



**ASMI Board of Directors Meeting  
December 5, 2024  
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Mid Deck, Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage & Virtual**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Chair Kimball called the meeting to order at 8:11 AM.

Chair Kimball asked Heather Johnson-Smith to do the roll call. Members present: Chair Allen Kimball, Vice Chair Tomi Marsh, John Daly, Michael Erickson, Duncan Fields, Richard Riggs, Christopher Sannito. Ex Officio members present: Commissioner Julie Sande, Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Nick Capozzi, Rep. Sarah Vance. Ex Officio members not present: Senator Gary Stevens, Senator Lyman Hoffman, Senator Bert Stedman, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Rep. Sara Hannan. ASMI staff and members of the industry and public were also present both in person and virtually.

Riggs made a motion to approve the agenda with an amendment of moving the RFM Update under New Business to after the Executive Director's Report, which will accommodate a presenter's availability. Fields seconded. All were in favor.

Fields made a motion to approve the minutes from October 8, 2024. Marsh seconded. All were in favor.

ASMI Antitrust Statement was read by Jeremy Woodrow.

Chairman's Remarks: Chair Kimball thanked the staff for their collaboration and emphasized the industry's crisis. He stressed the need to discuss market value, support domestic business, and keep Alaska Seafood competitive. A key focus is pink salmon, though all species need attention. The board's challenge is prioritizing spending effectively.

Chair Kimball invited the public to make comments. There was no public comment.

Executive Director Report: Jeremy Woodrow thanked attendees, especially Christa Hoover, for ensuring strong Cordova representation. Participation at All Hands has increased. A key thing heard in almost every meeting has been about pink salmon, as well as having a focus on sablefish and flatfish in the U.S. market. Discussion also covered opportunities under the new administration and ensuring Alaska seafood remains prominent. RFM remains essential to industry efforts.

**New Business**

RFM Update by Jeff Regnart, Mark Fina and Kristy Clement of AFDF (who joined virtually): RFM is growing into a global certification program, recently certifying Gulf of Mexico shrimp and increasing chain of custody by 16%. Key partnerships and proposed global certification effort aim to simplify, enhance transparency, and expand market access while maintaining Alaska's leadership in sustainable

fisheries. There's ongoing discussion about protecting Alaska's interests, securing economic support, and potentially moving away from MSC certification due to its high costs and misaligned requirements.

### **Operational Committee Reports**

- Outgoing Domestic Marketing Committee Chair Lilani Dunn shared her committee's report. (Included as addendum to minutes.)
- Incoming International Marketing Committee Chair Bart Lovejoy shared his committee's report. (Included as addendum to minutes.)
- Seafood Technical Committee Chair Monique Moore shared her committee's report. (Included as addendum to minutes.)
- Incoming Communications Committee Vice Chair Shannon Ford Ward shared her committee's report. (Included as addendum to minutes.)

### **New Business**

ASMI Fiscal Update: ASMI Finance Director Becky Monagle presented an update.

ASMI Communications Director Greg Smith presented the Communications Program report since he was not able to present on Day 1 of the conference due to weather conditions and cancelled flights.

Alaska Herring RFM Certification: Jeff Regnart shared the Alaska herring fishery's RFM pre-assessment showed a strong likelihood of certification using a data-limited module. The \$15,000 assessment feeds into full certification, which would cost around \$60,000. Next steps include identifying a fishery client and securing industry support. The decision hinges on market demand and strategic value for the fishery.

Canned Wild Alaska Pollock: ASMI Global Food Aid Director Bruce Schactler shared the canned herring initiative, backed by Ocean Beauty and OPI Seafoods, aims to enter international food aid markets. A prototype has been developed for agencies like the USDA, with industry support ensuring continued progress. Budget decisions are expected in February, but full production likely won't start until B Season 2025.

Board Roundtable & Discussion: Marsh shared that tourism, with over 3 million annual visitors, offers a major opportunity for Alaska Seafood. Strategies like onboard ambassadors, incentives, and local seafood access can drive sales and support communities. Aligning with tourism growth and tracking impact will maximize industry benefits. Riggs shared that the Alaska seafood industry has made progress stabilizing markets through strategic actions, but proactive planning is crucial, especially for the 2025 pink salmon season. Strengthening international and domestic strategies will help ensure long-term success. Commissioner Sande shared that ASMI's proactive and innovative efforts continue to add value to Alaska Seafood, despite external challenges like currency fluctuations and global market disruptions. Fields shared that ASMI is vital in supporting Alaska's fishing industry amid economic challenges. Despite setbacks, it has secured grants, promoted key fisheries, and engaged legislators. Moving forward, securing funding is crucial to sustain marketing efforts and support fishing communities. No comments from Erickson. Daly shared that ASMI has shown strong responsiveness and strategic planning to support Alaska's seafood industry. Key efforts include market diversification, proactive marketing, and legislative support. Looking ahead, reduced inventories, stronger negotiating power, and innovations especially in promoting canned pink salmon—offer optimism for 2025. Sannito shared that despite challenges, he is optimistic. Alaska seafood is gaining national recognition as a top healthy choice, and initiatives like "Make America Healthy Again" will boost domestic demand. Commissioner Vincent-Lang made three points: Secure U.S. Markets – Advocate for funding to protect and expand domestic seafood

markets. Address Industry Challenges – Tackle concerns over bycatch, trawling, hatcheries, and international pressures affecting perception. Future Growth – Use legislative reviews to restructure and strengthen Alaska’s seafood industry for long-term success. Representative Vance shared that we must secure funding, improve public perception, and expand outreach to strengthen Alaska’s seafood industry.

Fields: **“I move that ASMI staff be encouraged to increase focus and emphasis on the promotion of pink salmon within their current budgets with a possible shift within the wholesale/Retail marketing budget of up to \$500,000 being dedicated to timely promotions for pink salmon.”** Erickson seconded. All were in favor.

Fields: **“I move that ASMI staff, in anticipation of additional ASMI funding through the State’s supplemental budget process, refine ASMI’s domestic marketing plan for supplemental funds to allocate approximately 50% of any funds received through the supplement budget process to specifically promote Alaska pollock, pink salmon, black cod and chum salmon in the domestic market.”** Erickson seconded. All were in favor.

Fields: **“I move that ASMI fund the RFM certification of herring from the general funds in the amount of \$60,000.”** Erickson seconded. Woodrow asked for clarification on budgeting; Fields said his intent is that we fund it but do not increase the budget. All were in favor.

Housekeeping Comments: A question was raised about which species committee herring should reside in, and it was decided to keep it under the Whitefish Committee. There was also discussion about committee member training, with a proposal for a structured pre-meeting training session for chairs, vice chairs, and new members before the all-hands reception. Next steps will be for staff to develop recommendations for improving committee training and efficiency, and to focus on streamlining onboarding while ensuring clear expectations and engagement.

**Executive Session:** Fields made a motion to enter into executive session. Riggs seconded the motion. Executive session began at 12:04 PM.

*ASMI Personnel (AS 44.62.310(c)(1) describes the subjects that may be discussed in executive session as follows: (b) subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion;)*

Fields made a motion to come back into open session from executive session. Erickson seconded. Return to New Business at 2:19 PM.

Further Business as Necessary: Vice Chair Marsh spoke to visitor sector opportunities. Woodrow shared that there is limited bandwidth within ASMI. Fields, Riggs, Chair Kimball and Daly said they don’t want to lose the opportunity and the window is open so they support it. Woodrow pointed out that independent travelers spend more than cruisers; Rep Vance agreed with Woodrow’s wholistic approach to tourism.

Good of the Order

Next ASMI Board Meeting Date: February 21, 2025

Fields made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Erickson seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 2:31 PM.



## **2024 ASMI All Hands on Deck ASMI Operational Committee Questions**

### **Domestic Marketing**

Please use the following topics as points for discussion by your committee and provide a summary to the ASMI Board of Directors:

#### **How can ASMI make an immediate difference in the marketplace?**

- Promote pink and keta salmon in retail, focusing strongly on pink salmon and creative product forms.
- Continue supporting sablefish and cod promotions.
- Collaborate with WASA to promote flounder in retail and foodservice.
- Conduct demonstrations.
- Highlight USA-sourced products.
- Target college and university markets.

#### **What long-term challenges must your program continue to monitor and address?**

- Managing the large inventory of pink salmon.
- Addressing distribution challenges for halibut and sablefish.
- Strengthening the keta market.
- Mitigating potential tariff issues for species processed overseas.

#### **For Domestic & International: What resources can ASMI provide to best help retailers and foodservice operators?**

- Use the RFM logo on packaging and across all possible touchpoints (e.g., business cards, websites, email signatures).
- Offer the RFM logo to private label partners.

#### **For Communications: What resources can ASMI provide to best help harvesters understand ASMI's value to Alaska's seafood industry?**

- Use every opportunity to elevate RFM with customers.

**How can your harvester group, businesses, affiliate organizations, or the companies you represent support ASMI in-state or in the market (domestic or global)?**

- Share information about distribution partners.
- Promote new product forms for retail and foodservice.
- Utilize fishermen member organizations (e.g., RSDAs, UFA) to provide talent.
- Partner with WASA to expand consumer and customer education.

**Recommendations for species committees that your operational program should take action on:**

- Focus heavily on pink and keta salmon promotions in retail.
- Develop more educational materials and programs for seafood counter employees.

**Recommended actions for the Board to consider at All Hands or in the near future:**

- Develop a domestic market plan for pink and keta salmon, identifying required support and funding.
- Continue efforts for cod and sablefish from FY2024.
- Improve All Hands productivity by:
  - Providing training for new committee members on species committee goals and operational committee reports.
  - Reinforcing ASMI's goals and role while avoiding overly tactical suggestions.
  - Encouraging stakeholders to stay updated via weekly/monthly reports and social media throughout the year.



2024 ASMI All Hands on Deck

ASMI Operational Committee Questions

International Marketing

Please use the following topics as points for discussion by your committee and provide a summary to the ASMI Board of Directors:

How can ASMI make an immediate difference in the marketplace?

- ASMI can provide better guidance to OMRs, who then can communicate it to the trade, about the opening of harvest seasons. I.e., communicate the Bairdi crab opening to OMRs.
- Market pink salmon, recognizing the upcoming large supply.
- The Alaska seafood industry should communicate where the product ends up in the market so that ASMI OMRs know who to work with.
- Flatfish: In 2025, 25% of the fleet will be tied up. Flatfish needs immediate support in the international marketplace.
- Promote refreshed salmon program, including pink and keta salmon, in Europe.

What long-term challenges must your program continue to monitor and/or address?

- Russia
- China, as a reprocessing sector, continue to monitor.
- Monitor EOs and tariffs – potential disruptions both short and long-term.
  - Tariff exemptions are a priority – try to work with legislators to ensure exemptions on Alaska seafood species.
- The fluctuations in supply and demand for species is a long-term challenge
  - A potential solution is increased education and messaging about the fluctuations in supply that occur in wild capture fisheries.
- Reduce dependence on the Japanese market for small-size sablefish.
  - Prioritize market diversification for small-size sablefish.

For Domestic & International: What resources can ASMI provide to best help retailers and foodservice operators? What needs to be done to elevate RFM with our customers?

- Increased usage of RFM logo on the packaging could include a QR code with additional information.

Are there ways that your harvester group, businesses, affiliate organizations or the companies you represent can support ASMI either in-state or in the market (domestic or global)?

- Communicate the value of ASMI in-state, share ASMI success and effectiveness, and raise awareness about ASMI's value to industry and the state of Alaska with elected officials.
- Participate in ASMI events and tradeshow
- ASMI should continue to work with GAPP and WASA and ensure collaboration.
- ASMI presence – materials, information - in plants and on boats. Raise awareness about ASMI by industry communicating to their staff.
- We think this question should be asked more frequently.
  - Open channels of communication with ASMI staff so that the industry can support ASMI requests

Please review the summaries of the species committees. Do you have any recommendations for which your operational program should take action?

- Prioritize promotions for Alaska surimi and flatfish in Japan and the EU
- Prioritize the refreshed salmon program, particularly for pink and keta, in new markets, particularly in Europe.
- Canned salmon: promotions in non-traditional international markets and continue to capitalize on the tinned seafood trend.
- Identify solutions to reduce dependency on the Japanese market for small sablefish
- Continue highlighting Bairdi Queen crab in the Japanese market and consider increasing promotional funding for Bairdi support in Japan.

Is there an action that this committee recommends the Board consider at All Hands or in the near future?

- Update the logo licensing agreement to include verbiage explicitly stating that the logo cannot be used on products containing Russian raw material.
- We'd like to ask the Board for a legal opinion on whether the industry can have an MOU between companies to monitor the use of the ASMI logo. Can the OMRs assist with this?



## 2024 ASMI All Hands on Deck ASMI Operational Committee Questions

### Seafood Technical

Please use the following topics as points for discussion by your committee and provide a summary to the ASMI Board of Directors:

- How can ASMI make an immediate difference in the marketplace?
  - Continuing w/ eat frozen messaging
  - Messaging in short formats
  - Story telling-go beyond Alaska, get to community level...who is providing fish and from where
  - Mobile optimization of materials
  - Continue w/nutritional messaging
    - Connect with current diet trends
    - Transparency of contents in product
    - Marketing around 'natural' product
  
- What long-term challenges must your program continue to monitor and/or address?
  - Rarity of QA/QC expertise, highlighting existing ASMI resources to benefit internal education at processing/harvesting
  - Asks exceeding capability of budget
  - Environmental challenges of wild harvest
  - Utilization conversation
  - Packaging
  
- For Domestic & International: What resources can ASMI provide to best help retailers and foodservice operators?



- What needs to be done to elevate RFM with our customers?
- For Communications: What resources can ASMI provide to best help harvesters understand ASMI's value to Alaska's seafood industry?
  - What needs to be done to elevate RFM with our customers?
- Are there ways that your harvester group, businesses, affiliate organizations or the companies you represent can support ASMI either in-state or in the market (domestic or global)?
  - Address market loss due to certification, etc
    - Be a reference
  - More networking for wider dispersal of ASMI materials (communities, food webs, small businesses, fisherman groups....groups which would have use for ASMI materials but not the budget for creation of own)
  - Conduit between research opportunities and industry, ID projects most immediately helpful to industry
    - Not just academia, but regulatory science
    - Platform of discussion for ongoing topics of research/projects
- Please review the summaries of the species committees. Do you have any recommendations for which your operational program should take action?
- Is there an action that this committee recommends the Board consider at All Hands or in the near future?
  - Review/update of strategic plan
  - Some way to interface more directly/frequently with other ASMI committees

## For Seafood Technical

Are there any areas where ASMI may be able to provide technical support for your species: i.e., quality, products, packaging, health, safety, nutritional?

### SALMON

- Educate fishermen on the importance of careful fish handling to improve quality throughout the supply chain (e.g., YouTube videos, imagery).
  - We will redistribute the current relevant library, and coordinate with committee to see if gaps exist.
- Develop more illustrations and technical materials to promote the health and safety of Alaska seafood.
  - We will redistribute the current relevant library and ongoing new projects of relevance and coordinate with committee to see if gaps exist.
  - Are there specifics on illustrations that are needed?
- Enhance communication with fishermen.
  - Explore annual event around expo to feature specific outreach for harvesters
  - More frequent dispersal via Comms messaging to fleet
- Train foodservice and retail individuals to accurately convey the Alaska seafood message to consumers.
  - Look into what if any technical info is currently being made available, and is it accurate, update and provide info if not.
- Promote fish cutting as a skill and art form.
  - Connect with potentially help expand fish butchery program, coordinate with thoughts from Comms committee
- Utilize CQR devices to monitor fish quality and health.
  - Continue to promote the benefits of this technology, 1-pager on advances in this space and how it can help drive best practices
- Provide materials to emphasize seafood's nutritional value.
  - New SK data and relevant outreach

## HALIBUT-SABLEFISH

- Inclusion of halibut in upcoming Technical chef sensory study
  - We can plan to include this
- Sablefish harvesting photos and video (focus on slinky pot fishing)
  - Connect with Amanda Gladics and Tom Crestodina on relevant illustrations on slinky pots, ID opportunity for action shots with other committees

## WHITEFISH

- Nutrition comparisons between farmed and wild species resources, and pacific and Atlantic species.
  - ASMI cannot do comparisons of this type
- Regional market analysis of Alaska seafood consumption in K-12 schools and which products are making it into schools.
  - This is best handled by domestic, Chuck Anderson and Bruce may have information on this and we will ask
- Create a one-page guide on how to submit species to the USDA for school lunch programs.
  - This may be best suited to FoodAid

## None from SHELLFISH

Guidance document on beginning as a direct marketer, how to start, permits and regulations of relevance, etc.

6<sup>th</sup> Edition Direct Marketing Manual is a good place to start, ASMI Technical was involved in its creation. Provide a link to order on ASMI website, develop simplified 1-pager



## 2024 ASMI All Hands on Deck

### ASMI Operational Committee Questions - Communications Committee

1. How can ASMI make an immediate difference in the marketplace?
  - o Proactively prepare materials and/or messaging needed by industry and federal partners to respond to any opportunities or challenges, such as changes at USDA, the Farm Bill, Make America Healthy Again, Russian sanctions, trade, tariffs, and origin labeling, that may arise at the federal level.
  - o Increase social media focus on telling the Alaska Seafood story (e.g. the People of Wild Alaska Pollock campaign.)
  - o Develop engaging social campaigns (similar to the Alaska Seafood Hacks campaign) that leverage industry partners and their audiences.
  - o Develop strategies to increase demand among younger consumers, especially by highlighting affordable species, utilizing influencers with strong parent audiences and informing industry of ways to increase purchases by school districts.
  - o Increase focus of consumer-facing content on priority species and products (cod, sole/flounder, blackcod, pink and keta salmon).
  - o Evaluate opportunities to promote undervalued and under-harvested species, such as herring, which could benefit from additional ASMI resources (like a fact sheet in English) and RFM certification.
  
2. What long-term challenges must your program continue to monitor and/or address? (Comms Committee addition: actions on how to address them)
  - o Climate-related changes in the ecosystem that affect harvest levels and stock status.
  - o Increased focus on trade and tariffs.
  - o Brand erosion due to stock fluctuations (example: GOA ESA determination).
  - o Declining seafood consumption by US population.
  
3. What resources can ASMI provide to best help harvesters understand ASMI's value to Alaska's seafood industry?
  - o Develop concise and easily-shareable information for use by ASMI supporters and industry to convey the value of ASMI.
  - o Increase utilization of social media, fleet meetings, webinars, industry/harvester ambassadors, harvester, trade and industry groups, and events to communicate the value of ASMI to harvesters, with an emphasis on visible and in-person activities.

4. What needs to be done to elevate RFM with our customers?
  - o Ensure clear and concise messaging and information exists for the industry related to why businesses should choose RFM and the value it provides.
  
5. Are there ways that your harvester group, businesses, affiliate organizations or the companies you represent can support ASMI either in-state or in the market (domestic or global)?
  - o Harvester groups, businesses, affiliate organizations or companies could:
    - Advocate for ASMI's value to the state and ASMI's budget.
    - Advocate for ASMI with our state and federal delegations and expresses the value/importance of the organization.
    - Be a conduit of information between ASMI and harvesters.
    - Share resources and amplify content where appropriate. This occurs with the larger marketing organizations (i.e. RSDAs, GAPP or WASA) but should also include other direct efforts that contribute to the Alaska brand. (i.e. relevant SK projects, fleet-specific or vertically-integrated harvesters.)
    - Communicate direct impacts of management success stories (recent example: Prince William Sound Herring) and the direct impact on processors, harvesters, and community economy.

Note: Return-on-investment information, such as "ASMI focused on X domestic marketing promotions in 2024 and that created X impact for AK seafood, or "ASMI has worked on opening up additional international markets in X for specific products" would be helpful to partner organizations.

6. Please review the summaries of the species committees. Do you have any recommendations for which your operational program should take action?

#### Halibut-Sablefish

- Sustainability talking points about halibut:
  - o Catch method (hook and line)
  - o Positive history and story of halibut fishery
  - o Sustainability in action regarding declining biomass
- Emphasize the ease of at-home preparation and convenience of sablefish to consumers

*Are there any areas where ASMI may be able to provide technical support for your species: i.e., quality, products, packaging, health, safety, nutritional?*

- Sablefish harvesting photos and video (focus on slinky pot fishing)

#### Shellfish

- Promote messaging around limited availability as a positive attribute.
- Highlight the health benefits of shellfish in marketing campaigns.
- Support for direct marketers as new business start-ups: create a guide or clear process roadmap to jump through the hoops of becoming a new direct marketer business
- Cooked crab country of original labeling remains a complex issue. Consider using the current political landscape to push for supportive legislation.

- Engage fishermen directly in-season at docks and other accessible locations.
- Provide opportunities for fishermen to act as brand ambassadors, elevating the Alaska Seafood brand.

### Salmon

- Integrate pink and keta into the influencer program; adjust promotions based on industry input and market demand.
- Rebrand pink and keta products to make them appealing to consumers and increase consumption.
  - Highlight high omega-3 content, mild taste, marinade compatibility, and low cost.
- Educate fishermen on the importance of careful fish handling to improve quality throughout the supply chain (e.g., YouTube videos, imagery).
  - Communications Committee note: Communications program can disseminate materials to industry and fleet.
- Reinforce the value of wild, US-origin, Alaska seafood.

### Whitefish

- Prioritize Yellowfin Sole and Alaska Plaice promotion in domestic markets due to decreased sales volume (consumer PR and influencers).
- Partner with UFA to identify fisherman ambassadors and develop a program in a variety of sectors.
- Expand marketing materials about fishing families in the whitefish sector.
- Keep promoting nutritional benefits of Alaska whitefish, including highlighting new study by WASA showing high omega 3 content in Flatfish.

7. Is there an action that this committee recommends the Board consider at All Hands or in the near future?

- Continue to support and fund the in-state Seafood Sustains Alaska campaign.
- Increase outreach to and education of ASMI, its role and value to elected officials.
- Consider funding RFM Certification for the herring fishery.