



Fish News

Feb. 23, 2010

Lower Salmon Harvest Expected for 2010



ADF&G projects an estimated sockeye harvest of 45.8 million salmon, an increase of 2.5 million from last year.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has released its statewide commercial salmon harvest forecast for 2010. The projected total is 138 million salmon -- a 15% decrease from 2009. Most of the decrease is expected to come from lower pink salmon catches. The estimated Chinook salmon harvest of 515,000 fish is a slight increase over last year. The sockeye catch is estimated to be 45.8 million salmon, an increase of 2.5 million from the previous year. The Coho

catch is forecast at 4.4 million. That's up slightly from 2009. The chum salmon forecast remains the same, at 18 million fish. For more information, visit the link below.

[Link: ADF&G Statewide Commercial Salmon Harvest Forecast for 2010](#)

Borough Resource Director Recommends Setting up Pre-Season Meeting with ADF&G



AEB Resource Director Beth Stewart

AEB Resource Director Beth Stewart recommends that our Borough fishermen set up a pre-season meeting with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) to discuss strategies to avoid or significantly decrease the chum bycatch during the June Fishery. Although the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) didn't impose a chum cap during its meeting earlier this month, Stewart said it's clear that Board Members were

extremely concerned about last season's relatively high catch. She emphasized the importance of avoiding a repeat of last year's chum numbers.

"I have received calls from fishermen who are very concerned that this message might not be clear to fishermen who were unable to attend the BOF meeting," said Stewart. "We need to include the processors in the meeting so that we can thoroughly discuss any needed improvements to the chum pool."

Update from the Latest NPFMC Meeting



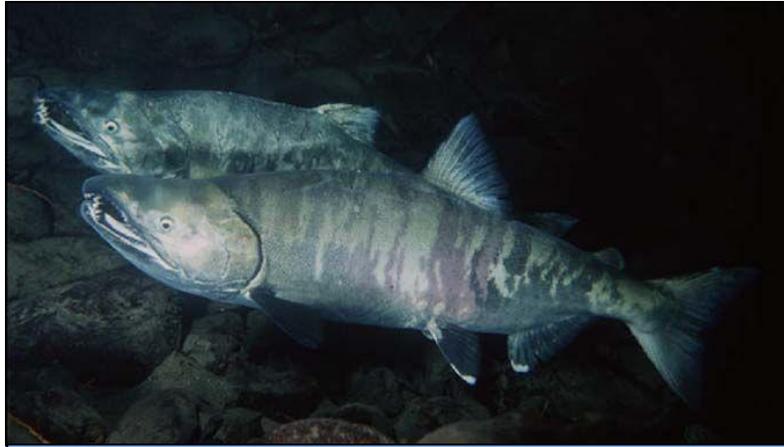
Sam Cotten, NPFMC Member
and AEB Fisheries Consultant

By Sam Cotten, NPFMC Member and AEB Fisheries Consultant

Sam recently took part in the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meeting Feb. 10 - 16, 2010 in Portland, Oregon. The following information outlines Council actions taken and discussions that occurred.

Chum salmon by-catch: The Council reviewed area closures and analytical methods of determining the origins of chum salmon harvested during the Bering Sea pollock fishery. A new Genetic Stock Identification study was released to the Council at the meeting. This study was based on samples taken in 2005. Approx. 1,000 samples were taken from the approx. 700,000 chum salmon harvested by the pollock fishermen (their highest year in recent history). The study, conducted by NMFS/NOAA,

showed the following distribution: upper/middle Yukon: 5 - 6%; western Alaska: 16%; BC/Washington: 16 - 17%; Japan/southern Russia- 28 - 29%; and Russia 25 - 29%. The salmon were harvested throughout the year with heavy concentration in July, August and September. The peak occurred in mid August.



A new Genetic Stock Identification study was released at the recent NPFMC meeting in Portland, Oregon.

The Council is expected to finalize the alternatives at the June meeting. This study and other previous studies are available to the public and contain a lot more detail than presented here. (Chum salmon harvest in Area M may or may not show the same distribution patterns. We expect to see the results of State of Alaska studies in 2011 or 2012.) For more information, visit the link below.

[Salmon bycatch patterns in the Bering Sea pollock fishery](#)

Sea Lions: We expect to see the draft biological opinion (Bi-Op) on March 1, 2010. This opinion will state the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) (draft) determination as to whether Steller Sea Lions (SSL) remain in jeopardy in spite of the existing mitigation measures. We don't know yet what the opinion will say. There have been hints that the numbers are weak in the Western Aleutians. However in our area, the Western Gulf of Alaska, the SSL numbers are steadily increasing. The Council may have to place additional restrictions in areas of concern. The Council discussed the issue at length and has sent a letter to NMFS expressing its views as to how we should proceed. For more information, visit the link below:

[SSL Bi-Op NPFMC Letter to NMFS](#)



The Council will determine whether it should extend the Rockfish Pilot Program with modifications or allow

Rockfish program: This program is important to fishermen, regardless of whether they participate in the Kodiak-based fishery. While NMFS has made it clear that we cannot award processor quota shares, there is an option to award harvest shares to processors. A little background on the program: Congress passed legislation setting up the Rockfish

Pilot Program. Fishermen and processors were given harvest and processing quota shares. The program was originally a two-year deal and was later extended to five years. It expires after the 2011 season. The Council has to decide whether to extend it with modifications or let the management go back to the LLP -based plan. There have been some benefits realized from the program: lower halibut by-catch and better timing for processing operations in Kodiak, to name two.

Crab: Community protection measures that were part of the Crab Rationalization program are still being refined. One of the protection measures allows communities the right of first refusal (ROFR) should a company decide or be required to move some of its crab processing to another location. In King Cove, Aleutia is the organization that has been designated to exercise the ROFR. There are some contingencies which had not been considered when the program was started that need some improvement.

Aleutia Marketing Consultant Karen Montoya made a presentation to the Council on the



Community protection measures, part of the crab rationalization program, are still being refined.

current situation Aleutia is facing as a result of purchasing the crab processing quota that Peter Pan Seafoods was required to divest. The contract was signed in 2008. However, the purchase has not worked out well for Aleutia. Karen did an excellent job on laying out the details of the problem Aleutia faces, and she proposed some changes that may help prevent future problems for others.

Halibut: Halibut is a prohibited species, which means any incidental catch must be thrown overboard, dead or alive. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) determines the mortality rate (how many fish die when thrown back) and the Council sets the limit for how much can be wasted. The current limits are 2,000 tons for trawlers and 300 tons for hook-and-line fishermen. These limits cover the entire Gulf of Alaska, so what happens in Kodiak affects the western gulf and vice versa. Observer data is weak in the Gulf and must be improved before we can know how much halibut is actually taken. The Council has begun a process to reassess what the limits should be.

The Council is also reviewing new proposals for changes to the existing IFQ program. One of the major changes proposed was to end the ability to use a hired skipper on any new IFQ purchases. The council set Feb 12 as a control date, after which, any new purchases must be fished by the IFQ holder. (B, C & D quota shares only).

The Council recently posted its February newsletter. For more information, visit the link below.

[Read more: NPFMC February 2010 Newsletter](#)

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