



ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

HATCHERY COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday, March 7, 2020, 8:30 a.m.  
Egan Civic and Convention Center, Anchorage

MEETING SUMMARY

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Reed Morisky, Chair	John Wood
Märit Carlson-Van Dort, Vice-chair	Israel Payton
John Jensen	Fritz Johnson
Gerad Godfrey	

**OPENING BUSINESS**

Call to Order – Chairman Morisky calls the meeting to order at 8:42 am.

Introductions of Board Members and Staff. The committee members introduced themselves. Member Jensen was absent initially, but arrived shortly thereafter. Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) staff included:

Commercial Fisheries

Sam Rabung – Director  
Forrest Bowers – Deputy Director  
Bill Templin – Chief Fishery Scientist  
Andrew Munro – Statewide Fisheries Scientist  
Chris Habicht – Principal Geneticist  
Kyle Shedd – Fisheries Geneticist

Jeff Milton – Statewide Hatchery Coord.

Boards Support

Glenn Haight – Board of Fisheries Exec. Director  
Jessalynn Rintala – Publications Specialist  
Charity Lehman – Southcentral Region Coordinator  
Joe Corona – Office of Information Technology

Sport Fisheries

Tom Taube – Deputy Director  
Tim McKinley – Southcentral Research Coord.

Department of Law

Aaron Peterson, Assistant Attorney General

Chairman Morisky opened the meeting by reviewing the Joint Protocol on Salmon Enhancement (Finding/Policy #2002-FB-215).

Tom Carpenter of the Copper River/Prince William Sound Advisory Committee was in attendance and received his Certificate of Excellence in Service from Chairman Morisky.

**ADF&G STAFF REPORTS**

The department provided the following reports.

1. [Alaska Fishery Enhancement Program](#) by Lorraine Vercesi
2. [Sport Fish Enhancement Program](#) by Jeff Milton
3. [Introductions and Concepts](#) by Bill Templin



- a. Straying and Homing in Salmon Life History by Templin and Chris Habicht
- b. Alaska Hatchery Research Project by Templin and Habicht
4. [Study Question 1: Genetic structure of Chum and pink salmon in Prince William Sound and Southeast Alaska](#) by Sara Gilk-Baumer
  - a. Chum salmon in Prince William Sound and Southeast
  - b. Population structure of pink salmon in Prince William Sound
5. [Study Question 2: What is the Extend and Annual Variability of Straying?](#) By Templin and Habicht
6. [Study Question 3: Update on pink and chum salmon hatchery /wild relative fitness](#) by Kyle Shedd
  - a. Southeast Alaska Chum Fitness Study
7. [Assessing Mechanisms Driving Relative Reproductive Success](#), Chris Habicht
  - a. Review of Evidence of Genetic Interaction Between Hatchery and Wild Pink Salmon in Prince William Sound
  - b. Application of Science to Policy by Templin and Andrew Munro

Board members asked a number of questions to staff on the presentations.

#### DEPARTMENT OF LAW BRIEFING

The Department of Law provided a briefing of the extent to which the Board of Fisheries has authority over hatcheries. Assistant Attorney General Aaron Peterson offered the advice from Law has not changed from that given in the 1997 which is that the board has authority to modify releases in a hatchery permit. A review of legislative intent behind AS 16.10.440(b) did not find that authority was limited to wild capture broodstock.

#### OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION

The board held an open forum for discussion on set topics. The information below summarizes the public discussion.

Is hatchery research in Alaska adequately independent? Comments included:

- Original money for the Alaska Hatchery Research Project came from the State of Alaska. Hatcheries were asked if they wanted the appropriation, but they asked to have it go to ADF&G to keep the funding with a neutral facilitator. Additional hatchery operator comments indicated they contributed to project funding, but do not recall having any oversight on the research.
- The Douglas Island Pink and Chum hatchery indicated the funding they provided was from a large windfall that came to the hatchery. At the same time, they were able to fund a graduate program with the university unrelated to hatcheries.
- There was support for research to receive peer review and an independent body to help oversee the effort.
- Additional comments related to peer review suggested traditional peer review was appropriate for academic research, but applied research required oversight by more knowledgeable sources such as ADF&G.

How could the hatchery research be more independent? Comments include:

- Having an accurate assessment of escapement goals in rivers where straying is occurring would help to determine the impact of the straying.
- There are examples of other industry-led models that future work could emulate including the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute and the Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center.



- Independent peer reviewed work is not helpful if it does not understand the subject matter.
- One hatchery board member discussed that within his board, who is composed of mainly fishermen, there is a culture of care and caution for the wild stocks over hatchery production.
- It should be expected that even without a formalized peer review process, all the work that comes from the Alaska Hatchery Research Project will receive a significant amount of external review.
- There was concern that certain employees within ADF&G were not able to publicly voice concerns about hatcheries.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

The board finished the committee meeting by discussing three specific questions.

Should the annual Hatchery Committee meeting be two days in length to accommodate the potential length of presentations, or should it be shortened?

- There was general agreement one day was adequate. One request was for department presentations to be done ahead of time and posted on the Internet to allow board members to review them in advance and be prepared to ask questions. The material was quite a bit and some subject matter was complex. An opportunity to review in advance and study would help.

Should the Joint Protocol on Salmon Enhancement be adopted into regulation? What purpose would it serve?

- There was general concurrence that putting the policy into regulation would have no practical purpose. It was agreed to continue to have annual hatchery committee meetings.

Is the precautionary approach being implemented when reviewing hatcheries? Is it working?

- The only comment from the board was the belief that the precautionary approach is built into the permitting plans and research currently underway is evidence of that approach.

### **SCHEDULING THE NEXT HATCHERY COMMITTEE MEETING**

The board determined to hold the next Hatchery Committee meeting the day prior to the 2021 Statewide meeting, March 4, 2021.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:33pm.**