



September 21, 1993

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, salmon and demersal rockfish.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLAND KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES: The Adak brown (golden) king crab fishery closed by regulation on August 15, 1993, with a preliminary harvest of only 4.7 million pounds. This fishery has opened by regulation on November 1 and closed on August 15 for the past 8 years. Harvests have ranged from 11.1 million pounds taken during the 1985/86 season, to 4.7 taken during the 1992/93 season. This seasons harvest is the second smallest harvest recorded since the directed fishery for brown king crab in the Adak registration area began during the 1982/83 season.

Five vessels have received special permits issued by the department to fish C. tanneri. To date, 19 landings totalling 573,000 pounds have been made to shore side plants in Dutch Harbor. Although the fishery remains open, effort is expected to decline as other Bering Sea and Aleutians king and Tanner crab fishery open.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA SALMON TROLL FISHERY: Since there was no agreement under the Pacific Salmon Treaty, Alaska managed the chinook salmon fishery under the Biological Opinion (BO) issued by NMFS for the 1993 season and the hatchery access fishery was not held due to the requirements for the Snake River Fall Chinook salmon.

Experimental fisheries began the last week of May. These fisheries are managed not to exceed 10,000 treaty fish. The total catch was 15,745, with a 41% Alaska hatchery percentage. The terminal troll fisheries harvested an additional 2,838 chinook salmon.

The general summer season opened on July 1, and lasted 6 days. A total of 100,956 chinook salmon were harvested in 6 days, with only 3.1% from Alaskan hatcheries. The chinook salmon fishery reopened on August 21 for 5 days, with a preliminary catch of 23,000 chinooks. The remainder of the quota will be taken during the last part of the troll season.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH FISHERY: The demersal rockfish fishery was opened during the recent halibut fishery in Southeast Alaska. Preliminary catch statistics indicate that the bycatch rate during the halibut fishery will be high.

The fall season directed demersal shelf rockfish season reopens on October 1. Staff will assess what remains to determine what the quota will be.

The Chatham Straight sablefish fishery will open for 24 hours, from 12:00 noon, September 25 through 12:00 noon, September 26. This 24 hour opening is expected to produce approximately 1800 to 2150 metric tons of sablefish, round weight.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

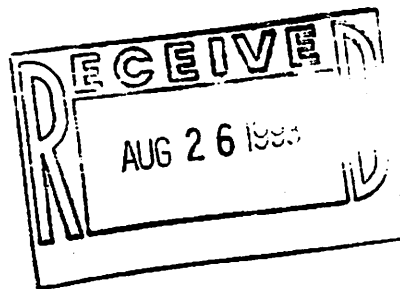
AGENDA B-2
SEPTEMBER 1993
Supplemental

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August 18, 1993

Mr. Clarence Pautzke
Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery
Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501



Dear Mr. Pautzke:

In response to the Council's request to schedule a joint meeting with the Alaska Board of Fisheries this fall to discuss crab management issues of mutual concern, I suggest you work directly with Mr. Earl Krygier and Mr. Laird Jones of my staff to develop and finalize a schedule. As you know, the board is composed of private citizens and we need to coordinate carefully with their personal schedules. Mr. Krygier and Mr. Jones can make the appropriate contacts to assist in scheduling.

Regarding the Council's request for information on the basis for my decision to implement certain troll management measures in 1993 to comply with federal requirements for ESA-listed Snake River fall chinook salmon, I note that Council members did not have my June 22 open letter to trollers when they made their request. The open letter explains the general basis for selecting the management actions I chose.

I would, however, like to respond additionally to two questions raised by the Council as noted in your letter.

1. The Council asked why a five-day closure of the troll fishery was chosen rather than reducing the chinook catch ceiling as a means of reducing impacts on Snake fall chinook.

As I indicated in my June 22 open letter, my decision not to reduce the chinook catch ceiling was based on several considerations:

- (i) Reducing the chinook catch ceiling would have increased chinook nonretention mortalities, whereas implementing the five-day closure reduced incidental mortalities. I could not justify selecting an option which would increase incidental mortalities and reduce the allowable chinook harvest when other options were available. (I also note in this regard that NMFS indicated a preference of reducing incidental mortalities as a way of reducing impacts on Snake fall chinook.)

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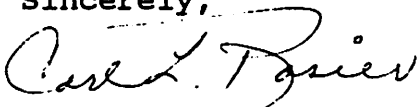
(ii) The Council's questions suggest that coho not harvested by the troll fleet during the five-day closure would be lost to the fleet. That is simply not correct. There is very little movement of coho into inside areas in early July and most coho foregone during the July 7-11 closure would remain available to the fleet when the fishery reopened. Furthermore, these coho would have gained additional weight--early season coho gain roughly a quarter pound per week--which would help offset any loss of harvest which might occur during the closure. To help compensate for loss of harvest of other species, I authorized continuation of the Cross Sound/Icy Strait experimental pink/chum troll fishery during the five-day closure.

2. The Council's questions suggest that CWT tag information on Lyons Ferry hatchery chinook, used as a surrogate for Snake fall chinook, indicate that the concentration of Snake fall chinook would be lower during the first week of July than during the second week.

I would appreciate seeing the information on which this contention is based. As ADF&G reported in its biological assessment, only 35 Lyons Ferry tags were recovered in random sampling of Southeast Alaska fisheries during the six-year period 1987-92 with a maximum of 12 tags in a single year. Thus, estimates of concentrations in any specific gear/time/area strata would be expected to have little statistical reliability. Furthermore, any changes in concentration during consecutive weeks would be expected to be small and would not significantly affect the already *de minimis* effects on Snake fall spawning populations resulting from the 1993 actions in the Southeast Alaska troll fishery.

In summary, the decisions I made in selecting management measures to respond to the NMFS ESA requirements were based on careful consideration of a complex mixture of biological and socioeconomic factors. I believe the options selected were in the best interests of the people of Alaska in general, and in the best overall interests of the troll fishing community.

Sincerely,



Carl L. Rosier
Commissioner

cc: Earl Krygier
Laird Jones
Charles P. Meacham

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman
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July 13, 1993

Carl Rosier, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Dear Carl:

The Council met last week and asked me to make two requests of you. First, they would like to schedule a joint meeting with the Alaska Board of Fisheries this fall to discuss crab management issues of mutual concern. We will be calling for crab management proposals over the summer and have them before us for review in September as they relate to possible plan amendments. I am not sure about the timing of the next Board meeting. The Council is scheduled to meet the weeks of September 20 in Anchorage, and December 6 in Seattle. I'll be in touch with you or your staff within the next two weeks to determine a suitable time for the Council and Board to get together.

Second is the issue of troll chinook salmon management in Southeast. I thought the open letter you distributed was excellent in laying out the issues and the reasons for your decisions. The Council did not have the letter available to them last week, but did request me to ask you for information concerning the socioeconomic and ecological considerations that went into the decision and the consistency of the decision with the Magnuson Act mandate to achieve OY as modified by relevant social economic and ecological factors. Some of the points raised in Council discussion were:

Socioeconomic

1. After incorporating recent information on chinook abundance and shifting 25,000 chinook from the June hatchery access openings to the July fishery, an additional 4% reduction in the troll fleet's exploitation rate was required to bring the fleet into compliance with the ESA.
2. Options for achieving the 4% reduction included: (a) reducing the chinook harvest by 8,000 fish, or (b) instituting a five-day closure to all fishing during the first week of July or immediately after the chinook season (i.e., the second week of July).
3. At 1993 prices, 8,000 chinook are worth approximately \$320,000. During the first week of July, cohos are generally small and far offshore; last year during the second week of July trollers landed 435,662 pounds of cohos, worth approximately \$436,000, along with substantial amounts of pinks, sockeye, and chum. Frozen-at-sea cohos, harvested during this week, were landed later in the season and are not included in the above figure.
4. An overwhelming majority of the fleet preferred the 8,000 fish reduction to a five-day closure. ADF&G implemented a five-day closure.

Carl Rosier
July 13, 1993
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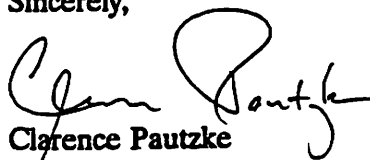
Ecological

1. Existing tag information on Snake River Fall Chinook (SRFC) indicates that a closure during the first week of July would more likely benefit SRFC than would a closure during the second week of July. ADF&G implemented a closure during the second week of July.

The Council would like to know the extent to which these economic, social, and ecological considerations were taken into account. At the same time, we recognize that this was a very tough call on your part, and that few people will be happy with changes in the fisheries.

The Council would appreciate hearing your views on the above issues, and as I said earlier, I will be in touch concerning the fall joint meeting with the Board.

Sincerely,



Clarence Pautzke
Executive Director