

RC - 259

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

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Alaska Board of Fisheries
Juneau, AK 99801

Sent via fax: 907-465-6094

January 18, 2018

Dear Chairman Jensen and Board of Fisheries Members:

RE: Chilkat River and King Salmon River King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2018 (RC4)

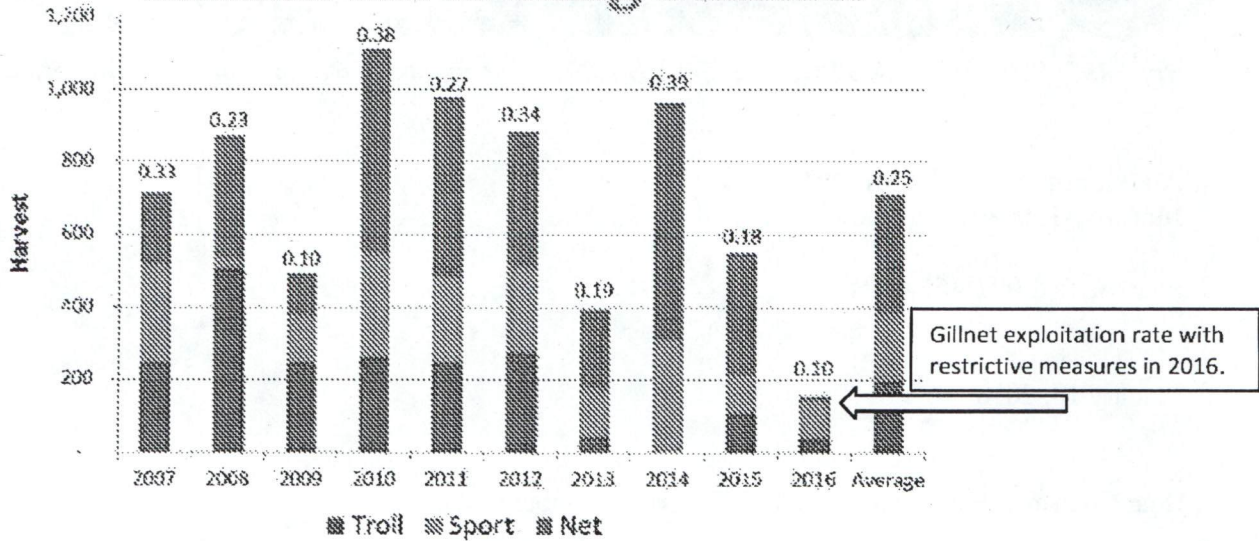
Please note the following to support our position of "Option A" in the department's "Draft: Chilkat River and King Salmon River King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2018". The plan (page 12) describes management measures taken by the department for the gillnet fleet:

2016:

- Reduced area open in northern Chilkat Inlet to the District 15 commercial gillnet fishery during the first 5 weeks of the season by implementing and exceeding conservation measures of the *Lynn Canal and Chilkat River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan*.
- Imposed 6-inch maximum mesh restriction in first and second weeks (SW 26-27) in Sections 15-A and 15-C.
- Close western half of Section 15-A first through third weeks (SW 26-28) in Section 15A.
- Reduced time and open area in the first week of the District 11 drift gillnet fishery. Area restriction significantly more than previously utilized.
- Imposed a 6-inch maximum mesh restriction in the first week of the District 11 drift gillnet fishery.

Results from these measures are included in the chart below (RC3, tab 20, page 36), which illustrates the actions in 2016 were very effective in reducing the gillnet king salmon harvest. In 2016, you'll see a combined 10% overall exploitation rate; the gillnet portion of that is much smaller.

Chilkat River King Salmon



On average, 25% (~700 fish) of the Chilkat River king salmon run is harvested each year split 6%, 7%, and 12% among the troil, sport and net fisheries, respectively

Oral Report RC-3, Tab 20
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United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters would like to reiterate our position for 'Option A'. Given the fact that conservative actions by the department in 2016 resulted in a gillnet catch of seven Chilkat chinook, 2017 efforts resulted in a catch of 10 fish, and the pre-season forecast of 634 for 2017 that resulted in an escapement of 1173, shows us that the current management is taking measures that are showing results. It is apparent to us that the department has a handle on conservative measures necessary to minimize impacts on these stocks and allowing opportunity to our fleet.

As we stated in committee and in our comments (PC165), we are committed to conservation through the discretion of the department's expertise in fish management.

Thank you,

Cynthia Wallesz
Executive Director