

RC 031

Dear Board of Fish Members,

We would encourage you to support the emergency petition for purse seining on the Yukon River summer chum run.

It cannot be overstated that along this river is an *ancient culture wholly dependent upon a single resource; Salmon*. Without meaningful access for its people to the salmon resource, the culture is at risk. Without access, the future is bleak.

I manage the fish processing plant in Kaltag. In my experience it is crucial to maintain the ability to harvest salmon resources on the Yukon where possible, while still protecting the critical Chinook salmon resource. While we compete for the same resources on the Lower Yukon, we understand the incredible hardship of being prohibited from harvesting the only significant local resource for food and cash.

While the Yukon summer chum salmon run is now likely the largest wild chum salmon run in the state, and incredibly healthy, the Chinook is struggling. The Board provided us in the Middle Yukon an opportunity to change our fish handling practices on fish wheels, to good results – Thank you by the way.

How to harvest one, and not the other?

We need to change harvesting methods. With proper regulatory protection, we are sure this is possible. I have considerable experience with seining, and am certain with the appropriate protection, it is possible to harvest summer chums potentially with zero mortality of Chinooks, utilizing purse seines. Beach seines will not work.

The key to zero mortality is more than just changing the gear type, but additionally regulating the fish handling practices. Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia all have a decade of experience in these handling techniques with scientific data to back up these practices.

I would recommend mandatory wet brailing of salmon from the net. Wet brailing is a scoop that has water impervious material built into it instead of the traditional webbing. This means that every scoop is a slug of water cradling the salmon when removed from the water. Specifically a brailer needs to be a minimum of 36" in diameter to accommodate Chinooks and at least 80% impervious material.

Personal regards,

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