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Oil studies find commercial fish in Arctic waters

by The Associated Press

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska - Surveys for possible oil and gas drilling off Alaska's northern coast have found commercial fish such as Pacific cod and walleye pollock in Arctic waters where they have not been previously documented.

The Anchorage Daily News reports studies of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas are generating research of value beyond oil exploration.

The National Marine Fisheries Service conducted a trawler survey in the summer of 2008 in the western Beaufort. In addition to the discovery of cod and pollock it found commercial-sized snow crab. The findings led regulators to ban commercial fishing in U.S. Arctic waters before seafood companies could send boats.

Another survey of the central Beaufort is scheduled this summer, led by the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

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