



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, AK 99802-1668

December 2, 2025

UPDATED

Agenda B-2: NMFS Management Report

Government Shutdown

Most Alaska Region personnel were furloughed from October 1 through November 12, but a number of our personnel worked either daily or intermittently to handle certain excepted functions and some activities that can be carried out using non-appropriated funds. Critical services we provided during that time include monitoring and managing fisheries to avoid exceeding catch limits, issuing quota so the Bering Sea crab fisheries could open, processing IFQ transfers and related transactions, monitoring the security of our IT systems, and completing ESA section 7 consultations on projects that are top administration priorities as well as emergency consultations on the typhoon Halong response in western Alaska. We appreciate stakeholders' understanding that we could only provide limited services during the lapse in appropriations.

While NMFS was unable to hold a Tribal engagement session prior to the December 2025 Council meeting due to the shutdown, we will hold a Tribal engagement session and invite Tribal consultation ahead of the February 2026 Council meeting. NMFS is in the process of scheduling the Tribal engagement session on the upcoming Council actions on chum salmon bycatch and 2026 Cook Inlet salmon harvest specifications and will reach out to our Tribal partners on details to participate.

Progress on Rulemaking

Highlights on progress since the October 2025 meeting include:

- On **September 3, 2025**, NMFS approved Amendment 125 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP). A final rule to implement Amendment 125 is under review. Amendment 125 and the final rule would allow smaller hook-and-line or pot catcher vessels operating in the Federal BSAI Pacific cod less than 60 feet hook-and-line or pot catcher vessel sector to harvest Pacific cod from the BSAI Pacific cod jig sector's allocation. *If published, NMFS anticipates implementing Amendment 125 for the 2027 Pacific cod fishing season, which opens on January 1, 2027.*
- On **October 2, 2025**, NMFS published a proposed rule to revise and standardize the time limit for assigning a management program to each haul for trawl catcher/processors participating in the groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) management areas. The comment period on this proposed rule ended on **November 3, 2025**. NMFS is preparing a final rule.
- On **November 19, 2025**, NMFS published a correction notice to correct the final rule published on July 7, 2025 to implement the Pacific Halibut Recreational Quota Entity Program Fee Collection (90 FR 29774) that inadvertently omitted an amendatory instruction to add the definition for "Charter vessel permit holder" to 50 CFR 300.61.



- On **December 1, 2025**, NMFS published a notice reopening the comment period on Regulatory Reform, Seafood Industry Challenges, and Innovative Approaches in Response to the Executive Order Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness from December 1, 2025 to December 15, 2025 ([90 FR 55089](#)). Details below.
- On **December 5, 2025**, NMFS will publish the standard prices and fee percentages for cost recovery for the Amendment 80 Program, the American Fisheries Act Program, Aleutian Islands Pollock, and the Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program. The cost recovery fee notice for the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program is under review.
- **The Status of Actions Report** provides additional detail.

Additional NMFS Documents

In addition to this B2 NMFS Management Report, NMFS also posted the following documents under this agenda item:

- Federal Register notice reopening comment period on E.O. 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness
- Guided Angler Fish Annual Report
- Inseason update on 2025 catch in the groundfish fisheries
- Status of Actions Report

NOAA Fisheries Re-Opens Comment Period on E.O. 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness

On August 27, 2025, NMFS published a notice in the Federal Register requesting comments on E.O. 14276 ([90 FR 41818](#)). The comment period closed on October 14, 2025 and NMFS is currently reviewing the 693 comments received.

NMFS reopened the comment period on Regulatory Reform, Seafood Industry Challenges, and Innovative Approaches in Response to the Executive Order Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness from December 1, 2025 to December 15, 2025 ([90 FR 55089](#), December 1, 2025). Comments must be received by 11:59 p.m. EDT on December 15, 2025.

Specifically, we are looking for input on the following issues:

- Regulations that govern fishing activities that may be suspended, revised, or rescinded.
- Challenges specific fisheries are facing, suggestions for innovative improvements, and examples of existing federal fishery regulations that could be modified to enhance U.S. fishing businesses.
- Ways to improve fisheries management and science.
- How can less expensive and more reliable technologies and cooperative research be used to support fisheries assessments?
- How can NMFS improve and modernize how it collects and uses data so federal fishery regulations better reflect what's happening on the water right now?
- What types of data, tools, or information do U.S. fishing businesses need most to deal with changing economic and/or environmental conditions and keep fishing? How can NMFS best support the development and use of these resources?
- How to expand exempted fishing permit programs to promote fishing opportunities nationwide?

Comments will be used to help identify specific actions we can take as we launch a bold, coordinated effort to revitalize the U.S. seafood sector. The effort underscores our commitment to addressing the recent decline in fisheries landings and revenue, boosting sustainable aquaculture, reducing the seafood trade deficit, and strengthening supply chain resilience. NMFS plans to share public comments relevant to each Fishery Management Council.

NMFS Inseason Annual Report Update

Due to the lapse in Federal appropriations from October 1 through November 12, 2025, the NMFS Inseason Annual Report is not available for the December Council meeting (with the detailed graphs and maps). NMFS plans to release the GOA and BSAI reports on the NMFS Alaska Region website in January, 2026, with a full year of 2025 catch. NMFS's usual inseason update with the 2025 catch data to date is posted under this B2 report.

2026 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) Update

Due to the lapse in Federal appropriations from October 1 through November 12, 2025, the Final 2026 ADP for Observers and Electronic Monitoring in the Groundfish and Halibut Fisheries off Alaska will be delayed until January 15, 2026. At this point in time, the Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division plans to proceed using the trip selection rates published in the [Draft 2026 ADP](#) (and presented under item C2 of the October 2025 NPFMC meeting agenda). We are actively working on finalizing the 2026 ADP. We will notify Council, industry, and our partners on or before January 15, if the Draft 2026 selection rates will be revised, and we will provide a link to the finalized rates at that time.

Chum Draft Environmental Impact Statement

On September 12, 2025, NMFS released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery for public comment. The public comment period will end on January 5, 2026. All comments will then be made available to the Council for review. To review the DEIS and for information on how to submit comments, please see the [NMFS Alaska Region webpage](#).

Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) Funding Implementation

NMFS staff have been collaborating with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to implement the new RQE halibut stamp requirement for the 2026 charter halibut fishing season. Charter halibut permit (CHP) holders will be able to purchase charter halibut stamps in their eFISH accounts starting January 1, 2026. As required by the RQE funding final rule ([90 FR 29774, July 7, 2025](#)), charter vessel guides will be able to validate stamps in their saltwater charter eLogbook for each charter vessel angler intending to catch and retain halibut beginning on February 1, 2026. Charter business owners will be able to track their stamp validations post-submission using an eLogbook data query, and these validations will be reflected in each CHP holder's eFISH account balance later in 2026. NMFS and ADF&G are also planning outreach activities to alert and educate charter halibut fishery participants.

Salmon Excluder Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)

On November 25, 2025, NMFS received a letter from North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation requesting a one-year extension of EFP #2025-01 to test salmon excluder devices in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery. The EFP holders requested the extension of the EFP through 2026 because fishing conditions in 2025 did not allow for adequate testing of salmon excluder designs. The EFP holders also requested a minor modification to allow the EFP to be initiated and paused in alignment with real-time chum bycatch occurrences, to provide greater flexibility in the timing of 2026 field operations. NMFS will review the request in a timely manner and notify the Council if the request is granted.

Cost Recovery Update

In response to the Council’s April 2025 motion, NMFS AKR sent a memorandum to organizations that submit incremental costs under cost recovery informing them of improvements to the 2025 cost recovery process and conducted informational meetings with organizations that submit costs under cost recovery. This memorandum included revised Alaska Region Guidance on Tracking Incremental Costs for Cost Recovery. These documents are posted to the Council’s October eAgenda under the NMFS B2 Report.

Since then, we’ve completed the cost recovery process for six programs: the Crab Rationalization Program, the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program, Amendment 80 Program, American Fisheries Act Program catcher vessels, Community Development Quota Program, and Aleutian Islands pollock (AIP). In response to growing interest from the Council and public for more timely information, the following tables provide a synopsis of agency costs and resulting proposed fee percentages for these programs, reflecting our ongoing commitment to transparency and timely communication regarding the cost recovery process. The 2025 percentage for AIP is zero because there was no AIP fishery in 2025, thus no associated harvest. NMFS will provide a complete annual cost recovery report to the Council at the June 2026 meeting.

Crab Rationalization Program Direct Program Costs by Year and Fee Percentages.

Year	NMFS AKR	NMFS AFSC	NOAA OLE	NMFS FSD	ADF&G	PSMFC	TOTAL COSTS	FEE %*
2025	\$344,9490	\$20,430	\$480,948	\$349	\$706,199	\$107,605	\$1,660,483	1.2%
2024	\$849,544	\$13,153	\$447,681	\$8,187	\$1,367,420	\$160,967	\$2,846,950	3.0%
Difference	-\$504,590	\$7,280	\$33,260	-\$7,838	-\$661,227	-\$53,362	-\$1,186,470	

*The billed fee percentage was limited by the Magnuson-Stevens Act statutory cap of 3.0 percent of the ex-vessel value of the fishery in a Program year.

Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program Direct Program Costs by Year and 2025 Fee Percentage.

Year	NMFS AKR	NMFS AFSC	NOAA OLE	ADF&G	TOTAL COSTS	FEE %*
2025	\$217,174	\$2,897	\$145,200	\$4,705	\$369,976	3.0%
2024	\$296,568	\$1,958	\$65,133	-	\$363,659	1.92%
Difference	-\$79,394	\$939	\$80,067	\$4,705	\$6,317	

*The billed fee percentage was limited by the Magnuson-Stevens Act statutory cap of 3.0 percent of the ex-vessel value of the fishery in a Program Year.

Amendment 80 Program Direct Program Costs by Year and 2025 Fee Percentage.

Year	NMFS AKR	NMFS AFSC	NOAA OLE	ADF&G	PSMFC	TOTAL COSTS	FEE %*
2025	\$612,990	\$381,000	\$537,681	\$10,721	\$78,030	\$1,620,439	1.55%
2024	\$536,901	\$394,665	\$620,409	\$10,930	\$126,865	\$1,689,760	1.86%
Difference	\$76,098	-\$13,657	-\$82,728	-\$209	-\$53,362	-\$69,330	

American Fisheries Act Program Direct Program Costs by Year and 2025 Fee Percentage.

Year	NMFS AKR	NMFS AFSC	NOAA OLE	ADF&G	PSMFC	TOTAL COSTS	FEE %*
2025	\$249,216	\$145,220	\$190,430	\$5,515	\$32,621	\$623,010	0.35%
2024	\$242,094	\$132,916	\$88,509	\$5,950	\$52,968	\$522,430	0.24%
Difference	\$7,122	\$12,300	\$101,921	-\$435	-\$20,347	\$100,577	

Community Development Quota Program Direct Program Costs by Year and 2025 Fee Percentage.

Year	NMFS AKR	NMFS AFSC	NOAA OLE	ADF&G	TOTAL COSTS	FEE %*
2025	\$206,262	\$136,770	\$418,124	\$32,124	\$793,287	1.19%
2024	\$309,648	\$128,330	\$497,298	\$35,838	\$971,118	1.38%
Difference	-\$103,386	\$8,442	-\$79,174	-\$3,7140	-\$177,831	

IFQ Medical Transfer Limitations

NMFS would like to remind participants in the Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ) Program of the limitations applicable to the use of emergency medical transfers authorized

at [§ 679.42\(d\)\(2\)](#). The medical transfer restrictions state that NMFS will not approve a medical transfer if the applicant has received a medical transfer in any 3 of the previous 7 calendar years for any medical reason. On February 27, 2023, NMFS issued a final rule to exclude medical transfers approved in 2020, 2021, or 2022 from the use restriction detailed at [§ 679.42\(d\)\(2\)\(iv\)\(C\) \(88 FR 12259\)](#). If an IFQ holder has used this medical transfer provision in each of the last three calendar years (2023, 2024, and 2025), then this limitation will prevent NMFS from approving the use of the medical transfer provision through the 2029 calendar year. For questions, please reach out to the Restricted Access Management Division at RAM.Alaska@noaa.gov or by phone at (800) 304-4846 option #2 or (907) 586-7474.

Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation on the BSAI FMP

SFD prepared a Biological Assessment and submitted it to PRD on May 15, 2025, to reinitiate consultation on the groundfish fisheries managed under BSAI FMP, including State of Alaska parallel groundfish fisheries. PRD is completing a Biological Opinion on the effects of the BSAI groundfish FMP on ESA-listed species and designated critical habitat. In accordance with [NMFS Policy Directive 01-117: Integration of Endangered Species Act Section 7 with MSA Processes](#), the Regional Administrator will provide a draft of the BSAI BiOp to the Council Executive Director and Chair for review as discussed at the October 2025 Council meeting. The draft has been delayed due to the recent lapse in appropriations.