



Reasons to Change the Transfer of Limited Entry Salmon Permits

By Aleutians East Borough Mayor Alvin Osterback

Times have changed for many rural Alaskan communities participating in the salmon limited entry fisheries. Today, we have permits leaving the rural communities at an alarming rate. This out-migration of permits has snowballed mainly due to the “graying of the fleet.”

To prevent rural communities from shrinking, the State of Alaska needs to redefine the transferability of the limited entry permit. Currently, because of the restrictions on the transfer of permits, they are being sold to people outside of the fishing area and mostly to people living out of state. They go where the money is.

Part of the reason this is occurring is because of the high rate of alcoholism and drug use in many rural communities. In some cases, rural permit holders are unwilling to turn over permits to their children because they’re concerned they might sell the permit to get money for drugs. Currently the only way to have another individual fish a salmon permit is to transfer it in a sale.

I would like to recommend an idea that will hopefully curb this out-migration of salmon permits from rural communities. My proposal would allow an additional name to be listed on a salmon permit. This would enable the permit holder to allow the permit to be

fished without fear that this asset could be sold by a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Adding another name onto a permit would allow the permit owner to mentor an up-and-coming fisherman in their community and help transition that individual into the fishery. In many cases, local fishermen are willing to step up and become independent salmon fishermen, given the opportunity.

One of the biggest obstacles young fishermen who want to pursue a career in fishing face is lacking an established credit history. Without it, it's almost impossible for new entrants to obtain commercial bank loans to purchase boats and permits. Changing the limited entry salmon fisheries program so a second name could be added to the permit would assist new entrants by establishing a work history in their fishing career. That would later assist them in obtaining a commercial loan.

Adding a second name would also eliminate the permit holder's fear of losing the permit. The second person listed on the permit would only have the right to sell fish for that season or as long as his or her name is on the permit card. The permit owner would retain all rights of the permit ownership.

An additional benefit of this change in the current statute of limited entry salmon permits would be to have the survivor of a permit holder retain the ability to be the first name on the permit and allow a second name to fish this permit. Under the current law this is not possible.

This is not how the system should work. Consider the following scenario: a man and his wife build a life together in a fishing community and have a couple of children. Their main source of income is commercial salmon fishing. If the permit holder dies, the wife should be able to maintain that permit in her name and place a second person's name on the permit, if she chooses, providing that individual the ability to sell salmon with no other ownership.

Out-migration in rural Alaskan communities has been a growing problem for years. Given the state's current fiscal crisis, it's more important than ever to maintain and

increase economic opportunities for individuals and families. Since commercial fishing is the main economic driver for many rural Alaskan communities, empowering them to remain economically healthy so they can retain and grow their population base is essential. I'm hopeful this proposal will help to accomplish that goal.

2018 AEB Winter Fisheries Teleconference

The Aleutians East Borough held the annual Winter Fisheries Teleconference on December 28th, 2017. These are the notes from that meeting, recorded by AEB Natural Resources Director Ernie Weiss.

Brent Pristas with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) in Kodiak (907-486-3298) comments:

- A Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP) is required for U.S. vessels which are used to fish for groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska or Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands federal fisheries. These are three-year permits and vessel owners can check with Brent on the FFP status, and if renewal will be required for 2018.
- If your Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been turned off for a few months, it's recommended to turn on for at least 3 hours, before giving Brent's office a call to see if the unit is transmitting properly.
- Vessels that are considering fishing in a different federal area this year should check the LLP endorsement – make sure the vessel is endorsed for that area. Call the office with any questions.
- When logging trips in the Observer Declare & Deploy System (ODDs) – you need to specify delivery to shore plant or to a tender. OLE realizes weather or other factors may necessitate changing delivery location (shore plant or tender) but some boats are consistently recording wrong delivery location. OLE be watching this closely in 2018.
- The [acoustic sensor moored to the bottom near Sanak Island](#) has worked well, but recorded few pollock this past year. The unit will be redeployed to the Bering Sea in 2020. Chris Wilson at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center is available to answer questions, but could not participate in this call.

Krista Milani with NOAA Sustainable Fisheries, In-season Management in Dutch Harbor (907-581-2062): Given the low total allowable catch (TAC)s for cod this year, Krista gave a rundown on management for each sector in the Western Gulf of Alaska (WGOA) 2018 Pacific cod A Season.

- WGOA trawl Catcher Processor (CP) TAC set at 50 metric tons (mt), closed to directed fishing.
- WGOA hook & line CP TAC set at 607 mt, open to directed fishing as normal January 1.
- WGOA hook & line Catcher Vessel (CV) TAC set at 39 mt, closed to directed fishing. (needed for incidental catch in other directed fisheries).
- WGOA Jig TAC set at 51 mt, will open to directed fishing as normal on January 1. If planning to jig, fishermen should report to processor ASAP so NMFS can keep a close count under the small TAC.
- WGOA trawl CV TAC set at 1543 mt, open to directed fishing as normal on January 20. NMFS understands fleet will abide by voluntary catch share plan. If no catch share is in place NMFS will preannounce closure for 2-3 days following opening; fishery will be managed very conservatively.
- WGOA pot (CV & CP) TAC set at 1103, will open to directed fishing as normal January 1, fishermen encouraged to check in with processor ASAP so NMFS can keep accurate count. May need to close at shorter than the normal 48-hour notice.
- NMFS cannot be over on any allocations and will be managing very conservatively this year. Information from the fleet will be critical to success. Reporting accurate statistical areas where fished is important – check your fish ticket.
- If vessels are interested in fishing in the Aleutian Islands, contact NMFS and State for more info, including for Steller sea lion closure areas and coral closure areas.

Glenn Campbell with the Observer Program reviewed some of the components of the program, dealing with human observers:

- This year the observer coverage rates set for the different sectors are: Trawl 20%; Trawl Tender 17%; Hook & Line 17%; Pot 16%; Pot Tender 17%.
- In ODDS there are new questions related to IFQ fishing in different areas. Fishermen are also encouraged to review the definition of a trip (tender/no tender) in the [ODDS FAQ section](#)
- For help on account info, email to odds.help@noaa.gov

Chris Rilling with the Observer Program talked about the newly integrated electronic monitoring (EM) component of the Observer program:

- The deadline to request to be in the EM pool for 2018 was November 1, 2017. 141 hook & line and pot gear vessels applied and were approved to be in the EM pool. Trawl vessels are not part of the EM pool.

- There are 2 EM service providers: Archipelago Marine Research (AMR) predominantly servicing longline vessels, and Saltwater predominantly servicing pot gear vessels.
- To be in the EM pool, you must have an EM system installed, and have an approved vessel monitoring plan that lays out deck view of catch coming onboard, and where discards occur. Must be approved before trips can be logged in ODDs. ([ODDs EM FAQs](#))
- EM trips are selected at a coverage rate of 30%. Must perform a function test before any EM selected trip.

Luke Syzmanski project manager at AIS Inc., observer providers reminded fishermen that the AIS call center support hours are from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. AKST, 855-747-6377, alternate number 206-673-3338.

Nat Nichols ADFG area groundfish manager reviewed management procedures for the 2018 State GHF cod fishery:

- No changes in regulations - same as 2017 except for the GHF is much lower. Expecting a faster season.
- Pot gear allocation for the South Pen is 4.5 million lbs, down from 20 million lbs last year. Jig allocation 800,000 lbs.
- Expect State season to open March 7th at noon, given the small federal TAC. Weather delay rules are in effect – a gale in the forecast would delay the season opener for 24 hours.
- Pots can be stored on the fishing grounds 7 days prior to the opener unbaited, doors open.
- 60 pot limit, buoy tags are required and available at ADFG in Kodiak or local processors. Buoy tags are orange this year.
- Could be a fast season making reporting critical. The South Peninsula fleet has been great in past years reporting. ADFG will be taking reports daily between 9 - 10 a.m.. Contact dispatch directly on 7894 tag phone, call Kodiak office 907-486-1840 or email, sat phone, or relay to a vessel near you or to a processor.
- Please cooperate with dockside samplers in Sand Point and King Cove – they are not working in any enforcement capacity, but working to improve the fishery for everyone.

Mark Stichert, ADFG in Kodiak added a few reminders for fishermen:

- The South Peninsula Board of Fish cycle is coming up and proposals are due April 10th, 2018, for the February 2019 meeting. ADFG is able to assist with getting proposals prepared.

- Dutch Harbor staff can answer questions about the Dutch Harbor Subdistrict State GHL cod fishery for 58 ft. & under vessels using pot gear. The GHL for the DH Subdistrict is 28 million lbs. The Aleutian Island state cod GHL is 13 million lbs.
- The Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) has had slower turnaround lately processing applications; it may take a little longer to get vessel licenses or fishing permits. Apply early.

Jennifer Mondragon with NMFS, along with Glenn Campbell and Chris Rilling responded to questions about trips logged in ODDS:

- If you want to switch from a non-tendered trip to a tender, and you haven't departed yet, cancel the trip and re-log the trip. If you have already departed, call OLE – Brent Pristas. Each circumstance will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- The rationale for observed rates for different sectors is explained in the [Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan](#). Tendered trips are treated differently because the definition of a tender trip is different than for a shoreside delivery trip.

A member of the public commented that the Sanak bottom-mounted sounder should remain in place, to monitor the troubled GOA groundfish stocks. Also any research/charter opportunities should be made available to local vessels first.

Thanks to all who participated in the call. The AEB Winter Fisheries teleconference was advertised to be carried by KSDP, but was not carried live or recorded. The AEB Natural Resources Department and KSDP apologize for any inconvenience.

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