



Fish News

July 11, 2008

Exxon Plaintiffs Go After Interest Owed from Punitive Damages Case



Alaska fishermen and other plaintiffs owed money from the Exxon Valdez lawsuit have requested that the U.S. Supreme Court make it absolutely clear that they should receive interest payments. That's in spite of the fact that the court slashed the punitive damages award last month from \$2.5 billion to \$507 million. Lawyers for the fishermen have tallied that interest, which they believe will add up to approximately \$488 million. That means the total amount owed by

Exxon Mobil from the devastating 1989 oil spill would be nearly \$1 billion. After subtracting attorney fees, approximately \$628 million will be divided among more than 32,000 plaintiffs.

[Read More](#)



Fish & Game Continues Closure for Southeast District Mainland

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) is continuing the closure for the Southeast District Mainland (SEDM) because of the low sockeye salmon early run in the Chignik River system. According to John Hilsinger, Director of the Commercial Fisheries Division with ADF&G, the early Chignik run projection was for a harvest of 720,000. The actual early run harvest turned out to be 251,000 (using the standard transition date between early and late run at midnight on July 4, 2008). Because the early run failed to develop as predicted and the harvest for the early run did not exceed 300,000, ADF&G decided the closure for the Southeast District Mainland will remain in effect. Officials with the ADF&G are hoping to get to a point where they are certain they will get at least 600,000 sockeye salmon in the Chignik Area before opening either Igvak or SEDM.

Given those factors, paragraph C of the management plan applies.

[Southeastern District Mainland Salmon Management Plan](#)

Bristol Bay Sockeye Return Overwhelms Canneries



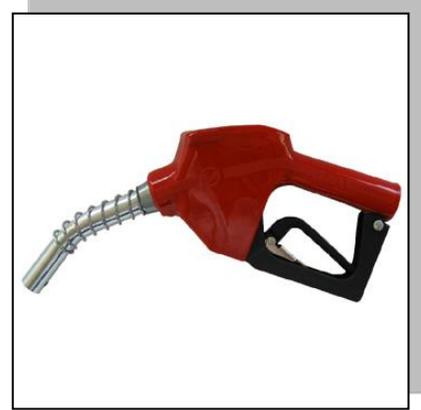
A huge sockeye salmon run in Bristol Bay appears to be far more than processors can handle, leaving commercial fishermen with full nets and light wallets. Gillnetters trying to sell the fish are finding out that processors will only take limited catches, and in some cases, they're suspending purchases entirely. Canneries say they're struggling to keep up with the fish landed

earlier in the week. In the meantime, fishermen have been venting their frustrations to the governor's office. They say the same thing happened last year.

[Read More](#)

Fishermen Reeling from Increasing Fuel Prices

Skyrocketing fuel prices are dashing the dreams of many of America's commercial fishermen, forcing some to consider putting their nets away for good. Fishermen and seafood economists say conditions are progressively getting worse, and some captains are thinking about leaving the business. To cut their costs, many fishermen from Florida to Texas are traveling to Mexico to fuel up. Other fishermen are making fewer trips or they aren't traveling as far to fishing grounds.



[Read More](#)

Fishermen in Sand Point, King Cove Stand Down Over Sockeye Salmon Prices

Sand Point and King Cove fishermen staged a six-day stand down early last month to protest the 70 cents per pound offer from Trident Seafoods and Peter Pan Seafoods for sockeye salmon. The fishermen sat on shore for nearly a week after the season opened. The biggest issue has been the dramatic rise in the price of diesel fuel, which has nearly doubled during the past several months. In the end, fishermen settled on 70 cents per pound for sockeye. Peter Pan Seafoods also agreed to give King Cove fishermen a 20-cent-per-gallon discount on fuel.

[Read more](#)

Development Association Opens Processing Plant in False Pass



Bering Pacific Seafoods has opened for business in False Pass. The \$4.5-million processing plant, owned by Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA), plans to buy and process salmon, Pacific cod, halibut and sablefish. APICDA Joint Ventures Inc., the for-profit arm of APICDA, hopes to operate on a year-round basis. The plant expects to provide new markets for local and regional fishermen, offer

local jobs and create tax revenue for the City of False Pass.

[Read More](#)

Alaska Law Review Article Urges More Protection for Fisheries from Proposed Mine

A recent Alaska Law Review article claims the state's current law does not have enough safeguards in place to protect the Bristol Bay salmon fisheries if the proposed Pebble Mine is developed. The authors of the June edition article say more than 5,500 Alaska jobs and approximately \$320 million in Alaska commerce generated from the Bristol Bay watershed could be jeopardized by the mine. The report, titled "Pebble Mine: Minerals and Testing the Limits of Alaska's Large Mine Permitting Process," focuses on the potential economic benefits of the mine, the values of the fisheries, the environmental risks to the fisheries and whether current state law is sufficient.

[Read More](#)

June North Pacific Fishery Management Council Report

By Sam Cotten, NPFMC Member

Cod issues:

LLP Recency: Put off until December, along with Pacific cod sector split. New options include exempting most jig vessels and vessels less than 60 feet long (<60'), if they meet a capacity limit that will be determined by the council at a later date. The capacity limit is interesting because it would be the first time (to my knowledge) that a measurement other than length overall (LOA) would be used.



[Read more](#)

[Link to NPFMC June newsletter](#)

How Communities Are Affected by Endangered Species Act Listings



Threatened Mammals or Poster Critters of Global Warming?

Polar bears, ice seals, the northern right whale and Steller sea lions have a lot in common. All of these mammals have been at the center of controversy lately. This spring, environmental groups have succeeded in getting the polar bear listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Whether to list the ribbon seal, one of the ice seal species, is currently under review. The North Pacific right whale is considered to be the most endangered whale in the world. Recently, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule in the Federal Register, reaffirming the designation of portions of Lease Sale 214, located in the North Aleutian Basin, as critical habitat for the northern right whale. A few months ago, NMFS released a lengthy plan

which provides dozens of actions needed to aid in the recovery of the sea lion population in western Alaska. So how does listing these mammals as threatened or endangered affect nearby communities? To begin tackling this issue, let's start with the polar bear, a mammal that has been grabbing the headlines everywhere, from the Washington Post to Time Magazine.

[Read more](#)



Monitoring Critical Marine Mammal Populations in the Shumagin Islands

by AEB Researcher Cathy Foy

Why would relatively sane people fly around the outer

Shumagin Island group in a small single engine plane, circling at low altitudes while searching for sea lions and sea otters? Why would they take time from their daily jobs and families, often accepting lower pay, to do this? Besides the inherent dangers, they are risking airsickness, cramping muscles, and enduring no bathroom-breaks for six hours at a time. Pilot Theo Chesley (middle) and marine mammal observers Peter Devine (left) and Cheryl Lundgren (right) fly because they believe that the research they do has important benefits for their communities. Along with Aleutians East Borough staff researcher Cathy Foy, they are proactively monitoring two of the critical marine mammal populations in the area, Steller sea lions and sea otters.

[Read more](#)

You are reading FISH NEWS, published quarterly by the Aleutians East Borough to help keep the lines of communication open between Alaska's commercial fishing interests. If you would like to have FISH NEWS delivered to you via e-mail subscription, send an e-mail message to FISH_NEWS. In the body of the message type SUBSCRIBE FISH NEWS. To unsubscribe type UNSUBSCRIBE FISH NEWS. This newsletter is also available in PDF and plain text versions. Please e-mail FISH_NEWS to receive the newsletter in another format. For more information about our fisheries, our people, and our communities, please visit us at www.aleutianeast.org