

Frank Kelty
City of Unalaska
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Date: September 8, 2023

To: Bil Homka, Marjorie Veeder, Patrica Soule, Estkarlen Magdaong, Michelle Price,

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities Memo, and Fishery Articles for the week.

I attended the ADFG Bycatch Advisory Council meeting on Tuesday last week. The Chair of the Bycatch Council announced the ADFG Commissioner Vincent-Lange and staff will be holding a bycatch town-hall meeting on September 19th in Kodiak, Alaska.

The next item was an update on sub -committee work. The Council moved on to three presentations, the first was a presentation by Dr. Katie Howard of ADFG on salmon research work on the Yukon and Kuskokwim River system. Dr. Howard discussed some of the projects and studies they are working on including theories on disease issues, spawning issues, and predator impacts on certain river systems. Chinook and Chum salmon return decline issues especially on the Yukon is it an Ocean issue, strength of the Chinook to travel the thousand of miles on the Yukon to spawning grounds and Chum bycatch issues in other fisheries. Why Sockeye salmon in the Bristol Bay region have large returns and the northern river systems are struggling. A lot of questions and theories, not a lot of answers yet.

The second presentation was by ADFG Crab Research staff from Kodiak, discussed by Dr. Ben Daley and Mark Stichert Western Region Supervisor. They discussed the just completed tagging studies done in concert with NOAA, and the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation. The was just completed a few months ago on the movement of Bristol Bay Red King Crab. They also discussed upcoming work on Opilio (Snow Crab) especially stock assessment work, and Snow Crab movements in the Northern Region on this severely depressed crab stock. They are also looking at water temperature impacts on stocks of crab, disease issues such as bitter crab disease and predator interactions. They also touched on the NOAA summer crab survey work that is still under analysis. There were some areas of small improvement on some stocks but most of the crab stocks are still in a depressed state.

The last presentation was by Deputy Commissioner Rachel Baker, she discussed ADFG Management issues that Alaska Board of Fisheries is dealing with be it Chum bycatch issues in the Alaska Peninsula Salmon Area M fisheries, Cook Inlet Sport, and Commercial salmon issues and of coarse major subsistence issues on the Yukon and Kuskokwim River systems. Rachel also sits on the NPFMC as the State of Alaska representative and has a Council meeting upcoming in October where the Council may

set a Chum Bycatch Cap for the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery, will set the Crab allocations for the 2023-2024 crab season, and will also review the Crab Fisheries work plan.

The Bycatch Council then took public comment they had some technical difficulties on hearing people that called in to demand zero bycatch in our fisheries, which is totally unrealistic or they to catch Pollock in pots and longlines. They close the meeting by discussing their priorities and the development of Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force Road map that will be discussed at their October meeting. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM AST

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Fishery Activity Memo
2. NPFMC Crab Plan Team Agenda with Documents 9-12-14-23
3. NPFMC Groundfish Plan Team Agenda with Documents 9-19-22-23
4. Fishery Articles for the week.