

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Presented by ⁶⁻²⁸⁻⁷⁹
Harold Sparks

STATEMENT BY JESSIE FOSTER REPRESENTING WESTERN ALASKAN SALMON INTERESTS, June 21, 1979

I wish to thank the Council for this opportunity to discuss further the interception of western Alaskan chinook salmon by the foreign trawl and gill net fleets of Japan. During renegotiations of the North Pacific Fisheries Act of 1954 in 1978, we alerted this Council that a serious management problem would result if controls over the FCZ and FCMA management of anadromous species was shared between this Council and an international body, the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission. Unfortunately, our worst fears have been realized. A paralysis now exists in the western Bering Sea in regard to resource managers of the United States having unilateral control over Western Alaskan chinooks due to the new Protocol. I am asking this Council to undo that paralysis, and to chart a new course to protect this valuable resource to the subsistence and commercial fishermen of western Alaska, a resource this Council has declared "has no available surplus".

On two fronts, this Council can act to limit the efficiency of the Japanese interceptions of Western Alaskan chinook salmon stocks.

This Council, through its setting of Total Allowable Catches, and in its recommendations of tonnage and allocation of permits to ⁱⁿ the Secretary of Commerce and the Department of State, can influence a downturn/the interceptions by fleets under the flag of Japan. First, we urge this Council to use its influence in the allocation of TALFF within the Fisheries Conservation Zone to reduce Japanese tonnage on Bering Sea bottomfish until pressure in the high sea mothership and land based gill net effort on Western Alaskan chinooks is significantly reduced by unilateral action by the government of Japan. The second area in which this Council can significantly reduce chinook interceptions is through adoption of the most restrictive closure for protection of both herring and salmon between the Pribilofs and St. Mathew's Islands in the eastern Bering Sea during January and February. This closure is addressed to the Council under the title "Bering Sea Herring-Salmon Closure Area", and must be placed in both the Bering Sea Groundfish and Herring FMP's for public review. It is imperative that this Council act to stop the growing ^{reported} interception of our salmon in the ocean. Western Alaskans have exhausted legislative remedies without success. This Council has acted in behalf of the resource and on-shore fishermen consistently in its history, and we feel that both the biological and socio-economic implications of the growing Japanese interceptions of our chinook stocks require a weighted closure by this Council to alert the Government of Japan that this Council will no longer tolerate an abuse of Western Alaska's salmon stocks.