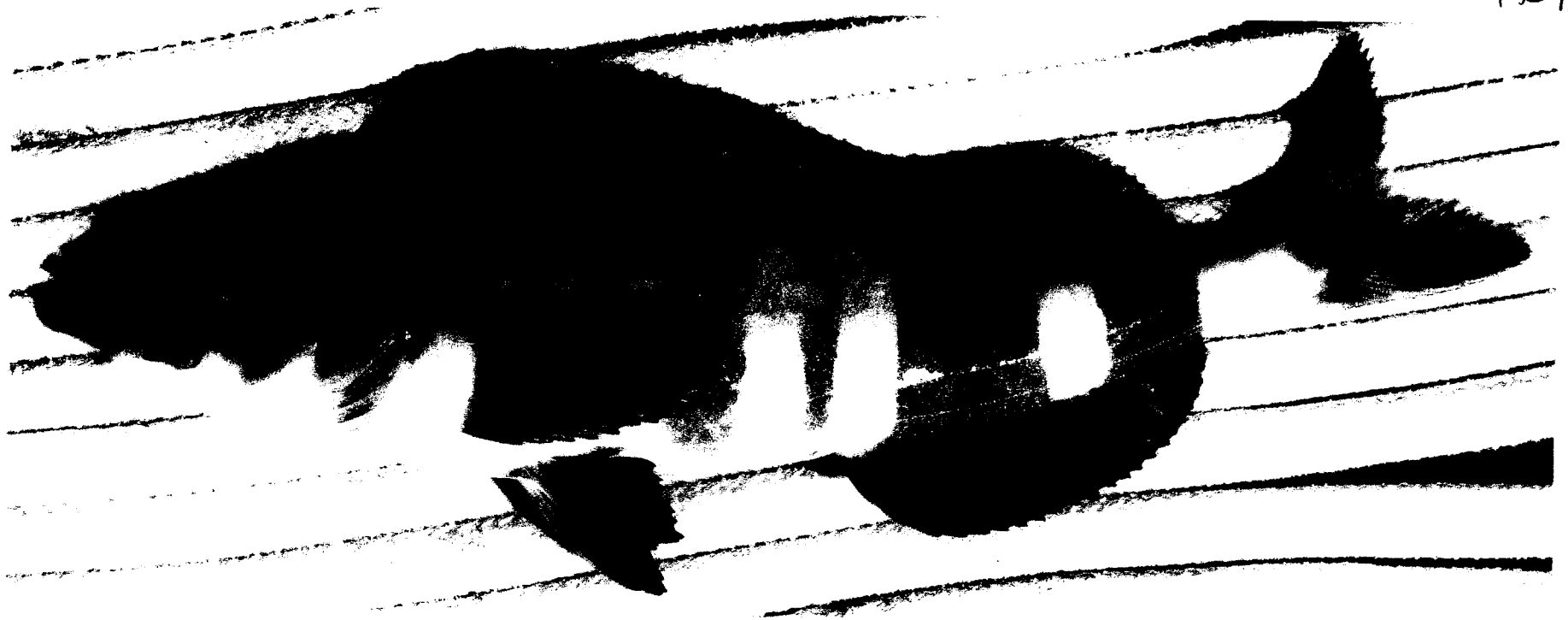


RC42



# Atka Mackerel Test Fishery

F/V Taurus & F/V Half Moon Bay

August 2<sup>nd</sup> – August 24<sup>th</sup>

Castle Cape Fisheries & Icicle Seafoods

Dan Veerhusen

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# Atka Mackerel Test Fishery Summary

- ❑ The Atka Mackerel are extremely fast fish that swim in small to medium sized schools (3 – 50 ton) that have highest populations between 25 through 13 fathoms of water.
- ❑ The mackerel live in areas where lots of current is present and generally harsh, rocky bottoms.
- ❑ The F/V Taurus observed the most mackerel near the ocean's surface during a full moon.
- ❑ The F/V Taurus made more than 20 sets during a three week period in August and traveled to/from Dutch Harbor and Atka Island two times, and Adak once. Mackerel were spotted numerously between Atka and Adak Islands.

# Atka Mackerel behavior

- ❑ In each location between Amlia/Atka Islands and Adak the crew of the F/V Taurus jigged mackerel to test size and for sign of spawn.
- ❑ The largest mackerel were on Amlia/Atka Islands, averaging 2 to 2 ½ pounds. Mackerel near Adak Island averaged 1 ½ pounds.
- ❑ The mackerel on Amlia/Atka Islands showed more sign of spawn and the roe in some of the females looked riper; however, the fish were not close to being ready to spawn at the time.
- ❑ The largest and best sign of mackerel near the surface was closest to the full moon in early August. Also, mackerel seem to come to the surface when the weather is calm and sunny.

# Atka Mackerel behavior cont.

- ❑ Atka Mackerel live near rocky bottoms and next to pinnacles, making them difficult to catch with a traditional seine.
- ❑ The mackerel were plentiful in passes with strong currents especially Amlia Pass. However, a traditional seining operation like for salmon or herring would not be able to set in currents of 3-4 knots and difficult bottom.
- ❑ When closing a set, the mackerel would almost immediately try to sound, driving them out of the net entirely. They are built for speed. Also, the mackerel were easily frightened by boat noise.