## Sustainability notes

**Stock levels**

For the BSAI stock, the main component (eastern Bering Sea) is well above reference points. The latest assessment for the Aleutian Islands (AI) sub-stock indicates that it is also above target levels. The GoA fishery is much smaller than the eastern Bering Sea fishery; allowable catch levels are similarly conservative. Managers are very sensitive to environmental conditions that are the determining factors in fluctuating stock abundance and set precautionary harvest levels.

**Environmental Impact**

Proportions of bycatch are very low (below 1%). All significant bycatch species (non-pollock groundfish, primarily) are subject to annual scientific assessment. There is extensive regulation to limit bycatch in U.S. North Pacific fisheries. The threatened and endangered Steller sea lion is found in the area of the fishery. Fishery regulations are in place to minimize fishing impacts on sea lions and other protected species.

**Management plan**

In 1976, the U.S. established management for Alaska pollock stocks out to 200 miles. Federal fishery management plans, adopted through an open and transparent public process and based on sound science, govern the harvest of Alaska pollock. The plan has been amended numerous times to achieve continuous improvement in the performance of the fishery. Fishery managers and scientists follow a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach.

**Further notes**

The stock assessment process for Alaskan pollock is one of the most robust in the world. One of the longest time series of data on fish abundance and distribution has been, and continues to be collected. Annual stock assessment modelling takes into account more factors, including potential ecological impacts, than in most fisheries. The observer programme also has extremely high coverage of fishing activities.

**Fishery Improvements**

Pollock stocks show considerable fluctuations in abundance due to naturally high variability in recruitment. Modelling the effects of environmental variation on Gulf of Alaska pollock has been an active area of research at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center for the past 20 years. Recent advances in predictive multi-species modelling will allow the testing of existing harvest strategies for robustness against different assumptions regarding the role of natural environmental variability on pollock stocks.

## Useful websites

**Suppliers:** www.msc.org/where-to-buy/find-a-supplier
**Fishbase:** http://fishbase.org/Summary/SpeciesSummary.php?id=318

## Certificate holder


**Company** At-sea Processors Association (APA)
**Address** 1225 I Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
USA
**Contact** Mr Jim Gilmore, Director of Public Affairs
**Phone** +1 (202) 712 9119
**Email** jgilmore@atsea.org
**Website** www.atsea.org

Pan-fried pollock © At-sea Processors Association

**Last updated:** March 2009

# **MSC Fishery Fact Sheet:** Alaska pollock

| | |
|---|---|
| **Latin name** | *Theragra chalcogramma* |
| **Deutsch** | Pazifischer Pollack |
| **English** | Alaska Pollock / pollack |
| **Español** | Abadejo |
| **Français** | Lieu de l'Alaska |
| **Nederlands** | Alaska koolvis |

## Basic information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Location** | Eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and the Gulf of Alaska |
| **Fishing gear** | Pelagic trawl |
| **Season** | 20 Jan to mid-April and 10 June to 1 Nov. Frozen products available year-round |
| **Quota / TAC** | Bering Sea: 815,000 MT,<br>Aleutian Islands: 19,000MT<br>Gulf of Alaska: 49,900MT |
| **Products** | Whole, roe, headed & gutted, gutted, fillets, steaks, portions, , minced (surimi), chilled, coated, frozen block, individually quick frozen, loins, marinated/pickled, nuggets, ready meals, salads, skewered, smoked |
| **Date certified** | 14 February 2005 |

## Background information

The U.S. Alaska pollock fishery is the largest fishery in North America. The BSAI pollock fishery is a mid-water trawl fishery, with trawlers of 110 to 150 feet in length making short trips and then offloading catches at shoreside plants. Some trawls deliver to floating processors. Catcher-processor vessels comprise the balance of the fleet. In the Gulf of Alaska, the pollock fishery uses predominantly pelagic trawls, and is entirely shore-based.

The U.S. Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI), and the Gulf of Alaska (GoA) stocks are considered to be two separate stocks. Alaska pollock (also known as 'walleye pollock') are schooling, midwater to bottom-dwelling fish, usually found between 100 to 300 m depth. They can live up to 15 years and reach a length of 100 cm. Pollock occurs across the entire northern Pacific.

The catch is processed into a variety of products, for markets in Asia, North America and Europe.

**MSC webpage** www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/pacific/bsai-pollock
www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/pacific/gulf-of-alaska-pollock

*C/P Northern Eagle,*
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