



The FAIR ADVOCATE

FISHERIES,
AWARENESS,
INFORMATION, AND
RESPONSIBILITY

A PUBLICATION OF THE BERING SEA FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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2008 salmon season summary

Kotzebue Sound

Kotzebue's salmon fishery operated much as it has in recent years. With just one fish buyer, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game generally keeps the fishery open continuously, and the buyer establishes the fishing times for the fishermen...as long as the run is healthy and subsistence catches are good. Commercial fishing began on July 14 and lasted through August 29. A total of 48 permit holders made deliveries totaling 190,321 chum salmon at 1,540,235 pounds. With the average price at 25 cents a pound, the total value of this year's fishery comes in at \$385,270.

This year's harvest was well above the recent 10-year average catch and just slightly below the long-term average from 1962-2007. Participation in this summer's fishery was up a little bit from recent trends, with 48 limited entry permit holders making at least one delivery but this is considerably

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lower than the longer term average of over 100 permits fished.

A bright spot was that, although participation was down, the average earnings among the fishermen went up this year. In 2008, the fishermen netted an average value of \$8,026 each, which is up considerably from the recent (1998-2007) average of \$3,741.

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, subsistence harvests across the region were good. Spawning escapement estimates were also strong. Excellent conditions for aerial survey counts in some drainages showed strong returns to most rivers.

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2008 Salmon Harvest, Estimated Value and Historical Averages - Kotzebue Area

Year	Total Catch in numbers of fish	Number of Permits	Season Catch per Permit Holder	Gross Value of Catch to Permit Holders	appx price per pound (8 # average)
2008	190,321	48	3,965	\$385,270	\$0.25
98-07 AVG	101,293	41	2,803	150,280	\$0.17
1962-2007 AVG	195,801	114	1,838	589,587	\$0.29

Does gillnet mesh size influence the fish size & age?

New study examines the effect of large-mesh gillnets on Yukon kings

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently released the report from a project that used computer models to examine the potential long-term effects of large-mesh gill net fisheries on Yukon River Chinook salmon, "An Investigation of the Potential Effects of Selective Exploitation on the Demography and Productivity of Yukon River Chinook Salmon", by Jeff Bromaghin, Ryan Nielson and Jeff Hard. The report can be found at: http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/fish/Technical_Reports/t_2008_100.pdf

In recent years, there have been concerns raised among Yukon River stakeholders about the declining size and age of the Chinook salmon returns and the report notes that "[c]oncerns regarding the potential consequences of the continual removal of large Yukon River Chinook salmon in large-mesh gill net fisheries are being expressed with increasing frequency within the regulatory processes and during other public meetings."

"Selective fisheries such as the Yukon River summer-season gill net fishery have the potential to alter fundamental characteristics of its Chinook salmon population. However, the population dynamics of Chinook salmon are complex and adaptive mechanisms to moderate fishery-induced evolutionary pressures almost certainly exist. [...] Given this

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Kawerak traditional knowledge project underway

By Julie Raymond-Yakoubian

Kawerak, Inc.

People in Wales are seeing salmon in the creek in the village, for the first time. This kind of local knowledge is being documented in a three year project.

Kawerak, Inc. is carrying out a project in the Bering Strait region called “Traditional Knowledge and Norton Sound Salmon Variability.” This is a three year project funded by the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative. The purpose of this project is to document Traditional Knowledge regarding historic and current changes in salmon populations and the environment of the region. The first year of research has just been completed and Kawerak has collaborated with 7 villages to date.

A total of 15 villages will have participated in the project by its completion (Brevig Mission, Elim, Diomed, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome Eskimo, St. Michael, Savoonga, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales and White Mountain). A minimum of five local experts from each community are interviewed. Local experts are defined as individuals who have lived in the area for an extended period of time and have been intimately involved in salmon fishing and environmental observation throughout their lives. Local experts are identified with the assistance of Tribal Councils, community members, and other Kawerak staff. The interviews focus is on the changes in salmon populations and changes in the environment that each interviewee has observed, where they observed them, and when they observed them. Maps are used to record the location of fish camps, salmon streams, events, and other fishing-related places.

By having such a broad focus, and one involving multiple communities, Kawerak hopes to be able to demonstrate a progression of change in the region. This pattern recognition, in terms of the local variability of salmon resources (timing and magnitude across the region) and other environmental indicators, may help address concerns in communities that have not yet experienced declines. This approach,



Checking the net in St. Michael Bay. (photo by Julie Raymond-Yakoubian)

collecting ecosystem oriented information, will also lend insight into the long term variability of salmon and other resources.

Additionally, this work is helping to build capacity within Bering Strait communities. Through this project 15 people will be hired and trained as local assistants, 2 interns will receive anthropological methods training, several people will be hired as transcribers, and over 100 local experts will be interviewed and receive honorariums.

Some of the observations of local experts documented thus far include less predictable weather patterns, seeing unusual insects and birds, changes in the sequence of salmon runs and declines in the health of some salmon. For example, one Koyuk resident had this to say regarding the health of salmon:

“There seem to be a lot more of the worms. Every time I cut a fish open there’s worms in there. Those tapeworms, at least I think they look like tapeworms. Almost every other fish that I cut has them, whereas years ago there weren’t any, or very few. ... I clean them out. I can’t afford to throw the fish away. If you get all the worms away, the meat is good. I’ve dried them, and they’re still good to eat. With no ill effects, no side effects.”

She also noted that it is a lot more work

to remove the worms. Other interviewees have noted the presence of cysts, puss, black spots on the skin, and other irregularities in the health of salmon.

Some other findings included the documentation of the first time in the living memory of the village of Wales that there was a run of salmon in a creek that flows through the village. This substantial run of humpback salmon was in the main freshwater source for the village and residents were concerned with the possible contamination of the creek by the fish. Most villagers were using the other freshwater creek in the community for drinking water because of the humpies in the main creek.

The high cost of gasoline and heating fuel in the villages has been a constant topic of conversation and has, in many cases, prohibited fishing. The extremely high gas prices have led to a variety of changes in fishing activity. For some, the cost of fuel outweighs the benefits of fishing and they have stopped fishing altogether, instead relying on store bought food and shared fish from family members. In some cases, people are deciding to stay at their fish camp for longer periods of time instead of going back and forth to the village. Family groups are also sharing costs; either multiple

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Fish drying in Koyuk. (photo by Julie Raymond-Yakoubian)

Kawerak

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people contributing to the cost of fuel for a trip, or taking turns paying when they have cash available – in these cases people are usually fishing together.

In the spring and summer of 2009 Kawerak will conduct research and interviews in the remaining 8 communities that are participating in this project. Analysis and follow-up work are ongoing and late 2009 and early 2010 will be spent writing up the report and finalizing maps. Products from this project will be a set of interviews, transcripts, maps and photos for each

of the individuals and communities that participated. The Eskimo Heritage Program, based out of Kawerak in Nome, will also receive the same data to place in their archives, which are accessible to the public for educational and research purposes. The final report should be available in the summer of 2010. ❖

Kawerak, Inc. Contacts

Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Social Scientist and Project Manager, (907) 443-4273

Rose Fosdick, Natural Resources Division VP, (907) 443-4377

IRS seeks to return more than \$1 million to Alaska taxpayers

The Internal Revenue Service says it is looking for Alaska taxpayers who are missing 977 economic stimulus checks totaling more than \$600,000 and 411 regular refund checks totaling more than \$400,000 that were returned by the U.S. Postal Service due to mailing address errors. These checks would have been received sometime this past summer. The IRS says all a taxpayer has to do is update his or her address once, and the IRS will then send out all checks due. The IRS says that taxpayers who may be due a stimulus check need to update their addresses with the agency by Nov. 28, 2008. By law, economic stimulus checks must be sent out by Dec. 31. The undeliverable economic stimulus checks for Alaska taxpayers average \$622.

The Internal IRS website, www.irs.gov is the quickest and easiest way for a taxpayer to check the status of a stimulus check and receive instructions on how to update his or her address. Taxpayers without internet access should call the IRS at 1-866-234-2942. ❖

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CONTACT US

Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

110 W. 15th Ave, Unit A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

(907) 279-6519
(888) 927-2732 TOLL-FREE

www.bsfaak.org

Season Summary

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Norton Sound

Quoted text in this section is excerpted from "2008 Norton Sound Salmon Season Summary", by Jim Menard and Scott Kent (ADFG), November 4, 2008. <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/catchval/08nssalsum.pdf>

The commercial salmon fishery in Norton Sound was good for a number of species however, the extremely poor returns of Chinook salmon to eastern Norton Sound led to subsistence restrictions and closures in the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik subdistricts. Concern over Chinook salmon returns also affected commercial fishery management decisions in the earlier part of the season for northern Norton Sound.

"The 2008 Norton Sound Chinook salmon run was arguably the poorest return on record. At the onset of the season, a directed Chinook salmon commercial fishery was not expected, and the early closures to the subsistence and sport fisheries were anticipated for subdistricts 5 and 6 in early July. [...] By July 2, it was clear that the Unalakleet River Chinook salmon run had a later than average run timing and was a very weak run. If there was any chance of meeting escapement needs, an early closure was necessary and the sport and subsistence fisheries were closed effective 8 p.m. Saturday July 5." All marine waters of the Unalakleet and Shaktoolik subdistricts, and the Unalakleet River were closed to subsistence fishing with set gillnets. In the Unalakleet River, subsistence fishers could still use beach seines, with a requirement that Chinook salmon needed to be released. These restrictions were in place until July 16.

While the restrictions seemed to slightly help the lagging escapement, "[d]espite

proactive restrictions and the eventual closures, the Chinook salmon escapement fell below the lower end of the North River SEG (1,200) range for the fourth time in five years [...] Additionally, the 2008 North River escapement of 903 Chinook and total run-size estimate of 3,853 Chinook were record lows. [...] Although the magnitude of the Chinook salmon escapement was poor in the Unalakleet watershed, mesh-size restrictions appear to have the desired effect of conserving more age-5 and -6 Chinook salmon, thereby improving the quality of the escapement."

In the rest of Norton Sound, the chum and pink returns were generally good and the coho returns were good to excellent, including "[...] the third highest coho salmon harvest on record, a resurgence of directed pink salmon fishing in Norton Sound, and the return of commercial salmon fishing in the Golovnin Bay (Subdistrict 2) and Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4) subdistricts for the first time in years. Also, there was increased commercial interest in chum salmon, but the onset of the chum salmon fishery was delayed until mid July in southern Norton Sound in order to conserve Chinook salmon."

Commercial fishing for coho salmon in Subdistrict 2 was limited, despite a record coho return in that area. After two 48-hour commercial periods on August 14 and 20, the buyer quit sending a tender to the area because of low participation by permit holders.

"Subdistricts 5 and 6 have experienced strong coho returns since 2004 and 2008 was another above average run. Cumulative Unalakleet River test net and Shaktoolik Subdistrict commercial fishery coho salmon catches were record setting in 2008 and the Unalakleet Subdistrict commercial coho catch was the fourth highest. [...] By regulation the Subdistricts 5 and 6 commercial salmon season closes on

September 7. However, the abundance of late-run coho in conjunction with continued market interest warranted additional commercial salmon fishing. The season was extended by emergency order for two additional 48-hour periods until the fishery was closed on Friday, September 12."

"In the Port Clarence District, there was a limited commercial salmon fishery for the second consecutive year. As in 2007, there was a directed sockeye salmon fishery, but the harvest of chum salmon to sockeye salmon was nearly three to one. [...] By mid-July, the Pilgrim River in-river goal of 30,000 sockeye salmon was projected to fall short and there was little interest from the buyer to continue the fishery due to the small sockeye salmon catches. Commercial catches in the Port Clarence District were 89 sockeye, 256 chum, and 910 pink salmon."

Yukon Area

Quoted text in this section is excerpted from "2008 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary", ADFG, October 20, 2008. <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region3/finfish/salmon/catchval/08yuksalsum.pdf>

Of course, the biggest news for the Yukon River area was the very poor Chinook salmon return in 2008. Prior to the season, ADFG estimates called for a below average run, but still expected enough to meet escapement needs, support normal subsistence harvests and possibly provide a small commercial harvest opportunity. However, the actual returns ended up much worse than the already low expectations.

"The LYTF (Lower Yukon Test Fishery) detected the first pulse of Chinook salmon entering the Yukon River from the evening of June 14 through June 17, followed by 5 days of low catch rates. On June 20, the cumulative catch per unit effort (CPUE) was approximately half the historic average to that date. The first pulse of Chinook salmon yielded a lower than expected estimate of 10,000 fish at Pilot Station Sonar. The estimated total run past Pilot Station at that time appeared to be as low as 80,000 fish. These data raised concerns about the magnitude of the run. The projected Chinook salmon run abundance would not support average subsistence harvests in Alaska (approximately 50,000 Chinook

2008 Commercial Salmon Harvest & Participation by Subdistrict - Norton Sound

	Subdistrict						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
# of Fishers	0	4	12	4	23	58	101
Chinook	0	0	5	7	6	65	83
Sockeye	0	0	0	0	24	36	60
Coho	0	256	4,586	600	37,624	77,227	120,293
Pink	0	2,699	14,536	1,232	8,219	48,698	75,384
Chum	0	623	304	507	6,042	17,648	25,124
Total harvest	0	3,578	19,431	2,346	51,915	143,674	

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Season Summary

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salmon) and meet escapement goals in Alaska and meet the interim management escapement goal (IMEG) of >45,000 fish in Canada agreed to by the Yukon River Panel.” (from ADFG’s “2008 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary”)

Subsequently, subsistence fishing restrictions were put into place that reduced fishing time by half in most areas, in an attempt to protect the rest of the run. These restrictions began in the lower river, and progressed upriver with the run. Mesh restrictions to 6” gear or less were also implemented in Districts 1-3.

Given the weak Chinook salmon return and the implementation of subsistence fishing restrictions, no Chinook salmon-targeted commercial periods were allowed in 2008. Only 4,438 Chinook salmon were incidentally taken in restricted-mesh fishing periods that targeted the summer chum salmon run.

A strong return of summer chum salmon helped a bit, but management was difficult given the concerns about the weak Chinook salmon run. As mentioned above, all of the commercial fishing periods were restricted to 6” gear or less to target the chum salmon run. The openings were also short and scheduled when Chinook salmon abundance was thought to be low. 151,786 summer chum salmon were harvested in the Yukon River, which is slightly more than double the recent 10-year average. However, with the weak Chinook salmon return and harvest, the overall value to commercial fishermen was well below average. The estimated total value of the Chinook and summer chum salmon commercial harvest was \$718,000, which is 71% below the 1998-2007 average of \$2,500,000.

“High water hampered efforts to accurately quantify escapement in 2008 via tower counts and aerial surveys; thus, most escapement goals could not be assessed. Based on available data, it appears

that the lower end of the BEGs (Biological Escapement Goals) in the Chena and Salcha rivers, the largest producing tributaries of Chinook salmon in the Alaska portion of the drainage, were met. [...] The preliminary escapement estimates into Canada is approximately 32,500 or 28% below the goal.”

2008 Commercial Salmon Harvest - Yukon River

Species	Number of fish
Chinook	4,641
Summer chum	151,786
Pink	14,100
Fall chum	119,386
Coho	36,460

The fall commercial fishing season ended in the lower Yukon on September 10. The fall chum salmon run appeared to be below average and the coho return was slightly below average. 119,386 fall chum salmon were taken

in commercial fisheries throughout the drainage, as well as 36,460 coho salmon.

Kuskokwim Area

Quoted text in this section is excerpted from “Preliminary 2008 Kuskokwim Area Salmon Fishery Summary”, ADFG Kuskokwim Bay News Release #22, September 24, 2008. <http://csfish.adfg.state.ak.us/newsrelease/select.php?dist=KUB>

“From the beginning of the season there was a good showing of sockeye and chum salmon throughout the Kuskokwim Area, although overall abundance of these species has declined from the record high levels seen in 2005 and 2006. Chinook salmon abundance was characterized as average to below average. Run timing of Chinook, sockeye, and chum salmon was characterized as later than average with run timing at the spawning grounds being among the latest on record for some Kuskokwim River populations. Coho salmon abundance was characterized as average to above average with overall normal run timing.”

Subsistence fishing was allowed seven days a week throughout the region, with the exception of closures around and during commercial fishing periods. ADFG also reports that subsistence needs seem to have been met.

Commercial fishing began in Kuskokwim

Bay Districts 4 and 5 on June 14 and June 19, respectively. “Each District was initially placed on a two day per week fishing schedule on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A weak early showing and late run timing of Chinook salmon resulted in pulling two periods from this schedule to ensure adequate Chinook salmon escapement into the Kanektok and Goodnews Rivers. A schedule of three 12-hour commercial fishing periods per week was initiated in Districts 4 and 5 on July 8 when management transitioned to sockeye salmon directed harvest. Because of limited processing capacity, the single buyer imposed limits on the number of fish that could be delivered by District 4 and 5 fishers during the peak of the sockeye salmon harvest in early July.”

146 permit holders recorded landings in District 4, harvesting 13,812 Chinook, 69,743 sockeye, 94,257 coho and 57,033 chum salmon. While the Chinook salmon harvest in District 4 was below the recent 10-year average, the sockeye, chum and coho salmon catches were all above average. The total estimated value of the District 4 commercial salmon harvest was \$750,731. In the Kanektok River, aerial survey counts indicate the Chinook salmon escapements within the needed range and sockeye salmon escapements exceeded the upper end of the goal range.

25 permit holders made landings in District 5, catching 1,281 Chinook, 27,236 sockeye, 22,547 coho and 10,340 chum salmon worth an estimated total of \$198,070. At the Middle Fork Goodnews River weir, the Chinook and sockeye salmon escapements were within the goal ranges and the minimum thresholds for chum and coho escapement were also achieved.

In Kuskokwim River District 1, 374 permit holders harvested 8,865 Chinook, 15,601 sockeye, 142,862 coho and 30,516 chum salmon with a total estimated value of \$538,310 which is 10% below the recent 10-year average.

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2008 Commercial Salmon Harvest by Subdistrict, in numbers of fish - Kuskokwim Area

	Chinook	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
Lower Kuskokwim River, W-1	8,865	15,601	142,862	15	30,516	197,859
Quinhagak, W-4	13,812	69,743	94,257	0	57,033	234,845
Goodnews Bay, W-5	1,281	27,236	22,547	0	10,340	61,404
Total	23,958	112,580	259,666	15	97,889	

Yukon Study

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complexity, it is difficult to confidently predict the long-term effects of size-selective fisheries on Yukon River Chinook salmon. Nevertheless, an improved understanding of how such opposing selective pressures might interact to control population dynamics would be beneficial, both for inferring historic population characteristics and trends and for developing informed management strategies to maintain desirable population characteristics into the future.”

The authors of the study used computer models to examine the situation since biological data is lacking for earlier years. In addition, it would be quite difficult to conduct a definitive field study on this issue.

A number of different simulations were conducted that considered different variables such as overall spawning productivity, harvest rates, management precision, differing escapement goals and of course, gill net mesh size. The computer simulations began with a hypothetical un-fished stock (an assumed population that had not yet been subjected to the possible selective effects of fishing) and ran the simulations for an initial 200 year time period.

“In nearly all fishing scenarios considered, mean length displayed a consistent rate of decline for approximately 50 years, after which the rate of decline tended to moderate. In most cases, mean length was approximately stable by year 100. Mean length decreased by approximately one third in the high-productivity simulations, while the decline was somewhat less, approximately one quarter, in the low-productivity simulations. Mean age responded similarly.”

The authors wanted to examine how some of these simulations would respond if management actions were taken to try to correct the population changes that had occurred (the reductions in larger and older fish). They used a subset of their initial simulations to examine “alternate fishing simulations” in which they modified some of the variables, particularly mesh size, harvest rates and escapement goals to examine how the populations would respond over an additional 200 year time period.

“In most of the cases we considered,

management intervention after 200 years had meager success in reversing declines in mean length and age over a subsequent 200 years unless multiple changes were implemented in the fishery. The reduction in mesh size from 8.5 in to 7.5 in was modest in comparison to the large reduction in length after 200 years of fishing with 8.5 in gear, so the smaller-meshed gear continued to target the largest individuals and effectively preclude recovery in the absence of other remedies. Management options to reduce exploitation rate and mesh size were much more effective in increasing length and age when implemented jointly, rather than individually.” In addition, management intervention was more successful when enacted before substantial reductions in age and size had occurred.

The report is summarized with four conclusions and two recommendations:

Conclusion #1: That many phenotypic traits, such as size and age at maturation, are heritable seems irrefutable, not

withstanding the important influence that environmental factors have on the same phenotypic traits.

Conclusion #2: Insufficient information exists, in the form of theoretically-justified models and empirical observations with which to parameterize such models, to accurately predict the magnitude of a population-level response to selective exploitation.

Conclusion #3: Size-selective exploitation, particularly directional selection for the largest and most fecund individuals, has the potential to rapidly reduce fish size and age at maturation, as well as population productivity.

Conclusion #4: Unless scientific experiments are conducted at a scale in which individual populations are the experimental units, which is unlikely to be socially acceptable even if logistically feasible, analysis of empirical observations is unlikely to conclusively reveal the true

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BOARD OF FISHERIES UPDATE

What (State) fishing regulation(s) do you think needs to be changed?

It's that time again...as part of the regular cycle, the Alaska Board of Fisheries considers changes to the fishery regulations for each area and fishery on a three-year rotation. Next winter (2009/2010), the Board will be holding meetings for all the finfish fisheries (which includes salmon) of the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region, Bristol Bay, Area M, and issues of Statewide application. In the spring before each year's upcoming meetings, the Board will issue a "call for proposals" which invites anyone to submit proposed regulation changes. Proposals must be received by April 10, 2009.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, it's always helpful to talk with the folks at Fish and Game. If you have an idea and would like to discuss your proposed change, BSFA staff can help. We are always available to discuss these matters and provide support in various ways.

For more information, go to the Board of Fisheries website at: <http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/fishinfo/index.php> ❖

2009/2010 Board of Fisheries Tentative Meeting Dates & Locations

Date	Topic	Location
October 13-14, 2009 [2 days]	Work session, agenda change requests	Anchorage
December 1-8, 2009 [8 days]	Bristol Bay finfish	Anchorage
January 26-31, 2010 [6 days]	Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim finfish	Fairbanks
February 2-6, 2010 [5 days]	AK Peninsula/Aleutian Islands finfish	Anchorage
March 16-20, 2010 [5 days]	Statewide finfish and supplemental issues	Anchorage

Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch Update

At the June North Pacific Council meetings in Kodiak, the Council added another alternative to the analysis document for Chinook salmon bycatch and identified this new one as their “preliminary preferred alternative” (PPA).

The new alternative can be found at: http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/salmonbycatchmotion608.pdf

The PPA would establish a hard cap on Chinook salmon bycatch for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island pollock fishery at either 68,392 or 47,591 fish. For the higher cap of 68,392 Chinook salmon to apply, all or part of the pollock fleet must operate under a program that “provides explicit incentives to promote [Chinook] salmon avoidance...”. This incentive program is still being developed by the fleet and may carry financial penalties for those with poor bycatch performance and rewards for those fishing cleaner.

The alternative further specifies three requirements for an incentive program:

1- “[...] must provide incentive(s) for each vessel to avoid [Chinook] salmon bycatch under any condition of pollock and salmon abundance in all years.”

2- “Incentive measures must include rewards for [Chinook] salmon bycatch avoidance and/or penalties for failure to avoid [Chinook] salmon bycatch at the vessel level.”

3- “[...] must specify how those incentives are expected to promote reductions in actual individual vessel bycatch rates relative to what would have occurred in absence of an incentive program. Incentive measures must promote [Chinook] salmon savings in any

condition of pollock and [Chinook] salmon abundance, such that they are expected to influence operational decisions at bycatch levels below the hard cap.”

If the fleet cannot develop and agree to a satisfactory avoidance program, then the lower hard cap of 47,591 Chinook salmon will apply.

Representatives from the pollock industry have been working to develop incentive programs that may fit the criteria outlined in the new alternative. At the most recent NPFMC meeting (October 1-7) the Council heard updates from several individuals regarding their progress in developing these programs. The Council also outlined a timeline for further review as they move toward taking final action on this issue in April 2009. At their December 2008 meeting (Anchorage) they expect to hold an evening session at which the public can hear more information about the developing incentive programs and there will be opportunity for questions. Prior to the February 2009 NPFMC meeting (January 20), the Salmon Bycatch Working Group will meet to review incentive programs and may also provide input back to the Council. At the February 2009 meeting (Seattle) the Council’s Advisory Panel and Scientific & Statistical Committee will hear and review final (or near final) avoidance program plans from the industry and will provide their comments back to the full Council, as well.

Other points in the preliminary preferred alternative:

- Provides for a 70% and 30% split of the hard cap between the pollock A and B seasons, respectively, and allows

up to 80% of the unused A season cap allocation to be rolled over into the B season.

- Uses a blended approach to allocate the total hard cap between the fishery sectors. The sector allocations are based upon 75% of the sector’s 2002-2006 salmon bycatch history (within each season) and 25% by their sectoral allocations of pollock. A complicated approach, but basically it boils down to this:
 - A Season sector sub-allocations: Community Development Quota (CDQ) 9.3%; inshore Catcher Vessels (CV) 49.8%; mothership 8.0%; offshore Catcher/Processor (CP) 32.9%
 - B season sector sub-allocations: CDQ 5.5%; inshore CV 69.3%; mothership 7.3%; offshore CP 17.9%
- Allows Chinook salmon bycatch allocations to be transferred between sectors (NMFS does not actively manage the bycatch allocations)

Further amendments to the Chinook salmon bycatch alternative(s) are unlikely to be considered until the April 2009 Council meeting, when they are planning to take final action on the matter. BSFA will continue to closely follow this issue and will report more progress in future issues of the FAIR Advocate and in the discussion forums on the FAIR website: <http://fair.bsfaak.org/cfforumsexpress/>

The Council is also expecting to move forward with the lengthy process to analyze the proposed alternatives to address chum salmon bycatch. At their December meeting, the Council is expected to review and possibly modify a discussion paper on the chum salmon bycatch alternatives. Once this step is completed, Council and NMFS staff can begin preparing the analysis documents.

The chum salmon discussion paper can be found here: http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/Chumbycatchalts908.pdf

The agenda for the December 2008 NPFMC meeting is available on the council’s website: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/Agendas/1208Agenda.pdf> ❖

Yukon Study

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relationship between fishery exploitation and the phenotypic traits and demographic characteristics of salmon populations.

Recommendation #1: Maintain the abundance of the reproductive component of a population well above the level suggested by traditional analysis of stock-productivity data to maintain the resiliency of the population to both fishery and

natural selective forces.

Recommendation #2: Reduce or eliminate the directional selection for larger and more fecund individuals to maintain genetic and phenotypic diversity, capacity to utilize diverse habitat, and population productivity.

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Season Summary

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Bristol Bay

Quoted text in this section is excerpted from "2008 Bristol Bay Salmon Season Summary", ADFG, September 22, 2008. <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region2/finfish/salmon/bbay/brbpos08.pdf>

The midpoint of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's preseason forecast called for a total run of 40.29 million sockeye salmon and, thru July 20, the actual run came in at 40.4 million. Pretty darn close in the world of run predictions. But, there were some differences within the individual districts.

A strong push of fish coupled with limited processing capacity led to limits and some processors suspended buying operations for brief periods. ADFG's season summary chronicles the unfolding of the peak of the run: "[L]imitations in processor capacity began impacting Bristol

Bay salmon fisheries on the night of June 30, with the first action to suspend or limit catch. By July 3, limits or suspensions had occurred in all districts. Processors proactively managed the harvesting capabilities of their fleets according to their individual needs. Companies imposed control on harvest by district, tide and gear group to varying degrees. By July 8 limits became less of a factor although some companies had limits in place until July 11. Management actions by the department were to liberalize fishing times allowing processors and permit holders to determine how to utilize their resources in the most efficient manner. While the limits were in place, the department lost the ability to control escapement resulting in a loss of harvestable yield in some districts as fish passed into the escapement." ADFG's summary estimates a potential lost yield of 1.1 million fish

2008 Sockeye Salmon Commercial Catch & Escapement by District - Bristol Bay

District	Catch	Escapement
Naknek/Kvichak		10,440,385
	Kvichak Tower	2,757,912
	Naknek Tower	2,416,782
	Alagnak Tower	2,180,502
Egegik		7,430,294
	Egegik Tower	1,253,982
Ugashik		2,348,594
	Ugashik Tower	568,632
Nushagak		6,885,606
	Woor Tower	1,724,676
	Igushik escapement	1,054,704
	Nushagak escapement	492,546
Togiak		650,718
	Togiak Tower	205,680
TOTAL		27,755,597
		12,655,416

in the Naknek/Kvichak District and 0.6 million fish in the Nushagak District as a result. Applying average weight and price equates to approximately \$6.8 million in unharvested fish.

The total Bristol Bay salmon harvest was approximately 29.3 million fish (of which 27,755,597 were sockeye) for a total estimated value of \$113.3 million. ❖

Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
110 W. 15th Ave, Unit A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

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