

Staff Clean up wording w/ ad change in intent.
Adopted 1/24/81

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ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES FINDINGS,
1981 TROLL FISHERY

The Alaska Board of Fisheries, in developing the troll fishery regulations and policies for the 1981 season, considered information presented at Board meetings by the public, the staff of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other fishery agencies such as Washington Department of Fisheries and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The information includes numerous written reports, materials, and testimony presented at meetings in January 1981 in Juneau or well relevant material from past meetings. The findings of the Board are:

I. RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Coho and chinook stocks experience significant harvest pressure when in outside waters before those stocks, many of which are depressed and depleted, have separated into more discrete runs whose strength or weakness can be ascertained in inside waters.
- B. Mixed stock fisheries that target on healthy stocks are dangerous to the maintenance of intermingled small or weak runs. Such fisheries should not be encouraged unless it is not feasible for participating fishermen to relocate in more inshore fisheries for the purpose of operating on stronger stocks after they are separated from the weak runs and ~~it is~~ not harmful from a conservation perspective. *they are*
- C. Further expansion of fishing effort, ^{special} in outside waters, should be prevented to promote conservation of stocks involved, and to comply with the Board's management policy on mixed stock fisheries.
- D. The behavior of salmon in the outside waters is inconsistent and unpredictable. Harvest data can be misleading as to actual strength of runs and effects of fishing on these runs of mixed origin, since large catches may occur from relatively weak stocks when intermingled with stronger stocks.
- E. A significant time lag is involved in receiving adequate catch data from the troll fishery ~~occurring in waters outside of the surfline~~ which prevents the timely availability of catch data ~~on which to make~~ inseason management decisions. *new word*
- F. Stabilization of fishing effort on chinook and coho in Southeastern Alaska is necessary because conservation of those stocks requires a minimum level of harvest which will allow escapement of sufficient fish into rivers and lakes to ensure maintenance of runs on a sustained yield basis.
- G. Further time and area restrictions would not diminish actual fishing effort, but would concentrate existing effort in specific times and areas made available to fishermen. However, gear restrictions do protect stocks by reductions of total effort without concentrating effort in specific times or areas.

II. HARVEST DISTRIBUTION

- A. More than adequate capability to take the available harvest of salmon currently exists. Further increases in fishing effort on limited stocks are biologically unsound and compound the difficult management decisions that must be made.
- B. The relative distribution of salmon harvests among gear types that existed in 1975 when limited entry was imposed on power troll, gillnet, and purse seine fishermen is desirable because it would allow stocks to rebuild while not disrupting harvest opportunities in existing fleets.
- C. The number of hand troll fishing vessels has increased significantly since 1975. The absolute number of coho and chinook harvested by hand trollers has increased significantly since 1975. The relative proportion of the total catch of coho and chinook taken by hand trollers has increased significantly since 1975 as compared to the catch by other gear types.
- D. Traditionally, hand trollers utilized relatively inefficient rod and reel gear operated from small vessels close to home in the inside waters, and, except for a few villagers, fishermen rarely depended on hand trolling for their economic livelihood. In the last three to eight years, however, a significant percentage of hand trollers ^{has} converted to the vastly more efficient "gurdy" gear and has placed that gear on bigger, more mobile vessels capable of making longer trips and fishing in rougher weather. These more efficient hand troll vessels have shifted their effort towards outside waters where stocks are more mixed, a greater level of income from fishing is necessary to amortize their investment, and consequently take a greater number of fish from stocks that are already overharvested or fully utilized.
- E. The economic dependence upon fishing varies widely among hand trollers. However, most hand trollers use hand trolling to supplement other sources of income.
- F. The majority of all hand troll caught salmon are harvested by a minority of the fleet in recent years. These full time professional participants in the hand troll fleet can be expected to continue to harvest a major portion of the hand troll catch.

III. FISHERY DEVELOPMENT

Unless adequate numbers of coho salmon are allowed to reach inside waters where the ^{subsistence commercial} inside troll, sport, and gillnet fisheries occur, these fisheries would not be allowed to occur. ~~The State would have to forego the benefits of the gillnet chum fishery because coho are caught incidentally with chum salmon.~~