



Marine Conservation Alliance

promoting sustainable fisheries to feed the world

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Adak Fisheries, LLC
Alyeska Seafoods
Alaska Crab Coalition
Alaska Draggers Association
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Alaskan Leader Fisheries
Alaska Pacific Seafoods
Aleutian Islands Brown Crab Coalition
Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
Akutun, Adka, False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, Nikolski, St. George
At-Sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.
Aleknagik, Clark's Point, Dillingham, Egegik, Ekuk, Ekwook, King Salmon, Levelock, Manokotak, Naknek, Pilot Point, Port Heiden, Portage Creek, South Naknek, Toggak, Twin Hills, Ugashik
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
St. Paul
City of Unalaska
Coastal Villages Region Fund
Cheforiak, Chevak, Eek, Goodnews Bay, Hooper Bay, Kipruk, Korngiganaq, Kwigillingok, Makrooyak, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nightmute, Oscarville, Platinum, Quinhagak, Scammon Bay, Toksook Bay, Tuntutuliak, Tununak
Groundfish Forum
High Seas Catchers Cooperative
Icicle Seafoods
McCarty and Associates
Mid-Water Trawlers Cooperative
Mothership Group
PV Excellence
PV Ocean Phoenix
PV Golden Alaska
North Pacific Longline Association
Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
Brevig Mission, Diomedes, Elm, Gambell, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome, Saint Michael, Savoonga, Shaktolik, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, White Mountain
Pacific Seafood Processors Association
Alaska General Seafoods
Alyeska Seafoods, Inc.
Golden Alaska Seafoods, Inc.
Peter Pan Seafoods, Inc.
Premier Pacific Seafoods, Inc.
Supreme Alaska Seafoods, Inc.
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Wardis Cove Packing Company
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
Westward Seafoods, Inc.
Prowler Fisheries
Trident Seafoods Corp.
United Catcher Boats
Akutun Catcher Vessel Assoc.
Arctic Enterprise Assoc.
Mothership Fleet Cooperative
Northern Victor Fleet
Peter Pan Fleet Cooperative
Unalaska Co-op
Unisea Fleet Cooperative
Westward Fleet Cooperative
U.S. Seafoods
Waterfront Associates
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
Alakanuk, Emmonak, Grayling, Kotik, Mountain Village, Nunamiq

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MCA Supports Scientific Approach to Setting Catch Levels Backs Council Decision to Reduce Pollock Catch during Cyclic Downturn

The Marine Conservation Alliance (MCA), a coalition of harvesters, processors, and communities involved with Alaska groundfish and crab including the Bering Sea pollock fishery, expressed support today for a decision by federal fishery managers to reduce the Bering Sea pollock catch to 1 million metric tons in 2008.

The 26 percent reduction, down from 2007's catch of 1.35 million tons, was taken by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council as a precautionary measure to protect the pollock stock during a predicted downward trend.

"This cyclic downturn was not unexpected. The responsible course of action is to follow our scientists' recommendation to reduce harvests as a precautionary measure," said MCA executive director David Benton. "This has been the way we've done business in Alaska for over 30 years with the result that there are no overfished stocks."

The action followed the recommendations by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Groundfish Plan Team and was based on recent stock assessment data including annual surveys of Bering Sea groundfish. Those same surveys found indications that the pollock stock may see new recruitment over the next few years.

"We've known this downturn was coming because a large age class of fish that dominated the population was naturally getting older. Fortunately, it seems a new age class may soon replace them," Benton said. "Preliminary indications are the recruitment of new pollock in 2006 was the largest in ten years. That's a positive sign but until it can be verified, we support the scientists' view to err on the side of conservation."

Bering Sea pollock is one of the world's most abundant fisheries and accounts for a third of all fish harvested in the U.S. Fluctuations in the catch level are not unusual. Pollock catch limits were held below 1 million tons from 1977 to 1983. More recently, the catch limit dropped to 980,000 tons in 1999 after which the

fishery rebounded and produced record catches of almost 1.5 million tons from 2002 to 2006.

“Bering Sea pollock is one of the world’s most abundant fishery resources and is a dynamic population,” Benton said. “Despite this cyclic trend, the pollock resource is still healthy and it will remain healthy as long as we continue to follow our scientists’ recommendations. That approach is why Alaska is respected around the globe as a model of fishery management.”

Based in Juneau, the Marine Conservation Alliance is a coalition of seafood processors, fishermen, coastal communities and support industries involved in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish and crab fisheries. The MCA promotes science-based conservation measures to ensure sustainable fisheries in Alaska. For more information, visit www.marineconservationalliance.org.

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Bering Sea Pollock Fact Sheet
in metric tons

Eastern Bering Sea pollock biomass	4,360,000
Calculated allowable harvest level for 2008	1,170,000
Recommended Total Allowable Catch in 2008	1,000,000
Total Allowable Catch in 2007	1,394,000
Actual Harvest in 2007	1,350,530
Total US Seafood landings in 2006	4,304,000
Alaska Pollock as a Percentage of US landings in 2006	35%

Sources: Draft NPFMC Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/Docs/drafts/draft_assessments.htm; US Department of Commerce Fisheries of the United States 2006 <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/fus/fus06/>