation does not address the specific issue of pelagic trawl fisheries that are managed as midwater trawlers but are operating in contact with the seafloor, leaving this issue unresolved</p> <p><b>Question (Dan M.):</b> What would be the cost of the salmon excluder and sensors?</p>

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166	Amend statewide definition of a mechanical jigging machine, as follows		
Support	11	0	1 Abstention (Doug)
169	Create a definition of groundfish coil spring or 'slinky pot,' as follows		
Support	12	0	<p><b>Billy:</b> There is currently no clear definition of what constitutes a "slinky pot." Some operators have been stitching pots together, creating ambiguity. It would likely be beneficial to provide a clear, standardized definition.</p>
170	Reduce the permitted egg take level of each hatchery permit containing pink and chum salmon by 25% of the current permitted capacity for those species, as follows		
Support	7	4	<p><b>Doug M.:</b> Hatchery inbreeding is a larger problem than we think it is. If left unchecked, it may contribute significantly to other fishery issues. Has intent to support this proposal and others that address similar concerns.</p> <p><b>Dan M.:</b> AC's located far from coastal communities, such as Fairbanks, making blanket cuts is not an ideal approach. Hatcheries undergo a strict annual permit renewal process, conducted through ADF&amp;G with community input, which provides a more appropriate forum for discussion and decision-making. In the North Pacific as a</p>

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			<p>whole, Alaska has a smaller percentage of hatchery releases compared to Japan and Russia. Reducing salmon releases could lead to increased abundance of pollock and other species, resulting in shifts in ecosystem dynamics.</p> <p><b>Dave L.:</b> Agrees that the Fairbanks AC's approach is problematic, but fishery management is not solely focused on protecting salmon.</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> Agrees with the concerns about the Fairbanks AC's approach but does not agree with hatchery fishing in general.</p> <p>1 Abstention (Billy)</p>
174	Allow the engine of a purse seine vessel or skiff to be shut off when the purse seine is deployed, as follows		
Support	12	0	<b>Sid:</b> There's no reason not to let people shut their skiffs off at this point.
<i>Sport Fisheries</i>			
<i>Bag and Annual Limits</i>			
176	Allow anglers fishing from the same vessel to pool bag and possession limits, as follows		
Support	6	5	<p><b>Josh:</b> There is a significant amount of catch-and-release fishing for undersized halibut.</p> <p><b>George:</b> Prefers to catch his own fish if he is paying for a charter trip.</p> <p><b>Lauren:</b> Concerns about food scarcity are not realistic on a \$500-per-head charter trip.</p> <p><b>Sid:</b> The proposed rule is likely to increase effort on secondary species. Understands the proposal but wished that the charter industry would be more transparent about its underlying motivations.</p> <p><b>Eric Lehm:</b> Charter operators are seeking to complete trips earlier</p> <p><b>Question (Sid):</b> Why does every client need to catch their limit?</p> <p><b>Answer (Eric Lehm):</b> Because clients want to catch their limits</p> <p>1 Abstention (Dave)</p>

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179	Establish a statewide annual limit for king salmon of 10 fish, as follows		
Opposed	0	12	<p><b>Dan M.:</b> It's more appropriate to manage this fishery by area rather than through blanket measures.</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> Setting a limit would primarily affect individuals under age 60 who do not have a permanent license.</p> <p><b>Mike (ADFG):</b> The Board does not have the authority to require permits. There may be future proposals for king salmon permits. When considering permit requirements, the Department evaluates both the burden on users and the administrative burden on the Department. He acknowledged that harvest data is not as complete as desired but suggested that the simplest approach would be to avoid requiring additional permits for charter fishermen, as their harvest is already recorded. Emphasized the importance of making any permit and reporting processes as straightforward as possible, avoiding duplicate reporting requirements.</p>
<i>Possession Requirements</i>			
180	Establish a statewide annual limit for king salmon of five fish, as follows		
Opposed	0	12	<p><b>Dan M.:</b> It's more appropriate to manage this fishery by area rather than through blanket measures.</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> Setting a limit would primarily affect individuals under age 60 who do not have a permanent license.</p> <p><b>Mike (ADFG):</b> The Board does not have the authority to require permits. There may be future proposals for king salmon permits. When considering permit requirements, the Department evaluates both the burden on users and the administrative burden on the Department. He acknowledged that harvest data is not as complete as desired but suggested that the simplest approach would be to avoid requiring additional permits for charter fishermen, as their harvest is already recorded. Emphasized the importance of making any permit and reporting processes as straightforward as possible,</p>

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			avoiding duplicate reporting requirements.
<i>Sport Fishing Gear</i>			
183	Amend regulations requiring conditions of fish available to inspection while in possession, as follows		
Opposed	0	12	<p><b>Mike (ADFG):</b> The Department’s intention with the proposal was to focus specifically on lingcod. Lingcod have a minimum size limit, there is currently no requirement to retain the carcass. Enforcement has been challenging at times when legally harvested fish are not retained, and some wildlife troopers brought these concerns to the Department’s attention.</p> <p>The proposal, as written, would require every boat to retain the carcasses of all fish species with both a bag limit and a size limit. In Southeast, EOs have been used to address carcass retention requirements.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> Majority consensus that the proposal, as written, would be logistically difficult to implement for port and harbor operations, and that the rule would be more effective if it were more specific to the species of concern.</p>
<i>Definitions</i>			
184	Align the sport fish definition of rockfish with the statewide definition, as follows		
Support	11	0	<p><b>Question (Billy):</b> Can Mike provide a clearer definition of rockfish?</p> <p><b>Answer (Mike ADFG):</b> The current state definition of rockfish is not standardized across all areas. The proposal would remove the “non-pelagic” category and replace it with three categories: demersal, shelf, and slope species. This change is intended to provide consistency across all fisheries harvesting rockfish. In areas such as Prince William Sound, this approach could allow adjustments to bag limits and provide harvest opportunities specifically for slope species. It would also improve data collection on harvests and enhance understanding of stock status.</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> Concern that this change could lead to overharvesting, as</p>

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			fishermen might attempt to target different species under multiple limits. <b>Mike (ADFG):</b> Addressing this concern would require a separate proposal. 1 Abstention (Dan A)
186/ACR 5	Reduce commercial salmon fishing opportunity with drift gillnet gear in the Central District of the Cook Inlet Area		
Opposed	0	11	<p>Heard from Steve Brown, Member of the Public</p> <p><b>Dan A.:</b> The proposal did not meet any of the established criteria required to be accepted as an ACR and the Board adopted the ACR and converted it into a proposal, which is inappropriate. The affected fishery currently receives only one opening per week in one area, and in the other area an opening occurs only when run strength is exceptionally strong. If this area is removed, the remaining fishing opportunity would be limited to corridor areas, where coho salmon are also harvested. The Board should consider not supporting the proposal and recognize the intent of this proposal is to reallocate fish to guides in the Valley.</p> <p><b>Question (Tom H.):</b> Given the record run this year, what will the 20-year average run look like?</p> <p><b>Answer (Dan A.):</b> Personal historical observations from the early 1990s, when fishing in the lower inlet, when coho abundance is high, fishermen will catch them.</p> <p>There are approximately 585 drift permits, with roughly 110 vessels classified as D boats. He estimated total participation at approximately 460–475 vessels, with maximum deliveries totaling approximately 365–370 vessels during the previous year.</p> <p>1 Abstention (Cory DeCook)</p>

#### 4. Other Fish and Game Business as Needed

**Dan A.:** Would like to explore limiting participation in Northern District fisheries for catch-and-release fishing when escapement goals are not being met. May draft a proposal himself and pursue it through the Board process.

**Dan M.:** Update on Fish and Game comments regarding the beaver trapping proposal. Chris (AMB) opposes closing beaver trapping, because beaver are not managed by drainage. Contact the Department and provide input if you have an interest in the issue.

**X. Set next meeting date:** Currently scheduled for Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm

**XI. Other:**

- Homer AC will let Leila know if anyone is going to the statewide finfish meeting
  - Dan A mentioned talking to Cory Loos about attendance
  - Josh expressed interest in attending

**XII. Adjournment:** 20:18

Minutes Recorded By: Lauren A. Wolford

Minutes Approved By: Douglas Malone

Date: 12.16.25