

January 15, 2018

Dear Board of Fisheries members,

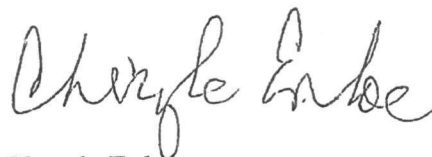
I am writing to ask that you take a more conservative stance on the amount of herring taken during the annual herring seine fishery. I was born and raised here in Sitka. My father and brother, Merle Enloe and Sonny Enloe were commercial seiners that took part in the herring fishery. My father, Merle, sold his boat and permit in 1989 and my brother, Sonny sold his herring permit sometime in the early 90s. Because I lived in Juneau to work at that time I cannot speak for their reasoning on selling those herring permits. But in the last several years here in Sitka, even I cannot help but observe that there seems not to be the numbers of herring that there used to be and I am certainly not seeing the amount of herring spawn right here in town that there used to be. Typically while I was growing up and working here in Sitka, there were herring spawning along the shoreline from one end of town to the other end. Driving over the bridge you could see the green-tinted foamy waters along the shore of Japonski to the beachfront of Totem Park indicating that herring were spawning. Driving out Halibut Point Road to Starrigavin, the whole shoreline was the foamy green color indicating herring spawn. I did not see that last year at all. I have heard explanations such as the herring moved and are spawning elsewhere now. Why? When they have historically ALWAYS spawned around the Sitka area, would they decide to move elsewhere now?

With all of the fisheries problems, reduced numbers of returning salmon and reduced catch limits and openings as well as environmental changes, i.e. global warming, I think it only makes sense to manage the herring fishery with a more conservative approach due to the uncertainty of the changes that are going to result from changing conditions of marine environments. There are climate changes affecting numerous other species constantly in the news.

I know that this past herring season, many people that tried to harvest subsistence herring eggs had no luck getting any. I heard that many, many times. I was lucky enough to be given one gallon-size ziplock bag of herring eggs. That is a very sad occurrence for me and for the many other locals and natives that have never previously had any problem harvesting as much herring eggs as needed to get through until the next herring spawn season.

I am most concerned for the long term survival of this important species, not so much for myself, but for all of the other marine species that rely on herring for their survival.

Please manage our herring more conservatively to ensure their long-term survival.



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