



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Fisheries managed under delegated authority to the State of Alaska since the last council meeting include crab and salmon.

**BERING SEA TANNER CRAB FISHERIES:** The C. bairdi fishery opened on November 15 with a 38.1 million pound pre-season harvest guideline, seven days after the closure of the Bristol Bay red king crab fishery. A total of 289 vessels, including 21 catcher processors landed 33.5 million pounds during the 4 ½ month fishery. As in past seasons, effort in the C. bairdi fishery declined over the holidays and after the opening of the C. opilio fishery on January 15.

C. opilio: Through a petition request adopted by the Board of Fisheries, tank inspections were required for all vessels, except catcher processors, prior to fishing for C. opilio Tanner crab. This action allowed for a fair start in the C. opilio fishery, but required catcher only vessels to leave the crab grounds that were presently open to C. bairdi and return to port for tank inspections. A total of 246 vessels, including 26 catcher processors, participated in the fishery, landing over 224.6 million pounds of crab, 17 million pounds more than the pre-season harvest guideline. The C. opilio fishery was managed by sub-district, with the eastern area producing 151.5 million pounds, and western area producing 73.1 million pounds.

All Tanner crab totals are preliminary.

**SALMON TROLL FISHERY:** The winter Chinook troll catch to date stands at 33,200 fish with a large portion of this catch has occurring during the past few weeks in Sitka Sound. The final catch is expected to be between 36,000 and 38,000 fish. At this date, there is no Alaska hatchery percentages available.

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCK FISH FISHERY:** The Southeast Alaska demersal shelf rockfish fishery remains closed to fishing until July 1, when the Outside Sections open. The Fairweather Grounds are closed to directed fishing for the remainder of the 1993 season.

Lingcod in a portion of the Central Southeast Outside Section has been closed to fishing due to concentrated effort and declining CPUE due to increased fishing effort.

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## Togiak fishermen look to Russia for herring market

DILLINGHAM (AP) — Fishermen in Western Alaska looking for another market for a projected herring surplus are looking toward Russia.

The Bristol Bay Longline Gillnet Cooperative wants the state to allow Russian vessels into state waters at Togiak.

Joe McGill, president of the Dillingham-based cooperative, is recruiting fishermen to deliver herring to the Russians, and he said about 100 boat owners are interested.

The prospect of a new buyer is a potential bright spot given the decision by other processors to opt out of the Togiak herring fishery.

Unisea and Wards Cove Packing Company are staying out of the fishery for the first time in years.

Peter Pan plans to buy herring, but the company said fishermen may want to stay home because of low prices from a glutted Japanese herring roe market. Herring roe is a delicacy in Japan.

Seattle-based Oceantrawl has applied for the permit and would serve as a go-between in Togiak, Kuskokwim Bay and Norton Sound, said Ed Wolfe, the company's director of international and governmental affairs.

Oceantrawl would buy directly from the fishermen and in turn would sell to a Russian joint-venture partner, Wolfe said.

Many details remain to be worked out, including having the state determine if domestic pro-

cessors can handle the entire herring harvest.

Oceantrawl's surimi fleet isn't equipped to process herring, Wolfe said.

The permit would be issued by the state Department of Commerce and Economic Development based on information from the Department of Fish and Game.

Herman Savikko, a Fish and Game spokesman in Juneau, said the agency has contacted all the processors who bought herring between Togiak and Norton Sound last year, seeking information about their daily and total processing capabilities.

Fish and Game is forecasting a harvest of 76,000 tons this year, which is more than what processors want, Savikko said.

At a recent meeting in Anchorage, processors were unsuccessful in getting the state to limit the harvest to about 45,000 tons, he said.

The agency had deferred that decision to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, which decided it couldn't limit harvests based on market conditions, Savikko said.

"Our main interest here is to assist and develop our CDQ (community development quota) relationship with Bristol Bay," Wolfe said. Oceantrawl is the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.'s joint-venture pollock partner.

Wolfe would like to have Russian vessels on the herring grounds by April 25 if the state gives the go-ahead.