

SOUTHEAST ALASKA DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY
MANAGEMENT PLAN, 1993



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INTRODUCTION

This management plan provides an overview of the expected salmon run sizes, management issues, and harvest strategies for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries in 1993.

There are approximately 480 limited entry permits in the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery of which over 95% are actively fished each year. Drift gillnet landings have averaged approximately 1,900,000 salmon annually since 1960. Of the total commercial salmon harvest in Southeast, the drift gillnet fishery harvests an average of 42% of the sockeye, 26% of the chum, 12% of the coho, 5% of the pink, and 4% of the chinook salmon.

The drift gillnet fishery targets primarily on sockeye, pink, and summer-run chum salmon during the summer season, and on coho and fall-run chum salmon during the fall season. Chinook salmon are usually harvested incidentally, although some targeted chinook salmon fisheries are allowed in terminal hatchery areas in the spring. Currently, there are no directed gillnet fisheries for natural stocks of chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska.

There are five drift gillnet fishing areas in Southeast Alaska: District 1 (Tree Point and Portland Canal), District 6 (Prince of Wales), District 8 (Stikine), District 11 (Taku-Snettisham), and District 15 (Lynn Canal). In addition, drift gillnet fisheries occur in several terminal areas adjacent to hatchery facilities. Each of these gillnet fisheries are discussed separately in this management plan.

SALMON RETURNS

In Southeast Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issues formal preseason return forecasts only for pink salmon. Otherwise, the projected returns of sockeye, chum, and coho salmon presented in this management plan are strictly qualitative and should not be considered official department forecasts. The return projections are calculated primarily from parent-year catch and escapement data and are expressed in terms of probable magnitude of return relative to historic levels.

Average returns of sockeye salmon to the drift gillnet fishing areas are expected in 1993. Although returns of natural summer-run chum salmon stocks are anticipated to be below average in most areas, overall summer-run chum salmon returns should be above average due to increasing hatchery production. Poor returns of fall-run chum salmon are expected to Lynn Canal. Returns of hatchery-produced, summer-run chum salmon are expected to contribute significantly to the District 1, 11, and 15 gillnet fisheries. Overall, returns of coho salmon should be above average due in part to significant hatchery contributions.

A record pink salmon return of 83,000,000 has been predicted for Southeast Alaska in 1993. Subtracting the escapement goal of 31,000,000 results in a catch forecast of 52,000,000. The major portion of the harvest will be taken by purse seine gear, but good harvest opportunities are also expected for gillnet fisheries.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The lack of accurate preseason forecasts for salmon returns to the drift gillnet fishing areas requires a flexible management approach. Thus, this management plan presents only a general outlook of how the season is expected to develop. Some specific management approaches may be altered depending on inseason assessments of salmon run strength. Fishermen are encouraged to contact department management staff listed at the end of this plan for more detailed information.

The primary objectives for management of the 1993 drift gillnet fishery are:

1. Obtain overall salmon spawning escapement goals with the best possible distribution to all systems.
2. Provide for an orderly fishery while harvesting those fish in excess of spawning escapement needs.
3. Promote the harvest and processing of good quality fish within the constraints dictated by run size.
4. Manage the fisheries for a total Southeast gillnet catch of 7,600 chinook salmon, exclusive of Alaska hatchery-produced fish [5AAC 33.365. (10)(B)].
5. Minimize, to the extent possible, the interception of salmon destined for locations where weak returns are expected.

Achievement of these management objectives will be accomplished by inseason adjustments of fishing time to control harvests in specific areas in accordance with salmon run strength and timing. Comparisons of current-year fishing performance to historical fishing success (i.e., catch per unit effort, or CPUE analysis) are a major component of inseason run strength assessment. This approach assumes that catch rates are a true reflection of run strength by time period, and can be relied upon to indicate salmon escapement rates through the fishing area.

Past experience has demonstrated that management of salmon fisheries based only on CPUE data can be misleading, especially for mixed-stock fisheries. Therefore, although fishery performance will be important to in-season management, other available run strength indicators will also be used. For example, information on spawning escapements, stock separation using scale characteristics, test fishing, observed salmon concentrations or schooling in sanctuary areas, catches from other fisheries, and salmon run timing models will also be utilized.

The increasing availability of hatchery-produced salmon is a major factor in the management of the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries. Where in-season management is based on fishery performance, it may be difficult to gauge natural stock run strength if significant numbers of hatchery fish are present in the catch. Where possible, the hatchery component of the catch will be separated when evaluating fishery performance.

Weekly Fishing Announcements

In-season management of the District 1 drift gillnet fisheries is conducted by the Ketchikan Area staff, Districts 6 and 8 by the Petersburg and Wrangell area staff, District 11 by the Juneau area staff, and District 15 by the Haines area staff. Because fishermen can move freely among all drift gillnet fisheries, weekly fishing announcements for all areas will be coordinated by the Juneau regional office. These will normally be released simultaneously in all area offices by mid-afternoon each Thursday during the fishing season.

Weekly Fishing Periods

Weekly fishing periods can generally be expected to begin on Sunday at 12:01 p.m. Exceptions are the Northern and Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association's (NSRAA & SSRAA) terminal fisheries in Deep Inlet, Nakat Inlet, and Earl West Cove, where rotational harvest plans for drift gillnet, seine, and troll fisheries will apply, and the Wrangell Narrows and Ohmer Creek terminal hatchery fisheries that will begin on Monday.

Gillnet Specifications

The 1991-1993 Southeast-Yakutat Commercial Fishing Regulations booklet mistakenly omitted a portion of the Gillnet Specifications and Operation. The official regulation register does contain the correct gillnet specifications. It reads as follows:

"5AAC 39.250. GILLNET SPECIFICATIONS AND OPERATIONS. (c) Gillnet web must contain at least 30 filaments, except that

- (1) in the Southeast Alaska, Yakutat, Prince William Sound, and Cook Inlet Areas, gillnet web must meet one of the following requirements:
 - (A) the web must contain at least 30 filaments and all filaments must be of equal diameter,
 - or
 - (B) the web must contain at least six filaments, each of which must be at least 0.20 millimeter in diameter."

U.S./CANADA PACIFIC SALMON TREATY

The U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) will influence management of the District 1, 6, 8, and 11 drift gillnet fisheries. For the 1993 season, these fisheries will be managed consistent with the provisions of the PST annexes for the transboundary rivers (Taku and Stikine) and the northern boundary area (northern British Columbia and southern Southeast Alaska). The management provisions specified by the PST will be considered separately under the specific management plan for each respective fishery. Gillnet fishermen are encouraged to contact local department staff for more detailed information concerning Alaska's PST obligations. Because PST negotiations are ongoing, these management plans are subject to change.

CHINOOK SALMON CATCH

Existing regulations [5AAC 33.365. (10)(B)] specify a catch limit of 7,600 chinook salmon (exclusive of Alaska hatchery fish) for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery. The Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted this regulation to ensure that the various user groups maintain their recent-year share of the total chinook salmon harvest quota specified by the PST.

The need for management measures to comply with the drift gillnet harvest quota for chinook salmon will depend on in-season evaluation of chinook salmon catch rates relative to the 7,600 fish ceiling. The Board of Fisheries has recommended nighttime fishing closures as the primary management measure to restrict the incidental catch of immature, "feeder" chinook salmon. As in past years, early season area closures will be maintained to minimize the incidental harvest of mature, "spawner" chinook salmon returning to the Stikine River in District 8, the Taku River in District 11, and the Chilkat River in District 15.

TREE POINT AND PORTLAND CANAL FISHERY

Introduction

The Tree Point and Portland Canal gillnet area consists of Sections 1-A and 1-B. This fishery targets on chum and sockeye salmon early in the season, followed by pink salmon, and finally chum and coho salmon at the end of the season.

1993 Outlook

Sockeye salmon returns to Canadian systems, which contribute significant numbers of fish to the Tree Point drift gillnet fishery, are expected to be below average, based on parent-year escapements. Returns to Hugh Smith Lake, a local U.S. spawning system, are also expected to be below average. If the returns of sockeye salmon develop as predicted, early-season fishing time and area may be affected. Chum salmon returns to natural spawning systems are expected to be above average to most areas, based on parent year spawning levels to systems in Boca de Quadra and Behm Canal. Returns to Portland Canal are expected to be below average.

Returns of summer-run chum, fall-run chum, and coho salmon to the Nakat Inlet release site of the Southern Southeast Alaska Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA) are expected to contribute fish to the District 1 gillnet fishery. The 1993 projected returns are approximately 53,000 summer chum, 68,000 fall chum, and 11,500 coho salmon. Peak catches from these releases are expected between mid-July to mid-August for summer chum and late August and early September for fall chum and coho salmon, respectively.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 1993 District 1 drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

- A. Manage the fishery in accordance with the Pink Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 33.360).

The Pink Salmon Management Plan establishes gillnet fishing time in Section 1-B in relation to District 1 purse seine fishing time when both gear types are concurrently harvesting the same pink salmon stocks. Based on regulations passed by the Board of Fisheries in February of 1991, the plan will start on the third Sunday in July (July 18). The fishing time formula specified by regulation is as follows:

1. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of one day during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 48 hours during the same fishing week.
 2. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of two days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 96 hours during the same fishing week.
 3. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of three or more days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 120 hours during the same fishing week.
 4. Conservation concerns for other salmon species may reduce the fishing time specified in the Pink Salmon Management Plan.
- B. Manage the fishery consistent with the provisions of the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty (5 AAC 33.361). Discussions between the U.S. and Canada are ongoing, hence this management plan is subject to change.

The sockeye salmon fishery will be managed in accordance with the PST which specifies an average annual harvest of 130,000 sockeye salmon. This catch limit is viewed as a level to be maintained over the long term. An average seasonal catch of approximately 143,600 sockeye salmon has occurred in the area during the PST period from 1985 through 1992.

Management Plan

The Tree Point gillnet fishery will initially be open in the waters of Section 1-B for a standard four-day fishing week beginning at 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 20. This is the opening date specified by regulation. The duration of subsequent fishing periods, through mid-July, will be based on the strength of sockeye and summer chum salmon returns and fishing effort levels. Sockeye salmon run strength to Canadian and Alaskan systems will be considered in establishing fishing time and area..

The Alaska Board of Fisheries passed a regulation in February of 1991 (5 AAC 33.332) which states that during concurrent seine and drift gillnet openings in Sections 1-B and 1-F, seine nets may not be in the waters of Section 1-B in a fishing or non-fishing condition. This regulation will be in effect for the 1993 season.

The Section 1-B gillnet fishery will be managed according to the Pink Salmon Management Plan, beginning July 18. If the pink salmon run develops as forecasted, it is expected that four to five-day weekly fishing periods will be allowed from mid-July through late August or early September. As allowed by regulation, a minimum gillnet mesh size of six inches may be required, if needed, to protect pink salmon during the fall season.

Beginning in early September, depending on the duration of the pink salmon run, Section 1-B will be managed for the harvest of fall chum and coho salmon. If a below average coho salmon return is apparent, a conservative management approach can be expected during September. As in recent years, gillnet fishermen can expect the season to end no later than September 20. However, the Nakat Inlet terminal special harvest area, as discussed later in this management plan, is scheduled to be open after this date.

The PST requires that interception of chum salmon returning to Portland Canal be minimized to assure rebuilding of these stocks. In 1993, no fishing in Section 1-A for Portland Canal chum salmon should be expected unless it is determined that a harvestable surplus exists. Any management decision to fish Portland Canal must assume there is sufficient additional surplus fish to support a Canadian as well as an Alaskan fishery.

As in recent years, the catch of chum salmon returning to the Nakat Inlet hatchery release site will not be included in the evaluation of natural stock fishery performance. The contribution of Nakat Inlet chum salmon will be determined by inseason analysis of coded wire tag data. Enhanced chum salmon have contributed as much as 71% of individual weekly catches and as much as 31% of the total harvest in recent years.

PRINCE OF WALES AND STIKINE FISHERIES

Introduction

The District 6 drift gillnet fishery occurs in the waters of northern Clarence Strait and Sumner Strait, in regulatory Sections 6-A, 6-B and 6-C, and portions of Section 6-D. The Stikine fishery encompasses the waters of District 8 surrounding the terminus of the Stikine River. Due to their close proximity, management of these fisheries is interrelated, resulting in some major stocks being subject to harvest by both fisheries. Two distinct management areas exist within each district; the Frederick Sound (Section 8-A) and Wrangell (Section 8-B) portions of District 8, and the Sumner Strait (Section 6-A) and Clarence Strait (Sections 6-B, 6-C, and 6-D) portions of District 6. Terminal hatchery fisheries for harvesting returns to the Crystal Lake (ADF&G) and Earl West Cove (SSRAA) hatchery facilities will be discussed in the "Terminal Hatchery Fisheries" portion of this management plan.

Historical information indicates that Stikine River sockeye salmon stocks represent a major proportion of the fish available in District 8, a small proportion of the fish in Section 6-A, and a very low proportion in Sections 6-B, 6-C and 6-D. Management of these fisheries is based on sockeye salmon abundance early in the season, pink salmon abundance in the middle, and coho salmon abundance at the end of the fishing season.

1993 Outlook

The 1993 Stikine River sockeye salmon return is expected to be average to above average. Sockeye returns to local Alaskan spawning areas have been average in recent years, but it is difficult to anticipate their production for 1993.

Average pink salmon returns are forecast for District 6 spawning streams. Because returns are harvested in mixed stock fisheries prior to entering District 6, it is difficult to anticipate local availability. However,

pink salmon returns to southern Southeast Alaska are forecast to be above average in 1993. Because the District 6 gillnet fishery occurs in a major migration corridor, pink salmon destined for other districts will be available at certain times. The return of natural coho salmon stocks is expected to be about average. Chinook, coho, and chum salmon returns to enhancement facilities are also expected to contribute significantly to these fisheries. However, summer chum salmon returning to Burnett Inlet Hatchery and Eastern Passage (Earl West Cove) will be low this year. The projected returns to the Eastern Passage Specific Harvest Area are 25,000 coho, 20,400 summer chum, and 6,500 chinook salmon.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 1993 District 6 and 8 gillnet fisheries are as follows:

1. Minimize the interception of mature spawning chinook salmon returning to the Stikine River.
2. Obtain pink salmon spawning escapement goals in District 6 and 7 streams.
3. Continue to rebuild spawning escapements of sockeye salmon in local Alaskan systems.
4. Manage the District 6 and 8 gillnet fisheries consistent with the provisions of the PST (5AAC 33.361). Discussions between the U.S. and Canada are ongoing, hence this management plan is subject to change.

Management Plan

The sockeye salmon fishery in both districts will be managed in accordance with the Transboundary Rivers (TBR) Annex of the PST. The TBR Annex generally allows the District 6 fishery to be managed for harvesting local Alaskan sockeye salmon stocks and is not influenced under most conditions by the presence of sockeye salmon stocks of Stikine River origin. Management of the District 8 fishery will be based on the need to harvest sockeye salmon of Stikine River origin as allowed by the sharing provisions of the TBR annex and the conservation of the resource. The 1993 Stikine River returns should be strong enough to fulfill PST obligations and allow drift gillnetting in District 6 and limited amounts of time in District 8.

The general summer sockeye season in both districts can be expected to open for 48 hours on Sunday, June 20. Prior to this date, a terminal chinook salmon gillnet fishery will take place outside Ohmer Creek

as discussed in the terminal hatchery fishery portion of this management plan. After the initial open period, fishing will depend on assessments of the abundance of stocks in relation to spawning escapement needs and terms of the PST.

Management actions during the sockeye salmon fishing season will be based on analysis of test fishing, CPUE, and stock identification data to determine the availability of Stikine River fish. These stock abundance indicators, along with fishery performance and stock composition data obtained from Canadian commercial, test, and subsistence fisheries, will be incorporated into a Stikine sockeye management model. This model will, as the season progresses, be the primary tool used to estimate the availability of sockeye for harvest by the Alaskan fishery in District 8 and the Canadian in-river fisheries. Any conservation measures required for Stikine River sockeye salmon will first be implemented in District 8, followed by Sumner Strait in District 6. If the return to local Alaskan island systems is determined to be weak, area and time restrictions may be necessary in District 6.

The area adjacent to the Stikine River mouth, and other milling areas for Stikine River chinook salmon in District 8, may close during the early portions of the sockeye season to reduce the incidental harvest of Stikine River chinook salmon. Area restrictions will be maintained during sockeye salmon directed fishing periods through early July.

Pink salmon should begin entering District 6 in significant numbers by the third or fourth week of July. Early-season pink salmon restrictions (i.e., large mesh gillnets) are not anticipated. The early portion of the pink salmon fishery will be managed primarily on CPUE comparisons. By mid-August, pink salmon destined for local systems will begin to enter the fishery in greater numbers and at that time, management will be based on observed local escapements. If the run strength of the local returns are not evenly dispersed within the district, or are weaker than anticipated, area restrictions may be necessary.

The coho salmon season will occur during late August and early September. Limited directed fishing in terminal areas is anticipated in District 8. Management of the District 6 fishery will be based predominantly on wild stock CPUE analysis. The State-operated Crystal Lake Hatchery, and the SSRAA Earl West Cove and its facilities in the Ketchikan area, are expected to contribute coho salmon to the District 6 and 8 fisheries. Inseason estimates from coded-wire tag recovery data will be used to identify the hatchery component of the catch. Only the catch of natural fish will be used for fishery performance evaluation.

Regulations allow gillnetting along the Screen Island shore of Section 6-D during the early and late portions of the season. Specifically, this area encompasses those waters of Section 6-D west of a line from Mariposa Rock Buoy to the northernmost tip of Point Harrington to a point on the shore of Etolin Island at 56°09'35" N. latitude, 132°42'42" W. longitude to the southernmost tip of Point Stanhope. The periods when fishing may be allowed are: 1) from the third Sunday in June (June 20) through the last Saturday in July (July 31), and 2) from the second Sunday in September (September 12) until the season

is closed. During this time, gillnetting is allowed during the same time periods that the adjoining waters of Section 6-C are open.

TAKU/SNETTISHAM GILLNET FISHERY

Introduction

The Taku/Snettisham (District 11) gillnet area encompasses Section 11-B (Taku Inlet, Port Snettisham, and Stephens Passage south to Midway Island) and Section 11-C (Midway Island south to a line from Point League to Point Hugh). This fishery has traditionally targeted on sockeye salmon during the early portion of the season, and fall chum and coho salmon later in the season.

1993 Outlook

The harvest of natural salmon stocks is anticipated to be below average for the Taku/Snettisham gillnet fishery in 1993. Returns of sockeye and fall chum salmon are expected to be below average, while pink and coho salmon returns may be above average. Hatchery contributions of summer chum salmon from the Snettisham (ADF&G) and Douglas Island Pink and Chum (DIPAC) hatcheries, should contribute significantly to the District 11 drift gillnet harvest. Additional fishing time may be expected this season to harvest 40,000 Snettisham hatchery chum salmon returning to Limestone Inlet. Several thousand adult sockeye will also be returning to Sweetheart Creek from the enhancement of Sweetheart Lake by Snettisham Hatchery. DIPAC is projecting a return of 930,000 pink, 300,000 chum, and 147,000 coho salmon to its Gastineau Channel facilities in 1993. Chum salmon returning to DIPAC facilities will be harvested only incidentally during the directed sockeye salmon fishery. No additional fishing time will be provided to harvest DIPAC returns.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 1993 Taku/Snettisham drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Provide for sufficient salmon spawning escapements to the Taku River and Port Snettisham and Stephens Passage streams while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
2. Minimize, to the extent practical, the incidental harvest of chinook salmon.
3. Manage the fishery consistent with the provisions of the PST (5AAC 33.361). Discussions between the U.S. and Canada are ongoing, hence this management plan is subject to change.
4. Maximize the harvest of hatchery-produced chum salmon returning to Limestone Inlet, while minimizing the incidental harvest of Port Snettisham wild sockeye salmon.

Management Plan

Section 11-B will initially open for a 72-hour period on the third Sunday of June (June 20). The fishery will be managed on the strength of the sockeye salmon return. Run strength will be evaluated from fishery CPUE data and from weekly escapement estimates derived from the Taku River fish wheel tagging and recovery project operated by ADF&G at Canyon Island.

As specified in the PST, the Canadian in-river gillnet fishery is allocated 18% of the total allowable catch (TAC) of sockeye salmon originating from the Canadian portion of the Taku River. In addition, the Canadian fishery is allowed to harvest a maximum of 3,000 coho salmon. Other species are allocated to Canadian fishermen only as incidental landings taken during the directed sockeye and coho salmon fisheries. Analysis of CPUE, fishwheel tag recovery, and scale pattern data will be used to manage the District 11 gillnet fishery consistent with the PST.

To minimize the harvest of mature wild stock chinook salmon, Taku Inlet will be closed north of the latitude of Jaw Point during the first week of the fishery. If landings of mature chinook salmon are above the recent-year average, additional time or area restrictions may be implemented during subsequent openings.

Chinook salmon returning to the Snettisham hatchery will not be needed for broodstock in 1993. Therefore, Speel Arm will be opened for harvesting surplus hatchery chinook salmon during the first three weeks of the Section 11-B gillnet fishery. Following the normal weekly closure of the gillnet fishery, Speel Arm will be opened for an additional two-day (48 hours) period. This area will not be restricted by the six-inch maximum mesh size regulation [5AAC 33.331. (d)(2)(B)].

Large incidental catches of immature chinook during the early portion of the summer fishery may result in nighttime fishing closures. The harvest of small, immature chinook salmon was a particular problem during the first week of the 1991 season when the chinook catch was twice the previous ten-year average. Harvests and CPUE of chinook in the Juneau recreational fishery prior to the opening of the gillnet fishery, and catches during initial gillnet openings, will be evaluated to determine the need for nighttime fishing closures during the 1993 season.

Conservation of Port Snettisham sockeye salmon returns will again be necessary in 1993 to rebuild escapements of these stocks to historic levels. Port Snettisham will be closed inside a line from Point Amner to Point Styleman through approximately August 14. This restriction does not apply to the openings in Speel Arm in June and early July for harvesting Snettisham Hatchery chinook salmon.

Since the 1993 Snettisham Hatchery chum salmon return to Limestone Inlet is not expected to be large, extended fisheries and minimum mesh size restrictions in the area may not be necessary to harvest the return. If the chum salmon return is larger than expected, the department may implement a 6-inch minimum mesh size restriction in section 11-B south of Circle Point during additional fishing periods.

A small area at the head of Gilbert Bay in Port Snettisham may be opened in late July or early August to harvest an expected return of sockeye from a Snettisham Hatchery enhancement project in Sweetheart Lake. Since Sweetheart Creek is blocked to anadromous fish, the returning sockeye must be harvested. To ensure the return is fully utilized, a personal use gillnet fishery may also be allowed.

Directed gillnet management for harvesting Taku River and upper Stephens Passage pink salmon stocks is not anticipated in Section 11-B. Pink salmon will be harvested incidentally to the sockeye and chum salmon fishery, north and south of Circle Point, respectively. Fishing time for pink salmon in Section 11-C will depend on the strength of returns to streams in lower Stephens Passage, Seymour Canal, and the northern portions of District 10. Based on the good 1991 parent year escapements in Section 11-C, openings in that area may occur in early August.

Beginning in mid-August, management of the Taku/Snettisham gillnet fishery will be based on the run strength of fall chum and coho salmon. In-season management will be based on evaluation of the fishery catch, effort, and CPUE relative to historical levels, and on escapement estimates from the Taku River fish wheel project.

In order to avoid gear conflicts, the District 11 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby. Consequently, during Statistical Week 33, the District 11 gillnet fishery will not open until Monday, August 9.

LYNN CANAL FISHERY

Introduction

The Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery includes Section 15-A in upper Lynn Canal, Section 15-C in Lower Lynn Canal, and Section 15-B (Berners Bay). Sockeye salmon are the target species during the summer season; chum and coho salmon dominate the catch from late August through the end of the season.

1993 Outlook

Sockeye salmon returns to Chilkoot Lake should be above average in 1993. The 1988 parent-year produced a harvest of 250,000 sockeye salmon, the fourth largest for this stock. The resulting escapement through the Chilkoot Weir of 82,000 sockeye salmon was at the upper end of the annual escapement goal range. Chilkat lake stocks, however, produced a harvest of 75,000 during 1988 with a resulting escapement of only 28,000 fish the second lowest on record. The age-6 component (normally 38% of the run) will return from a 1987 parent-year escapement of 49,000 sockeye, also well below the escapement goal. As a result, the return of Chilkat sockeye is anticipated to be below average during 1993.

Summer chum salmon harvests in lower Lynn Canal, Section 15-C, are anticipated to be supplemented by hatchery chum salmon returning to the Boat Harbor remote release site. An estimated 80,000 chum salmon may return to this site in 1993. Special openings along the Boat Harbor shoreline and extended fishing time will be provided, similar to the strategy used during 1992.

Pink salmon abundance in District 15 is expected to be below average, based on 1991 parent year harvests and escapements. Pink salmon will be harvested incidental to sockeye salmon during normal fishing periods.

Fall chum salmon returns to Lynn Canal in 1993 are expected to be poor. The chum salmon harvest in Lynn Canal during the 1989 parent year was approximately 125,000 fish, of which approximately 90,000 were fall chum, the lowest harvest on record. In addition, parent-year chum salmon escapements were

uniformly poor throughout the Chilkat River drainage. Escapement was particularly low in the Klehini River and its tributaries. Escapements to mainstem areas of the Chilkat River were also well below desired levels. The low population levels observed during the past four years warrants a conservative management approach for fall chum salmon during the 1993 season.

Coho returns in 1993 are expected to be above average as restrictions of the fishery during the 1989 parent year to conserve chum salmon provided large escapements. A peak count of 7,580 spawners was recorded in the Berners River, and escapements to the major index systems in upper Lynn Canal including Chilkoot Lake, Chilkat Lake, and Tahini River were all above average.

Management Goals

Management goals for the 1993 Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Obtain an escapement of 53,000 to 92,000 sockeye salmon through the Chilkoot Weir. The escapement objective for the early stock is approximately 22,000 prior to Statistical Week 29 (about July 12), and 40,000 for the late stock.
2. Obtain an escapement of 52,000 to 106,000 sockeye through the Chilkat Weir. The escapement goal objective for the early stock is approximately 18,000 through Statistical Week 33 (about August 15), and 48,000 for the late stock.
3. Provide for sufficient chum and coho salmon spawning escapements to the Chilkat, Chilkoot, and Berners Rivers and other Lynn Canal systems, while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
4. Minimize, to the extent practical, the incidental harvest of chinook salmon.

Management Plan

The 1993 Lynn Canal gillnet fishery will open for 48 hours on Sunday, June 20. The open area will include portions of both Sections 15-A and 15-C. During the initial fishing period, the waters of Section 15-A will only be open south of the northern tip of Sullivan Island for conservation of mature Chilkat River chinook salmon. Adjustments to area closures may be made during the early weeks of the season, prior to mid-July, if further protection of mature chinook salmon and early-run Chilkat River sockeye is warranted. Chilkat Inlet will remain closed until Chilkat River sockeye salmon strength can be assessed.

Chilkoot Inlet will be opened north of the latitude of Mud Bay Point to harvest surplus Chilkoot sockeye. The lower portion of Chilkoot Inlet will remain closed to protect early-run Chilkat sockeye stocks.

After the initial opening, gillnet fishing time and area adjustments will be based on stock-specific catch and escapement information obtained from CPUE analysis, stock composition from scale sampling, weir counts, and test fishing. Total-run forecast models for each specific sockeye salmon stock will be utilized to assess run strength on a weekly basis, and to help gauge the exploitation rate required to achieve escapement objectives.

As a general guideline, targeted fishing effort on Chilkoot and Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon will not be conducted in Section 15-C unless adequate run strength is demonstrated for both stocks. Section 15-B will remain closed during the initial weeks of the season until Berners Bay sockeye and chum salmon stock strength can be better assessed. A portion of Section 15-C, within two nautical miles of the eastern shoreline south of the latitude of Pt. Bridget, will be opened during the first week of the season to evaluate summer chum salmon strength. Special openings along the western shoreline of Section 15-C, including extended fishing time, are planned in order to maximize the harvest of hatchery returns to Boat Harbor. Openings will be restricted within one nautical mile of the Chilkat Peninsula shore south of the latitude of Lance Pt. and north of 58°37'03" N. latitude (2.4 miles north of Pt. Whidbey). Following the period of peak abundance of summer chum and pink salmon stocks, the fishery will return to sockeye salmon management and the area along the eastern shoreline may be closed.

Night time fishing closures may be implemented during July as a conservation measure to reduce incidental harvest of immature chinook salmon. The need for night time closures will be evaluated inseason based on the abundance of immature chinook salmon in open gillnet areas.

In order to avoid gear conflicts, the District 15 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby. Consequently, during Statistical Week 33, the District 15 gillnet fishery will open on Monday, August 9.

Fall season management will begin in late August or early September, depending on the run strength of sockeye and chum salmon. Due to continued low fall chum populations, a conservative management approach will be followed during the early weeks of the fall season until chum salmon run strength can be adequately assessed. Chilkat Inlet and portions of upper Lynn Canal may be closed. Management of Section 15-C during the fall season will be based on chum and coho salmon run strength and fishing effort levels. Berners Bay coho returns should be strong and directed fishing in lower Lynn Canal may be implemented during the fall season.

TERMINAL HATCHERY FISHERIES

For the 1993 season, drift gillnet terminal area fisheries can be expected in Deep Inlet, Nakat Inlet, and Earl West Cove (Eastern Passage) to harvest salmon returning to NSRAA and SSRAA enhancement facilities, and in portions of Blind Slough to harvest salmon returning to the Crystal Lake Hatchery (ADF&G). No common property drift gillnet fisheries are expected at the Neets Bay or Carroll Inlet (SSRAA) terminal areas.

Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association Terminal Area Fisheries

The terminal hatchery fishery at Deep Inlet will be managed jointly with NSRAA and according to Board of Fisheries management plans. The open gillnet fishing times will be announced by ADF&G news releases prior to, and during, the fishing season.

Terminal Area - Deep Inlet

The Deep Inlet drift gillnet fishing area includes the waters of Deep Inlet and Aleutkina Bay and contiguous waters south of a line from a point at the east entrance to Pirates Cove at 135°22'10" W. longitude, 56°59'18" N. latitude, to a point on the West side of Long Island at 135°21'50" W. longitude, 56°59'50" N. latitude, to the southeastermost tip of Emgeten Island to the southernmost tip of Error Island to the southernmost tip of Boidarkin Island to a point at 135°17'52" W. longitude, 57°00'38" N. longitude.

When chum salmon begin returning to the Deep Inlet THA, in approximately mid-July, the area will be open to purse seine and drift gillnet with the following weekly rotational fishing schedule in effect for the 1993 season;

Seine: will be open from 5:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. Sunday and Wednesday.

Gillnet: will be open from 5:00 a.m. Thursday through 9:00 p.m. Saturday.

This schedule may change if there is a build up of fish and/or quality problems develop in the THA. If this occurs, a more aggressive fishing schedule will be implemented maintaining the 2 to 1 gillnet to seine fishing time ratio. Additionally, troll gear will be allowed in the Deep Inlet THA only during times when it is closed to net gear. The department will issue a news release prior to opening the area listing the open fishing dates. Fishermen should check with the department or NSRAA, prior to fishing to obtain updated

fishery information. Fishermen are also requested to ensure that fish caught in terminal areas are reported correctly on their fish tickets. This will enable the accurate documentation of fish taken from the Deep Inlet THA.

Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association Terminal Area Fisheries

The terminal hatchery fisheries at Earl West Cove (Eastern Passage) and Nakat Inlet will be managed jointly with SSRAA and according to Board of Fisheries management plans. The open gillnet fishing times will be announced by ADF&G news releases prior to, and during, the fishing season.

Terminal Area - Eastern Passage

The Eastern Passage drift gillnet fishing area includes the waters of Eastern Passage south of 56°24'50" N. latitude and west of 132°06'21" W. longitude, with all waters of Madan Bay east of a line from the latitude of the channel marker in the narrows to the eastern tip of Channel Island (56°21'48" N. latitude, 132°09'24" W. longitude) to the navigational light on the northern tip of Channel Island to the southernmost tip of Point Madan (56°22'39" N. latitude, 132°09'42" W. longitude).

Terminal Area - Nakat Inlet

The Nakat Inlet drift gillnet fishing area includes the waters of Nakat Inlet between 54°50' N. latitude and 54°56' N. latitude.

Crystal Lake Hatchery Chinook and Coho Salmon Terminal Fishery

The two terminal fishing areas for harvesting chinook salmon returns to the state-operated Crystal Lake Hatchery are at the mouth of Crystal Creek in the Wrangell Narrows portion of District 6, and at the mouth of Ohmer Creek in District 8.

Crystal Lake chinook salmon will return to both terminal areas in 1993. The return to the District 8 (Ohmer Creek) terminal area is expected to be approximately 700 adults, all of which will be available for harvest. At the Wrangell Narrows (District 6) terminal area, the expected return is lower than in previous years and a more conservative management approach is needed. No predetermined fishing time will be announced prior to fish returning to the area. If inseason indicators show the return is stronger

than anticipated, gillnetting will be allowed in the Wrangell Narrows terminal harvest area. Open fishing periods will depend upon the egg take needs of the hatchery and the availability of surplus chinook. If a fishery is warranted, the openings are expected to occur on Mondays to minimize conflicts between fishing vessels and other vessels traveling Wrangell Narrows. Fishing would be limited to the daylight hours, and the length of gillnets will be limited to 75 fathoms.

The Ohmer Creek portion of District 8 will open on Monday, June 7, for two days. Subsequent open periods prior to the general gillnet season will be for two days each week starting on Mondays. Open periods after the start of the general season will be based on the fishing time allowed in the directed sockeye salmon fishery and the availability of surplus chinook salmon. The length of gillnets will be limited to 150 fathoms.

The coho salmon return to the Crystal Lake hatchery is expected to produce 2,000 fish available for harvest in Wrangell Narrows. A limited number of one-day periods to harvest these returns can be expected beginning in mid- to late August. Fishing time will be limited to daylight hours; gillnets will be limited to 75 fathoms in length.

FISHERY CONTACTS

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The following is a list of telephone numbers that may be called during the gillnet fishing season to obtain recorded announcements concerning areas open to gillnet fishing:

Ketchikan	-	(907) 225-6870
Petersburg	-	(907) 772-3700
Sitka	-	(907) 747-5022
Juneau	-	(907) 465-8905

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If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility please write:

ADF&G ADA Coordinator, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau AK 99811-5526

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 300 Webb, Arlington VA 22203

Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington DC 20240

The department's ADA Coordinator can be reached via phone at the following numbers:

(VOICE) 907-465-6077, (Statewide Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) 1-800-478-3648, (Juneau TDD) 907-465-3646, or (FAX) 907-465-6078

For information on alternative formats and questions on this publication, please contact:

ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau AK 99811-5526 (907)465-4210.