

Joel Brady-Power

RC 266 Unuk Action Plan Troll Fishery: Summer Troll

I would like to recommend amending language in the revised action plan under the summer troll fishery to open the first retention period for king salmon during the general summer troll fishery on July 1st to target 70% of the remaining troll king salmon annual allocation, minus the number of treaty king salmon harvested in winter and spring troll fisheries.

Justification: In deliberations today the 19th of January 2018 during an exchange between Board of Fish board member Robert Ruffner and ADFG troll biologist Grant Hagerman, board member Ruffner asked Grant Hagerman what the benefits were to moving the start date of the summer fishery back by one week to July 8th. Grant did not mention any benefits, but did speak to the complications and loss of fishing time. When asked about the specific benefits to protect Unuk King salmon by delaying the season a week he mentioned that because the troll fleet has not fished into the second week of July in recent years that actually, from a data perspective, it was a big question mark. The department does not have data that shows moving the start date of our summer troll season back will result in less Unuk Kings harvested. In fact it could result in more. It seems irresponsible to take that risk right now especially when we know harvest rates are very low in the first week.

Furthermore moving the start date back creates serious logistical problems for the fleet, for processors and for management. As a freezer boat and self-marketer it takes me a longer time to get in unloaded and back out to the fishing grounds. It would not be feasible for me to go out to fish coho for a few days get back to town for the fair start closure, unload my fish and then get back out to the areas I like to fish king salmon. I would not participate in this fishing time, ultimately leading to a whole week lost of my season. Also processors would be slammed trying to ice the fleet up three

times in about 10-12 days. Once before July 1st, again during the fair start closure, and then again after the short king opening. Also since everyone knows about the fair start closure boats could be out prospecting before the opening creating a management problem for the department. If boats know where the fish are before it opens catch rates could be drastically higher than historic averages making it very difficult for the department to manage in season catch rates.

In summary moving the start date back on our summer season with zero data showing any reduction in harvest of Unuk king salmon while limiting opportunities to our fleet and seriously complicating logistics for both processors and management seems unnecessary and counterproductive. Please consider all of this very seriously before making your decision. And I urge you to open the Summer troll season on the 1st of July. Thank you.