

I WOULD FORMALLY LIKE TO REJECT THE 15A, ACTION PLAN, OPTIONS A, B & C PROPOSED BY A.D.F&G

I would like to add an Option A-1

Option A-1 --- Open Area 15A, the same as last year, April 15 to December 31, with **RETENTION OF KING SALMON PROHIBITED (CATCH & RELEASE ONLY)**

Benefits: The 6 Charter Fishing Businesses will continue to stay in business with little or no effect on the King Salmon returns.

Sharing the Resource: The State of Alaska mandates equitable sharing of the resource. The Trollers are allowed to intercept kill and harvest as many Chilkat Kings as they can in their allotted time, yet sportfish is closed down.

Mortality Rate: I acquired a copy of the PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION report on Catch & Release. The information is from 1980 to 1996.

According to the report they hired Commercial Trollers to do the fishing and compare barbless to barbed hooks. If I was a Troller I possibly would have felt a little threatened. If this study goes the wrong way as a Troller I might be forced to use barbless hooks. This study could maybe make barbless hooks become mandatory.

The method used in the study was to bring the King Salmon on board, probably being lifted by the hook, without a net, which can cause the gills to tear on small Kings. The Troller then unhooked and anaesthetized the fish with an electrically charged basket, measured, tagged and placed the traumatized King Salmon in a tank. Then they took the fish after up to 6 hours, that were still alive out of the hold, I'm sure not with a rubber net like we use today to prevent scale lost, and loaded them into netted pots. They didn't have underwater go-pros like now, so they would have to bring the pots to the surface to check to fish. They did this for up to 6 days to check how many Kings were still alive. This is the data the A.D.F.&G. are using for their mortality rate.

When we get a fish, we stop the boat. Pulling small Kings against the current can rip gills. Trollers don't stop. Also, the drag on our reel is made less, so ripping gills has a less of a chance of happening. We wait until the fish is tired, to bring it to the boat so it struggles less, preventing it from unnecessary injury. We put a gaff next to the barbless hook while the fish is still in the water, and then slide the hook out of the fish's mouth. This method causes very little trauma and because of the barbless hook, it slides out easily. I know this is a much lower mortality rate than in the 1997 published P.S.C. Report.

Since we would be doing Catch & Release the only reason they have to close us down is the Mortality Rate.

I estimate the six businesses bring in around \$600,000 to Haines and Skagway. As you know boats are very expensive to own so most of the money ends up back in the communities. I don't have my logbook here but my best guess on how many Kings I **caught and released** last summer was about 50 total, small and large. The other five boats caught much less per boat. Even with the status quo Mortality Rate, last years total fish mortality estimate would be less than 15 Kings and out of those 15 historically, only 20% are Chilkat Kings, that equals only 3 Chilkat Kings that may have died in our 2017 season. That's \$200,000 per King Salmon.

PLEASE LEAVE 15A OPEN FOR NO RETENTION FOR THE SUMMER.

IF YOU GO WITH THE A.D.F.&G RECONMDATION THIS WOULD BE FINANCIALLY DEVASTATING TO ALL INVOLVED

IT IS UP TO THE BOARD WHETHER WE GO OUT OF BUSINESS!

Thank you for all your hard work!

**Kenneth Gross
Never Monday Charters
Skagway, Alaska**