

PERSONAL TESTIMONY , HARRIET MIYASATO BELEAL  
NOV. 29,2017  
Sitka, Alaska

In order to CONVERSE and DEVELOP the FISHERY RESOURCES of the STATE OF ALASKA, in my opinion, the herring eggs resource, which used to be so abundant and plentiful in the Sitka Sound area has been dwindling very RAPIDLY for our Tlingit/Haida/Tsimpean peoples of Southeast Alaska.

To me, it's a tragedy for many reasons. How do you replace a native food which is not only very healthy, nutritious but has been a favorite native food (especially in our salads) for many years ?. If you think back, I'm sure every one of you can recall your favorite traditional native foods in your particular culture, dating back to your ancestral ties to your grandparents.

As springtime arrived in Sitka, we would look forward to the herring egg spawn. My brother , Chester J. Miyasato, his boys, Chester Jr, Ben, Richard, Nick and Chuck would set the branches out for the herring eggs. Those days, herring eggs was plentiful. So much happiness it was to be able to do this harvesting of herring eggs.

When I moved to Anchorage, Alaska back in 1969, with my seven children and my husband , Edward Beleal, we all looked forward to springtime (usually the end of March) when the herring would spawn. My brother Chester (he was a retired carpenter and fisherman) and my sister-in-law Kate, along with their sons would send us a big box of herring eggs every year. In later years, it became increasingly harder to be able to do this.

In Anchorage, there were many Tlingit/Haida/Tsimpeans living there (12,000 or so). As I was a Tlingit/Haida Anchorage delegate to our Central Council and also with the Ak. Native Brotherhood, Camp '71 and Sisterhood, later on the ANB/ANS Camp '87, we would share these herring eggs with our people. Nowsdays, it is extremely difficult to be shipping herring eggs to neighboring S.E. towns and Anchorage because the herring eggs are not as plentiful as in the past.

I, as a person who is ½ Tlingit and ½ Japanese (My Dad, George K. Miyasato loved herring eggs and he lived with us from 1971 until he passed away in March, 1989). I am proud of my heritage as I share my personal thoughts. I wonder why the quota for the taking of herring is not being reduced as it would be a major step in CONSERVING and DEVELOPING the herring population in the Sitka Sound.

Many of the other Southeast Alaska towns look to Sitka during harvest time of herring eggs. It shouldn't become a "thing of the past" to be able to continue this traditional and be able to share this precious food with our relatives and friends.

I thank uou for listening to me today. In conclusion, I would venture to say, in order to really CONSERVE ans DEVELOP this particular resource, including the herring in the Sitka Sound waters, it is my strong belief that , as a board, you recommend that the quota for the taking of herring be reduced.

God bless you as you continue to represent us on this board.

Sincerely,

*Harriet Miyasato Beleal*  
Harriet Miyasato Beleal

Alaska Native Brotherhood, Camp 1, Secretary