



Gulf of Alaska Chinook ESA Petition

Kodiak RAC

March 6, 2025

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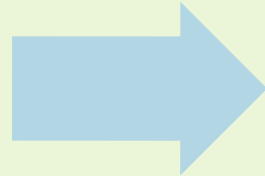


Chinook Salmon (Gulf of Alaska)



January 11, 2024

- Petition filed to list under ESA by Wild Fish Conservancy (errors, omissions, unsupported assertions)

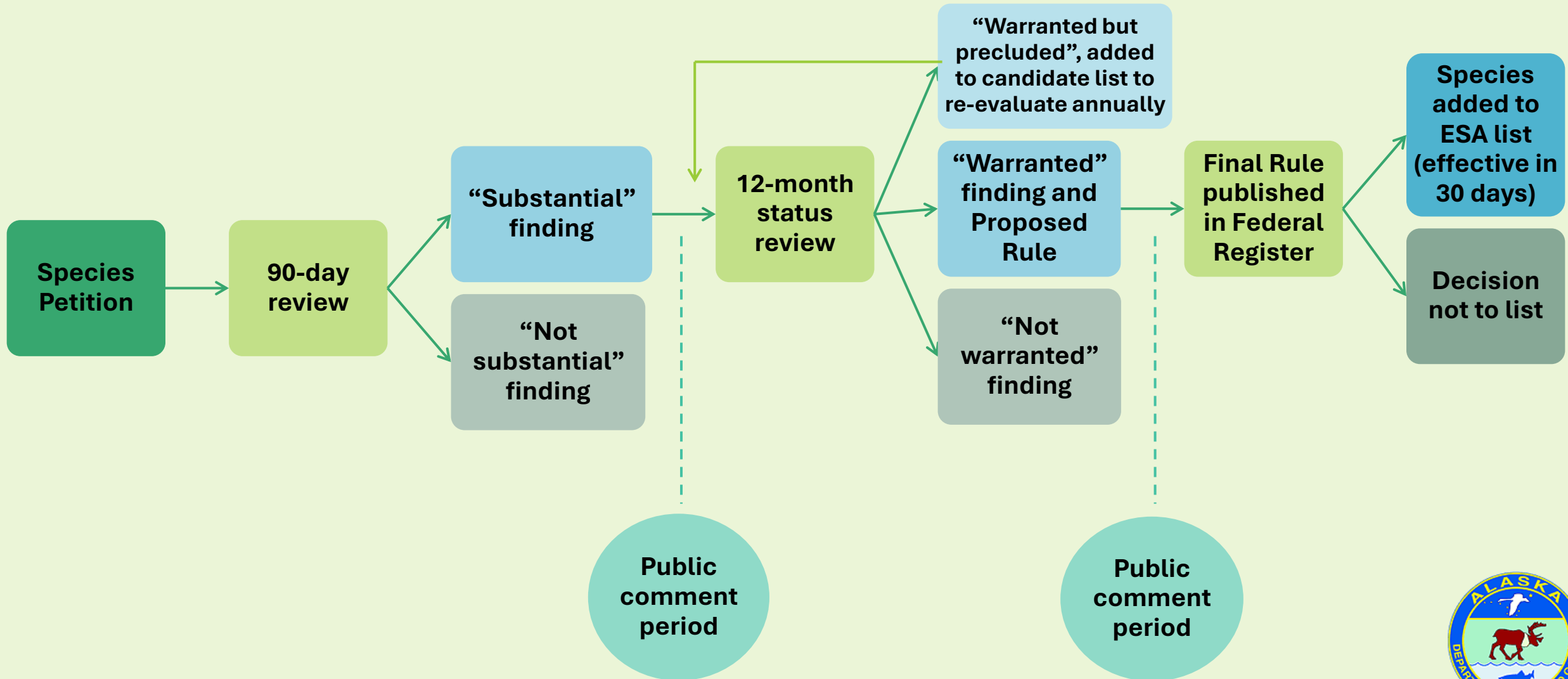


May 23, 2024

- Positive 90-day finding “low bar”
- Missed escapement goals & decreasing size and age at maturity



ESA Listing Process



ESA Listing Criteria – Threats (Section 4)

1. Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species' habitat or range
2. Species' overuse for commercial, recreational, scientific or educational purposes
3. Disease or predation affecting the species
4. Inadequate existing regulatory mechanisms protecting the species
5. Other natural or man-made factors affecting the species' continued existence



State Position



- The State of Alaska does not believe that the ESA is the correct tool to address a downturn in Chinook abundance.
- Escapement goals are based on maximum sustained yield. They are not a metric of abundance to maintain a viable population. In other words, failing to meet an escapement goal is not evidence that stocks are at risk of extinction.
- Salmon habitat in Alaska is largely pristine.
- The state has adequate regulatory controls to manage for sustained yield and conservation of stocks.



Next Steps - NMFS

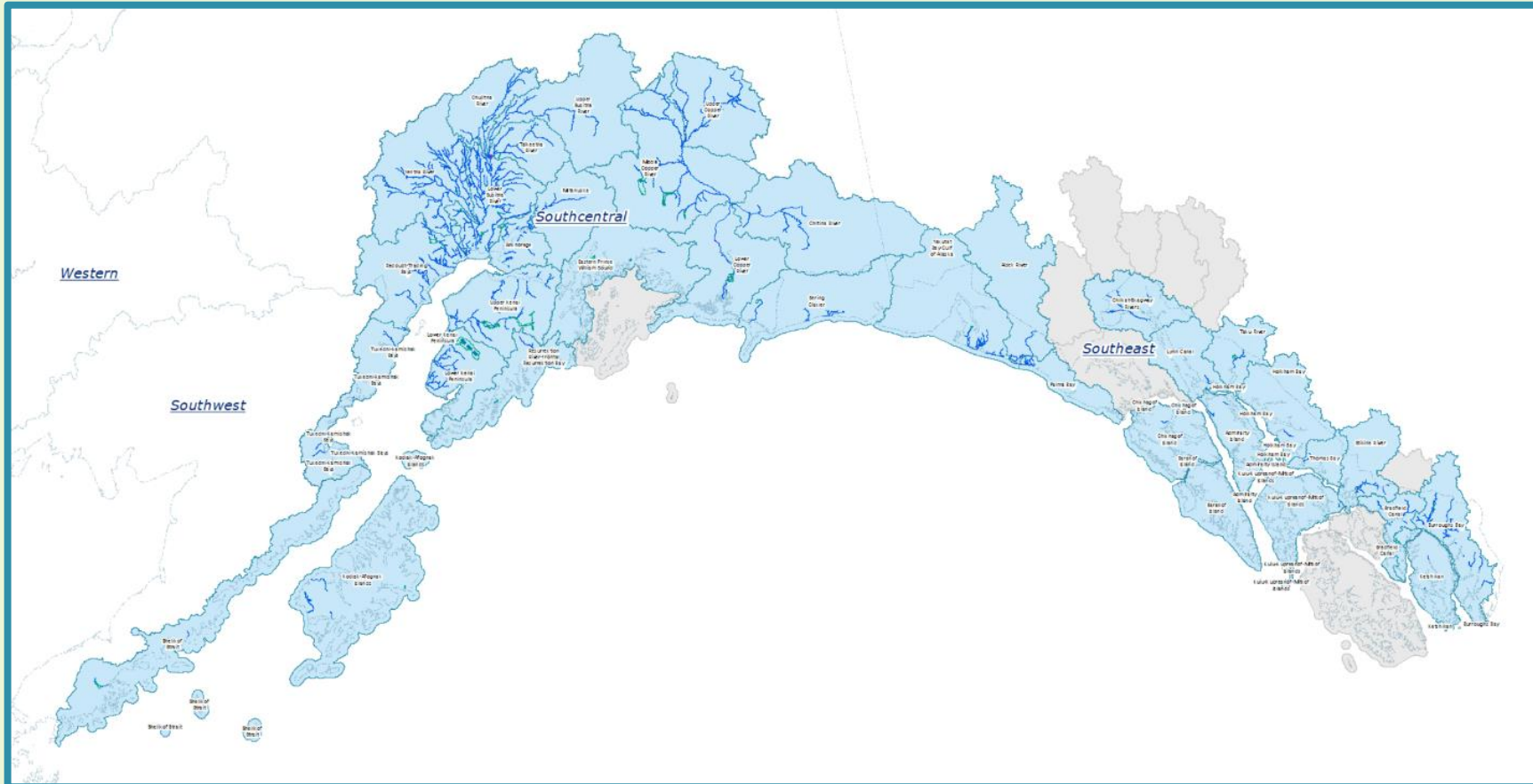
Status review

- 12-month deadline
 - Delineating listable units called ESUs
 - Assembling and synthesizing information
 - Population assessment
 - Threats analysis
-
- ADF&G has 2 non-voting seats



Evolutionary Significant Units

- “substantially **reproductively isolated** from other nonspecific population units”
- “represent an **important component** in the evolutionary legacy of the species”



What happens if Chinook get listed?



1. Species management shifts from State to Federal control.
2. Potential to affect nearly every fishery in the GOA, not just those targeting Chinook.
3. Added complexity and regulatory hurdles.
4. Take prohibited except in specific circumstances.
5. Designation of critical habitat which are “**Specific areas**” that contain “physical or biological features **essential** for conservation”



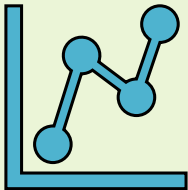
How can you engage in ESA process?

Public/State may comment:



- Positive 90 day finding
- Proposed rule to list as threatened or endangered and species status assessment

Public/State may be requested to provide:



- Scientific expertise/ analyses during the 1-year status review

