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By Jeff McKean

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**Report to the Board of Fisheries, Status of the
Allocation of Enhanced Fish, Southeast Region**

by

Garold V. Pryor

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ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE REGIONAL PLANNING TEAM

Two of the most influential factors affecting allocation are marine survival and price per pound, which are factors outside the control of the associations, the department, and the Board of Fisheries. The Joint RPT has never suggested that the present allocation imbalance is due to failure of the associations to follow the board's allocation guidelines. The allocation plan and associated findings of the board do not *require* the board to make changes in access, or the Joint RPT to recommend changes in production, when an imbalance occurs.

The Joint RPT takes their assignment of 'allocation plan oversight' very seriously. Joint RPT meetings are a forum to discuss hatchery production changes, and possible modifications of the harvest of enhanced fish to address the allocation imbalance³. The Joint RPT believes the intent of the allocation plan has always been to try and increase targeted production and/or harvest opportunity of the gear group below its allocation range using measures that do not significantly and directly penalize the historical harvest opportunities of the gear group that is above its target range. Because the allocation is relational, a percentage increase in one gear group value will mean a corresponding decrease in the other two gear groups.

The Joint RPT has recommended to the commissioner that hatcheries continue to increase Chinook, coho, and chum salmon production, where possible. The inherent risk of adjusting production to correct an imbalance is the lag time from egg takes to harvest, especially for Chinook and chum salmon. A decision to modify production numbers in a given brood year will take four years before the majority of fish return for chum salmon, and five years for Chinook salmon. In the worst-case scenario, a decision to *increase* production results in little or no increased harvest value, if survivals and prices decline. A decision to *decrease* production could result in a magnified drop in harvest value, if survivals and prices decline.

Overall increases in Chinook and coho salmon releases, as well as changes in harvest management, have been a positive step to increasing troll allocation. If future marine survivals and exvessel prices do not adversely override the increase in production, the value of the troll harvest should increase. It is important to note, however, that the value of Chinook and coho have increased dramatically in terminal "clean up" fisheries for all the gear groups. Increased restraints imposed by the Pacific Salmon Treaty have limited the amount of fishing time for the troll fleet, which reduces the troll catch and allows more fish to return to the terminal areas. In essence, projects specifically designed to help the troll fleet may be working against the allocation imbalance by providing significant value to the seine and gillnet fleets in the terminal areas. These projects do raise the value of the troll harvest, but do not necessarily raise the allocation portion based on value.

The Joint RPT submitted two proposals that were adopted by the Board of Fisheries during the 1999/2000 cycle. A proposal to eliminate the chum salmon cap during the spring Chinook fishery at Hidden Falls, and a proposal to allow the department to extend the length of the weekly Snow Passage spring fishery based on enhanced coho harvest, were both intended to increase the opportunity for the troll fleet to harvest enhanced Chinook, coho, and chum salmon. While both of these proposals may have increased value to the troll fleet, neither project has had

³ The role of the Joint RPT in making recommendations relative to allocation poses a unique situation for the three ADF&G representatives on the team. ADF&G staff provide technical input and participate in team discussions, but only the six industry representatives on the Joint RPT have voted on proposals or recommendations submitted to the Board of Fisheries.

a significant impact on allocation percentages. A proposal by the Joint RPT submitted to the Board of Fisheries during the 2008/2009 cycle to change the rotation of the Deep Inlet Special Harvest Area (Proposal 273), will likely result in a higher percentage of the Deep Inlet harvest going to the seine fleet, which should have a direct impact on allocation by shifting fish value from the gillnet to the seine fleet.