

# AIFMA LEADER

Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association

November 2008

## Salmon Are King

**O**ur boats are put away and the boneless fillets of Bristol Bay salmon are frozen solid. I hope everyone is well and preparing for winter activities.

The harvest for Bristol Bay stands at nearly 28 million sockeye, 1.2 million chums, 278,000 pinks, 90,000 coho and 25,000 kings. The value of the harvest is nearly \$115 million (based on 68¢/lb. for sockeye, first wholesale/ex-vessel price).

It was quite a season for a pre-peak cycle, as compared with historical data. The harvest is the result of **due diligence by 17,000 hard-working people**—from ADF&G managers to fishermen, processors and their crews to freight workers and all the local community members that make this happen.

It has been an extraordinary privilege to participate in the **world's finest salmon fishery**. The beauty of this is that the fishery can continue next year, the following year and beyond to your children's children's lifetimes. The amazingly low cost to propagate this resource makes it fundamentally valuable.

The Bristol Bay fishery is a treasure indeed. We will continue to work on issues of salmon prices, markets, costs and margins, but all of that is premised on the

salmon resource continuing to be available for harvest.

Turning the Bristol Bay watershed into a **hard rock mining district** would inevitably and rapidly destroy the commercial fishing industry as we know it. The sport fishing industry would never be the same and the subsistence fishery will be impacted and a lifestyle lost.

**No mining permit for a large mine has ever been denied by the State of Alaska**, regardless of the environmental issues. We cannot assume that mining companies or the State of Alaska will make decisions in the best interest of any commercial fisherman or Bristol Bay resident.

A fish-friendly, open-pit mine is a bold-faced lie and a remarkable oxymoron. We cannot for a second believe utter nonsense.

The money now being spent in the local communities to grease this project better be in a good savings account. Should the mine be permitted and constructed, the local communities will eventually become a liability and need to be neutralized though restraint of revenue and importation of foreign labor.

—David Harsila, AIFMA President

## Exxon Oil Spill Settlements

**Alyeska Settlement:**  
The work to allocate shares of the Alyeska Qualified Settlement Fund to unholed fisheries, that includes Bristol Bay is completed. The Administrator of the fund expects to ask for permission to distribute approximately \$2 million to all unholed fisheries on or about **December 1st**. The portion of the \$2 million that will be divided among the following Bristol Bay fisheries as follows:

**Bristol Bay Herring: \$31,000**

**Bristol Bay Salmon: \$1,152,000**

Some people applied to participate in the Alyeska Qualified Settlement Fund only; some applied to participate in the Exxon Qualified Settlement Fund only; and some applied to participate in both.

The distributions in December will go only to those who applied (generally in the early 1990's) to participate in the Alyeska Qualified Settlement Fund. To find out if you applied for Alyeska contact Joel Garrido at Keller Rohrback at (206) 623-1900.

**The Alyeska distribution is per capita.** Each permit holder within a particular gear group will receive the same amount, and each crewmember will as well. Estimates for Bristol Bay salmon claimants from the Alyeska distribution are as follows:

**Drift permit holders: about \$900**

**Set permit holders: about \$310**

### Exxon Settlement:

**Exxon Qualified settlement funds are expected to be distributed in early 2009.** The funds will go to a different group of claimants than the Alyeska Settlement Fund—those who signed up to participate in the Exxon Qualified Settlement Fund, though, as you might expect, there is substantial overlap.

(Continued on page 2)

## Celebrating and Protecting Bristol Bay and Bering Sea Fisheries

Second Annual Fishermen's Reception during Seattle's Pacific Marine Expo

Thursday, November 20

5-7 p.m.

Pyramid Alehouse & Brewery, Upper Mezzanine rooms  
(Located across from Quest Field event center and Safeco Field)

Join us for food, a drink and to learn more about what's happening related to offshore drilling & Pebble Mine proposals, to meet people working on the issue and find out how you can help. Free drink to first 200 people and no-host bar.

**Sponsors:** AIFMA, Alaska Marine Conservation Council, Nunamta Aulukestai, Renewable Resource Coalition, Trout Unlimited, World Wildlife Fund

## Bay Watch

### 2008 Bristol Bay Run Summary (ADF&G)

Millions of Sockeye Salmon

District River	Predicted Harvest	Actual Harvest	Predicted Escapement	Actual Escapement	Predicted Total	Actual Total
Ugashik	5.63	2.35	0.85	.57	6.48	2.91
Egegik	6.92	7.43	1.10	1.25	8.02	8.68
Naknek/Kvichak	9.68	10.44	4.96	7.36	14.65	17.8
Kvichak	1.56		2.00	2.76	3.56	
Naknek	6.68		1.10	2.42	7.78	
Alagnak	1.45		1.86	2.18	3.32	
Nushagak	8.53	6.88	1.88	3.27	10.41	10.16
Igushik	1.15		0.23	1.05	1.37	
Wood	6.00		1.1	1.72	7.10	
Nushagak	1.38		.55	.49	1.93	
Togiak	.59	.65	.15	.21	0.74	.86
<b>Bristol Bay</b>	<b>31.35</b>	<b>27.75</b>	<b>8.94</b>	<b>12.66</b>	<b>40.29</b>	<b>40.41</b>

### Processor Competition

By Wesley Loy

*Anchorage Daily News 7/8/08*

I talked with Governor Sarah Palin yesterday about processors placing Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishermen on catch limits again this year.

Judging by some of the phone calls I've received, fishermen are plenty mad. And so is Palin.

She's displeased that processing companies told her people over the winter they could handle the big sockeye run.

She's unhappy her husband Todd's gillnets are "high and dry" out at Dillingham because a local cannery is buying only limited catches.

She believes the processors need more competition, even if it means allowing foreign processing ships to come into the bay to handle some of the salmon.

That's a step established processors have fought in the past, and one that two of Palin's predecessors, Frank Murkowski and Tony Knowles, declined to take.

"I have a much more open mind about foreign processors than prior administrations did," Palin told me.

The governor has dispatched her fisheries adviser, Cora Crome, to Naknek to talk with processors and fishermen about the Bay's latest cannery capacity crunch.

"I want to go a different direction than prior administrations because prior administrations, the decisions made there got us to where we are today," Palin said.

Too many Bristol Bay fishermen are sitting idle "because the processors, despite what they told the state – that they could handle it, that they had the capacity – they do not," she continued. "So we have to shift gears and do something different, do something smarter for our fishing communities and we have to allow that competition to come in."

**She said the Bay's processing industry is behaving like a monopoly.** "It's one of the reasons Alaska became a state, too, 50 years ago," she said. "It had to do with the fisheries and monopolies from Outside locking up potential with our fisheries."

Palin said her administration is about fostering competition for rights to develop state resources such as oil and gas.

"We need to do the same with our fisheries," she said. "Open it up for competition and let those processors have to compete for the right to purchase that resource from the fishermen."

### Exxon Oil Settlements

(Continued from page 1)

We anticipate in excess of \$6 million will be available at that time to distribute to the unopened fishery as a whole, and about the same percentage, 60% (\$3.6 million), will go to Bristol Bay fishers. **Note that for permit holders, their shares will be based in part on production**, so Exxon shares will vary among permit holders.

—Matt Jamin, Plaintiffs' Attorney

### Marsh Settlement

A settlement has been reached between the Plaintiffs and Marsh, Inc. Marsh has denied allegations, but has agreed to a settlement of more than \$69 million.

If you had Marsh marine insurance during the period August 26, 1994 through September 1, 2005 and you wish to be considered for a distribution in the event that the Court finally approves the Settlement, you must submit a properly completed Claim Form. Claim Forms must be mailed to the Settlement Administrator and post-marked no later than March 31, 2009.

It is unknown how much each claimant might receive until after March 31, 2009. More information is also available by calling (888) 356-0266.

**Claim forms are available at:**

[www.insurancebrokeragemarsh.com/Pdfs/Claim\\_Form.pdf](http://www.insurancebrokeragemarsh.com/Pdfs/Claim_Form.pdf)



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# Bristol Bay Prices

## 2008 Bristol Bay Ex-Vessel Salmon Prices

Processor	Sockeye Base Price/lb.	RSW/lb. (sockeye)	Chums Price/lb.	Kings Price/lb.	Notes:
Leader Creek	78¢ <sup>1</sup>		15¢ <sup>2</sup>	25¢	<sup>1</sup> Base price includes RSW/ice; Additional 5¢/lb. for "best" fish (chilled 32-39°, floating, bled, brailers less than 500 lbs.) <sup>2</sup> Chum price after July 17th was 30¢.
Ocean Beauty	65-75¢	10¢	40¢		June 1-30: 75¢; July 1-9: 65¢; July 10 to end of season: 75¢; 10¢ extra for bled fish
YAK	65-75¢	10¢	25¢	65-75¢	June 1-30: 75¢; July 1-8: 65¢; July 9 to end of season: 75¢
Alaska General Seafoods	68¢	10¢	10¢	25¢	
Icicle	68¢	10¢	20¢	50¢	
North Pacific Seafoods	68¢	10¢	10¢		
Norquest	68¢	10¢	15¢	\$1.40	
Peter Pan	68¢	10¢	10¢		
Snopac	68¢ <sup>3</sup>	16¢	30¢		<sup>3</sup> Additional 3¢/lb. for brailers 600 lbs. and below
Trident	68¢	10¢	15¢ <sup>4</sup>	\$1.40	<sup>4</sup> Chum price increased to 30 cents after July 18.
Bay Watch	60¢	10¢			

Prices collected from fishermen.

**Value of 2008 Bristol Bay Fishery: \$113,355 (based on 68¢ per lb.)**

### Bristol Bay Price Strong

Tokyo—Prices of sockeye from Bristol Bay, Alaska, remain strong in Japan due to shrinking supply. Prices of Chilean coho are also on a rising trend on the prospect of the production cut-back in the new season.

Landings of Bristol Bay sockeye this season closed with 27 million fish, falling below 31.35 million fish predicted before the season opened. This is causing industry observers in Japan to predict that imports of frozen Alaskan sockeye products, including those from areas other than Bristol Bay, this season to Japan will most probably stay around 15,000 tons.

Earlier, the prices of Alaskan sockeye opened at ¥600/kilo for 4/6 lb. No.1 size in Japan, and then surged to ¥630 as it became certain that supply volume will be reduced. From the start of September, the products have been traded at ¥650. **This represents an increase of ¥80 from the high of ¥580 last year,**

when the prices opened at ¥550. Japanese importers say that price setting is now in full control of U.S. suppliers.

Domestic sockeye sales in the U.S., which centered on non-Bristol Bay fish, shifted to Bristol Bay products this season due to lackluster harvest in areas outside the Bristol Bay. The purchase prices of 4/6 lb. size No. 1 stood at \$2.45/lb. C&F, about **40 cents higher than a year ago.**

Analysts forecast that prices in Japan will remain firm for the time being as it is difficult to foresee that the dollar may weaken against the Japanese currency.

*Seafood.com News,*  
*BANR Japan Reports, 9/23/08*  
(Summarized from the Minato Shimibun)

### Crossing the Bar

Charlie Segale, 53, passed away on July 31st in Winthrop, Washington. Charlie owned the vessel T&T and was an AIFMA member.

### Van Vector Moves to Leader Creek

AIFMA has recently learned that Norm Van Vector has joined John Lowrance and his management team at Leader Creek Fisheries.

Norm spent the last year helping Snopac products bring back to life the former Dragnet Fisheries facility located on the Wood River which had been dormant for over 8 years.

When asked Norman said he was excited and challenged with the prospects ahead. "John and I have often had common thoughts about Industry direction and opportunities, and I welcome the opportunity to put more of those dynamics in play."

He continued, "I'm looking forward to joining the Naknek based team and while I hope to bring much to the table, I also have much to learn and am looking forward to it."

## Bristol Bay Salmon in National Spotlight

One positive aspect of the growing debate around the proposed Pebble Mine is that Bristol Bay's true treasure - abundant healthy wild salmon - have come into the national spotlight.

Who would have thought though that it would take one of the biggest industrial developments ever proposed to catalyze regional promotion for Bristol Bay Wild Salmon?

While fighting non-renewable resource development in the critical habitat of our nation's greatest sockeye salmon run is important, there is also work that must be done to increase both Bristol Bay's intrinsic and economic value.

To that end, salmon consumers around the country wield tremendous power in the salmon marketplace, since they have the **ability to "vote with their forks" through their purchasing decisions.**

The WhyWild Program at Trout Unlimited is built upon this concept, and in fact "Vote with your Fork" is one of our key campaigns. WhyWild activities bring together fishers, processors, purveyors and consumers with the message that **by investing in sustainable wild salmon fisheries, we are investing in healthy rivers and healthy fish habitat.**

Some of this year's highlights from our WhyWild Program include:

**New Seasons Market promotions** were

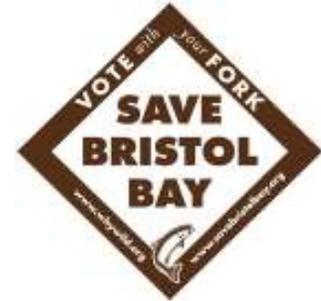
held in both 2007 and 2008 at which Bristol Bay fishermen, including Janis Harsila from AIFMA, handed out samples of Wild Bristol Bay salmon to customers at all nine of New Seasons Market's Portland, Oregon stores as well as information on the proposed Pebble Mine.

**Consumers were encouraged to do their part to save Bristol Bay by purchasing Bristol Bay salmon** right then and there. New Seasons Market ended up selling out at all nine locations during our weekend-long promotional event.

**Save Bristol Bay stickers** were distributed by the thousands to Bristol Bay processors for use on their packaging this summer to help increase consumer awareness. New Seasons Market also put Save Bristol Bay stickers on all their sockeye fish wrap this summer, helping to increase awareness in the Portland-Metro area.

**Intel promotional events** were held at Portland, OR campus sites where Trout Unlimited staff spoke with Intel employees at dining facilities about the importance of choosing wild salmon, and specifically Alaskan salmon. Salmon consumer materials, including Bristol Bay recipe cards were handed out.

**Renowned Alaska Chef Jack Amon** traveled to ComFish in Kodiak as a



WhyWild ambassador to share the importance of the "Vote with Your Fork" concept with fishermen, processors, and Alaska policy makers.

**An award-winning documentary film *Red Gold***, produced by Trout Unlimited, has traveled to screenings and film festivals nationwide, educating viewers on the story of Bristol Bay and the need to protect this natural treasure and its salmon fishery. At these events, WhyWild salmon consumer outreach materials were distributed carrying the Vote with your Fork message.

AIFMA members are encouraged to get involved with Trout Unlimited's WhyWild program as spokespersons, sponsors, advocates, and educators. To find out more, visit the WhyWild booth in the Alaska aisle at Pacific Marine Expo, or go to [www.whywild.org](http://www.whywild.org).

—**Lindsey Bloom, AIFMA member, Commercial Fisheries Outreach Coordinator. TU's WhyWild Program**

### 2008 Bristol Bay RSDA Projects

Funded Project	Grantee	Purpose	Amount
Ice Barges—Overhead	BBEDC	Offset storage, towing, repairs for ice barges	\$80,000
Bristol Lady Ice Barge	Ocean Beauty	Offset operating costs-keep ice cheap	\$45,000
Bristol Bay Ice Barge	Trident Seafoods	Offset operating costs-keep ice cheap	\$40,000
Small Boat Upgrade	Not yet funded-negotiating	Rawson renovation—Demonstration project	\$40,000
Naknek Ice	Bay Watch	30 ton ice system along Naknek River	\$20,000
Member Communication	KDLG	Expand commercial fish news on KDLG	\$20,000
District Permit Transfers	ADFG	Extend ADFG transfer office hours	\$15,000
Best Handling Practices	Dory Associates	Summarize existing research and gaps	\$5,000
Grant Sources	Dory Associates	Identify grants available to RSDA	\$5,000
Board Training	Foraker Group	Build Board members' skills	\$4,000

## Pebble Mine Update

It was disheartening to say the least, to lose the fight to pass **Alaska's Ballot Measure #4, the Clean Water Initiative**, which would have gone a long way to helping protect Bristol Bay.

Although we lost round one, the fight is far from over. Those of us at the Renewable Resources Coalition, and sister organization, The Renewable Resources Foundation, have regrouped and once again resumed our effort to prevent Pebble Mine from laying waste to one of the most productive fisheries on Earth.

While we did our best against the \$8 million dollar blitz of the foreign conglomerates backing Pebble, it is clear that the general public is in desperate need of more information. We plan in the coming months to step up our outreach and education work, taking the fight to communities throughout Alaska and into the Lower 48.

While more people are becoming aware of the threat posed to the Bristol Bay region, most residents are still unaware that **giant ore ships will most likely be brought into Iniskin Bay, the ore trucked or sent via a 104-mile pipeline, along with slurry, to the coast of Cook Inlet.**

Power production, now estimated at nearly 400 megawatts, may come from the Kenai Peninsula, perhaps from the proposed Beluga coal mine. And what about employee sewage and waste, where will that be disposed of?

The life of the mine, the jobs it will create, and their product is finite; and hardly worth the risk when one considers the dwindling wildlife and natural resources around the world. With the steady decline in fisheries, ours becomes even more rare, more exceptional, and yes, evermore valuable as we look to the future.

Our ongoing efforts are also helping to fund independent scientific studies to catalogue fish species within the mining district that encompasses Pebble. We have also been involved at looking into

what legal action may be undertaken in the near future to help stave off this potential catastrophe. The fight is far from over, though **it will take a concerted effort on the part of all user groups to win.**

We need the help of everyone—whether tourists and wildlife viewers, hunters and sportsmen, residents of Alaska or those who hope to one day visit. There are so many of us, people from all walks of life who need to know wild places, like Bristol Bay, still exist. Yet to win this fight, it will take the combined forces of all of us who have been there, who make our living through a renewable resource and know just how vital it is and must remain.

We need to spread the word and we need to join the fight, not only for ourselves, but for our children. The time to take action is now.

To find out what more you can do, to donate to this important effort, or become a member please visit:

[www.renewableresourcescoalition.org](http://www.renewableresourcescoalition.org).

—**Dave Atcheson, Executive Director, Renewable Resources Foundation**  
dave@renewableresourcescoalition.org

### *Join the Renewable Resources Foundation*

One of the easiest ways to become involved to fight the Pebble Mine is to join the Renewable Resources Foundation.

A membership requires a **\$25** tax deductible contribution which will help fund the mission to save the renewable resources of the Bristol Bay watershed by educating the public on the threat from the proposed Pebble mine and mining district. AIFMA's president, David Harsila, serves on the RRF board.

#### **Join Online:**

[www.renewableresourcesfoundation.org/join.htm](http://www.renewableresourcesfoundation.org/join.htm)

#### **Join by Mail:**

Renewable Resources Foundation, Inc.  
500 L Street, Suite 502  
Anchorage, AK 99501

*"Ms. Palin has said Alaska has "the right people in place" to evaluate Pebble's plans."*

*"Alaska regulators, however, have never rejected an application for a large mine."*

*New York Times, 10/22/08*

### **Eliminating Interceptions of Alaska's Salmon Runs**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The **Senate Committee** on Commerce, Science, and Transportation recently approved legislation sponsored by Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Daniel Inouye that would help end illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing on the high seas.

These fishing pirates have intercepted salmon in the past and may be a factor in the current reduced salmon runs being experienced in Alaska.

"I am deeply concerned about the low fish counts on the Deshka, Yukon, and other rivers throughout the state," said Senator Stevens. "Recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishermen are all feeling the effects of poor salmon returns.

There may be a combination of factors impacting these runs in Alaska, and I would like to eliminate one of those possible factors – illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing on the high seas. This bill takes a multi-faceted approach to combat pirate fishing fleets on the international stage, which could dramatically impact the health of our fish runs."

IUU fishing accounts for nearly \$9 billion in losses annually. Currently, the United States has a patchwork of law enforcement provisions that implement international fisheries agreements.

The Inouye-Stevens bill passed by committee would combat IUU fishing by consolidating those powers, increasing the fines and penalties for civil and criminal violations for those activities, and creating a government-sponsored International Fisheries Enforcement Program.

## Bristol Bay Offshore Drilling Update

Last April, offshore oil and gas drilling amid vital marine habitat for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon came one important step closer to becoming reality. The Minerals Management Service (MMS)—the federal agency in charge of offshore oil and gas decisions—initiated the “scoping” process, the first official step in preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the **proposed 2011 Bristol Bay oil and gas lease sale**. During scoping, MMS asks for public comments on the full range and “scope” of issues to be considered as it prepares an EIS.

AIFMA wrote an official letter to the agency urging it to hold a scoping meeting in Seattle during Fish Expo to provide an opportunity for west coast residents who fish in Bristol Bay and the Bering Sea to participate in the process. A number of Washington State Congress members also sent in requests for a Seattle scoping meeting including Senators Cantwell and Murray and Representatives Inslee, McDermott, Smith, and Reichert.

Unfortunately, MMS denied the call to hold a meeting in Seattle, expressing little interest in considering what they cited as “indirect” impacts to the region’s residents and economy. **The agency has, however, agreed to have a booth at Fish Expo** to allow people to stop by, express their comments and to learn more about the proposed lease sale.

Thankfully, Washington’s congressional delegation recognizes the importance of the fisheries to many living outside of Alaska and has taken a strong interest in Bristol Bay offshore drilling and how it could affect west coast residents. In the wake of recent investigations that revealed a deep-seeded culture of corruption within MMS, Congress is vowing to keep a watchful eye over the agency which was shown to be literally in bed with the oil industry that they are charged with regulating.

Even though MMS says it will accept comments at Fish Expo, the scoping comment period officially closed on October 17 and now the agency has entered the phase of preparing a Draft Environmental

Impact Statement (DEIS), which is supposed to consider, and respond to, the comments raised during scoping. The Draft EIS is scheduled to be released sometime in 2010.

Ideally, the release of that Draft EIS will never occur. While high energy prices this past summer led to a dramatic political push to expand offshore drilling in the U.S., **there is still much hope that the protection that existed for Bristol Bay will once again be restored** under the next presidential administration and Congress. There are a number of possible solutions to solving the energy problems in our nation, but drilling in our most important fishing grounds should not be amongst them.

**Vocal opposition from the fishing industry** whose economic well-being depends upon continued health of resources that would be jeopardized by offshore drilling remains critical to success.

**How You Can Help:** Go to [www.akmarine.org/our-work/protect-bristol-bay/take-action](http://www.akmarine.org/our-work/protect-bristol-bay/take-action) to sign the petition, “Bristol Bay Fishermen for Pro-

tecting Our Waters from Offshore Drilling” and to join the Bristol Bay offshore drilling listerv to stay informed and engaged.

**Call, write, or e-mail your congressional representatives** to thank them for their work on Bristol Bay offshore drilling if they are listed above. If not, call them and urge them to help restore protection for Bristol Bay from offshore drilling.

**During Fish Expo:** Stop by AIFMA and the Alaska Marine Conservation Council’s booth (next to AIFMA) for comment letters, more information, and to be pointed to MMS’ booth so you can give them your opinion on Bristol Bay drilling.

Attend the panel discussion during Fish Expo entitled, “*Rigs in the Nation’s Fish Basket? What Fishermen Should Know about Proposed Offshore Drilling in Bristol Bay and the Southeast Bering Sea*” on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2:30-4:00, Room C1.

—By Kelly Harrell,  
Alaska Marine Conservation Council,  
[Kelly@akmarine.org](mailto:Kelly@akmarine.org)

### Chevron Reported Polluting Cook Inlet

Chevron dumps billions of gallons of toxic oil and gas wastes into Cook Inlet from oil and gas operations each year. This has led to pollution of seafood according to Cook Inletkeeper and the Waterkeeper Alliance. Chevron could properly treat these wastes by reinjecting them back into the formation, but the corporation has balked due to high costs.

An EPA study around Cook Inlet Native villages in 2001 found a broad array of toxics in subsistence fish and shellfish, including the same types of contaminants found in industry waste streams. Several groups have asked Chevron to halt discharge of oil and gas wastes into Cook Inlet.

Chevron’s response has been that the discharges are legally permitted, although they represent the only case in the U.S. where an oil company is allowed to discharge toxic waste directly into the water column.

Chevron operates eight active offshore platforms and two onshore facilities in and around Cook Inlet where oil and natural gas are produced.

*We appreciate our Bristol Bay customers!*

**LFS**

Call us in Bellingham  
this winter!  
800-426-8860

# Pollock Fishery Under Scrutiny

The following article is excerpted from an *Anchorage Daily News* (6/25/08) article written by Jeannette J. Lee, Associated Press. Wesley Loy was a contributor.

...Increasingly **Chinooks** have been scooped up by the massive Bering Sea pollock fleet, a global source of frozen fish sticks, fillets and imitation crab, and the largest fishery by volume in the United States...

...In recent years, the fleet of about 100 pollock trawlers have intercepted record numbers of salmon bound for rivers in Canada, the Pacific Northwest, Asia and Alaska. Federal laws prevent them from keeping the salmon, so fishermen generally throw the mostly dead and dying fish back into the sea, or donate a fraction to food banks.

King salmon bycatch -- fishing jargon for the unintentional capture of a species -- in the Bering Sea pollock fishery rose last year to a record 122,000, up from a previous five-year average of 57,333. The bycatch count for other salmon species hit a record 706,000 in 2005, according to the NPFMC...

...Trawl bycatch of king salmon has declined sharply so far this year. During the winter fishery, which ran from Jan. 20 to June 10, the pollock fleet caught 15,557 king salmon compared to a record 69,542 during the same period last year, federal figures show.

A federal body that regulates the region's fisheries expressed tentative support this month for an unprecedented proposal to temporarily close the Bering Sea pollock fishery if king salmon bycatch exceeds a certain number...

...The corporations that dominate Alaska's billion-dollar pollock industry generally believe a limit on salmon bycatch would put a damper on pollock numbers and increase the cost of fuel by forcing boats to relocate more frequently, according to Stephanie Madsen, a former council chair who is now executive director of a pollock

trade group, the At-Sea Processors Association.

If adopted, the limit on salmon bycatch would likely take effect in 2011 and, in some scenarios, could cost the pollock fleet more than \$500 million annually, according to federal estimates.

The industry has spent more than a half million dollars in the last five years to develop nets that allow salmon to escape while keeping pollock in, said John Gruver, a manager at United Catcher Boats, a Seattle trade group of fishing vessels. He said the latest version, which he is still refining, allows one in five salmon to swim free. Earlier models let more salmon escape, but broke easily.

"We hope people understand that we're not just out there hammering away and that we are aware of the bycatch situation," Madsen said. "We've been struggling with it for years."

But a segment of the pollock fleet is pushing for the cap on bycatch. Members of a federal program set up to aid impoverished Western Alaska villages rely almost exclusively on pollock for income. Some believe their mission to protect the salmon-dependent village economies comes first.

"We recognize that pollock is where we get our royalty money from," said Ragnar Alstrom, executive director of the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Assoc. "But both the subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries inriver are more important to us than the pollock."

Pollock boats are just one of many obstacles that can lead to a salmon's demise. Spawning returns hinge on several factors, including ocean temperatures, availability of food, predator numbers and disease...

## Fish Expo Highlights

### ✓AIFMA Booth #545

### ✓Minerals Management Service Booth # 532

Stop by this federal agency's booth to express comments on and learn more about proposed offshore oil & gas lease sales in Bristol Bay.

### ✓Bristol Bay: Alaska's Red Gold

Award-winning documentary film

Wednesday, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Free movie screening

Seattle Art Museum

First & University

### ✓Rigs in the Nation's Fish Basket? What Fishermen Should Know about Proposed Offshore Drilling in Bristol Bay

Thursday

2:30—4:00 p.m.

Room C2

### ✓AIFMA/Bristol Bay Reception

Thursday

5—7 p.m.

Pyramid Alehouse

### ✓Bristol Bay Processing Capacity

Friday

1—2 p.m.

Room C3

### ✓BBRSDA Meeting

Saturday

1—3 p.m.

Room has not been assigned





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