



Ocean Conservancy®



ALASKA MARINE  
COMMUNITY COALITION

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# NEWS: Analysis Shows Huge Gaps in Pollock Industry-Funded Research, Points to Underreported Economic and Environmental Damages

*The Industry's Own Research Finds That a Majority of Profits Leave Alaska*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Marine Community Coalition and Ocean Conservancy [released an analysis today](#) that highlights gaps in two 2025 studies commissioned by the pollock fishing industry. Their analysis shows that the pollock industry's research failed to account for the fishery's negative environmental impacts while overstating the economic benefit of the fishery for everyday Alaskans. Indeed, the industry's own research indicates that 71% of labor income, 62% of jobs and roughly two thirds of economic output actually leave Alaska.

Pollock, a fish commercially used for everything from imitation crab meat to McDonald's Filet-O-Fish, plays a central role in the Bering Sea ecosystem as both a predator and prey for fish, seabirds and marine mammals. Since 1977, large scale industrial fishing boats have caught an average of 1.2 million metric tons of pollock each year, making it the largest food fishery on the planet, and the second-largest fishery overall.

"The industry's research leads with faulty assumptions and ends with incomplete conclusions," said **Ocean Conservancy's Fisheries Scientist Dr. Megan Williams**, who helped write the analysis. "They fail to account for the huge impacts that pollock trawlers have on the ecosystem, on Alaska Native fishing rights and cultures and other important fishing fleets. We need studies

that fairly value the diversity of the Alaskan fishing economy as a whole, as well as the essential role of healthy ecosystems and communities.”

“Alaska’s fisheries are not just about the volume of what we catch, but who we are as communities, and that’s the critical context left out of these reports,” said **Alaska Marine Community Coalition’s Executive Director Michelle Stratton**. “Small-boat fishermen, subsistence families, and coastal communities carry responsibility and care for these waters and our coastal infrastructure every day, and our strength comes from a diversity of fisheries, communities, and ways of fishing. Our resilience and well-being cannot be measured by pollock infrastructure and volume alone, so when that is the only context offered, any conclusions reached are insufficient. Alaska’s future must be built with all of us at the table, and without the on-the-ground realities of coastal economies and fisheries included from the beginning, reports like this will inevitably fail to capture what real benefit – or risk – looks like in coastal Alaska.”

The pollock industry has caught more than 6.3 million chum salmon and 1 million Chinook salmon as bycatch since 1991, and scientists are increasingly concerned about mounting ecosystem and community impacts, including links to the long-term decline of crab, salmon, northern fur seals in the Pribilof Islands, and other species.

The new analysis additionally finds that the industry-funded research:

- Treats industrial pollock vessels as the backbone of Alaska’s maritime economy, without considering the vital economic contributions of sovereign Tribal nations, other fisheries, mixed-species harvesting, and other players that may be impacted by large-scale pollock harvests.
- Omits the role of government support to the pollock fleet, including \$50 million in recently announced seafood purchases and hundreds of millions in historic subsidies, thereby overstating the fleet’s economic strength.
- Does not examine whether the shared infrastructure in Alaska that the pollock fleet relies on can be reliably accessed by independent fishermen and small processors.
- Overstates potential economic impacts by considering only the effect of a full closure of the fishery, ignoring other scenarios that include a measured reduction.

“Pollock trawling is a billion dollar industry – but the industry’s own research shows that shockingly little of its profit stays in Alaska,” said **Ocean Conservancy’s Fisheries Economist Anthony Rogers**. “Our analysis of these recent reports from the pollock fleet show they only provide a simple snapshot and are incomplete without considering how relationships between sectors can change in a coastal economy. But above all, the studies don’t consider other players that live and work in Alaska’s coastal communities who make them unique, vibrant places.”

[The full analysis can be found here.](#)

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## **ABOUT OCEAN CONSERVANCY**

For more than 50 years, Ocean Conservancy has delivered effective, evidence-based solutions for the ocean and all who depend on it. Today, we continue to unite science, people and policy to protect our ocean from the greatest challenges it faces: climate change, plastic pollution and biodiversity loss. We are a 501(C)3 headquartered in Washington, D.C. that inspires a worldwide network of partners, advocates and supporters through our comprehensive and

clear-eyed approach to ocean conservation. Together, we are securing a healthy ocean and a thriving planet, forever and for everyone. For more information, visit [oceanconservancy.org](https://oceanconservancy.org), or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Bluesky](#) or [Instagram](#).

## **ABOUT ALASKA MARINE COMMUNITY COALITION**

For more than 30 years, Alaska Marine Community Coalition (AMCC) has been working alongside fishermen, Tribes, and coastal leaders to strengthen Alaska's fishing communities and the marine ecosystems that sustain them. Guided by the belief that healthy oceans and healthy communities are inseparable, AMCC advances community-driven fisheries stewardship and equitable access to support the long-term resilience of Alaska's working waterfronts. Through collaboration, research, and advocacy, AMCC helps ensure Alaska's fisheries remain rooted in robust science, local knowledge, respect for place, and the well being of the people who depend on them. For more information, visit [akmarine.org](https://akmarine.org), or follow us on [Instagram](#) (@ak.marine), [Facebook](#) (@AlaskaMarine), and [LinkedIn](#).