



NOAA
FISHERIES

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Status Review of Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon

On May 24, 2024, NOAA Fisheries published a positive 90-day finding on a petition to list one or more evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) of Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), meaning that our initial review indicates that the petitioned action may be warranted. Therefore, NOAA Fisheries has commenced an in-depth review of the species' status within the Gulf of Alaska.



Where are we in the petition process?

The chart to the left outlines the steps in the petition process. Since publishing the positive 90-day finding, we have convened a team of scientists led by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to conduct a comprehensive status review of Chinook salmon populations in the Gulf of Alaska. To inform the status review, we are soliciting information from the public about the species' status until September 6, 2024. We will then develop the status review and determine whether listing is warranted.

What is a status review?

The status review team will collect and analyze the best available scientific and commercial information on Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon, including its biology, ecology, abundance and population trends, and threats to the species, in order to evaluate the species' current status and extinction risk. The team will

develop a status review report that will inform our decision whether any ESU should be proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA.

What is an ESU?

Under the ESA, an ESU is a Pacific salmon population or group of populations that is substantially reproductively isolated from other populations of the same species and represents an important component of the evolutionary legacy of the species, meaning it contributes substantially to the ecological/genetic diversity of the species as a whole. NOAA Fisheries' ESU Policy (56 FR 58612; November 20, 1991) defines the criteria for identifying a Pacific salmon population or group of populations as an ESU. An ESU can be listed as an endangered species or a threatened species under the ESA.

When will the status review be completed?

The status review report and 12-month finding will be completed in early 2025. If NOAA Fisheries determines that listing one or more ESUs is warranted, we will publish a positive 12-month finding and proposed rule in the *Federal Register* and seek public comments on the proposed listing(s). If we determine that no ESU warrants listing, we will publish a negative 12-month finding.

How does NOAA Fisheries determine whether a species warrants listing under the ESA?

The ESA (section 4(a)(1)) requires that we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened based on one or more of the five following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. The ESA requires us to base our assessment solely on the best scientific and commercial data available.

How may I submit information for the status review?

You may electronically submit data and information relevant to our review of the status of Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and enter NOAA-NMFS-2024-0042 in the Search box. Click on the "Comment" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. Written comments may be submitted by mail to Anne Marie Eich, Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division, Alaska Region NMFS, Attn. Susan Meyer, Post Office Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802. Details regarding the types of information we are seeking can be found in the 90-day finding ([89 FR 45815](#); May 24, 2024).

Would an ESA listing for Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon impact subsistence harvest of salmon?

The ESA allows for subsistence harvest of a listed species by Alaska Natives who reside in Alaska, or by any non-native permanent resident of an Alaska Native village who is primarily dependent upon the taking of fish for consumption, so long as it is not done in a wasteful manner.

How can I keep up-to-date on the petition process for Gulf of Alaska Chinook salmon?

The petition, 90-day finding, and other updates are available from the NOAA Fisheries website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/petition-list-gulf-alaska-chinook-salmon-threatened-or-endangered-under-endangered-species>