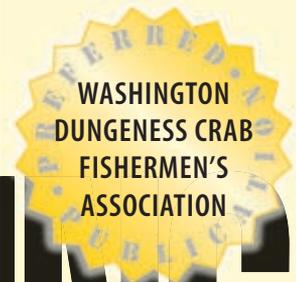


More from 'One Hook at a Time'



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## The **money** issue

- **Commissioner Cotten takes questions**
- **Oregon Dungeness ditches MSC**

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# Dollars and good sense

**Ins Ide:**



**Alaska commissioner Q&A • Page 12**



**Money matters • Page 16**



**One Hook at a Time • Page 30**



**Welcome Aboard: F/V Serenity • Page 23**

**ON THE COVER:** A pile of yelloweye rockfish.  
Dan Evans photo

**VOLUME XXXVI, NO. 4 • APRIL 2015**

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Like all journalists, I sometimes think of moving on to something else. No, not commercial fishing. I'm not that crazy!

Financial adviser is one line of work that appeals to me. I'm not really qualified for it. But I enjoy reading about personal finance and talking with friends and family about how to handle money, or the lack thereof.

To me, financial success revolves around two words: saving and debt. Whether you catch fish for a paycheck or you serve Filet-O-Fish sandwiches, a key to peace of mind and a happier life is saving. It's hard, I know. But a nest egg for me equates to freedom. We should all learn to save.

Some people who are able to save money never do because they can't decide how to invest it. Don't worry about the investing. The saving part is more important.

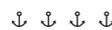
As for debt, well, the older I get the more debt averse I become. I'm hopelessly addicted to the good feeling that comes with zero debt.

So there's my financial counseling, free of charge. We've got a lot more financial information to offer in this issue, however. Turn to page 16 for a "Money matters" special section featuring three articles we're sure you'll find useful.

The first article is a conversation with an Alaska official who tells us all about the state's seafood industry loan programs. Many fishermen, unlike magazine editors, need loans to build their businesses, and Alaska might well be your best source of capital.

The second article offers tips for managing yearly fishing income. Lastly, accountant Charles Morgan offers a smart strategy for dealing with the tax man.

We hope you find something of value in our special section. And remember those two words: saving and debt.



**Attoboy for ASMI:** The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute recently made an announcement that we applaud.

"ASMI strives to better communicate with the owners of the Alaska Seafood brand: the hardworking fishermen," the announcement said. "Starting this year, ASMI will be producing an annual fleet newsletter which summarizes ASMI's marketing activities over the course of the year."

ASMI plans to call its newsletter *Wheel Watch: ASMI Report to the Fleet*. This is a good idea. I've covered ASMI since the early 1990s. My impression has been that the agency, with a limited budget, does a fine job of promoting Alaska seafood around the world. But ASMI has been less successful in consistently showing and explaining its work to the fishermen who ultimately bear much of the cost of ASMI.

Hopefully, the *Wheel Watch* newsletter will give fishermen a better look at ASMI campaigns and how they serve the industry.

*Wesley*

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# Fish Wrap

**It's FRee! It's dAILY!\***

It's the best commercial fishing news digest available in the North Pacific. Here's some of what you missed by not reading Fish Wrap.

**Halibut edges up:** The International Pacific Halibut Commission has set a 2015 catch limit of 29.2 million pounds, up 6 percent from last year. – [deckboss.blogspot.com](http://deckboss.blogspot.com)

**Opinion: UClA suit misunderstood:** The organization "does not want federal management" of the Cook Inlet salmon fishery. – [adn.com](http://adn.com)

**struggles at American seafoods:** The Seattle-based company reportedly could default on some of its debt. – [seattletimes.com](http://seattletimes.com)

**IPHC, north Pacific Council meet today in seattle:** Halibut bycatch figures prominently on the agenda for the joint meeting. – [npfmc.legistar.com](http://npfmc.legistar.com)

**Murkowski moves to block ePA:** The bipartisan legislation would permanently exempt fishing boats from incidental discharge regulation. – [murkowski.senate.gov](http://murkowski.senate.gov)

**salmon-gobbling birds to be killed:** The Army Corps plan involves shooting 11,000 double-crested cormorants nesting on East Sand Island at the mouth of the Columbia River. – [opb.org](http://opb.org)

**Bering sea halibut bycatch under fire:** North Pacific Fishery Management Council votes to study the impact of cutting the bycatch limit by as much as 50 percent. – [kucb.org](http://kucb.org)

**Alaska, Puget sound do big business:** Just under 24,000 Puget Sound jobs and \$1.3 billion in wages are tied to Alaska's seafood industry, new study finds. – [seattlechamber.com](http://seattlechamber.com)

**Oregon Gov. Kitzhaber under pressure to resign:** The four-term governor is mired in a growing ethics scandal involving his fiancée. – [seattletimes.com](http://seattletimes.com)

**Four rescued off Kodiak:** The Coast Guard said it received an EPIRB alert early Monday from the F/V Savannah Ray, which had run aground in Chiniak Bay. – [uscgnews.com](http://uscgnews.com)

**Wrecked boat laden with 25,000 pounds of cod:** Monday's grounding of the F/V Savannah Ray near Kodiak remains under investigation. – [dec.alaska.gov](http://dec.alaska.gov)

**Watching you:** NMFS focuses on monitoring and reporting technology in fisheries. – [dec.alaska.gov](http://dec.alaska.gov)

**Bristol Bay election:** Candidates contend for seats on the BBRSDA board of directors. – [bbrsda.com](http://bbrsda.com)

**Kenny down named to north Pacific Council:** Down is president of Blue North, which operates freezer longline vessels targeting Alaska cod. – [deckboss.blogspot.com](http://deckboss.blogspot.com)

**Kodiak strip club owners indicted:** The charges stem from the dumping of raw sewage into local waters, federal authorities say. – [kmxt.org](http://kmxt.org)

**On the rocks:** Efforts are under way to salvage the cod boat Savannah Ray, which went aground Feb. 16 near Kodiak. – [deckboss.blogspot.com](http://deckboss.blogspot.com)

**Is Bristol Bay buyback still in the cards?:** Drift gillnet association to survey its members again on possibly reducing the number of permits in Alaska's top salmon fishery. – [bbrsda.com](http://bbrsda.com)

**Positive outlook for California Chinook:** "The forecasts are encouraging and suggest that California fisheries may see salmon seasons in 2015 that have increased opportunities over last year," a state Department of Fish and Wildlife scientist said. – [cdfgnews.wordpress.com](http://cdfgnews.wordpress.com)

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# Bristol Bay RSDA needs renewed focus, strong voter participation

Bristol Bay fishers,

We are four former directors of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, and we're asking your help to fix an organization that has gone far off course. We're of the stalwart opinion that our current BBRSDA board of directors has lost sight of its goals, with the exception of working to preserve our salmon resource by fighting the Pebble Mine. Sadly, the RSDA is ignoring practically everything else of importance to the membership. We are writing you because we believe it is imperative that you exercise your right to vote in the upcoming election for the BBRSDA board of directors.

Maintaining a healthy resource and advocating for responsible land use in the Bristol Bay region are absolutely the BBRSDA's responsibilities, but they are not the RSDA's only responsibilities. The guiding document of the BBRSDA calls for a balanced work plan that addresses all the issues facing its members while striving to maintain and create more value in the product harvested.

**It is our opinion** that the Marketing budget and associated work plan are for all intents and purposes an extension and addition to the Sustainability work plan and budget. The Marketing group focuses on press tours that emphasize sustainability and on a movie that informs the public about the threats from the Pebble project. Is this effective advocacy for wild salmon? Unquestionably yes. But will this help market the current inventory, much less the glut expected in 2015? Absolutely not. No other projects in the Marketing plan invest significant amounts of money or staff time to accomplish the RSDA's stated marketing goals. The sockeye market has big storm clouds on the horizon with excess inventory going into the 2015 season. Additionally, the 2015 harvest is projected to be nearly 40 million fish (240 million pounds). We need a marketing plan that reflects this new reality.

Quality improvement – the one surefire way we can raise the value of the catch – has become an afterthought. No significant quality initiatives are underway, other than funding legacy projects such as ice barges.

**Every Bristol Bay drift permit holder** deserves a board that addresses key issues, operates within the bounds of stated strategic initiatives, and invests the members' money to achieve its goals in an effective and efficient manner. We should be collaborating with others to leverage these funds into a big, audacious marketing campaign that will expose more consumers to Bristol Bay sockeye. Bottom line: We need to act more like the trade association we were created to be. This is not being done.

We believe that the BBRSDA can be an effective tool representing members' interest on many levels. But we believe that this can



*The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association represents drift gillnet permit holders. They pay a 1 percent assessment on their catch to support the organization's activities. Wesley Loy photo*

only be accomplished if the organization is guided by a board that leaves personal agendas at the door, strives to create and believe in the importance of a transparent process, and above all, gauges its advocacy in the context of how it returns value to the members whose dollars fund the organization.

We urge you to go to the BBRSDA website and read the candidates' statements, ask questions, and exercise your right. Vote! Your money and your future are at stake. ↴

*Mark Buckley, founding board member, 2007-08*

*Nick Lee, founding board member, 2007-11*

*John Fairbanks, board member 2012-14*

*Matt Luck, board member, 2011-15*

# Seiners and sea lions alike await Sitka herring fishery



Action from a past Sitka herring season. Chip Treinen photo

As *Pacific Fishing* went to press, anticipation was building for the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.

This is one of Alaska's most competitive and valuable herring harvests, although prospects looked dim for a strong payoff to fishermen this season.

Close to 50 seine boats annually take part in the fishery, which last year opened on March 20 and closed 10 days later. The 2014 harvest totaled 16,976 tons on a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 16,333 tons.

This year's production likely will be much smaller, with a preliminary GHL of 8,712 tons. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game said it would announce a possibly revised quota on March 16, based on results from a winter test fishery.

In preparation for the commercial fishery, the department began aerial surveys on March 10. No herring or herring spawn was seen that day, but hundreds of predatory sea lions were beginning to congregate.

The herring are valued chiefly for their roe, or eggs, virtually all of which goes to Asian markets. ↴

– Wesley Loy

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## Debate continues on need for Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

A bill being heard in the Alaska State House says the state's Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission no longer needs to be an agency separate from the Department of Fish and Game.

Rep. Louise Stutes, a Kodiak Republican, sponsored House Bill 112 that would fold all commission duties into the department while eliminating three commissioner posts that come with six-figure salaries each.

Stutes chairs the House Special Committee on Fisheries, which was to begin holding hearings the second week in March.

In 1973, the Legislature created the CFEC under the Limited Entry Act, designed to bring order to the salmon fisheries.

To date, the commission has handled nearly 23,000 discrete applications and has limited entry to 68 fisheries including salmon, herring, crab, and sablefish.

Some lawmakers believe the commission has exhausted its use.

Further, a recently released Fish and Game report noted processing delays for permits and vessel licenses and a bloated payroll.

**Cutting state spending:** The bill comes at a time when the state faces budget shortfalls of \$3.5 billion, thanks to collapsing oil prices.

In a news release, Stutes, who was away from the Capitol on state business, noted the bill addresses the Legislature's mission to cut spending while keeping "vital state services in place."

A fiscal analysis on prospective savings that normally accompanies a bill once hearings begin was not available at press time.

Lawmakers have had the CFEC in their sights for some time.

Last April, Rep. Paul Seaton, a Homer Republican, ran the fisheries committee and requested a commission audit from the

Legislature, and that's pending.

Seaton introduced similar legislation in the waning days of last year's session.

He said he did it to indicate his concerns about CFEC while assuring people he wasn't trying to cram a new law through the system with time running out.

**Permits not going away:** "The only thing CFEC is really doing is issuing permits, because we haven't since 2002 had a new limited entry," Seaton said. "Most of the fisheries that are to be considered separate, viable fisheries in state waters have already been limited."

"It doesn't mean the Limited Entry Act is going away. Nobody is trying to get rid of permits. It's a matter of how can we administer this in a way that makes sure we generate dollars to ensure our fisheries can be properly managed."

Longtime commissioner and attorney Bruce Twomley said he doesn't believe swift, wholesale changes are warranted.

Twomley has been serving since his Halloween day appointment from Gov. Jay Hammond in 1974.

He cited the department's report, which recommends keeping all three commissioners until the commission completes all of its 28 outstanding adjudication cases on contested permits.

"It's something we've been doing with success, and this is a very specialized field," Twomley said. "There are really only a handful of lawyers in the state who are effective in addressing these issues before us."

"If there were to be a wholesale change of the structure and rules, we would be handing a cause of action to the folks the commission would likely be denying over the next year or so." ↴

## Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission to bow out of MSC program

The Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission announced Feb. 20 that it would not renew its Marine Stewardship Council certification, designating it as a well-managed and sustainable fishery. The commission voted instead to allow the certification to run its course and expire in November.

"We learned lessons that are bettering the fishery ... we put money into many research projects that helped us along the way," said ODCC Executive Director Hugh Link. But, he said, the commission has other priorities - research to look at bycatch, for example.

MSC certification is a useful marketing tool, local processors say, and in some markets - European markets, for example - it is essential. For once-troubled and overfished fisheries, such as the West Coast groundfish fishery, which achieved MSC certification last year, it has played a key role in rebuilding trust and confidence.

But, said Link, the Oregon Dungeness crab fishery was "never really broken" to begin with. Also, committing once again to the MSC's five-year recertification and a new assessment would be counterproductive when West Coast and Asian markets for Dungeness are strong, and Dungeness buyers don't require it, he said.

Prices per pound were high near the season's peak this year, reaching as much as \$9 a pound before traditional Chinese New

Year celebrations, Oregon and Washington processors said. Low landings primarily drove the price.

**Cost of certification:** Also, to continue with MSC certification would mean conforming to new and perhaps more expensive standards. It is impossible to know what those costs would be beforehand, Link said. When the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission first achieved MSC certification in 2010, the assessment took seven years. An \$80,000 grant covered some of the initial costs but quickly ran out.

"We're solely funded by fishermen," Link said. Going forward "... we need to make sure they fish sustainably ... and also that we're using our funds wisely."

The costs of going through MSC certification vary from fishery to fishery and can depend on how organized the fishery is, how much data it already has on hand, and how verifiable that information is. Fisheries work with independent certifiers to gain MSC certification, and the MSC is not privy to the financial information.

Dan Averill, a senior fisheries manager with MSC, said he has heard anecdotally that the certification process could cost a fishery anywhere from \$75,000 to upwards of \$125,000. ↴

- Katie Wilson

## Alaska seafood exports increase slightly in 2014

Alaska exported nearly \$5.2 billion in goods in 2014, marking the state's second-highest year ever for exports, the governor's office said.

Seafood is prominent in Alaska foreign trade. Seafood exports last year increased 2.1 percent to \$2.26 billion.

Two Asian countries, China and Japan, are prime destinations for Alaska products. Seafood exports tallied \$783.5 million to China, which also took \$53.9 million in fish meal. Japan took \$525.6 million in seafood.

Other significant Alaska exports include mineral ores, forest products, and liquefied natural gas from Cook Inlet. ↓

## Pacific Seafood to distribute Skuna Bay farmed salmon

Pacific Seafood Group will distribute Skuna Bay farmed salmon in Washington state, Idaho, Montana, and Utah.

"After a lengthy due diligence process, Pacific Seafood was selected as exclusive distributing partner in their area for their reputation for quality, sustainable sourcing, service, and outstanding cold chain," Skuna Bay said in a March 4 press release.

Skuna Bay farmers raise salmon off the coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

"We are very happy to be adding Skuna Bay's salmon to our strong portfolio of high-quality seafood and continue to support those who harvest and raise their fish responsibly," said Mark Bowen, vice president of purchasing for Pacific Seafood. "In Skuna Bay we are excited to be supporting farmers who have demonstrated incredibly high standards and an unparalleled attention to detail – and who spend their lives raising salmon the right way."

"Our passion is to consistently provide the great chefs of America with great salmon so their customers always have a fantastic salmon dining experience," said Dave Mergle, director for Skuna Bay. "We are excited to improve our service in the region where salmon is a part of the cultural fabric – and where we think chefs will appreciate the attention to detail we put into getting them great 10-pound salmon year round." ↓

## Vigor acquires Kvichak Marine

Vigor Industrial is taking over Kvichak Marine Industries, a well-known builder of commercial fishing vessels.

Under the terms of what was described as a merger, Kvichak will become a Vigor subsidiary, said a March 3 press release on Vigor's website.

Kvichak owners Jim Meckley, Brian Thomas, and Keith Whittemore will join Vigor as shareholders and as members of the leadership team, the release said.

Vigor operates shipyards in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.

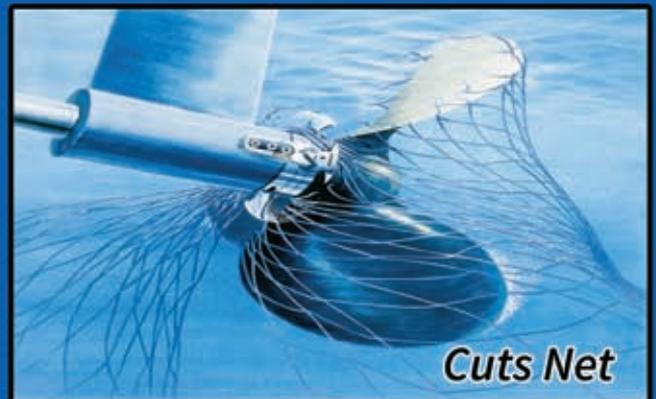
Kvichak, based in Seattle, builds aluminum workboats, and also has extensive experience building gillnetters, seiners, and tenders for the commercial fishing industry.

"My partners and I are very excited to be joining Vigor," said Whittemore, Kvichak's president. "Sharing best ideas and practices across companies will make us even more competitive and create a more stable business base for our workers."

The combined company can "lead the effort to recapitalize the North Pacific fishing fleet," the press release said. ↓

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# Columbia River salmon harvesters fight to improve catch quality

Good fall Chinook runs are predicted in the Columbia River this year, but commercial fishermen may not be prepared to handle their catches carefully.

"The incentives aren't there," said Kent Martin, a longtime fisherman and board member of Salmon for All, an organization started to fight for commercial access to the river.

Martin belongs to a fishermen's cooperative that sells to upper-scale markets in the Northwest. He's fished the Columbia since 1961.

"You don't have to convince me of the value of bleeding and icing fish."

It's what fishermen in his small co-op do, and he figures he gets roughly what the major processors get for fish - "about double the Columbia boat price."

Martin and his partners invested upfront to get a good price. When they began their little co-op, they paid \$12,000 for an ice machine. Over the years, the thing wore out, and they invested another \$14,000 recently to rebuild it.

## Positive outlook for Columbia River Chinook

Fall Chinook runs on the Columbia River should be good in 2015, similar to the near-record 2014 run and the year before it.

Columbia River brights should be above average and similar to the 2013-14 runs, according to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Tules should improve and will be slightly higher than returns over the past two years, the department said.

— Don McManman

It's what's needed to bring quality fish to the market.

**The price of quality:** While fishing for 30 years on Bristol Bay, Martin saw the same balancing act that continues on the Columbia - processors wanted carefully handled fish, but fishermen believed they weren't getting enough money for the trouble.

"I don't think processors were paying fishermen enough for quality fish," Martin said. "If they were talking 20 cents a pound (extra), then I'd still be fishing there."

The cost to install a refrigerated seawater system on board has to be reflected in the price of fish at the tender, Martin said.

On the Columbia, Martin uses a slush bag to keep fish cool. He and his fellow members of the co-op bleed fish soon after they're brought on board.

Word spread when the fishermen first started the co-op.

"We were selling out of the back of a pickup truck. People were sleeping in their cars, waiting for us to show up with the fish."

Robert Suder, a fish buyer on the Columbia, focuses on high-end restaurants and fish counters.

"Some fishermen (on the Columbia) use ice. The fishermen I buy from do," Suder said.

It's important in August and September, when river temperatures are warmer. The fish are warm coming out of the water, and fish holds sap heat from the river.

"One hundred pounds of insulation can go a long way," Suder said.

One problem is the territory. In the 145 miles of river below Bonneville Dam, there aren't many places to service fishing boats. Canneries that used to be strung along the river are gone.

"The infrastructure just isn't there," Suder said.

**Indian fishery improves:** It's a problem bedeviling the treaty Indian fishery farther up the Columbia. The fishery extends above Bonneville Dam for 140 miles, with few locations for the fishing fleet to be serviced, said Les Brown of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

The public probably best knows the Indian fleet through the over-the-bank sales along the river. It was common for the fish to be sitting in the sun, souring on a pickup bed. The only ice can be a few lonely cubes out of a bag bought at a 7-Eleven convenience store.

Those days are disappearing, said Brown.

"Ten years ago, they weren't getting much for the fish," Brown said. Indian fishermen started taking care of the fish, and the price went up, he said.

The Indian fleet has seen proof that quality pays. In the mid-1980s, Indians got about 50 cents a pound. Last year, they got roughly \$3 a pound.

"Last year, there were several million pounds of fish sold that wouldn't have been years before," said Brown.

Part of the reason for the success is fishing access spots, support locations for the Indian fleet scattered along the river, provided by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Also, ice is becoming more common. Some commercial buyers have ice available for their fishermen. The fish commission also has an ice station in East White Salmon, Washington.

Before, if Indians wanted ice, they might have had to drive to Portland or Yakima.

Part of the campaign has been educational. The tribal commission was involved in a seminar - originally designed for cannery workers - about quality handling. It attracted more than 300 fishermen on their own time.

**Ice imperative:** The fight for ice has involved non-treaty fishermen in the lower river. Fishhawk Fisheries out of Astoria asks its fishermen to use ice.

"More of the boats are getting ice on the fish," said Steve Fick of Fishhawk. All of his tenders are refrigerated as well. He said he supplies the ice and insulated totes to fishermen selling to Fishhawk.

"We try to get the fish as cold as we can as fast as we can," said Fick.

Also, he wants a quick turnover in his plant. "We try to get all the fish cut and iced in the first 24 hours," Fick said.

Demand for quality has been reflected in the river price to fishermen. Fick said a few years ago Chinook brought 20 cents a pound, but the price has gone as high as \$1.50 recently.

Most of the market for Columbia Chinook is domestic and fresh, although some customers want frozen. Quality is required.

"Everybody's heading that way. It's expected," Fick said.

But investments for quality are difficult to pencil out for a commercial fishery balanced on a political ax blade. Lower river fishermen have been banished to off-the-channel sites. But the fight still continues for river time for the lower river commercial fishermen. ⚓

# With Kitzhaber resignation, what now for Columbia gillnet fight?

When former Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned in February, he left many unanswered questions behind him. To fishing communities in both Oregon and Washington, one of the more pressing questions is what will happen to gillnet fishermen on the Columbia River now.

A 2005 "social snapshot" written by Irene Martin, a Washington-based historian who has fished commercially with her husband on the Columbia River and in Alaska, showed that most gillnet permits were held by fishermen in four lower river counties: Clatsop County in Oregon and Wahkiakum, Pacific, and Grays Harbor counties in Washington.

**History of conflict:** There has been a long tug-of-war between these fishermen, sport fishermen, environmental groups, and politicians. The two sets of fishermen have haggled over management plans for years, with sport fishermen claiming their activities have a greater economic impact on communities with lower environmental costs. Commercial fishermen argue that the true impacts of sport fishing have not been examined closely enough, while their own fishery practices ensure that only the right fish are snared in the sized mesh of the gillnets. Meanwhile, environmental groups worry about the impacts of gillnetting on salmon recovery.

In the 2000s, things came to a head. In 2008, the Portland-based Stop Gillnets Now, a coalition that included a number of sport fishing and environmental groups, championed a proposal to eliminate gillnetting altogether.

Then, in 2012, the coalition dropped its efforts to pass an outright ban and instead allied itself with a compromise proposed by Kitzhaber that prioritized selective sport fisheries on the mainstem of the Columbia River and called for a gradual phasing out of gillnets on the mainstem but that would allow such fishing practices on side channels – places like Oregon's Youngs Bay between Astoria and Warrenton.

When Measure 81 went out on the Novem-

ber 2012 ballot, voters shot it down: 1.1 million "no" votes to 567,996 "yes" votes.

**Oregon panel intervenes:** But then, to the lasting chagrin of gillnet fishermen and their advocates, the appointed Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission passed a modified version of Kitzhaber's plan anyway.

Under this plan, "alternative selective fishing gear and techniques" for commercial mainstem fisheries – gear such as purse seine and beach seine nets – would replace gillnet gear.

Washington outlawed seine gear on the Columbia River in 1935, and Oregon did likewise in 1950. Commercial and tribal fishermen are critical of the gear, saying it hurts far more fish than gillnets do.

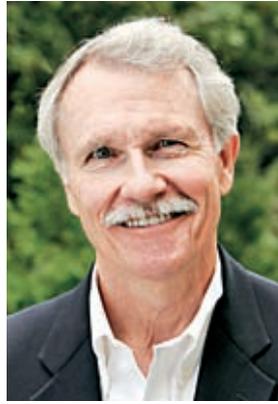
Since 2012, Washington and Oregon's fishery management agencies, which already set salmon seasons in cooperation with each other, have moved forward more or less in lockstep with Kitzhaber's plan, testing seine gear from both sides of the river.

There have been setbacks. Mortality numbers for the seine gear came back at unsustainable levels after 2013, fishery managers said. But Kitzhaber's plan called for "adaptive management," which meant that the Fish and Wildlife departments could continue to tinker.

In 2014, they decided to try another approach and formed a working commercial fishery that used seine gear. Ten fishermen were selected through a lottery system and fished with seine gear on certain days. They could sell what they caught. Numbers from the seine fishery were not available at time of publication.

Now, with Kitzhaber out of the picture, a spokeswoman from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife said the two departments plan to move ahead with adaptive management, collecting more information and moving slowly and carefully forward. ♪

– Katie Wilson



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# Q&A Alaska Commissioner Cotten talks budget, catch shares, and more

Sam Cotten is no stranger to Alaska's Capitol. He served 16 years in the Legislature, including two as House speaker.

Now he's been appointed state Department of Fish and Game commissioner, subject to legislative confirmation in April.

Named to the post by newly elected Gov. Bill Walker, Cotten succeeds Cora Campbell, who served for four years.

With Alaska facing severe budget cuts across the board - driven by collapsing oil prices - Cotten enters the job forced to make cuts while maintaining a management and research program to keep the state's fisheries vibrant.

Cotten served from 2007-13 on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and now again occupies a seat as Alaska's lead representative. Cotten's résumé also includes work for the Aleutians East Borough as a fisheries analyst.

He sat down with *Pacific Fishing* to offer his outlook on the issues he faces most immediately.

**Q: How will your time in the Capitol halls help you with this position?**

**A:** There are still people there who I served with. Not many, but there are a few: (Sen. Johnny) Ellis, (Sen. Lyman) Hoffman, and (Rep. Max) Gruenberg. A lot of staff are still there. So I'm familiar with the building. Many people understand how I looked at things as a legislator. When dealing with the administration, I knew what they needed to accomplish. When I was there (in the Legislature), I appreciated a response from the administration that was meaningful, not a brush-off. So we are trying to make sure we don't do that, and be as responsive as we can to inquiries and expressions of interest. With the budget, we understand they are faced with making reductions.

**Q: How will your department be affected?**

**A:** We are dependent upon people to do stock assessment in both fish and game areas. Those are critical management tools. If our people and our ability to do that job is diminished and we are forced to be a



more conservative manager, we might have to say we don't have the resources to determine whether there are enough fish, so fishing is closed.

That's one of our goals - to make sure we can continue to manage and do our job in spite of budget reductions. There will be a point where our ability to do our job is going to be diminished, and it's going to result in lost opportunity and lost access to people interested in fish and game resources.

**Q: What are some of your other goals as commissioner?**

**A:** We are also very interested in our relationship with the federal government. There are an awful lot of federal agencies that affect Alaska and our ability to manage fish and game resources.

Salmon, in particular, and Chinook salmon, specifically, has been a big issue in Alaska. We've had some support from the Legislature to initiate some Chinook salmon research that may or may not find more funding. At least we've got a good start on it. We will continue to identify that as a priority for research.

**Q: The Chinook research started with the previous administration. How's it coming?**

**A:** The Legislature and the previous administration had envisioned about a \$30 million overall project, and the department has gotten about half of that. We'll see if the Legislature wants to give us more. We've published a few newspapers about our progress so far. One thing we've learned that may not be news is many river systems in Alaska are having difficulties. The Yukon,

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the Kuskokwim have had low returns, so the evolving conclusion is it's probably not necessarily our river systems. It's more likely the marine environment for juvenile salmon. We don't have any answers, but a lot of fingers are pointing to marine environment.

**Q: Could ocean acidification play into that?**

**A:** Could be. The Bering Sea has got the highest concentrations of acids. It could be. We don't know. The scientists tell us it's ocean conditions.

**Q: What's being done on the Kenai River in terms of management and reliably counting king salmon?**

**A:** We're improving our ability to count fish. We have relatively new sonar equipment. We are doing a transition of the equipment (relocating the sonar site five miles upstream) so we'll have a better ability to count fish. There is an early run and a late run of Chinook salmon on the Kenai River, and we have escapement goals for both runs. The escapement goal for the early run on the low end is 5,300 fish; the projected run is 5,265 fish. So there will be no sport fishing. There will be no effort on the Kenai River on the early run. That's one thing we've always done - make sure we meet our escapement goals. After that there are a series of management measures. Allocation arrangements have already been decided by the Board of Fisheries. We'll manage to those allocation levels. We are also constantly looking for habitat improvements that we can do. But once those fish go back to the ocean, we're having difficulties.

**Q: The Cook Inlet fishing wars seem never-ending. What's your outlook on that?**

**A:** I don't think the passion people have for their interest in Cook Inlet is ever going to go away. People have been commercial fishing there for many generations. They have seen the population grow, with bigger demands for personal use fishing. And sport fishing on the Kenai is a big deal for guides and businesses. Then the folks who live up in the Mat-Su enjoy sport fishing. They have always been concerned about the impacts the commercial fleets may have on their ability to enjoy fishing. The one thing that has been changing is more people, more demands. What we can do is try to do a better job of communicating our management measures during the season, making

sure people understand why we are opening and closing. The Board of Fish met last year to put together a three-year management plan for Cook Inlet. So theoretically that will be in place until 2017. So there will be at least a three-year period of some stability of management measures the board has prescribed.

**Q: OK, switching to catch shares. What are your thoughts on this issue?**

**A:** Well, we've had some good experiences with catch shares, and we've had some

bad experiences with catch shares. With halibut, although not everybody will agree, it's close to owner-on-board, where the benefits are with the people doing the fishing.

The crab program, while there have been some measured successes, there have also been some things I and a lot of people don't like about it. For one thing, you don't have to be on the boat. (Quota holders) are able to lease their fishing rights and sit at home and collect 70 percent of the revenue just

*Continued on page 14*

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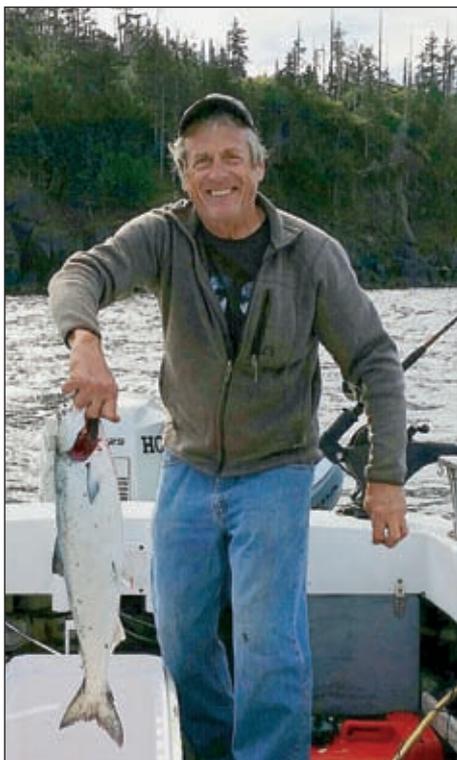


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Cotten says Cook Inlet, due to rising population and fishing demands, will always stir passions. Photo courtesy of ADF&G

because they own the paper. That's a model that I would never want to duplicate.

There are aspects of catch share programs that I think would be helpful in reducing bycatch, and that's the cooperative behavior that typically is an element of catch share programs. For example, you join with other fishermen and share responsibility in reducing bycatch. But I haven't been convinced that you have to own the fishing privileges to be able to have a successful co-op.

For the last 15 or more years, there has been an effort to rationalize the Gulf of Alaska. That means catch shares. It means individual quotas.

It means a lot of other things. It means impacts to individual communities. It means a higher bar to get over if you want to be a new entrant in a fishery. You're going to have one more expense. You're going to have to purchase quota.

Those issues have troubled me. On the other hand, we want to reduce bycatch. That's certainly a priority of this administration, especially with iconic species like Chinook salmon and halibut. We are definitely on board with reducing bycatch. I'm just not convinced we have to assign ownership of the target species to

achieve those goals.

**Q: Some folks have complained that Alaska has too much power on the North Pacific Council.**

**A:** I think it's a good thing if you're from Washington or Oregon to keep raising that issue so Alaska may not be too aggressive with the majority we have. We really haven't exercised that kind of power. If you take a look at the species harvested in federal waters in Alaska, 86 percent are harvested by people who identify themselves as other than an Alaska resident. So it isn't like Alaska has hogged all of the fish.

The distant-water fleets in Seattle feel like they've got a stake up here. It's really important to their fleets, and that's who does the harvesting. The Alaska majority tries to make sure that Alaska impacts are low, and that people who live and work in Alaska in these fishing communities that sometimes struggle with sustainability are treated fairly. I don't think anyone can say Alaska has taken over or exercised their majority to anybody's detriment.

For example, there was a vote to reduce halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea. All of the Alaska members voted yes, and the other members voted no. The Seattle fleet felt like it would be too much of a burden on the trawlers harvesting yellowfin sole. So we disagreed. That's an example where our interests didn't coincide with their interests.

**Q: Lastly, let's talk about the Marine Stewardship Council. Much of the Alaska salmon industry has withdrawn from the program. Why has the MSC become so contentious for Alaska?**

**A:** Well, MSC is a certifying entity. We've had some trouble with what they've demanded in Alaska in a few cases. One good example right now is Prince William Sound pink salmon. We have hatcheries in Prince William Sound. When fish swim back to the hatcheries some of them probably stray over to streams with wild fish in them. So if they mix up, then some people in these certifying agencies say that's going to weaken your stock and therefore we can't give you a stamp. In our opinion there is no scientific evidence that it weakens stocks.

There are some people who just don't like hatchery fish. They just think maybe the ocean can't handle that many fish. It's a gut feeling on some people's parts that we don't think is supported by science. Hatcheries are a huge success in Alaska. ↴

Steve Quinn is a journalist based in Juneau.

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# Money matters

Taxes, profits, losses, debt, retirement – words like these tend to clog our brains during the month of April. It's a natural time of year to assess our financial situation. Most commercial fishermen in the North Pacific are small businessmen. They understand fisheries, weather, and gear. The most successful operators also know finance. In this issue, *Pacific Fishing* offers a trio of articles that hopefully will boost your business acumen. First, we take a look at Alaska's loan program. Next is an article on managing yearly fishing income. Finally, accountant Charles Morgan outlines a smart tax strategy.

– Wesley Loy



## Need a loan? The state of Alaska might be your answer

Alaska has a legacy of seafood industry lending.

The state used to make its fishery loans through the Division of Investments. That division in 2010 was rolled into a new Division of Economic Development.

*Pacific Fishing* recently asked Jim Andersen, the division's loan/collection manager, to field a few questions about the state lending programs. Our conversation follows.

Learn more at [tinyurl.com/kckzd7s](http://tinyurl.com/kckzd7s).

**Q: Please summarize the loan programs the state of Alaska offers to commercial fishermen and other seafood-related operators.**

**A:** The Division of Economic Development (DED) has three loan funds that are related to the seafood/fishing industry. The Commercial Fishing Revolving Loan Fund (CFRLF) provides financing for commercial fishing operations, the Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund provides financing for permitted mariculture farms in Alaska, and the Fisheries Enhancement Loan Program provides financing for regional and non-profit salmon hatcheries.

**Q: Fundamentally, why is the state in the lending business for fisheries?**

**A:** Commercial fishing is an important industry in Alaska and plays a major part in Alaska's economy. The Alaska Legislature recognized that a strong, resident fleet benefits Alaska, so in 1972 they

created the CFRLF to provide a source of financing to fishermen who would otherwise not have a way to get started in the industry. Additionally, the program provides stability in a volatile industry that has seen some very trying times. When times are good, it's easy to forget how difficult times were 10 to 15 years ago when Alaska's salmon industry was in crisis – permit values plunged, vessels devalued, and people lost their livelihoods. The CFRLF provides reasonable support and stability that has allowed many fishermen to make it through times of crisis.

**Q: How does the state finance the fishing loans it makes? And does the state make money, lose money, or break even with its lending?**

**A:** The CFRLF was created through appropriations from the Alaska Legislature and has been self-sustaining since the initial capitalizations were made. The fund requires no annual support and has long since returned more revenue to the state than was originally invested.

**Q: Your loans are available to Alaska residents only, correct? Are there any other requirements?**

**A:** That is correct; the loans are only available to Alaska residents. The other general program requirement is that applicants cannot have any past-due child support obligations. Specific to certain loan types there are also eligibility requirements that

*Continued on page 18*

◀ Photo by John Engle

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concern fishing experience, percentage of income from fishing, and alternative sources of financing.

**Q: What can a fisherman do with a state loan? What is the most popular type of loan?**

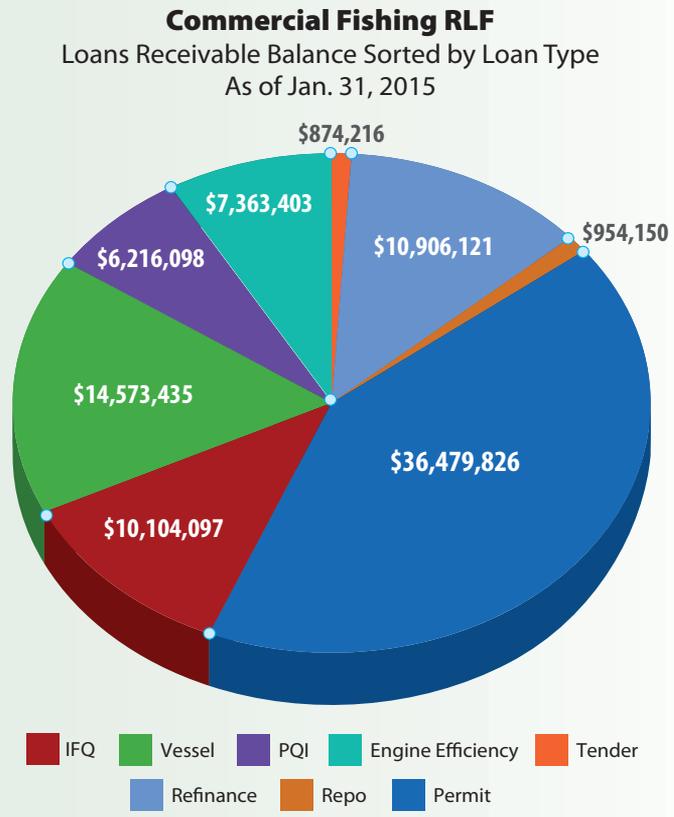
**A:** CFRLF loans can be used to purchase permits, purchase individual fishing quotas (IFQs), purchase vessels, upgrade existing vessels, pay past-due federal taxes, or refinance vessels if the original loan was for the purchase of the vessel. Loans can't be used for operating expenses, consumables, or extracting equity. The most-used loans are those for limited entry permits.

**Q: Are fishermen who take loans from the state generally unable to get loans from private banks, or is this a misconception?**

**A:** While applicants who apply for certain CFRLF loan types may also be able to receive traditional financing, one of the primary purposes of the CFRLF is to provide financing to fishermen who do not have access to private sources of financing. In order to prevent the state from competing with the private sector, many of the loan types offered under the CFRLF program require an applicant to be turned down by a bank before they can apply.

**Q: Are the state's interest rates and other terms more attractive than those from private banks?**

**A:** Because the state engages in non-standard lending and bank rates tend to vary depending on the transaction, a direct



comparison is difficult. The programs with a specific public policy purpose like the Product Quality Improvement and Engine Fuel Efficiency programs are intentionally designed to have favorable terms in order to encourage investment.

**Q: What is your current interest rate for a commercial fishing loan?**

**A:** The standard fixed interest rate is 5.25 percent. If the loan is for installing a more fuel-efficient, lower-emission engine or improving product quality, the loan would have an incentivized fixed interest rate of 4.25 percent. However, the interest rates offered under the program are tied to the commercial prime rate and adjust as the prime rate adjusts.

**Q: What is the maximum size loan a commercial fisherman can obtain, and what is the maximum loan term?**

**A:** The maximum loan amount varies by the type of loan and program. The maximum amount DED can lend to purchase a permit, IFQ, or upgrade an existing vessel is \$300,000. The maximum amount to purchase a vessel is \$100,000, but the limit to refinance a vessel is \$200,000. Loans to one fisherman under CFRLF may not exceed a total of \$400,000.

The maximum loan term for all CFRLF loans is 15 years.

**Q: A few years ago, the nation went through a terrible banking and credit crisis. We seemed to go from an era of easy money to a period when loans were hard to obtain. How did the state's lending program fare through this tumultuous period, and how would you describe today's loan environment?**

**A:** The credit crisis had little effect on the activities of the CFRLF, as the fund is solely focused on the Alaska fishing industry. Some

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of the other small business funds administered by DED saw increased activity during this time, as the state worked in conjunction with private lenders to minimize their risk by jointly financing small business ventures. Today's loan environment has improved over a couple of years ago, but it is still a challenge for some small businesses/fishermen to find financing to meet their needs.

**Q: How many commercial fishermen currently hold state loans, and how many obtain a loan on average each year?**

**A:** Currently there are 1,685 outstanding loans. The five-year average is 229 new loans per year.

**Q: How big is the Commercial Fishing Revolving Loan Fund?**

**A:** Currently, the total outstanding principal on the loans is \$87.5 million.

**Q: Please provide a breakdown of your fisheries loan portfolio in terms of loan type (vessel, permit, quota, gear, other) and asset value.**

**A:** See the pie chart accompanying this article.

**Q: What does the state require in terms of collateral?**

**A:** All loans must be fully secured and include a first priority lien. Most of the time, the collateral are boats, permits, and IFQs.

**Q: I understand that, by law, only the state and CFAB can take a limited entry permit as collateral; private lenders are not permitted to do so. True?**

**A:** True - only the state and the Alaska Commercial Fishing and Agriculture Bank (CFAB), acting as an agent of the state, can use limited entry permits as collateral, due to their unique nature.

**Q: Around 2002, when the Alaska salmon industry was mired in a depression, the state worked with many fishermen to restructure and extend their loans. Did this have any lasting impact on the state lending program?**

**A:** If anything, it made the program stronger and demonstrated its impact on maintaining a resident fleet. The state's commitment to the industry and flexibility allowed fishermen around the state to

*Continued on page 20*



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weather the storm until the market recovered. The CFRLF allowed borrowers to continue their way of life while contributing economically to their communities, and the state still recovered its investment over time.

**Q: My sense is that times are good right now in salmon and many other Alaska fisheries. Are you seeing many defaults or applications for loan extensions these days?**

**A:** Not many. As you know, commercial fishing is a volatile industry and we work with borrowers when the occasional unexpected event happens. There are always a certain number of accidents, breakdowns, and other problems that can affect anyone's season.

**Q: If the price of crude oil remains low and the state continues to face budget deficits, could this affect the lending program?**

**A:** We are not aware of any specific conversations that would put the loan program in jeopardy. However, all state programs are being evaluated for cost savings. While the program does not require General Fund support and is highly regarded across the fishing sector, it is not immune to budget reduction targets set by the governor and the Legislature. The loan program has been an extremely successful and cost-effective tool for supporting and growing Alaska's fisheries. Though the program may feel some impacts of the budget deficit, we feel the overall value of the program in supporting Alaska businesses is even more pronounced in these tight financial times.

**Q: All things considered, what's your basic advice today for any fisherman thinking of taking a loan for whatever reason?**

**A:** Managing a commercial fishing operation today is more complex than it has ever been, but some basic advice would be to know the financial part of your operation as well as you know the wind, tides, gear, and the grounds. This will help you plan for volatility and decide how a potential investment in your operation will affect your future plans and lifestyle. ⚓

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Purse seiners and other commercial vessels fill the Kodiak harbor. Wesley Loy photo

## Tips for managing yearly fishing income

*Editor's note: The following is a reprint of an Alaska Sea Grant article from 2010. While some of the information might be a bit out of date, we believe the article still offers plenty of valuable advice. Find a wealth of insight on many topics at [seagrant.uaf.edu](http://seagrant.uaf.edu).*

Whether you fish only during the summer salmon season, or you're longlining off Kodiak all year, managing your profits or losses is an annual drill necessary for long-term business success. Getting tax paperwork together is mandatory, but actual business decisions should be only partly driven by yearly tax demands.

Here are some tips to help organize your financial management to-do list before the end of the year while keeping an eye on long-term business and operation priorities.

### Meet Tax Preparer Soon

With final bills in hand, meet with a tax preparer right away to find out how much tax will be owed. A tax preparer will (1)

estimate how much money to set aside for taxes, and (2) want to know about purchases of equipment, gear, and permits to be made before the end of the year. Major investments can be expensed (written off against revenues) and reduce the tax burden, but those expenses must be incurred in the current tax year. So, if you have major work to do on a vessel or gear, consider lining up boyard time, gear hanging, or engine or refrigeration purchases before the end of the year. Also, ask your tax preparer about changes to the current tax laws.

### Strategize Long-Term Reinvestment in Your Operation

It's important to set aside money at the end of the season for eventual engine/machinery or whole boat replacement. Too often, operators taking the tax deduction for depreciation are not also setting aside the money to actually replace depreciated or worn-out assets. If an engine typically lasts 5,000 hours and replacement

*Continued on page 22*



*A seafood processing plant worker in Juneau shows off a freshly caught coho (silver) salmon. Kurt Byers photo*

costs are \$40,000, the operator may consider putting at least \$8 into an engine account for every tachometer hour. It might be even better to save \$20 for each hour to cover the entire vessel depreciation. Remember, it's not zincs and belts that require big cash outlays – it's engines, fuel tanks, etc.

### **Pay Down Your Debts**

Did lean fishing years push you to the limit on your debt? Are you current on permit and vessel payments? Explore with your lender whether making bigger rather than minimal payments will put your business in a better long-term financial position. Before deciding to pay down loans in advance, carefully consider your year-end tax liability and next season start-up cash needs.

### **Think About Refinancing Debts**

At the time of this publication, loan rates are very low for qualified borrowers. If you are paying a high interest rate on any loan, now is a good time to consider refinancing. For instance, lowering interest on an eight-year loan of \$50,000 from 9 percent to 7 percent can save \$5,000 (minus closing costs).

Reduce credit card debt wherever possible. Considering that a \$50,000 loan for eight years at 24 percent will cost \$47,000 more than a 7 percent loan, the refinanced "return" can be much better than on many other investments.

### **Retirement Savings**

Is retirement something just gray-haired skippers talk about over coffee? Remember, retirement will happen and you need to be in charge of your retirement income picture long before you tie up the boat for the last time. Always consider putting maximum annual contributions into a traditional IRA or a SEP (simplified employee pension) – some years it might make more sense than others. For those skippers with the coffee cups, remember the IRS allows for bigger contributions into qualified retirement accounts for folks age 50 and older. If you're younger, time is on your side. Investing even small amounts early on can pay off over the long haul. For example, investing \$200 monthly, earning 6 percent interest, will be worth over \$200,000 in 30 years.

*Continued on page 24*

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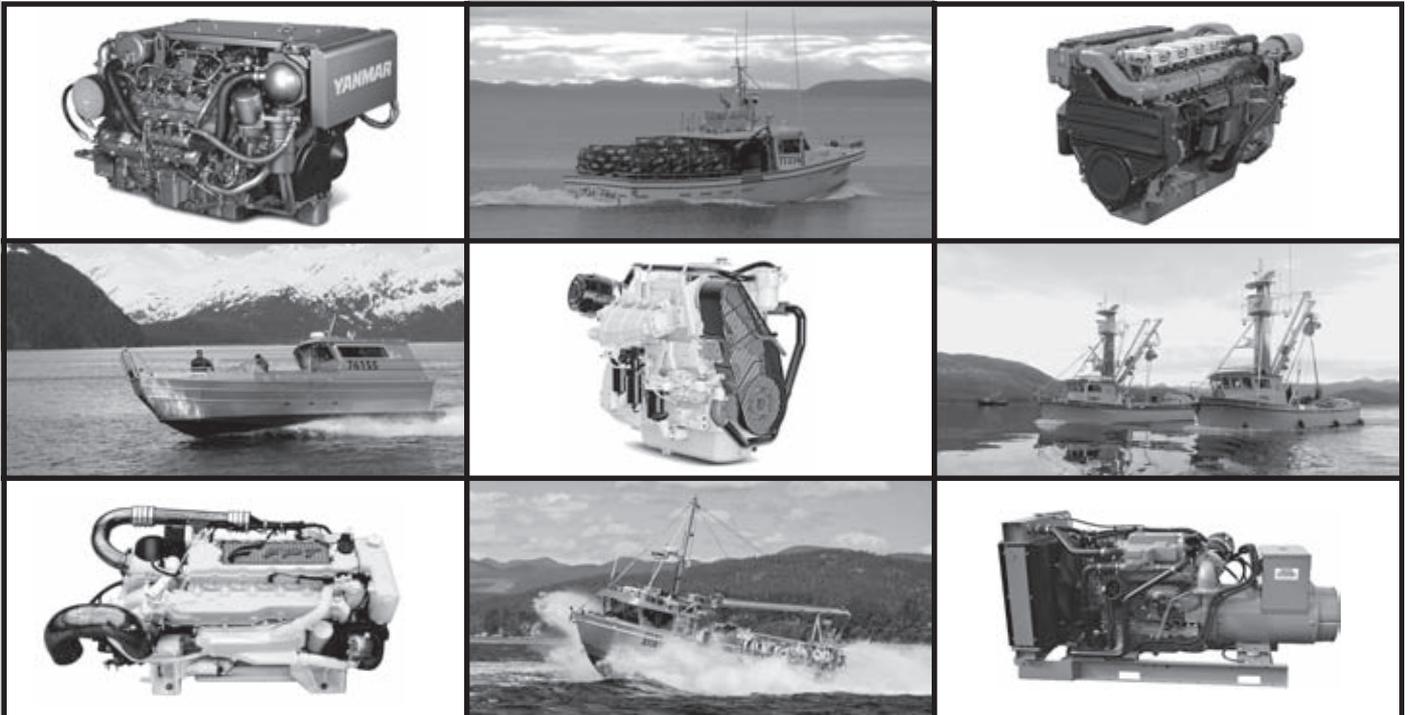
Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit participants discuss the importance of tax planning and finances with Bristol Bay fisherman and tax preparer Jerry Liboff. Kristi McGinnis photo

**Saving for Next Year's Start-up**

Over the winter, review fixed costs like insurance, moorage, and storage to see if consolidating, changing providers, or sharing services with a fishing partner can reduce expenses. Remember, insurance is an important cost of doing business, so reducing coverage to reduce premium costs is a serious consideration to be

thoroughly reviewed. If you are using a bank, processor, or family member for spring start-up money and paying interest on grubstakes, earmark earnings this year to self-finance as much of next season's start-up or maintenance costs as is reasonable.

Here are other areas to annually consider in your financial planning:



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## Buying into an Operation

If in the future you're considering buying your own fishing operation, remember that watching permit, quota, and vessel prices is only one aspect of getting into the business of fishing. Build good business habits even before applying for a loan, such as strengthening your credit scores by making debt payments on time, settling on (and sticking to) a budget, and prioritizing short-term and long-term business expenditures. Remember, lenders want at least 20 percent down as well as collateral to secure a loan. For example, if that boat and permit cost \$150,000, you need at least \$30,000.

## Succession Planning

If you are nearing retirement, remember that wise business succession planning is complex, and completely transferring your operation to new owners may take three to five years to accomplish. Make sure liens are cleared, the vessel has a strong maintenance record, and deferred maintenance is caught up. If a retirement goal is to keep the business in your local community, start working with an individual (crew, son, daughter) who wants to succeed you in running the operation.

## A Final Note

Just as important as hiring good crew, find a tax preparer or financial planner familiar with fishing business operations to help you. Ask around and get referrals from your lender, family, or fellow fishermen. The Alaska Business Development Center ([abdc.org](http://abdc.org)) is a nonprofit organization that partners with others to provide tax preparation and small business consultation for commercial fishermen throughout Alaska. Many Native corporations and Community Development Quota (CDQ) organizations also assist with fishing



Crab fishermen in Norton Sound. Deborah Mercy photo

business planning.

For online business planning tools, sample crew contracts, etc., visit the Marine Advisory Program's Fishbiz website at [marineadvisory.org/fishbiz](http://marineadvisory.org/fishbiz).

Remember, your business success is more than adding up fish tickets at the end of a season. Whether captain or crew, the season is not done until bills are settled, the boat is winterized, taxes are estimated, and business, family, and personal financial needs (including your retirement income) are evaluated. ↓



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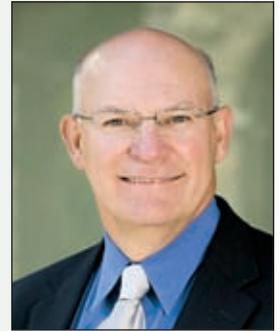
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# How ‘designing’ taxable income can benefit fishermen



Taxable income should be a designed amount, not a random number. Because the tax brackets work in a staircase fashion with increasing marginal rates, a zero tax liability is rarely a good plan. I always recommend to my clients that they maximize the 15 percent taxable income bracket. For a couple filing a joint tax return in 2015, that is taxable income of \$74,900, and for single individuals \$37,450. For higher income taxpayers, we target the breakpoint between the 25, 28, 33, and 35 percent tax brackets.

The best opportunity to design your taxable income is before year-end, when you have maximum flexibility. There are options that allow you to reach your design goals using post year-end planning. For maximum flexibility, file an extension on April 15 and make a payment based on your estimate of tax liability. With an extension you can establish, make contributions to, or withdraw funds from a capital construction fund. It also provides additional time to make deposits to a tax-deferred retirement account.

**Vessel improvements:** The tax treatment of vessel improvements is the major opportunity for post year-end planning. Fishing vessels are depreciated over a standard seven-year life using percentages assigned by the IRS. Taxpayers can reach their planned taxable income by making elections. Section 179 allows you to completely write off up to \$500,000 of equipment in the year of purchase. You may want to increase taxable income to take advantage of other tax deductions. Another election under the IRS repair regulations allows you to capitalize items that would be repair and maintenance expenses.

With a capital construction fund you can accelerate the deduction

for a major project that you are doing in 2015. You can contribute funds to your account through Oct. 15, 2015, and take a 2014 tax deduction. Then you can immediately withdraw the funds to pay for an approved project in 2015. This moves the tax deduction for that project back one year and reduces taxable income. This frees up cash that you would otherwise pay to the IRS.

**IRA and 401(k) contributions:** You can make contributions of \$5,500 to your individual retirement accounts by April 15. If you established a 401(k) plan, contributions can be made through Oct. 15. With a 401(k), you can make substantially larger contributions of up to \$52,000 for last year through a combination of elective deferrals and percentage income contributions. Higher limits apply for those over age 50.

**Income averaging:** Income averaging using Form 1040 Schedule J for commercial fishermen can lower your tax liability. When income has increased significantly, the tax is calculated using your prior three years’ base income. Income averaging based on fishing income may be used by vessel owners, crew members, partners, and S-corporation shareholders.

**Fishing deduction:** The domestic production activity deduction reduces taxes for manufacturing and extraction industries. Fishing qualifies as an extraction industry. The deduction is limited by W-2 wages paid to employees. When crew members are paid wages instead of crew shares, or S-corporation shareholders receive salaries, the vessel operator can take an additional deduction of up to 50 percent of wages. The limitations are calculated on Form 8903.

**Travel expenses:** Vessel owners and crew members should not overlook travel expenses. Your tax home is generally where your personal residence is located. All travel expenses when you are away from home for fishing purposes are deductible. These include airfares, hotels, meals en route, and incidental expenses. While at sea, you can use the federal per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses if you are charged for your share of meals. The combined per diem rate is approximately \$90 for most locations in Alaska.

If two-thirds of your gross income is from fishing, you are not required to make quarterly estimated tax payments. You can make a single estimated tax payment in January of the next year after you have designed your taxable income. ↴

*Charles Morgan is a certified public accountant with Jackson, Morgan & Hunt in Seattle. Since 1985, he has specialized in tax and accounting services for the commercial fishing and maritime industries. He assists clients with tax and business planning and IRS compliance and disputes. He also testifies as an expert witness in fisheries litigation.*

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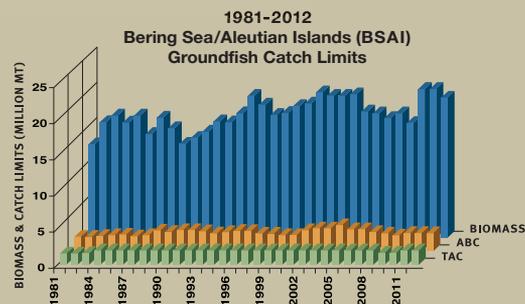


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# A prodigious yearly flood into the Gulf of Alaska



Ice like this in Glacier Bay constitutes part of the fresh water flowing from land to sea in southern Alaska. Joanna Young photo

Satellite data has confirmed that the amount of fresh water released into the Gulf of Alaska from streams and rivers in Alaska and northern Canada is about 1.5 times what the Mississippi River dumps into the Gulf of Mexico each year.

That astounding flow of water is from rainfalls that soak Southeast Alaska and the south side of the Alaska Range. The other half comes from the melting of snow and ice from glaciers.

Anthony Arendt is a glaciologist and an author on a recent paper in which researchers used different pieces of information to determine the fresh water input to the northern Pacific from Alaska and northwest Canada. He works at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and has studied data from a NASA mission that features two satellites orbiting Earth about 300 miles above our heads.

Those instruments measure gravity while racing around the planet in formation about 137 miles apart. Arendt and many other scientists have used this gravity information to calculate changes, in his case the loss of ice and snow from glaciers and massive icefields in Alaska and northern Canada. His data

confirmed work done since the 1980s based on stream gauges, weather station data, and computer models.

Some perspective on southern Alaska adding 1.5 times the Mississippi each year to the Pacific Ocean: The Mississippi River drains 31 states and two provinces. Ranked by discharge, it is the 10th largest river on the planet. The Yukon, which we tend to think of as big, is 41st.

**Feeding salmon:** So, the mountains and rainforests of southern Alaska are dumping a lot of water into the ocean. What does that mean? Fresh water helps power ocean currents that carry heat to cooler places. Glaciers gather lots of bits and pieces of life that, once transported by meltwater, feed tiny things in the ocean, which feed salmon and other creatures. Glacial rivers move the stuff of life, carbon, and redeposit it to the sea. Glacial melt increases sea level. And Alaska and northern Canada are moving water like a fire hose that grows in diameter each summer.

How does Alaska's fresh water runoff compare to other icy places? Even though its streams and rivers dump an enormous amount of water into the oceans, Alaska gains a lot of that water back in the next winter's snows. Alaska contributes about 4 percent of global sea level rise.

Greenland releases about one-third the amount of water Alaska does but is responsible for 20 percent of current sea level rise. This is because much of Greenland's water is from glacier ice that had been locked away.

**Greater water cycling:** What happens next? Alaska glaciers will probably shrink by a quarter of their current volume by century's end. Runoff will be larger at first, followed by a decrease as the glaciers shrink. But the story, as are most of this magnitude, is complicated.

"Climate change will likely create greater seasonal extremes, and warming will alter the boundary between rain and snow in the atmosphere," Arendt said. "With those kinds of changes, we expect the magnitude of the annual water cycling to increase in the future."

*Ned Rozell is a science writer for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute.*

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# New research reveals low-oxygen impacts on West Coast groundfish

When low-oxygen “dead zones” began appearing off the Oregon coast in the early 2000s, photos of the ocean floor revealed bottom-dwelling crabs that could not escape the suffocating conditions and died by the thousands.

But the question everyone asked was, “What about the fish?” recalls Oregon State University oceanographer Jack Barth.

“We didn’t really know the impacts on fish,” Barth said. “We couldn’t see them.”

Scientists from the NOAA Fisheries Northwest Fisheries Science Center and Oregon State have begun to answer that question with a new paper published in the journal *Fisheries Oceanography*. The paper finds that low-oxygen waters projected to expand with climate change create winners and losers among fish, with some adapted to handle low-oxygen conditions that drive other species away.

**Varied sensitivity:** Generally the number of fish species declines with oxygen levels as sensitive species leave the area, said Aimee Keller, a fisheries biologist at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and lead author of the new paper. But a few species such as Dover sole and greenstriped rockfish appear largely unaffected.

“One of our main questions was, ‘Are there fewer species present in an area when the oxygen drops?’ and yes, we definitely see that,” Keller said. “As it goes lower and lower you see more and more correlation between species and oxygen levels.”

Deep waters off the West Coast have long been known to be naturally low in oxygen. But the new findings show that the spread of lower oxygen conditions, which have been documented closer to shore and off Washington and California, could redistribute fish in ways that affect fishing fleets as well as the marine food chain.

**Tougher fishing:** The lower the oxygen levels, for example, the more effort fishing boats will have to invest to find enough fish. “We may see fish sensitive to oxygen levels may be pushed into habitat that’s less desirable and they may grow more slowly in those areas,” Keller said.

Researchers examined the effect of low-oxygen waters with the help of West Coast trawl surveys conducted every year by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to assess the status of groundfish stocks. They developed a sturdy, protective housing for

oxygen sensors that could be attached to the trawl nets to determine what species the nets swept up in areas of different oxygen concentrations.

The study combined the expertise of fisheries scientists such as Keller who assess fish stocks with oceanographers such as Barth who track ocean conditions to look at the relationship between the two.

“Initially, we would tell them where the low oxygen was, and they would trawl within areas ranging from low to high oxygen,” explained Barth, a professor in OSU’s College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences. “Later, oxygen sensors were deployed on all tows during the groundfish survey. They would look at the catch and

*Continued on page 58*

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Jon Adams with a deckload of halibut on the Quest, circa 1980s. Courtesy Jon Adams

## A crewmen's union comes to grips with IFQs

*Editor's note: This month we publish a second excerpt from "One Hook at a Time: A History of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific." The union, founded in 1912 and based in Seattle, represents halibut and black cod longline fishermen. To buy the book, call (206) 783-2922 or send an email to [DSFU@DSFU.org](mailto:DSFU@DSFU.org).*

### Chapter Seven

#### FROM "TURN AND BURN" TO IFQs

*You'd only fish maybe nine days a season. You didn't have much of a chance of making a living, and it was a crappy product. It was just killing the fishery.*

– Bruce Wick, DSFU member

The 1980s were a chaotic, even paradoxical decade for DSFU members. Large-scale changes were in store for all fishermen; some were good for the union and some were not. On the one hand, the

number of halibut fishing days decreased markedly due to a major influx of new, mostly nonunion vessels in the open-access longline fishery. Although the Alaskan halibut biomass was increasing, with the glut of floating platforms fishing halibut, the derby- or "Olympic"- style halibut openings grew shorter and shorter. On the other hand, black cod quotas and dockside prices were on the rise, opening up a whole new and increasingly lucrative fishery as American vessels employed new gear, technologies, and efficiencies to the harvest.

Union-crewed vessels were ideally positioned to capitalize on these new opportunities out on the edge of the continental shelf in the North Pacific. The vessels had a long history of fishing day after day, trip after trip, good weather and bad on the open ocean. The crews had the ability to "turn and burn" and hand bait the extra thousands of hooks a day required to longline for black cod. But the massive influx of new vessels in both the halibut and black

## ONE HOOK AT A TIME

A History of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific



Jeff Kahrs



Exhausted crewmen Grover Hedrick (left) and Karl Hedrick of the Coolidge catch a brief moment of sleep on deck. Marsha Hoem

Continued on page 32

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## Individual Fishing Quotas

FVOA boats with experienced DSFU crews consistently placed among those with the largest hauls during the halibut derbies. The *Seymour*, skippered by John Rosvik, for example, was the top boat in the entire Alaskan halibut fishery in 1984. Union boats were also the top boats in the increasingly lucrative black cod fishery. As black cod became more valuable, however, more boats entered the fishery, quintupling the fleet during the 1980s. This massive influx of boats, coupled with new technologies and increased efficiencies, began driving the fishing time for black cod down, just as had happened with halibut.

Something had to be done. During the mid 1980s, both the DSFU and the FVOA opposed the idea of instituting Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs), though for different reasons. Vessel owners

expected to help shape an IFQ agreement, while the union felt that IFQs threatened the Set-line Agreement under which they had worked with the FVOA for the union's entire history. But it was increasingly clear that major change was needed. Limited entry had been vetoed, but by some estimates, of the approximately 4,000 boats fishing halibut, nearly 3,400 would have to be retired to reach an optimum fleet size.

It became critical for the DSFU to find someone to dedicate more time advocating for them with decision-making bodies such as the IPHC and the NPFMC. "We couldn't have a president for only six months," said Bruce Wick. "Things were going on while we were fishing."

The union didn't have to look far to find a full-time executive director. During the 1988 season, John Bruce was seriously injured while unloading fish after a trip. He resigned as vice-president of the union and in January 1989, he was chosen to lead the DSFU as its executive director. Bruce was a towering man well over six feet tall. He was massive, with forearms the size of most men's thighs. He had a commanding presence and a booming voice that he used to ensure that the DSFU positions were heard.

According to Bob Alverson, the FVOA director, IFQs became a more viable option in 1988 after an administrative change at the NPFMC. Appointed to the council that year, Alverson was approached by council member and National Marine Fisheries Service Alaska regional director Steve Pennoyer, who asked him why he didn't support IFQs. Alverson expressed concern about the ability of the people working the boats - either captains or crew - to control the ownership of the proposed quota share. "We can do that," Pennoyer said.

With that change, the FVOA decided to support IFQs. Momentum shifted as many in the industry understood IFQs as a feasible method of catch sharing. Each boat could receive a percentage of the catch, with their initial allocation of quota share determined by the amount of fish the boat had caught during their best five of the six qualifying years between 1984 and 1990.

### IFQs Prove Their Worth in Canada

The DSFU's support of IFQs - if crewmen could have a stake in the quotas - grew with evidence of the solution's success. Canada instituted an IFQ system in 1990 and by 1992 the halibut season in British Columbia had increased from 20 days to eight months. More importantly, despite the occasional snafu, the resulting creation of a fresh halibut market meant B.C. fishermen received from \$.50 to \$3 more per pound than they would have selling to the frozen-fish market. As a result, those fishermen had more than doubled



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DSFU crew of the Evening Star, left to right: Koll Bruce (3rd generation), Eric Berggren, Brian Thomas (4th generation), Nils Lee (3rd generation), and Andy Iversen, skipper (4th generation). Denise Bruce



DSFU crew of the Vigorous, left to right: Gary Bogen, skipper (3rd generation), Rod Knutsen (3rd generation), Joe Falk (3rd generation), Marty Hulse, and Brian Journey. Courtesy Jim Bergquist

their yearly gross incomes. The Canadians expected to dominate the fresh market for some time, since Bruce Turris of the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans then estimated it would take the Yanks from three to seven years to establish an IFQ system – if they agreed to do it at all.

... John Bruce, executive director, and Bruce Jackson, union president, attended meetings, traveled to Washington, D.C., formed coalitions, and took part in negotiations, all in an effort to get crewmen into the initial allocation of quota share at the start of the program. Several DSFU members traveled at their own expense to testify at many council meetings and in Washington, D.C. In the end, however, they could not change the NPFMC's decision to base initial allocation of the quota share solely on a vessel owner's historical catch between the qualifying years. The argument that carried the day was that vessel owners were the ones who made financial investments and took financial risks, while crewmen had only put in their labor.

#### A Bittersweet Solution

Set-line Agreement conflicts aside, the DSFU and the FVOA had been allies on every major fishery issue since 1932. And crewmen *did* have long-standing rights to poundage. In the days of dory fishing, poundage was recorded according to *who* caught the fish. To be denied a portion of the initial allocation at this important juncture was frustrating. "All the history, all the hard work, and all the hours on deck the guys had put in – not only making money for themselves, but making 26.5 percent of the gross for the vessel owner," said Jackson. "Yet the whole asset value was going to go to the owners."

Despite this setback, Union crewmen had only two choices: support IFQs or object and risk destroying the economic viability of the fishery, as well as ruin their long-standing relationship with vessel owners. In a published letter to the editor of the *Seattle Times*, Union member Peter Soileau wrote: "The traditional method of dividing proceeds from fishing is a well-defined share system. The vessel gets a certain share, the skipper gets a certain share and the crew gets a certain share. This traditional method of dividing shares of fishing profits clearly indicates who the de facto 'owners' of the fishery are, if there are to be owners. If the Fishery

Management Council is going to do something as radical as privatize this national asset (our fishery) they should give it to the fishermen." Tragically, this well-spoken fisherman, Peter Soileau, later died at sea along with his brothers, Daniel and David.

But many DSFU members ended up leaning toward accepting IFQs and working on inequities through the process, not because it was fair, but because they didn't have any other viable option.

*Continued on page 34*



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DSFU crew of the Kristiana, left to right: Michael Dye (2nd generation), Carl "Tookie" Wright, and Jeff Peterson (3rd generation). Sara Chapman



DSFU crew of the Republic, left to right: Ryder Torgeson (3rd generation), Joe Schultz (2nd generation), Ed Johnson, and Brian Dougan (2nd generation). Sara Chapman

As DSFU president Jan Standaert said, "I don't know how many of us were that far away from quitting fishing because we couldn't make a living at it." There was also the foreboding sense that IFQs were going to go forward regardless, and that the union could go forward with it or they could be left in the dust. As Lundsten put it at one point, "You are f\*\*\*\*d if you do and f\*\*\*\*d if you don't."

After several months of heated discussions, it became apparent to many that the best path would likely involve supporting IFQs. The leadership decided to support IFQs if they could get a commitment from the FVOA for at least an eight-year contract and a commitment from vessel owners not to charge initially allocated quota share rent fees. Ultimately, those terms were accepted, and when the vote was cast, DSFU members supported IFQs by a two-to-one margin. The DSFU came to understand through the IFQ-shaping process that although they may not have gotten exactly what they wanted, one thing was for sure – they definitely didn't want the status quo. That much was very clear.

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Approved by the NPFMC, the IFQ legislation made its way to Congress. IFQs were signed into law in January 1993, though the quota system wouldn't start until 1995. Some bitterness about the process remains, especially among those who were displaced by the transition to IFQs. But when it came time to cast the vote, most union members felt that eight years of something was better than watching the entire fishery wither to nothing before their eyes. They voted for sustainability, while knowing that many members would lose their jobs.

Without a doubt, the IFQ program was a step toward long-term viability. For crew who survived the transition without losing their jobs, IFQs brought in a period of stability and prosperity. From their perspective, the two-thirds majority vote was a commitment to the future, though it wouldn't guarantee the future.

## Chapter Eight

### DOWN TO THE DECK

*No union fisherman that has fished derbies and fished IFQs would ever go back to fishing derbies.*

- Tim "T-bone" Henkel, former DSFU president

After the passage of IFQ legislation, establishing the quota system for halibut and black cod in the United States took three years. Naturally, halibut fishermen worried about how well the change would work. The results during the first season of implementation, 1995, proved promising for those who still had a job in the fishery. Prosperity also seemed guaranteed. The Union had negotiated an eight-year Set-line Agreement that would remain in effect until 2001. In the meantime, however, union crewmen faced a serious problem with fleet consolidation and lost jobs.

#### The Effects of IFQs

... "IFQs divided the union," said operations manager Sara Chapman. "Some members embraced it and others became disgruntled and bitter. Sadly, the union shrank. There were simply fewer fishermen needed for what became a consolidated fleet."

For DSFU members who kept their jobs, however, circumstances improved dramatically. IFQs allowed skippers to choose when they would stay home and when they would go to sea. This meant a quality of life and family time that was previously unavailable. At sea, crew gained another luxury: sleep. Hauling 75 to 100 skates of gear a day still meant 18- or 19-hour days on deck for the crew, but the more relaxed pace allowed for regular sleep at night.

The longer, slower-paced seasons allowed fishermen to provide fresh fish to the market from March through November. Before IFQs, fresh halibut was only available during the narrow window following the derby-style opening, sometimes only a matter of days. No longer in a frantic race for fish, crew could afford more time to take better care of their catch. They cleaned and iced them better and delivered them throughout much of the year to buyers and brokers who found premium restaurant markets for fresh halibut and black cod. The advent of onboard satellite phones enabled the crew to shop around for the best offer. "At \$5 per pound we treated our fish better than our kids," quipped Brian Harber.

Homer, Alaska, offered a new service for boats looking to quickly reach the fresh markets of Vancouver, B.C., and Seattle. The city constructed its own unloading dock complete with cranes and an ice plant. This allowed independent buyers into the buying pool, keeping prices competitive, and from Homer it was only a

52-hour trip by truck to market.

In 1993, the average value of halibut delivered dockside (ex vessel) in Alaska was \$1.23 per pound. By 1995 this price had risen to almost \$2.00 per pound and would stay there until 2003, when the price jumped to \$2.84. That price increase coincided with significant increases in the quantity of halibut being caught. In 1995 the quota for halibut was just over 44 million pounds, a figure that remained relatively constant for three years before rising to 60.9 million pounds. In 1999, U.S. fishermen caught 74 million pounds. Halibut had not been caught in such numbers since the heyday of the 1950s. The catch remained near or over 70 million pounds a year through 2003. Since vessel owners had received sizable quota among boats with long-standing union crew, the DSFU was

*Continued on page 58*



# It Pays to Invest in RSW

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# Oh, the irony

*Ken Jones is the owner of a brand-new seine boat. Photos courtesy of Ken Jones*

## Young skipper of F/V Serenity expects anything but as newly built boat goes to work

**A**t 23 years of age, Cordova resident Ken Jones has already reached a fishing career milestone – the construction of a new purse seiner.

The F/V Serenity is awaiting its maiden salmon season, after a year in construction at the Washington-based Little Hoquiam Shipyard.

Jones is a science fiction fan and chose his vessel's name because it's also the name of a spaceship in the movie "Serenity" and the TV series "Firefly."

"It's an ironic name because nothing was ever serene on that spaceship," he said. "I like irony, and nothing is ever serene with commercial fishing."

The name also refers to the antiquated term for the ocean as "the deep serene." Jones said the irony angle is tempered by "the hope

that you'll have clear skies and calm seas."

But there's nothing ironic about how Jones combined his lifetime fishing experience with some savvy financing maneuvers to buy a series of boats, culminating with his fourth, the Serenity.

**In the family:** Jones is a third-generation fisherman who got his start as a kid working on the back deck of his father's seine boat.

"I've been fishing ever since I can remember," he said.

By the time he was 11 years old, he was operating a skiff. He was getting paid, too, with his earnings channeled into what his parents believed was a college account.

But at the age of 16, he decided that he didn't want to go to college.

"My dad was on board with that, but it took some convincing for my mom," Jones said.



Fishermen are always looking for good signs. So it surely was a good sign that a rainbow appeared over the F/V Serenity just a few hours after its successful launch.



Crewman Stephan Olsen in the main hold of the new seiner.

There was enough money in the account to buy a permit and what Jones described as a “well-used” 42-foot boat, the F/V Sam-An-I.

“The engine was tired, the generator was tired, and the RSW (refrigerated seawater) system didn’t work,” Jones said. “But I got it into fishable shape.”

The boat was launched when he was a junior in high school. Jones’ first seining season with it didn’t last long.

“The motor blew halfway through the season,” he said, and the following winter and spring were spent rebuilding it and replacing the vessel’s hydraulics.

The work was done in time for the 2009 Prince William Sound seining season.

Fishing was poor and started a month late, in August, but Jones said he “scratched up enough to pay for the upgrades.”

The 2010 season was much better and in the midst of it, Jones decided to diversify into gillnetting. He put a down payment on a gillnet boat, the F/V Silver Mist, through a boat broker and bought a permit just before the price of one shot up by \$40,000.

“It was a risky move but it turned out well,” Jones said.

*Continued on page 38*

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The F/V Serenity cruises at 9 knots when unloaded and fueled up.

**Versatility pays:** Jones eyed the future and decided he needed to build credit, so he refinanced the permit he'd bought the month before and applied for his first credit card when he was 19 years old.

With money he'd earned seining, he then upgraded from the Silver Mist, investing in a 2-year-old gillnet boat, the F/V Second Wind. Paying down the loan for the permit further built up his credit.

In 2011, Jones and his crew worked the gillnet and seine salmon fisheries in Prince William Sound, and though those seasons were merely average, the diversification paid off.

"I fished hard and paid down debt," he said.

Just prior to the 2012 seasons, he started pursuing the knowledge he needed to make his next move.

"I went to the Young Fishermen's Summit, met people there, and started thinking about getting a new boat," he said. "I talked to builders and banks about how to do it."

The 2012 gillnet season was robust and the seining was "decent with good prices," said Jones. He sold his first gillnet boat, paid down more debt, and put money in savings as well.

Then came the clincher - 2013 was a "bang-up year" for salmon fishing, with huge returns and good prices.

"It put me in a good position to buy a new boat," Jones said.

**Building new:** With a "sizable" down payment and a loan from Northwest Farm Credit Services, financed against some of his assets, Jones began the process of having a new boat built.

He originally envisioned building a 56-foot seiner, but the controversial Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 set rigorous construction and materials standards for boats 50 feet and over.

Building a boat even a foot longer than 50 feet would add \$200,000 to \$300,000 to its cost, Jones said. The new boat falls short of the 50-foot mark by an inch and is 18 feet 3 inches wide.

It has a fiberglass hull, an "older-style" cabin house, and aluminum rigging. The decks and cabin are made of high-density foam core with glass overlay.

For a main, Jones chose a 575-horsepower John Deere. Fuel efficiency was a primary consideration, as Jones said John Deere engines are very fuel-efficient

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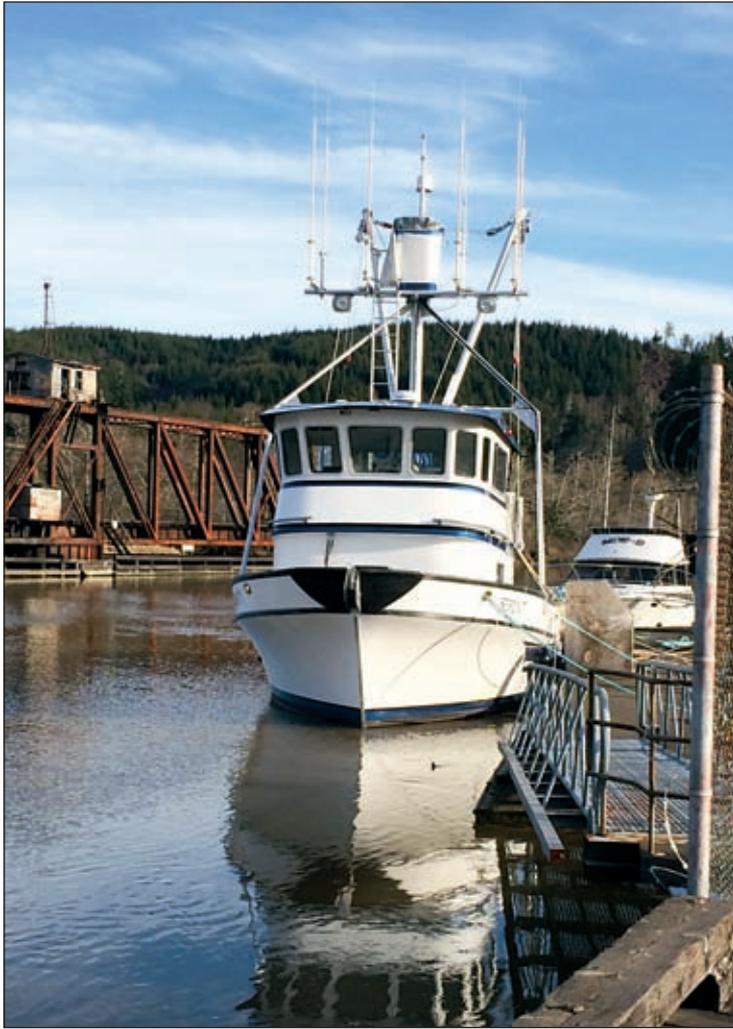
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*The F/V Serenity will start work this summer catching and tendering salmon in Prince William Sound.*

## F/V Serenity at a glance

**Owner:** Ken Jones

**Vessel type:** Seiner, fish tender

**Length and beam:** 49 feet 11 inches by 18 feet 3 inches

**Hull type:** Fiberglass

**Engine:** 575-horsepower John Deere

**Year built:** 2014

**Builder:** Little Hoquiam Shipyard

**Homeport:** Cordova

members and shift to seining for pinks and possibly coho and chum salmon for the rest of the season.

Jones uses the same three deckhands for all the operations, which he said “allows them to put in more than one season and increases their chances of having a good year as much as it does mine.”

He noted that the last three seasons have seen fisheries management being done in close collaboration with fishermen. The teamwork approach has successfully balanced protection of fisheries with allowing harvest opportunities, Jones said.

“Our local seining management has been a breath of fresh air the last three seasons,” he said.

As for the future, Jones envisions building on what he’s doing now.

“One of my major goals was to build a new vessel, so now that it’s built, I guess the goal is to pay it off,” he said. “I plan on acquiring fishing rights where and when they’re available and to really hone in on the fisheries I’m working in, to become competitive and to produce more.” ↴

when idling, which is done for long periods when purse seining.

Cruise speed is 9 knots when unloaded and filled to the full 1,500-gallon fuel capacity.

The boat’s refrigeration system has a 30-ton capacity, and Jones estimates hold capacity to be between 80,000 to 90,000 pounds.

“We won’t know the exact number until we fill it,” he said.

Some more money will be coming in prior to the start of salmon fishing, as Jones is in the process of selling his first seiner, the Sam-An-I.

**Getting to work:** In May and June, the Serenity will begin the salmon season in Prince William Sound by tendering gillnet-caught salmon for Inlet Fish Producers Inc.

Jones’ hired skipper and two crew members will handle the tendering, while Jones and one crew member will gillnet for sockeye, Chinook, and chum salmon. In late June, Jones will take the helm of the Serenity with his three crew



*The F/V Serenity is the fourth boat for Ken Jones, 23, of Cordova.*

## Is the Rogue vest the perfect PFD?

This year, of all years, safety has been the topic of conversation in fishing industry media. You've probably seen Angus Iversen, in his "Live to Be Salty" campaign, sponsored by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, staring paternally at fishermen with a coil of line in his hand, reminding us that nobody swims home from the Bering Sea. The message here is meant to be silly: Fishermen (and I speak for myself) typically are the last bunch in the maritime demographic to don personal flotation devices on deck. The advertisements need to make us chuckle at Angus' nonsensical demeanor and message so that we actually stop and consider what he's trying to tell us. Well, Angus is right. We really

loop for attaching a safety light. One single zipper up the front-middle makes it fast to your torso, and it otherwise contains no other bells or whistles.

**Highly wearable:** The vest hugs you close in a super-snug fit. Kent points out that the Rogue is designed to be worn as "clothing" and not as a "life jacket." One Sitka-based troller recently said, "The jackets were worn constantly except for sleeping (and worn then on two very rough and questionable anchorages!) when we were on the boat. We never left the dock without having them on, and they were never removed during the workday which, as you know, can be 14-16 hours during the peak bites." Additionally, the Rogue serves a double purpose: "In rough seas, I get thrown from one side of the trolling pit to the other, usually with a gaff, hook, or fish (or all three) in my hands, and the cushioning effect of the jacket helped minimize the usual damage I get on rough days!"

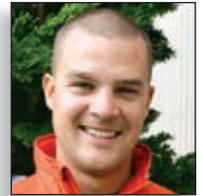
As I talk to fishermen about the vest, I get asked frequently if it is possible to wear the vest either on top of or underneath raingear. Luckily, because of the snug fit and low profile, a fisherman can integrate it anywhere in his or her back-deck wardrobe - over a T-shirt or sweatshirt, under bibs and jacket, or in any configuration you could imagine. Bottom line: You'll forget that you're wearing it until you head for the bunk. And even in that case, taking it off would likely be viewed as an unnecessary chore.

**Risky business:** You know who you are. You almost went in the drink standing on the rail stacking seine gear. Or, you were out on the heaving, exposed bow of a Bristol Bay gillnetter picking the anchor in heavy weather during the night. It could also be that you are a skipper looking for an extremely convenient and non-obstructive way to add a simple layer of protection for those you cherish on the back deck. I firmly believe the Rogue vest is the answer to these concerns - it is finally the PFD that fishermen will pay attention to, wear, and never have to think about while it does its job.

The vest is under \$80 and therefore a tremendous value.

Give the Rogue a shot longlining this spring or chasing salmon this summer. From what I can tell, this particular PFD is poised to change the way fishermen think about wearing flotation while working.

*Lange Solberg works in commercial sales at LFS Marine Supplies in Bellingham and is a third-generation Bristol Bay skipper. He has also seined in Southeast Alaska and gillnetted in Puget Sound.*



*The snug-fitting Rogue vest is completely unobtrusive for fishing or even sleeping. Charlie Bond photo*

should put on PFDs while working on deck. And while most of you may have reached this point in my column and decided to flip to the next page because the PFD discussion is *so* last November, consider this: Kent Safety Products has a hell of a vest on the market that doesn't tangle with gear, isn't in the way, and looks like a bulletproof vest. Do I have your attention now?

Last fall, Kent introduced the Rogue vest to the marketplace and began making deliveries around the time of the Pacific Marine Expo. All fishermen who tried the vest on at the show were ecstatic, and that is not an exaggeration. No pockets. No straps. No Velcro. No metal (besides its zipper). What does this translate to? No snagged meshes. No chance to get clotheslined by a PFD-seeking line on deck. No smashed ribs by a CO2 cartridge. And no chance that you'll even know it's on your person while stacking gear, baiting hooks, or picking fish (or even sleeping in the bunk, for that matter).

While the vest is not U.S. Coast Guard-approved, that won't affect us much when considering the overall purchase and addition to our gear quiver. With 12 pounds of buoyancy and jet-black in color, it is made of durable, breathable neoprene, with SOLAS tape on the shoulders for reflectivity at night. There is a non-metallic



# 'One firm handshake' lifts my spirits at Fish Expo



The month leading up to November's Fish Expo was the worst of my life. As a direct result of poor life choices, and being dumped, I suffered from a bout of depression and a total loss of any and all control over my feelings and mental stability. I was confused – mostly pissed off – especially after being admitted to the hospital in Ketchikan. They said it was exhaustion. I must've retained some of my self-dignity when I said, "No shit. I kind of felt exhausted." During my brief stay there, I was finally able to consume and retain food for the first time in over 2½ weeks. I also was able to sleep! Obviously, it was time to get my shit together. Just another bump in the road of life and yet another stepping stone on my journey to the top.

I was fairly certain that Amy Majors was still somewhere deep down inside. But with less than a week until the Fish Expo, I needed to know for certain whether she was going to make an appearance and join the rest of the world. There was no choice. I had to force feed and sleep. If I wasn't able to lift my head off the pillow, let alone get out of bed, then how in the hell would I be able to put on a brave face and act like the badass girl that I am?!

**Getting going:** Good friends and close family helped me through everything. Brian and Sandi even welcomed me into their home and literally kicked me in the ass to get on the plane the morning of Nov. 17.

"You can do this, and you are going to do this! Quit feeling sorry for yourself," was Brian's reaction to how I physically and emotionally drained myself nearly to the point of no return. So I took his advice. Little did I know that the next few days would change my life.

We landed in Seattle a couple of hours later, and we were at Gardner Boat Repair shortly thereafter. With a pale skin tone, and barely standing, I hopped onto the boat for my first real meal in nearly a month. It was so relaxing being surrounded by people who loved and supported me that I was able to muster enough energy to grab my dog and go for a 9-mile run later that day! Tough Girl was back!!! Untouchable, and stronger than ever!

Showing up for work at the *Pacific Fishing* magazine booth the next day was intimidating, but I'd be lying to say I didn't enjoy all the attention. Let's be honest here. Who wouldn't?

**A life-changing encounter:** It happened toward closing that day. At first, I was entirely convinced that the situation could very well be a figment of my imagination, but it wasn't. After meeting hundreds of people and signing even more autographs, all of a sudden the captain of the Wizard on the "Deadliest Catch" came over to the booth to discuss commercial fishing. Then he handed me his business card and challenged me. Oh, how this girl loves a challenge! It was something along the lines of: If you were really a "Tough Girl," you'd go out opie fishing with us on the Bering Sea in the dead of winter.

It took me all of 30 seconds to agree to do it. @#\$\$%^ it. Why not?! With nothing to lose, it would open so many doors for bigger and brighter things, which could help further my career in the long run as a seine boat owner and captain in Southeast Alaska. With one firm handshake, I had agreed to do the job.

**Dining with celebrities:** After being invited to the Metropolitan Grill with several other famous fishermen, it became apparent what was occurring – the limelight. Scared shitless, I asked myself if I was actually capable of being a crab fisherman on the Bering Sea. I thought about it almost every hour of every day thereafter. I never go back on a handshake, though. It was a done deal. I could worry about it as much as I deemed necessary, but there was no going back. I was committed. I'd never been so frightened, yet excited, during the same exact moments. It was something that even a few pinches and self-slaps

I'd never been so frightened, yet excited, during the same exact moments. It was something that even a few pinches and self-slaps couldn't wake me up from feeling. I realized that I should embrace the moment rather than fear it. I was one lucky girl!

couldn't wake me up from feeling. I realized that I should embrace the moment rather than fear it. I was one lucky girl! Everything in life happens for a reason – that's what I was told while at the Met in Seattle with a bunch of celebrities, gorging

on the most amazing cheesecake I've ever eaten.

This story has a lot more to it. Unfortunately, it will have to wait until June when it airs on TV. The time of my life is now, and I'm running with the opportunity as quickly as I can. The sky is the limit. God bless. See you all in June.

*Amy Majors writes monthly for Pacific Fishing.*

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# Talking herring aboard a B.C. scientific survey vessel



**A windy week of observing:** There was very little going on for me in the fishing industry at the end of January. So when I had a chance to sail on a scientific survey vessel, I jumped on it.

Michel Jutras was my skipper for five months of marine mammal observing in 2013. He was just coming off a food herring trip as a crewman on the seiner Denman Isle. We were to take a 60-foot former seiner, the Ocean Royal, up to Prince Rupert for a week of observing.

When I went down to join the boat on the morning of Jan. 22, I found that our engineer for the trip was Doug Mantta, former skipper of the seiner Ocean Virtue #1. I've known Doug for years, but this was the first time we had a chance to sail together.

With both Michel and Doug being longtime skippers on the coast, we talked a lot about the upcoming herring season.

With gillnetters being offered somewhere between \$100 and \$300 a ton for herring this year, which even at the top end of the scale isn't half of what they earned last year, we were hearing a lot of guys just weren't going.

It was looking like seiners were unlikely to do better. We heard of one boat that was told they could have a 500-ton quota to fish for \$150 a ton to be shared by the crew and boat.

We made our way up the coast from Vancouver to Prince Rupert, arriving on Jan. 25, a Sunday. We picked up our crew of marine mammal scientists and observers and sailed for the waters of Chatham Sound, not very far west of Prince Rupert. There was some windy weather, so it was a week of observing when possible and seeking refuge when we couldn't. We even got a chance to go

ashore and dig up a feed of clams, which was nice.

Whales were pretty scarce, but on Jan. 28 we had to abandon doing transects due to weather and sought refuge in between the Kinahan Islands, south of Prince Rupert at the mouth of the Skeena River. On the way in to anchor, we spotted 12 humpback whales, at least 40 sea lions, and goodness knows how many eagles and sea gulls. There was a huge school of herring in the area.

Kevin Smith, skipping the seiner Snow Cloud in a food herring fishery, went to that spot later in the week to catch his fish.

Due to wind, we had to extend the trip a day into Saturday, Jan. 31. Then we dropped the crew off, cleaned up the boat, and flew home.

We flew up to Prince Rupert for another survey Feb. 10-14, and again on Feb. 22 for a week. Then we could think about going out on the March roe herring fishery.



**Tide chart turnabout:** For those who still haven't wrapped their heads around using metric numbers, despite the fact that Canada has been using metric measurement since the 1970s, the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS) is offering to reverse a decision to print tide tables in metric units only starting this year.

The CHS has notified mariners that if the agency receives letters from a substantial number of people asking for the reinstatement of the imperial measure, they could well have the foot and inch column in next year's publication.

If this interests you, contact CHS tidal officer Ilona Monahan at [ilona.monahan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:ilona.monahan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).



**North coast salmon outlook:** Forecasts for 2015 salmon returns to B.C.'s north coast are looking pretty good, according to preliminary numbers released by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) communications adviser Michelle Imbeau.

In 2015, the total return to Canada for Skeena River sockeye (assuming average Alaska exploitation) is likely to fall within a wide range, between 1.7 million and 7.3 million fish.

The total return estimate for Nass River sockeye is likely to fall within a range between 588,000 and 900,000 fish.

With relatively strong pink salmon brood returns to north coast mainland systems, especially in Area 6 (south of Prince Rupert), DFO is anticipating harvesting opportunities in 2015. There are, however, no expected return calculations for pinks.

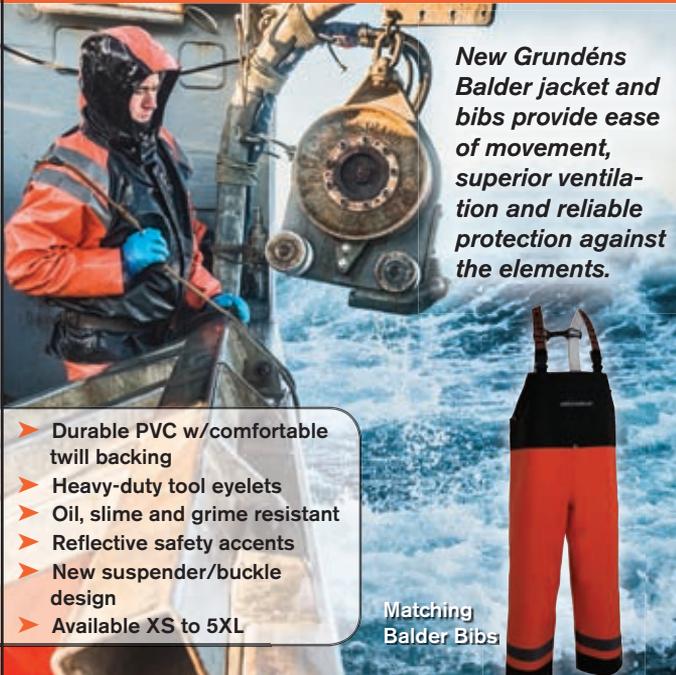
In Haida Gwaii, pinks are an even year stock. Therefore, no harvest opportunities are anticipated in this area.

"As in all years, careful management of fisheries will be required in 2015 to protect a number of salmon stock groups of concern," Imbeau wrote *Pacific Fishing* in an email. "Fishing opportunities will be determined based on in-season assessments of actual returns. Due to uncertainty of both the timing and size of returning salmon runs, many commercial openings are not confirmed until a few days prior to the actual opening."

Forecasts for south coast salmon, including the Fraser River, were unavailable.

*Michel Drouin has been covering the British Columbia fishing industry since 1990.*

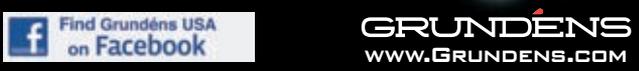
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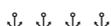
# Strong return of fall Chinook to Columbia River expected

**Salmon prediction:** Columbia River communities are gearing up for what will likely be another busy salmon season. Fishery managers are predicting the third-largest return of fall Chinook salmon to the river since 1938.

The year 2013 still holds the overall record at 1.2 million returning adult Chinook; 2014 was close behind at 1.1 million. This year, predictions published Feb. 13 are calling for 900,200 adult fall Chinook to the Columbia River.

Earlier this year, the National Marine Fisheries Service said 2015 could be a "relatively" poor year for juvenile salmon survival, and managers involved in the "North of Falcon" salmon season-setting process said salmon returns could drop in coming years.

North of Falcon refers to Cape Falcon in northern Oregon, which marks the southern border of active management for Washington salmon stocks.



**Boatyard closure:** The Port of Astoria, citing pressure from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, was planning to close the boatyard it operates off Pier 3.

The closure was to come as soon as April 1.

The DEQ has identified stormwater pollution in the area, most recently high hits of copper. Port Executive Director Jim Knight said work in the boatyard and the lack of a good catch system to collect heavy metals like copper are to blame.

With mounting pressure from DEQ to design a new stormwater system and reduce pollution issues, the port decided the boatyard needs to go. Rumors had been circling in the community for weeks.

Port staff say the boatyard was not designed well, and closing it means the port could have a chance to start over again. Some community members believe the closure is mostly motivated by business interests, however.

In recent years, cargo and log-handling companies have eyed Pier 3, pushing for further development there and full run of the pier. Currently, Astoria Forest Products is using a portion of the pier for log export operations.



**LNG update:** A liquefied natural gas terminal and pipeline first proposed more than a decade ago for a site near Astoria, Oregon, is still chugging away and under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

But the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the state attorney general's office, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are worried about what kind of impacts the Oregon LNG project could have on the environment, especially on salmon habitat. They also question the economic need for the proposed terminal.

A permit application for the project is currently in front of the Corps, while FERC is tasked with completing an environmental impact statement for the project and issuing the final siting permit for the terminal, the LNG storage facilities, and the pipeline. It will need the go-ahead from various other government agencies before it can issue this permit - permission that might be difficult to get given the Oregon agencies' concerns about the ability of Oregon LNG to meet Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act guidelines.

A number of Clatsop County residents and environmental groups have long opposed the project. The company has

countered their arguments, saying its \$6 million project will bring \$50 million in new annual tax revenue to the county, thousands of construction jobs, and at least 125 permanent local jobs.



**Marina rate hike:** In February, the Daily Astorian reported city commissioners in Warrenton, Oregon, approved a rate hike for the Warrenton and Hammond marinas that will raise the price per foot by \$1 annually, from 2016 to 2020. Currently, the yearly rate per foot for commercial boats is \$33.

City Manager Kurt Fritsch told the newspaper it was the cost of doing business out there. Commercial fishermen have complained about the size of the parking lot at the Warrenton marina, saying that finding parking is often difficult for them as well as for federal fishery observers.

"What would be a polite term to use? The parking is some of the worst ever for a commercial boat basin," one fisherman told the city commissioners.

The city plans to improve the parking lot and upgrade the docks, which are in poor condition.

*Katie Wilson is a reporter for the Chinook Observer in Long Beach, Washington.*



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# California envisions improved ocean salmon season



**2015 looking good:** California’s upcoming ocean salmon season is expected to be better than last year’s due to an increased allowance for Sacramento River winter-run Chinook and improved ocean abundance.

The first glimpse of what can be expected in 2015 was presented at a meeting held by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in late February. Dave Bitts, a Eureka-based fisherman who is president of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations and a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Salmon Advisory Subpanel, attended the meeting and said this season will see “considerably relaxed constraints” on harvest of winter-run Chinook.

Fishery managers use a rolling three-year average to determine the take level, and Bitts said that a weak year dropped out of the calculation. As a result, a 19 percent incidental take of Sacramento River winter-run Chinook will be allowed versus last year’s 14 percent.

The PFMC’s first preseason report was released a day after the meeting, and its ocean abundance forecasts are promising.

For the Sacramento fall run, 652,000 fish are expected to be in the ocean this year, up from last year’s 634,700. Klamath River fall run abundance is estimated at 423,800, a jump from last year’s 299,300 fish.

Last year, the Klamath Management Zone from the California/Oregon border to Horse Mountain saw a season limited to Sept. 12-30, with a 4,000-fish quota.

The 2014 season also was interrupted by two-week closures

south of Point Arena in July and south of Pidgeon Point in July and August. But more fishing time is expected to be in the offing for 2015.

“There should be better opportunities than last year, especially below Point Arena,” Bitts said. “If the salmon are there, both sport and commercial fishermen will have better opportunities to catch them.”

But the years following 2015 are of concern because they’ll reflect the effects of a troubling trend.



**Sacramento River die-off:** The effects of drought were severe during the summer of 2014, and now the startling impacts have been revealed.

Based on counts of juvenile salmon, California Fish and Wildlife recently announced that 95 percent of upper Sacramento River winter-run Chinook eggs and fry perished last summer and fall due to drying river and stream beds or high water temperatures.

The winter run is listed as endangered, so it’s feared that a die-off of that scale could completely shut down the state’s 2017 commercial season. But it’s not likely to, for the same reason that drought impacts may be offset in 2016 – releases of hatchery fish.

Just prior to a three-day storm event beginning Feb. 6, managers at the Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery at the base of the Shasta Dam released 600,000 hatchery fish – three times the normal release – into the waterway leading to the Sacramento River.

Collection of adult broodstock was accelerated when the die-off was discovered, and the three-day storm event provided perfect conditions for the hatchery fish to make their way downriver.

“Hatchery fish come to the rescue” trumpeted one news headline. But it’s a less than ideal rescue, as hatchery influence is believed to undermine wild stocks and is one reason why fall and late fall Chinook are listed as species of concern.

Nevertheless, it’s easy to argue that adequate returns of hatchery fish are better than little or no returns.



**Saving the run:** John McManus, executive director of the Golden Gate Salmon Association, said that the hasty collection of adult broodstock, done without genetic testing, was an act of desperation but one that’s likely made another winter run possible in 2017, when hatchlings return as 3-year-olds.

“We salute them for being proactive,” he said of state and federal fisheries managers. “This could be the only thing that saves our bacon in 2017.”

The Sacramento River’s fall Chinook run also had episodes of hatchery assistance in 2014, as hatchery fish were given truck rides downriver. McManus said his group’s advocacy succeeded in establishing criteria for truck transport, and in 2014, all of the Central Basin’s hatcheries used the method to allow fish to bypass the dry patches that wild fish encountered.

McManus said that because of the trucking, “I’ll be surprised if we don’t see a good return on it in 2016 – and the return will be mostly hatchery fish.”

*Daniel Mintz has reported on Humboldt County’s government and natural resources industries for more than a decade.*

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# Salmon permit values trend down; halibut quotas scarce



**Permit market update:** Last year was one of the busiest ever for Alaska brokers who help fishermen buy, sell, and trade fishing permits and quota shares.

"I was really happy to see such a good mix of permits we were selling - it wasn't just one thing," said Olivia Olsen, of Alaskan Quota & Permits in Petersburg. "We had a lot of Dungeness crab permits, charter halibut permits, salmon and shrimp permits, sea cucumbers, and then whatever IFQs (individual fishing quotas) we could find."

Salmon permit sales peak from March through May.

Early indicators point to lower salmon prices this year. A strong dollar against the yen and euro makes it more expensive for key foreign customers to buy Alaska salmon. At the same time, record numbers of cheaper, farmed salmon continue to flood into the United States from Norway and Chile.

Combined, these factors are putting downward pressure on permit prices - notably in Alaska's bellwether sockeye fishery at Bristol Bay.

Drift permits last fall were fetching a record \$175,000; now they've dipped to \$164,000.

"Permit prices have softened in the bay and actually kind of across the board for any salmon permits," said Doug Bowen, with Alaska Boats & Permits in Homer.

Bowen noted concern about fish prices this year.

"A lot of sockeye is left in the market from the big run in the bay last year, plus from the Fraser River," he said. "And another big sockeye run is forecast for Bristol Bay this summer. So there are some negative price rumors out there about the ex-vessel price in the bay dipping below a dollar a pound."

Even if a permit buyer is interested, both brokers said it could be tough going for anyone trying to break into the fishery.

"Some of these guys buying in are having quite a bit of difficulty just lining up a market and finding anyone who will take them on, because the processors at Bristol Bay are bracing for another big year and not really looking to expand their fleets," Bowen said.

Elsewhere, Prince William Sound seine permits have dropped below \$200,000 for the first time in several years. Cook Inlet driftnet permits are at \$65,000, down from \$90,000 two years ago. Kodiak seine permit interest is flat at around \$50,000.

Still, both brokers said the mood on the Alaska waterfront is very upbeat.

"I could feel it in the fall with how busy we were," Olsen said. "People are looking forward to a good year."

Bowen added: "People are building new boats. That is definitely the biggest vote of confidence that you can make."



**Tight quota market:** Right after the yearly halibut catch limits are announced each January, brokers usually are busy with buying, selling, and transferring catch shares. But it's been slow going so far this year, even with slight harvest increases in nearly all Alaska fishing areas for the first time in nearly a decade.

The buyers are there - it's the sellers who are scarce.

"There are less quota shares available," Olsen said. "We've had some good sales in Southeast (Area 2C), and we're seeing very strong interest for halibut quota pretty much across the board. But shares for both halibut and sablefish are practically nonexistent in the Central Gulf."

Blocks of halibut shares in Southeast are selling at \$50 per pound, Olsen said. Recent sales in the Central Gulf reached a high of \$45 per pound.

"These are record high prices, and of course the folks that are

buying must believe that the resource is recovering," Bowen said. "I have my doubts with the very modest catch increases we've seen just this year, but there certainly is a feeling out there that maybe things have bottomed out and will improve from here on. We see that in the prices that people are willing to pay for halibut quota. It's amazing."

Olsen said the biggest sellers in Southeast include charter halibut permits.

The cost for charter halibut permits is based on the number of anglers aboard the boat. The prices last year ranged from \$20,000 to \$29,000 for parties of four to six, the most common numbers of clients, Olsen said.

Her company also brokers GAF, or guided angler fish - halibut poundage that charter operators can lease from commercial quota holders, which last year started out at \$7 a pound.

Both brokers said interest also is picking up for sablefish quota shares, which are fetching \$15 to \$30 a pound in prime fishing areas.

The commercial halibut and sablefish seasons were to open March 14.

Dock Street Brokers in Seattle deals in Bering Sea crab quotas, which also have more interested buyers than sellers. Listings included 1,750 pounds of red king crab offered at \$52 a pound; 5,000 pounds of snow crab at \$16 per pound; and several offers of Tanner crab at \$13 to \$16 per pound.

*Laine Welch writes the Fish Factor newspaper column and produces Alaska Fish Radio out of Kodiak.*



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# 'Average' sockeye run forecast for Upper Cook Inlet

**Cook Inlet sockeye forecast:** Upper Cook Inlet is one of Alaska's top producers of sockeye salmon. And this year could yield a decent catch if the forecast proves accurate.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game projects a run of 5.8 million sockeye, with a harvest by all user groups of 3.7 million.

"The forecasted harvest in 2015 is equal to the 20-year average harvest," the department said.

User groups include commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, and dipnetters. Commercial gillnetters take the bulk of the fish.

The Kenai and Kasilof rivers are the two main salmon systems in Upper Cook Inlet. The forecast calls for a run of nearly 3.6 million sockeye for the Kenai and about 1.1 million for the Kasilof.

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**Bristol Bay buyback:** Mild efforts continue toward a potential buyback of drift gillnet permits in the Bristol Bay sockeye fishery.

The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association in March planned to conduct a postcard survey of its members to gauge interest in conducting a socioeconomic impact study. Such a study would provide valuable information to the fleet as it weighs the pros and cons of proceeding further toward a buyback, the BBRSDA said.

This is the second time the organization has surveyed its membership on the buyback idea.

Bristol Bay is the state's most valuable salmon fishery, attracting hundreds of driftnet boats each summer. Many have long felt that the bay is overcapitalized and that removing some permits could improve the fishery's long-term prospects.

But getting to a buyback likely would involve years of planning – and possibly arguments.

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**Juneau watch:** A number of bills of interest to the commercial fishing industry are under consideration in the Alaska Legislature.

Rep. Dan Ortiz, of Ketchikan, offered House Bill 134, titled "An act relating to the length of vessels used in a salmon seine fishery." The bill seems to be a bid to clarify in Alaska statutes that 58 feet is the maximum allowable length overall for a salmon seiner.

HB 134 would appear to take away the authority of the Board of Fisheries to provide by regulation for the use of longer vessels.

Rep. Bryce Edgmon, of Dillingham, introduced House Bill 128, which would establish Aug. 10 of each year as Alaska Wild Salmon Day.

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**Prince William Sound shrimp:** The Prince William Sound shrimp pot fishery was set to open April 15 with a quota of 67,000 pounds.

That's comparable to last year's quota of 66,600 pounds. The 2014 fishery closed on Aug. 14 when the quota was reached.

Shrimpers use pot gear to target predominantly spot shrimp, also known as spot prawns. Some coonstripe shrimp also are taken.

Spot shrimp are the largest variety of shrimp in the North Pacific. They take their name from the white, paired spots located just behind the head and just in front of the tail.

This will be the sixth season for the Prince William Sound shrimp pot fishery following an 18-year closure, from 1992 to 2009.

Last year saw 33 permit holders on 32 vessels take part in the fishery.

The fishery rotates on an annual basis between three areas within the sound. This year the fishery returns to Area 3 in the southwest.

The commercial fishery was last prosecuted in Area 3 in 2012, closing with only 42 percent of the quota harvested due to low catch rates, the Department of Fish and Game said.

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**American Seafoods case:** In our December issue, we reported that American Seafoods Co. had agreed to pay a \$1.75 million civil penalty to settle enforcement cases related to flow scale inaccuracies aboard three of the company's Bering Sea factory trawlers.

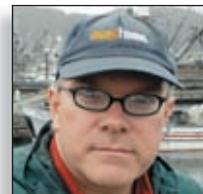
Curiously, federal regulators failed to release the written settlement agreement at the time the pact was announced.

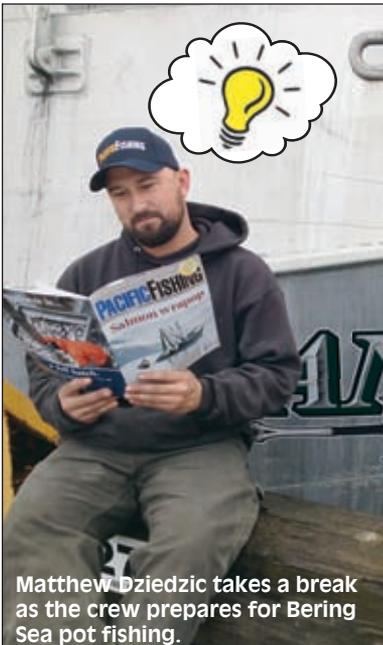
*Pacific Fishing* has since obtained the agreement through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The two-page document contains a couple of interesting tidbits. First, it says American Seafoods "admits the facts constituting the violation."

The agreement also set a March 31 deadline for American Seafoods to pay the \$1.75 million civil penalty in full.

Wesley Loy is editor of *Pacific Fishing* magazine and producer of *D eckboss*, a blog on Alaska commercial fisheries.





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Matthew Dziedzic takes a break as the crew prepares for Bering Sea pot fishing.

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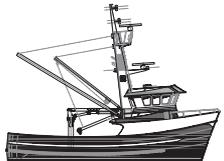
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**p2050m** – 54 X 16.2 COMBO, GMC 8V71 MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, 30KW ISUZU, JUMES CRAB BLOCK ON ARTICULATING DA VIT, COILER, BAIT CHOPPER, SPRAY BRINE RSW. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR 7, WITH 5 BERTHS IN FOCSLE AND 2 BERTH STATEROOM, HEAD W/SHOWER, ELECTRIC GALLEY, COMNAV PILOT, JRC SOUNDER, 4 GPS, 36 AND 72 MILE RADARS, VHF'S, SSB, SAT PHONE. REDUCED TO \$229K.



**p2126m** – 58' DEL TA COMBO BUILT IN 1982, TOTALLY GONE THRU IN 2008, 3408 CAT MAIN, 40KW JOHN DEERE, 30 TON RSW, PACKS 60 TON, PILKINGTON DECK WINCH, MARCO BLOCK, TWIN PICKING BOOMS, COMPLETE ELECTRONICS INCLUDE GPS PLOTTER, 48 MILE RADAR, AUTO PILOT, VIDEO SOUNDER, SONAR AND RADIOS. TURN KEY FISHING NOW, READY FOR NEXT SEASON. REDUCED TO \$925K. TRY OFFERS.



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**p2143m** – 1983 ROBERTS, CAT MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, BOW THRUSTER, PROP CLEAN OUT. NEW LISTING. CHECK ONLINE FOR MORE INFO AND SURVEY. ASKING \$80K, BAY PERMIT AVAILABLE.



**p2144m** – 58 X 22 STEEL COMBO, 6125 JOHN DEERE MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, 4045 JOHN DEERE AUX DRIVE 65KW AND 35/25 VICKERS PUMP, 30KW ISUZU. NEW 25 TON TEKNOTHERM TITANIUM CHILLER. NEW EXHAUST ON ALL ENGINES. PACKS 120K IN 2 HOLDS. COMES WITH BS LLP AND COD POTS, SEINE AND SKIFF. SOLID, SEAWORTHY PLATFORM. ASKING \$1,050,000.



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**CO15-003** 38'x13.8'x4' fiberglass crabber/troller, built 1992. Twin 255 hp Cummins 6CTA8-3. 5 kw genset. Packs 6,000# in 6 holds. Crab block, longline hauler, and 3 spool Simplex gurdies. GPS, VHF, radar, (2) sounders, ComNav pilot. Large open deck. Aluminum bulwarks and boom. Includes 400 pot CA crab permit, OR and CA salmon troll licenses, & appr 300 pots. Asking \$380,000.



**TN15-002** 52'x15.4'x8.9' Skookum sailboat troller built 1979. GM 4-71 main. 6 kw Northern Lights. 30,000# capacity, 10 ton blast freezer. 3 spool Hasbra gurdies and (2) tuna pullers. (2) radars, (3) VHF, SSB, XM weather, (2) sounders, ComNav autopilot, and solar panels. Includes CA & OR salmon permits. Clean boat. Asking \$300,000.



**CR15-007** 48'x15.5'x7.5' combination crab/shrimp/sternpicker built in 1989 by Growler Boat Works. Twin Detroit 453 mains. Yamaha 2.5 kw gas generator, Honda 1 kw gas generator. 12,000 lbs capacity. Kolstrand hydraulic block. Asking \$115,000.

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**2015 IFQ Listings**

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**BB15-004** 32'x13' KG Marine bilt in 1985. 300hp GM6V92 w/ top end overhaul & new injectors in 2012. New hydraulic hoses, galley stove, and seat cushions in 2013. New washdown pump & rebuilt roller in 2015. Sounder, radar, (3) VHF, and cell. Turnkey, clean, and ready to fish. Asking \$168,000.

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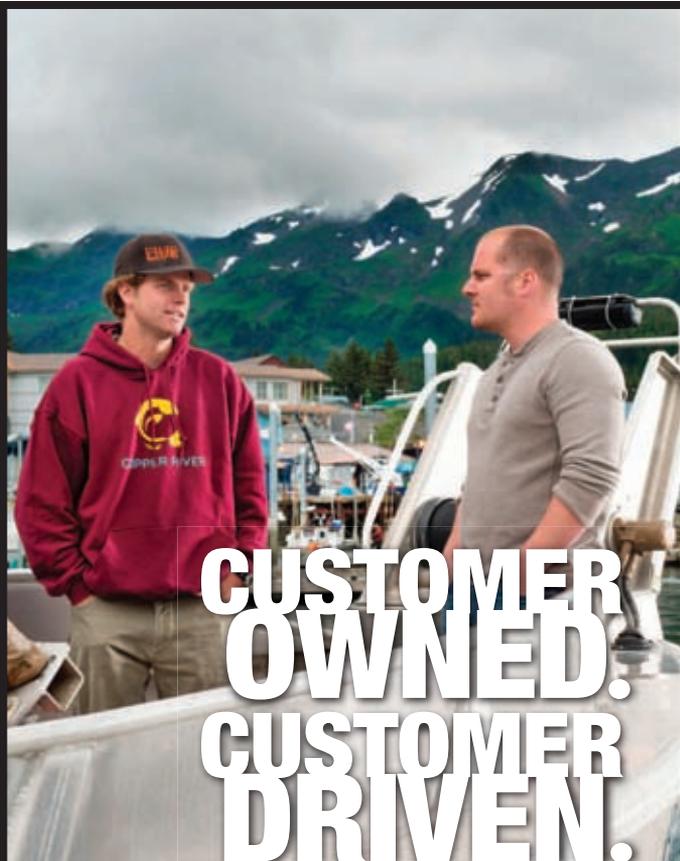
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**Alaska Entry Permit Prices**

(as of 4-1-15)

Species	Fishery	Asking Price*	Offer*	State Value*
<b>SALMON</b>				
S	SE DRIFT	95	95+	88.2+
S	PWS DRIFT	235+	225	231-
S	COOK INLET DRIFT	70+	65+	61.3-
S	AREA M DRIFT	145	140	119.5+
S	BRISTOL BAY DRIFT	168-	164-	166.1+
S	SE SEINE	290-	275+	307.5
S	PWS SEINE	195-	195-	199+
S	COOK INLET SEINE	75-	70-	86
S	KODIAK SEINE	43	42	47.1-
S	CHIGNIK SEINE	230-	200	211.3
S	AREA M SEINE	60	50	65.9
S	YAKUTAT SET	16	12	18.6
S	COOK INLET SET	16	13+	14.9
S	AREA M SET NET	50	40	55.6
S	BRISTOL SET NET	50+	45	40.8+
S	LOWER YUKON	10	9	8.6
S	POWER TROLL	40-	38	39.7-
S	HAND TROLL	12+	11	10.8+
<b>HERRING</b>				
H	SE GILLNET	12	10	13.4
H	KODIAK GILLNET	5	5	5
H	SITKA SEINE	250-	200-	419
H	PWS SEINE	27	20	30.9
H	COOK INLET SEINE	16	15	16.8
H	KODIAK SEINE	35	30	30.3
H	SE POUND SOUTH	37	30	35.8
H	SE POUND NORTH	38	25	43.1
H	PWS POUND	6	5	3.5
<b>SHELLFISH</b>				
S	SE DUNGY 75 POT	18	17	14.4+
S	SE DUNGY 150 POT	34	32	27.5
S	SE DUNGY 225 POT	48	40	35.5
S	SE DUNGY 300 POT	65	50	43.8
S	SE POT SHRIMP	25	20	22.4
S	KODIAK TANNER <60	24	22	29.7
S	PUGET SOUND DUNGY	130-	130	N/A
S	WASHINGTON DUNGY	1,250-3,500/FT	1,000-3,000/FT	N/A
S	OREGON DUNGY	1,500-3,500/FT	1,250-3,000/FT	N/A
S	CALIFORNIA DUNGY	200-600/POT	200-500/POT	N/A
<b>SE ALASKA DIVE</b>				
SE AK Dive	URCHIN	4	3	2.4
SE AK Dive	CUCUMBER	25	22	28.5
SE AK Dive	GEODUCK	70	60	86.6

Prices in APRIL vary in accordance with market condition s.\* in thousands  
 + denotes an increase from last month. N/A denotes No Activity.  
 - denotes a decrease from last month.

By Mike Painter and the Permit Master

**Gillnet:** Bay permits slid further, down to the upper \$160s by early March. SE permits were holding right around \$95k over the past month. PWS permits remained slow with permit available in the \$230s. Cook Inlet permit prices were holding between \$65k and \$70k. No new activity in Area M permits with permits starting at \$145k.

**Seine:** A few SE permits started to move in February with sales in the upper \$200s. Activity in PWS permits was still up a little, but prices had slipped back below \$200k. Trading in Cook Inlet slowed and permits were available as low as \$75k. Not much new in Kodiak permits, with permits starting in the low \$40s. Area M permits are still available, starting at \$60k.

**Troll:** SE Power Troll permits slipped slightly to \$40k. Hand Troll permits were holding at \$12k. Washington troll permits were available in the high \$20s. Prices of Oregon permits took a jump to \$20k or more and were flying out the door. California permits slowed and were available starting around \$15k.

## Halibut & Sablefish IFQ Prices

Recent market activity in halibut and sablefish quota shares

Species	Regulatory Area	Vessel Category*	Poundage (thousands)	Status (blocked/unblocked)	Ask (per pound) Low High	Offer (per pound) Low High
H	2C	D	1-10	B	42.00-48.00	42.00-46.00
H	2C	C/B	1-3	B	43.00-46.00	43.00-46.00
H	2C	C/B	4-10	B	46.00-50.00	45.00-48.00
H	2C	C/B	ANY	U	48.00-50.00	47.00-48.00
H	2C	A		B/U	50.00	48.00
H	3A	D		B/U	40.00-46.00	37.00-42.00
H	3A	C/B	1-5	B	40.00-44.00	40.00-44.00
H	3A	C/B	5-10	B	44.00-46.00	40.00-44.00
H	3A	C/B	>10	U	48.00-50.00	40.00-45.00
H	3A	A		B/U	40.00	38.00
H	3B	D		B	16.00-20.00	12.00-15.00
H	3B	C/B	1-10	B	18.00-24.00	16.00-18.00
H	3B	C/B	>10	U	20.00-26.00	18.00-20.00
H	3B	A		B/U	N/A	20.00
H	4A	D		B/U	14.00-16.00	12.00-14.00
H	4A	C/B	1-10	B	16.00-18.00	16.00-18.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	B	16.00-18.00	16.00-18.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	U	18.00-20.00	18.00-20.00
H	4B/C/D	C/B	1-10	B	9.00-16.00	8.00-12.00
H	4B/C/D	C/B	>10	B/U	16.00-20.00	10.00-14.00
S	SE	C/B	1-10	B	22.00-25.00	21.00-23.00
S	SE	C/B	>10	U	26.00-30.00	25.00-26.00
S	SE	A		B/U	32.00	30.00
S	WY	C/B	1-10	B	20.00-28.00	18.00-20.00
S	WY	C/B	>10	U	28.00-34.00	25.00-28.00
S	WY	A		B/U	35.00	33.00
S	CG	C/B	1-10	B	15.00-22.00	13.00-15.00
S	CG	C/B	>10	U	22.00-30.00	14.00-18.00
S	CG	A		B/U	30.00	25.00
S	WG	C/B	1-10	B	10.00-13.00	7.00-9.00
S	WG	C/B	>10	B	13.00-16.00	10.00-12.00
S	WG	C/B/A	>10	U	13.50-20.00	12.00-13.00
S	AI	C/B/A		B/U	0.75-6.00	0.75-4.50
S	BS	C/B		B/U	1.50-6.00	2.00-5.50
S	BS	A		B/U	7.00-8.00	6.00

\*Vessel Categories: A = freezer boats B = over 60' C = 35'-60' D = < 35'

NOTE: Halibut prices reflect net weight, sablefish round weight. Pricing for leased shares is expressed as a percentage of gross proceeds. \*\* Too few to characterize.

By Mike Painter and the Permit Master



What little 3A is on the market is going for never before seen prices. Blocks in the mid \$40s and unblocked pushing \$50! Still no 2C available at any price. 3B and 4A are all gone for the time being. A few pieces of 4B moved recently at relatively low prices, near \$10. If you're a seller, name your price. If you're a buyer, step up and be ready to jump.

Sablefish market is unchanged so far, going into March. Buyers continue to look for SE, mainly unblocked. With none available it is putting upward pressure on the price. Prices are holding fairly steady in WY and CG, but little interest so far. Some new WG listings are coming down in price, but it's too early to tell if there is going to be interest.

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 Have multiple squid light permits priced to sell quickly. \$250,000 dollars or make offer. Call Donny (949) 279-9369.

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**fo R SALE**  
 31' sea way design lobster or trap boat. Cummins diesel, low hours. Also has swordfish plank. All electronics, 12" hydroslave and 2 v berths. Call Donny. (949) 279-9369.

**WANTED**  
 California near-shore permit needed. Right away! Buyer has cash. Please call Don. (949) 279-9369.

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 California spiny lobster permit. Transferable. \$120,000 to sell quickly. (805) 686-1917.



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 Commercial squid light boat with permit. Priced below market value. \$469,000. Call Donny (949) 279-9369.



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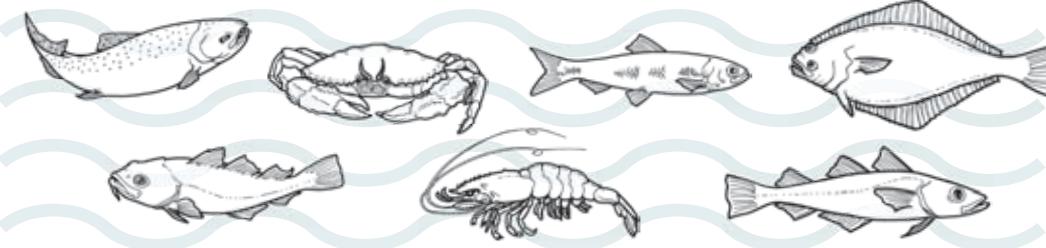
**fo R SALE**  
 1974 54' heavily built aluminum seiner. 73,000 in RSW. 3406B cat, 26 inch gripper, super heavy duty rigging, fast and very fuel efficient. Lease purchase possible with \$100,000 do wn. \$369,000 o.b.o. Skiff, seine, and P.W.S. permit also available. (360) 531-3074.



**fo R SALE - ALASKA LEGACY**  
 1990 - 50 Little Hoquiam seiner, currently located in Cordova, Ak. Twin Luger 460 engines, approx 11k hrs. 35kw Isuzu gen. 60k cap. in main hold/ Sunday hold. Complete list of amenities and copy of survey at [www.alaskalegacy.org](http://www.alaskalegacy.org). \$750,000 obo. (907) 748-5578 or (907) 748-5579.



**fo R SALE**  
 54' fiberglass freezer troller. Very well maintained boat with a very large fishhold. 1800 gal fuel capacity. 30kw genset new in 2008. AK power troll permit available. Price reduced to \$285,000. Owner retiring. (360) 280-2675.





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730 hp Cummins KT38 Diesel  
Stock# NS4577 \$2,490,000(CAD)



**Canadian Shore**  
1989 Expedition Yacht - 76'0" x 21'5"  
500 hp CAT 3412 Diesel  
Stock# PA4520 \$1,750,000(CAD)



**Hustle**  
1998 Crab / Prawn - 31'10" x 10'6"  
Yanmar Diesel - Ameson Surface Drive ASD-8  
Stock# NA4201 \$150,000(CAD)



**Competition**  
1992 Prawn / Crab / Dive - 34'1" x 11'1"  
2 x 130 hp Isuzu 6BD1 Diesels  
Stock# NA4251 \$75,000(CAD)



**Cowboy I**  
1992 Multi-fishery - 47'0" x 12'0"  
2 x 300 hp Volvo TAMD61A Diesels  
Stock# NA4390 Reduced to \$149,000(CAD)



**Genesis I**  
1990 Freezer Troller - 42'6" x 15'0"  
239 hp A/B Volvo Penta Diesel  
Stock# LF4556 Reduced to \$399,000(CAD)



**Krapanj**  
1972 Gillnetter - 37'0" x 10'0"  
250 hp Volvo Diesel  
Stock# NF3782 Reduced to \$63,000(CAD)



**Capt'n Ron**  
1986 Bow Picker - 31'0" x 12'0"  
210 hp Cummins 5.9 B Diesel  
Stock# NF4479 Reduced to \$135,000(USD)

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Stock #2060-LIC Southeast Salmon Purse Seine .....	\$310,000(USD)
Stock #2051-LIC California Salmon Troll .....	\$15,000(USD)
Stock #2050-LIC-California Crab 400 Pot .....	\$75,000(USD)
Stock #2030-LIC OR Crab 200 Pot .....	\$73,500(USD)

### PERMITS

Stock #2010-LIC Prince William Sound Salmon Purse Seine .....	\$250,000(USD)
Stock #2022-LIC Central Gulf Unfished 7500 lbs Sablefish .....	\$187,500(USD)
Stock #1959-LIC Pacific Coast Ground Fish Limited Entry Permit .....	\$70,000(USD)
Stock #2088-LIC Western Gulf LLP Non-Trawl .....	\$165,000(USD)



**Little Bear**  
1974 Troller / Crab - 32'0" x 10'2"  
80 hp Perkins Diesel  
Stock# NF4486 Reduced to \$79,000(USD)



**Laura Michelle**  
1979 Troller - 41'11" x 12'6"  
GM 4-71 Diesel  
Stock# NF4554 \$185,000(CAD)



**Caligus**  
1967 Trawler - 52'6" x 15'0"  
235 hp GM 8V-71 Diesel  
Stock# NS4093 \$229,000(CAD)



**Amy Usen**  
1966 Freezer Tuna Vessel - 93'0" x 21'6"  
415 hp KT 19 Cummins Diesel  
Stock# NS4517 Reduced to \$350,000(CAD)



**Lone Fisherman**  
1989 Multi-fishery - 58'0" x 20'6"  
400 hp CAT 3408 Diesel  
Stock# NS4560 Reduced to \$1,500,000(USD)



**Kanaka Bay**  
1978 Longliner - 54'0" x 17'4"  
325 hp CAT 3406-TA Diesel  
Stock# LA4553 \$365,000(USD)



**Red Sky I**  
1962 Freezer Tuna Vessel - 94'0" x 21'6"  
500 hp Cummins KTA 19 Diesel  
Stock# LS2319 Reduced to \$625,000(CAD)



**Wilf Rock**  
1994 Freezer Troller - 40'0" x 12'0"  
GM 6-71 Diesel  
Stock# LF4510 Reduced to \$99,000(CAD)



**Tough spot:** The fishing vessel *Savannah Ray* ran aground about 3 a.m. Feb. 16 off Long Island, about five miles southeast of the city of Kodiak. A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter safely rescued the crew of four. The boat had 25,000 pounds of cod aboard at the time of the mishap, the cause of which remained under investigation. Public records indicate the boat belongs to Mystic Blue LLC. In the days following the grounding, a light diesel sheen was seen in the area of the stranded vessel. Global Diving & Salvage was hired to recover the boat. USCG photos

## Marel belt weigher wins praise from customer Icicle



Marel, an Iceland-based global provider of food-processing equipment, says its certified Flowscale belt weigher is raising the industry standard.

"Designed for high-volume weighing of pelagic species, whitefish, and salmon, Marel's Flowscale is a self-contained belt weigher that sets an industry benchmark in

its category by gently weighing up to 100 tons of fish per hour in a continuous flow," the company said in a recent news release.

"We're very happy with the performance of the Flowscale," said vessel manager Robert Parsons, of the Icicle Seafoods processing ship Northern Victor. Icicle recently had a Marel Flowscale installed.

"We've noticed a significant improvement in handling and efficiency, which is great for maintaining the quality of the fish," Parsons said.

The compact, high-capacity Flowscale is designed specifically to maintain quality by handling fish gently, Marel said.

"The Flowscale is more efficient and effective than its predecessors, and it replaces methods of weighing that

inherently diminish product quality, such as hopper-scale weighing," the company said.

The Flowscale continuously records the weight of product moving across it and displays this data on a terminal, then registers the accumulated weight for each lot.

"It is ideal for measuring the total catch of fish coming from a fishing vessel into a processing factory, as well as for measuring the total amount of fish product in and out of a specific process," Marel said.

Using Innova Software Solutions, each flow can be set up through the system based on customer, vessel, and other specifications, the company added.

Visit [marel.com/flowscale](http://marel.com/flowscale) for more information or contact Marel in Seattle.

## Low seabird mortality seen in Alaska groundfish, halibut fisheries

In 2013, the restructured observer program expanded coverage by including vessels less than 60 feet overall and vessels in the halibut fleet.

Despite this expansion, the total seabird mortality associated with the fleet was the lowest we have recorded, at 4,730 birds overall. As was expected, however, the bycatch of albatross did increase, to 438, the second highest recorded number since 2007 and well above the average of 347.6 throughout this time period.

Overall bycatch remains low when compared to the years prior to 2002, when the cod freezer longline fleet and other longline vessels began extensive use of paired streamer lines.

— Alaska Fisheries Science Center

## United Fishermen of Alaska updates seafood industry fact sheets

What Alaska town ranks as No. 1 for total commercial fishing participation? Based on the number of fishing permits, crew licenses, and skippers, Anchorage comes out on top.

Cordova is the leading homeport with 704 vessels, followed by Kodiak at 685, Sitka at 661, and Petersburg with 596.

Those are just a few of the findings in the latest seafood industry fact sheets provided by United Fishermen of Alaska.

Access the fact sheets at [tinyurl.com/m9v2sqw](http://tinyurl.com/m9v2sqw).

— Laine Welch

## Governor's transition team lists five fishery priorities for Alaska

As Alaska's new governor, Bill Walker, came into office, he assembled transition teams to identify priorities in areas such as economic development, education, energy, health, Arctic policy, and fisheries.

The transition report on fisheries is available online at [tinyurl.com/p9hpdtx](http://tinyurl.com/p9hpdtx).

Here are the top five priority issues the fisheries committee identified, as taken directly from its nine-page report:

- Clear "fish first" policy for Alaska.
- Prioritize and improve fishery access for Alaskans: Develop policies, strategies, and management to return fishery access opportunities to residents of Alaska's fishing communities.
- Adequate funding for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and fisheries science.
- Alaska fisheries should be managed based on science over politics.
- Alaska fisheries management should be locally based and adaptive.

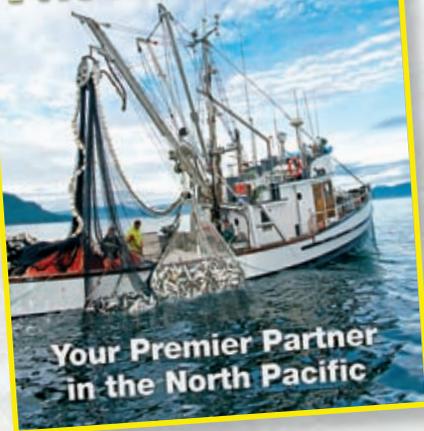


*The Bering Sea pollock factory trawler Starbound dwarfs a tractor-trailer truck during a February offload at Dutch Harbor. Jim Paulin photo*

The report lists possible actions to achieve success in the five priority areas. For example, on improving fishery access for Alaskans, the report suggests establishing state funds to "recapture" commercial fishing permits for state residents.

– Wesley Loy

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# Kenai River king salmon sonar moves five miles upstream

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game this season will rely on a sonar site farther upstream in an effort to better count Chinook salmon runs on the Kenai River.

The department on May 16 will begin operating the sonar at River Mile 14. The sonar project at River Mile 9 will be discontinued.

The Kenai, which flows into Cook Inlet, is famed for Chinook salmon runs popular with sportsmen. But the runs have been weak in recent years, resulting in restrictions to commercial gillnetters targeting sockeye salmon.

During 2013 and 2014, the department operated sonars at both River Mile 14 and River Mile 9.

The upstream site offers advantages that could improve Chinook run assessments.

"The new location allows sonar technology to span nearly the entire width of the river, which will result in more accurate assessments," said Robert Begich, area management biologist. "The sonar at River Mile 9 only counted fish moving up the

middle of the river, and we know from other means such as gillnetting and a mark-recapture project that some fish were not observed by the sonar."

While the sonar can accurately count large king salmon at River Mile 14, test netting will continue at River Mile 9 to help count kings of all sizes, the department said. The sonar can detect small fish, but can't distinguish between kings and other species.

**Key question answered:** The department addressed the question of whether Chinook spawn downstream of River Mile 14.

Yes, some do, the department said, adding: "A primary advantage of the transition to River Mile 14 was to move the sonar site upstream to an area of the river above tidal influence to increase accuracy of the final king salmon escapement estimate. Telemetry projects estimated that 4.2 percent (2013) and 5.4 percent (2014) of radio-tagged late-run king salmon completed migration and spawned downstream of River Mile 14. ... The inseason assessment during 2015 will account for spawning fish downstream of River Mile 14."

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## Low oxygen continued from page 29

the species richness.

"We tried to get it down to the individual species level, where we could tell which fish correlated with which oxygen levels."

Low-oxygen waters appear off the West Coast in two ways, Barth said. The first is the eastward movement of deep, oxygen-poor water that laps up against the West Coast. The second occurs when wind-driven upwelling brings nutrients to the surface, fueling blooms of phytoplankton that eventually die and sink to the bottom. Their decay then consumes the oxygen, leaving what scientists call hypoxic conditions where oxygen levels are low enough to adversely affect marine organisms.

**Petrale sole among most oxygen-sensitive:** The scientists examined the effects of varying oxygen levels on four representative species: spotted ratfish, petrale sole, greenstriped rockfish, and Dover sole.

Spotted ratfish and petrale sole were the most sensitive to changes in oxygen levels, with their presence declining sharply as the amount of oxygen dissolved in the water declines. But greenstriped rockfish and Dover sole were largely unaffected by dissolved oxygen levels.

Dover sole is adapted to low-oxygen waters, with gill surface areas two to three times larger than other fish of similar size that allow it to absorb more oxygen from the same amount of water. Dover sole also are among a few fish species that can reduce their oxygen consumption to very low concentrations, probably an adaptation to low-oxygen conditions.

The research is continuing, with trawl survey vessels carrying oxygen sensors on all of their tows since 2009, Keller said. Further data should provide insight into the response of additional fish species to low oxygen conditions, Keller said.

- Oregon State University

## One Hook continued from page 35

successfully "making sure the money comes down to the deck," as former DSFU president Tim Henkel put it.

Some members of the Union purchased quota as soon as they could. Now earning a good living, they started investing at least a portion of their pay in IFQs. Others were slower to warm to the

idea, and some have decided not to invest at all. Yet the idea of an ownership society, where crewmen held a vested interest in the catch, began taking hold.

But halibut was only part of the show. Black cod was increasing in value, and though its price in the late 1990s varied from \$1.59 a pound to \$2.26 a pound, the ex vessel price in Seattle jumped to \$3.65 a pound in 2000. Black cod became even more valuable than the king of flatfish in 2003. Though the price would vary according to the value of the Japanese yen and the strength of the U.S. market, black cod has remained a major fishery for DSFU fishermen. An April 2002 issue of *Pacific Fishing* indicated that four of the top 20 black cod IFQ holders had traditionally used DSFU crews, and almost every boat manned by union crewmen would make a list of the top 50.

## Our Legacy

The objective of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union has always been to let crewmen have a say in their chosen profession. The essence of the crew's life at sea has not changed dramatically in 100 years. Yes, the lines are stronger, the hooks more efficient, the machinery safer and more reliable, the galley and deck more comfortable, and the depth sounders and navigation equipment are far more sophisticated and accurate. But the people who go to sea today have the same aspirations as those who worked the deck 100 years ago: catch fish, come home, and get a fair wage for their efforts. In order for DSFU members to continue to have a say in their chosen profession, they need to maintain their voice in business, marketing, politics, and science. The DSFU's greatest asset as an organization is the ability to amplify and direct the needs of its members into a powerful, singular voice.

Without a doubt, the IFQ system has fundamentally changed longline fishing. It is more critical than ever that crewmen band together to protect their interests and their industry. When IFQs were being established, the DSFU fought hard in the political arena to ensure that only active fishermen could own IFQs. The Union also pushed hard for a federal loan program that provides crewmen access to capital to purchase quota share. The political challenge of the future is to protect hardworking crewmen from discrimination born of political favors. ↴



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