



Alaska Fisheries

RE: proposal 209

My name is Bruce Alexander.

I have a drift gillnet and have fished mainly the Tree Point District 1 area since 1995. I have concerns about Proposal 209 and strongly oppose it. This proposal would double the depth of the nets that are in use now. By doubling the depth the catch of treaty sockeye salmon would be increased. The District 1 fishery is regulated by the International treaty with Canada (Chapter 2 section 4 of the U.S. Canada Treaty). In order to accomplish the objectives of this chapter, neither party shall initiate new intercepting fisheries nor conduct or redirect fisheries in a manner that intentionally increases interceptions.

If more sockeye are harvested time constraints would occur, in the early season openings, primarily June and July, thereby limiting gillnet capabilities to harvest early chum salmon. This would negatively impact the gillnet fleet financially. District 1 is also constrained, by escapements to the sockeye indicator stream located in Boca De Quadra (Hugh Smith). Hugh Smith within the last decade had been designated a stock of concern. Remedies were enacted and escapements and have risen now to acceptable levels. By increasing depth of gillnets, sockeye catches of this stock would also increase. As of now, Hugh Smith sockeye exploitation rates can approach a 60 to 80 percent rate. This is far too high for adequate recruitment to spawning grounds. Other areas of concern which would be impacted would be Lake MacDonald sockeye, U.S. Canada Treaty Stikine and U.S. Canada Treaty Taku.

Over a period of years the gillnet fleet has achieved a consistent balance of catches, escapements, and treaty obligations with the gear they presently fish with. Also there is the high risk of by catch of marine mammals i.e. whales, porpoise, sea lions to say the least of dog fish. Nothing about this proposal sounds good to me! As management of our resources you must remember that it is the fishermen's job to catch the resources and your job to try to help maintain the resources for all, not just a few who simply want more now! Just say BUFFALO HUNT out loud.

Thank you

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