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Crawling back to the MSC

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ON THE COVER: Alaska is expecting a much larger salmon catch this year. Wesley Loy photo

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Let's get it straight. The real value of Alaska salmon is the product itself, coupled with the state's rigorous management of the resource. Outside "certification" of the salmon harvest is not, and must not, be bigger than the product.

Having said that, it is remarkable to see where the Alaska salmon industry stands today with respect to the Marine Stewardship Council.

We're guessing many in the industry rue the day the fishery hooked up with this London-based outfit 15 years ago.

Most of the major Alaska salmon processors dumped the MSC, and the considerable expense and aggravation associated with it, back in 2012.

Now the processors have changed their tune and are trying to return to the MSC fold.

Evidently they have no choice.

An April 10 press release from the processors - including Trident, Icicle, Ocean Beauty, Peter Pan, Alaska General, and North Pacific - cited, among other factors, the very large returns of salmon expected this year.

"This decision is based on the recognition that both the salmon market and sustainability landscape have changed in recent years," said Stefanie Moreland, Trident's director of government relations and seafood sustainability.

So how does this look?

It looks like the processors have been humbled, and the MSC has the Alaska salmon fishery by the balls.

The effort to establish an alternative ecolabel through the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, which the processors control, apparently was no substitute for the MSC - the perceived market leader in blessing fisheries for sustainability and sound management.

Particularly in Europe, the MSC label reportedly has become essential for selling seafood.

We reckon the MSC likes it that way.

To rejoin the MSC, it appeared the processors would need to swallow hard and reach some sort of agreement with an outlier group of competing companies - led by Silver Bay Seafoods - who stuck with the program and who hold the MSC certificate for wild Alaska salmon.

Even if the major processors do rejoin, the situation for consumers will remain confused, as one of the state's main salmon-producing areas, Prince William Sound, has been denied certification due to questions about hatchery impacts on wild salmon and herring populations.

No doubt, many will applaud the processors returning to the MSC. They'll reason you must do whatever it takes to sell the catch and add value to the product.

Others will see that dependence on the MSC or any other certifier leaves the fishery susceptible to dictates from afar.



Just chill: If you're thinking of upgrading your boat to cool your catch, don't miss our feature on page 12 examining the three primary chilling options. We're grateful to the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association for providing the raw material for the article.



So long: Amy Majors, who wrote the Tough Girl column for *Pacific Fishing*, tells us she is moving on to "bigger and better things." We wish her all the best.

Wesley

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Fish giveaways: A bill introduced in the Alaska House would allow donations of sport and subsistence catches to nonprofit meal programs such as those in schools and senior centers. – akdemocrats.org

Day of reckoning? With oil revenue declining and budget cuts coming, Alaska legislators Seaton and Edgmon propose bringing back the state income tax. – adn.com

First radioactivity arrives: Traces of radioactive isotopes from the Fukushima disaster have been detected on the B.C. shoreline, but the tiny levels pose no danger. – vancouversun.com

Bristol Bay outlook: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game outlines regulatory changes for the 2015 salmon season and discusses the harvest forecast by district. – adfg.alaska.gov

Cool deal: Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp. plans to award refrigerated seawater systems to 10 village fishermen. – kdlg.org

Somber sockeye outlook: Oversupply is expected to push down prices this year. – adn.com

MSC reconciliation: Major Alaska salmon processors are seeking to rejoin the Marine Stewardship Council certification program. – deckboss.blogspot.com

West Coast sardine fishery called off: Due to declining biomass, the Pacific Fishery Management Council votes to close the season that starts in July. – seattletimes.com

'Good news' today: NMFS will release its annual report to Congress on the status of U.S. fisheries. – scribd.com

Making up with MSC: The president of Peter Pan Seafoods and the executive director of ASMI discuss why it makes sense for Alaska salmon processors to rejoin the Marine Stewardship Council certification program. – adn.com

Salmon astray: In a study of hatchery-produced Chinook in the Columbia River, researchers find that warmer water and smaller run sizes can increase the rates at which the salmon spawn away from their home streams. – news.uaf.edu

Cotten in, Ruffner out: The Alaska Legislature on Sunday confirmed Sam Cotten as Alaska's fish and game commissioner, but rejected Robert Ruffner for the Board of Fisheries. – adn.com

Plenty of whales: The National Marine Fisheries Service proposes taking humpback population segments off the endangered species list. – noaanews.noaa.gov

Prince William Sound salmon outlook: Gillnetters in the Copper River District are expected to tally a strong commercial catch of 2.2 million sockeye this season. – adfg.alaska.gov

Cut it in half: A group of Alaska legislators is asking the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for a 50 percent reduction in the amount of halibut Bering Sea trawlers can take as bycatch. – kucb.org

Semper paratus: The Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard has scheduled an April 28 hearing on the topic "Staying Afloat: Examining the Resources and Priorities of the U.S. Coast Guard." – commerce.senate.gov

BBRSDA election concludes: Abe Williams and Buck Gibbons have won seats on the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association board of directors. – bbrsda.com

Togiak opens: A very large quota of 29,012 tons is up for grabs in Alaska's largest herring fishery. – adfg.alaska.gov

Fishing for data: NMFS scientists soon will head to sea aboard chartered commercial trawl vessels for the annual Bering Sea stock survey and the biennial Gulf of Alaska stock survey. – alaskafisheries.noaa.gov

'End of an era': State and federal agencies halt commercial sardine fishing off California. – cdfgnews.wordpress.com

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West Coast sardine fishery shut down as stock declines

There won't be a West Coast sardine fishing season this year as the stock has fallen below a minimum threshold, hitting the lowest volume in recent memory.

The estimated biomass for the season that would have started July 1 is pegged at 97,000 metric tons, significantly below a required 150,000-ton threshold. With the low abundance forecast, a mid-April decision by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to close the directed harvest fishery was automatic.

In recent years, sardine populations have swung from a 1.4-million-ton peak in 2007 to this year's season-crushing low. The stock assessment quantifies the number of fish that are at least 1 year old, and according to a press release from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the sardine population "appears to have dropped to the lowest levels in recent history."

Lost income: When it runs strong, the sardine fishery is an important aspect of the coastal economy. In 2012, a 109,000-ton harvest allowance yielded \$21.5 million in ex-vessel value.

The harvest allotment dropped to 23,293 tons for the 2014-15 season, which was closed on April 28 as soon as the catch limit was estimated to have been met.

As of mid-April, sardines were drawing up to \$400 a ton in California and \$500 a ton in Oregon.

"The impact is immense," said Astoria, Oregon-based fisherman Nick Jerkovich of this year's season closure. "We're going to lose a good portion of our yearly income."

The closure is the most dramatic loss in a series of disappointing years. Jerkovich noted that fishing periods have routinely closed early as their allowable catch totals were quickly met.

"Normally, we fish sardine every year during the summer and then fish squid, but last year the quota was so small, we went straight into squid," he said.

But squid presence is expected to decrease this year, and Jerkovich is considering going to Alaska to fish for salmon.

"This year, I'll do something different for sure," he said.

Corbin Hanson fishes for sardines in

Southern California, out of the ports of Los Angeles and San Pedro.

"We do rely on sardines as a component of our annual income, and the closure will definitely affect our bottom line," he said.

Without the sardine catch, this year's squid season will make or break fishing livelihoods in Southern California.

"If squid aren't in the ocean this year, I've got no way to make a living," Hanson said.

Overfishing alleged: The sardine decline has inevitably called fishery management into question.

The environmental advocacy group Oceana has alleged that overfishing has contributed to the stock decline, but that's disputed by the marine biologists who work for federal management agencies.

Sardine recruitment has been weak since 2010, with a cool water trend beginning in 2007 suspected of reducing the survival rate of juvenile fish.

Diane Pleschner-Steele of the California Wetfish Producers Association, which represents fishermen and processors,

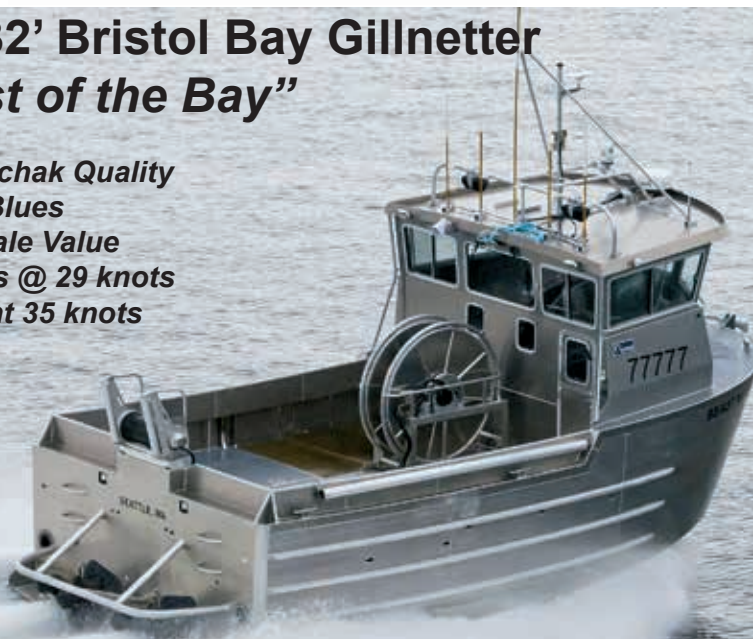
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Alaska Legislature rejects some appointees, leaves CFEC bill till next year

When Alaska legislators adjourned from their regular session April 27, they left Gov. Bill Walker two huge voids to fill.

Walker needs to find people to fill seats on the Board of Fisheries and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) after the Legislature rejected two of his appointees.

Walker, however, got unanimous support for his most significant appointment, Fish and Game Commissioner Sam Cotten, who takes over an agency that will see a 10 percent cut in state funds for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

Oil revenue crisis: The funding reduction was to be expected, as collapsing oil prices have forced the Legislature into making significant cuts. Most immediately affected are the state's herring management program, the Habitat Division, and the marine mammal program.

Two fish-related bills designed to help save money and raise revenue didn't pass this session but remain alive.

House Bill 112 would fold CFEC operations into Fish and Game. This would save the state between \$400,000 and \$450,000, according to the bill's fiscal analysis.

House Bill 137, which made it through the House, would raise sport fishing and hunting fees for in-state and out-of-state applicants. The fee revenue could be used to leverage federal dollars.

The CFEC legislation is the most contentious.

Many lawmakers believe that the 42-year-old commission has exhausted its use. They cite a recently released Fish and Game department report that noted processing delays for permits and vessel licenses and a bloated payroll.

Freshman Rep. Louise Stutes, a Kodiak Republican who chairs the House Special Committee on Fisheries, received bipartisan support for HB 112.

CFEC bill faces resistance: The legislation, however, didn't get as far as Stutes and other committee members had hoped. It still has two House committee assignments before getting a full House vote and Senate review.

Many fishing groups asked lawmakers to wait for an analysis from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee before moving forward. The report is due this summer.

"I'm hoping and am optimistic that the report out of LB&A will strengthen the position of the bill," Stutes said. "It will be money saved by consolidation."

During one hearing, Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner Kevin Brooks assured the committee that his agency could handle the absorption of CFEC.

"I have total confidence that it can be done," Stutes said. "It will take a little fine tuning, just like when the CFEC first started."

The CFEC issue carried into the Legislature's confirmation hearing, which brings the House and Senate together for a joint vote. To be confirmed, appointees need 31 out of 60 votes.

Two CFEC appointees faced a vote, but only one was approved. That was Benjamin Brown, a former legislative staffer who now will serve a second term on the commission.

Vern Rupright, however, garnered only 19 votes. Stutes was among legislators voting against Rupright.

Brown rejoins longtime commissioner Bruce Twomley. A commissioner's pay package, which far exceeds \$150,000 including benefits, is one area of potential state savings. Three commissioners would become one executive director under HB 112.

Stutes was publicly critical of what she considered the commission's lack of productivity, particularly with 28 outstanding adjudication cases on contested permits.

Stressing a personal respect for the two commissioners, Stutes said she expects Brown and Twomley to be productive even without a third commissioner in place.

Ruffner rejected: Board of Fisheries nominee Robert Ruffner came up two shy of the necessary 31 votes.

Ruffner was a late nominee and appeared less controversial than Walker's first pick for the board seat, Roland Maw, who withdrew his name about a month into the 90-day session.


Continued on page 37

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Pacific salmon catches could be fair to fabulous this season

Here's our preview of the 2015 Pacific salmon season, from Alaska to British Columbia to California.

ALASKA

Alaska has a chance for a blockbuster salmon harvest this year, with bigger pink, sockeye, and chum catches highlighting the forecast.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is projecting a commercial catch of 220.9 million fish for all species.

That would be much larger than last season's haul of 157.9 million fish, but well shy of the record 272.6 million taken in 2013.

The forecast total includes 140.3 million pink salmon, 58.8 million sockeye salmon, 17.2 million chum salmon, 4.6 million coho salmon, and 54,000 Chinook salmon in areas outside Southeast Alaska and Bristol Bay.

Southeast is the state's major producer of Chinook, but the regional quota had not been established as of press time.

Pink salmon catches usually fluctuate greatly from year to year. This season, pink returns are expected to be much stronger, and the harvest projection of 140.3 million fish is 46 percent higher than last year's catch of 95.8 million. Southeast is expected to tally 58 million pinks, and Prince William Sound is projected at 51.4 million.

Sockeye is the state's most valuable salmon crop, and this year's projected catch of 58.8 million sockeye is 33 percent higher than last year's catch of 44.1 million. Bristol Bay is the state's main sockeye fishery, and this year's harvest forecast for the bay is very large at 37.6 million fish.

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The statewide harvest projection of 17.2 million chum salmon, valued especially for their roe, is 52 percent greater than last year's catch of 11.3 million. Southeast alone is expected to produce 9.3 million chums.

Coho generally are the latest arriving salmon species each year. The harvest projection of 4.6 million fish is 27 percent lower than last year's catch of 6.3 million.

Fishery managers caution that forecasts can be off significantly, that market conditions and fishing effort affect catch levels, and that managers "have the primary goal of maintaining spawning population sizes - not of reaching preseason catch projections."

Hatcheries in Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and Southeast are major contributors to Alaska's annual salmon harvests, particularly with respect to pinks and chums.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) predicts that there could be substantial salmon returns to B.C. rivers this season, with ample opportunity for commercial fishing. But an environmental organization claims that the fishery will endanger some smaller runs.

The Fraser River is forecast to see between 2,364,000 and 23,580,000 sockeye return with a 50 percent chance of 6,778,000 arriving. The Skeena River on B.C.'s north coast expects between 1.7 million to 7.3 million, with a 50 percent expectation of 3.5 million.

Barkley Sound on Vancouver Island's west coast may have between 700,000 and 1 million sockeye return.

Fisheries are planned on all these runs, but Watershed Watch claims that the 2015 fishing plan for sockeye fishing in the Fraser River will endanger weak stocks such as Cultus Lake sockeye and coho stocks in the upper reaches of the watershed. The group also contends that DFO permitted too much fishing on sockeye in the Fraser in 2014.

Bob McKamey, vice president of the Area E (Fraser River) Gillnetters Association, argues that the fishing plan is sound and objections from Watershed Watch are predictable.

"Those people always have a kneejerk reaction to commercial fishing," he said. "There were some changes to the strategy to figure out harvest rates last year, and we supported those changes. We had been advocating them for years."

McKamey said the numbers are present to support commercial fisheries and that there have been some very questionable management measures taken over the years to protect weaker runs such as the Cultus Lake sockeye, allowing overescapement into spawning rivers.

"(University of British Columbia Professor) Carl Walters has made the point clearly that Cultus is a weak run, not endangered, and has been a weak run forever," McKamey said. "Millions of dollars have been foregone by the commercial and recreational fisheries and have accomplished nothing."

"Facts from 20 years of history prove he's right, but people just don't want to acknowledge that. The facts show what the result of overescapement is and show the result of fry that don't get enough to eat and go to sea at half the weight they are supposed to."

WASHINGTON, NORTHERN OREGON

Near-record returns of fall Chinook were forecast on the Columbia River. Meantime, Washington and Oregon fishermen awaited more chances on the river in the spring.

Continued on page 10

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According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, federal fish counters at Bonneville Dam counted more than 43,000 adult spring salmon in the last week of April. This raised the estimated run size to approximately 220,000 upriver fish and opened the spring Chinook sport fishery once again on the Lower Columbia River at the beginning of May. Fishery managers say about 50 percent of the run typically has passed the dam by May 7.

However, fishery managers in Oregon and Washington delayed commercial gillnet fishing in select areas on the Lower Columbia. Since former Gov. John Kitzhaber passed rules in 2012 to phase commercial gillnet operations off the main stem of the Columbia River, many fishermen have been forced into "select areas," which are areas off the main stem like Youngs Bay and Deep River.

The fishermen had a brief opener March 31 but soon caught their pre-season allotment of 244 upriver spring Chinook. The fishery was scheduled to open again for two days near the end of April, but those openings were canceled.

Fishermen and processors in Astoria noted that anglers were fishing in those same areas. As of press time, the commercial gillnetters still fishing the main stem of the Columbia River had



A much larger harvest of pink salmon is expected this year in Alaska. Naomi Weddle Alward photo

caught 1,737 spring Chinook salmon for this season. The majority of those were upriver spring Chinook. The fishery was suspended, awaiting status review.

Sea lions and seals continue to maintain a record presence on the Columbia River, and some fishermen blame a slow spring opener on their hungry bellies.

Meanwhile, a commercial seine fishery had yet to be announced. Following Kitzhaber's plan, beach and purse seine gear was intended to replace gillnet gear on the river. Last year, a commercial fishery operated under research impacts but this year could operate under regular impacts, sharing space with the rest of the Columbia River salmon fleets.

The return of fall Chinook to the mouth of the river this summer and fall will be the third highest since 1938, according to estimates released in February.

Oregon and Washington fishery managers estimate a return of 900,200 adult fall Chinook, lower than what was seen in 2013 and 2014, the river's two other top years since 1938.

The highest year on record is still 2013 when the actual return was more than 1.2 million adults, compared to the 2003-12 average of 557,600 adults. Last year, the actual return was more than 1.1 million.

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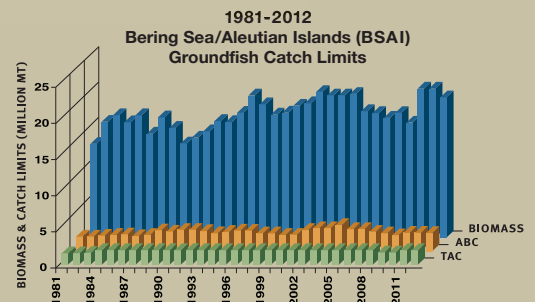
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Cool kids



At Bristol Bay, more and more salmon harvesters invest in chilling the catch

As ground zero for extraordinary annual returns of sockeye, Bristol Bay supports Alaska's most valuable salmon fishery.

But this blessing of fish has been something of a curse for the bay, where quality issues have plagued the fishery's reputation. Historically, many if not all of the sockeye were delivered dry to the plants, without the benefit of chilling.

This was somewhat understandable, as dealing with millions of fish pouring in over the course of only a few days presents a tremendous challenge.

In recent years, however, the quality picture has begun to brighten substantially as the industry invests in measures to improve fish-handling and freshness. The tactics include barges where fishermen can take aboard ice to chill their catches.

An organization funded by the fishery's drift gillnetters, the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, has been at the center of the quality improvement efforts.



◀ *The ice barge Bristol Maid. Photo courtesy of BBRSDA*

▼ *A gillnet boat takes on ice in Bristol Bay. Photo courtesy of BBRSDA*

The association has encouraged vessel owners to make improvements to their boats, noting that such upgrades can yield not only higher ex-vessel prices for gillnetters but also a better reputation overall for Bristol Bay salmon.

BBRSDA funds an annual processor survey to measure the drive to chill more of the Bristol Bay catch. The most recently available report, issued in February 2014, offers some impressive data.

The report shows that the share of chilled raw product purchased in Bristol Bay – from both driftnet and setnet fishermen – has risen steadily, from only 29 percent in 2008 to 54 percent in 2013.

While the trend is positive, it's obvious the bay still has a considerable way to go to match the quality standards of other sockeye fisheries around the state.

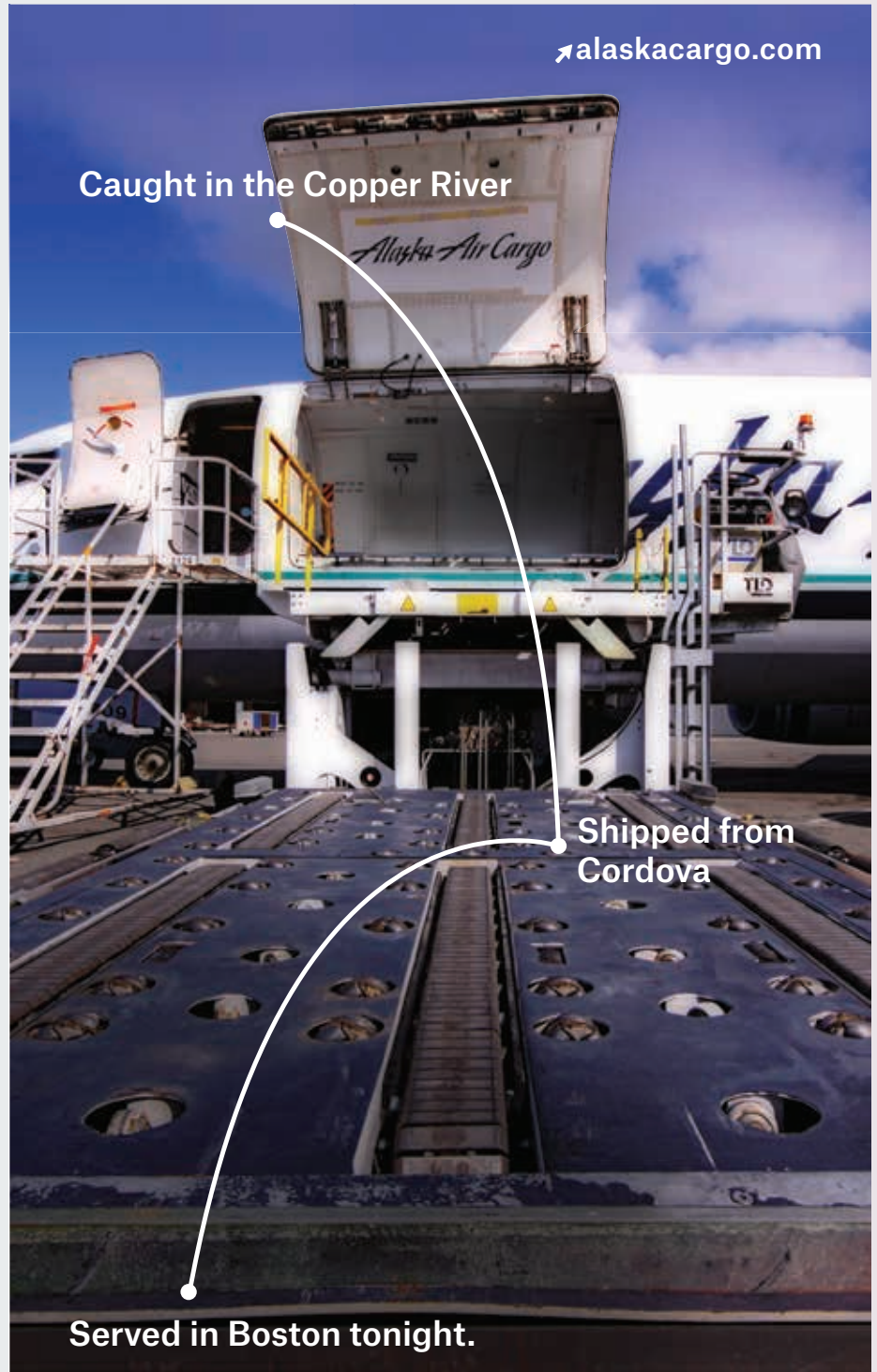
BBRSDA offers a wealth of information for fishermen interested in upgrading their boats for chilling. We mined the association's website to bring you the following discussion of the three primary chilling options.

– Wesley Loy

Continued on page 14



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◀ More than 50 percent of the sockeye salmon harvested in Bristol Bay is now delivered chilled to processors. Photo courtesy of BBRSDA

YOUR CHILLING OPTIONS

Slush bags

Slush bags are watertight, vinyl-coated nylon bags that isolate individual fish holds so that water and ice can be added to chill the fish. They can be made with or without a layer of insulation and cost as little as \$200 per bag.

As a nonpermanent chilling solution, slush bags are a good way for fishermen to test how well a slush-ice program works for their operation without having to make the larger investment of insulating their fish holds. They are easy to install and will last five years or more if cared for properly. Slush bags have proven themselves an effective way to isolate holds and chill catch when properly insulated and used with an adequate quantity of ice. They are a good choice for those seeking a low-cost chilling investment with a short payoff period.

Non-insulated slush bags

These watertight bags are custom-built to fit a fish hold and are constructed of a single layer of vinyl-coated nylon. They are about half the price of insulated slush bags and are much easier to handle due to their reduced weight and bulk. Because they lack insulating properties, it is necessary to add a layer of insulation between the fish hold walls and the floor in order for these bags to be effective at holding a slush-ice mixture for any practical duration. One of the more common forms of insulation for this purpose is half-inch XPE flexible closed cell foam, which can easily be cut to fit and held in place within the hold through the use of silicon sealant or industrial Velcro, allowing it to be removed periodically for cleaning. Other insulation materials such as 1½-inch “Blue Board” can be used as well. It’s commonly available at most hardware stores and provides a substantially higher R-value than half-inch XPE, although it is brittle and easily damaged. Often times, using a combination of these two insulation materials – depending on the location within the fish hold – provides the best balance of cost effectiveness, insulation performance, and durability.

Insulated slush bags

These watertight bags are custom-built to fit a fish hold and are constructed of half-inch XPE flexible closed cell foam sandwiched between two layers of vinyl-coated nylon. The added bulk and weight of these bags make removing and cleaning them



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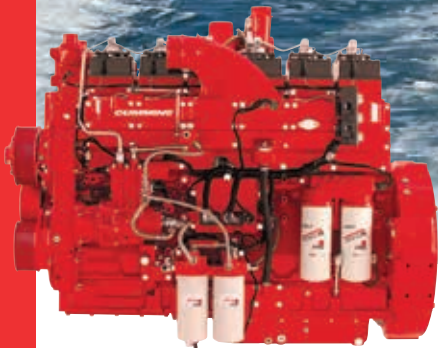
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Continued on page 16

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somewhat cumbersome, so they are best suited for smaller fish holds. Although insulated slush bags greatly reduce the need for supplemental fish hold insulation, in many applications an additional thermal barrier between hot spots, such as the engine room bulkhead and fish hold floor, is still advisable. Depending on the layout of your fish holds and their dimensions, insulated slush bags can be a practical solution to slush-icing your catch without the hassle of adding, maintaining, and cleaning a substantial amount of additional insulation.

Pros

- Low cost – They are the least expensive method to outfit your boat for chilling, with the total cost to outfit most boats in the \$2,000 to \$3,500 range, including the cost of additional foam insulation.

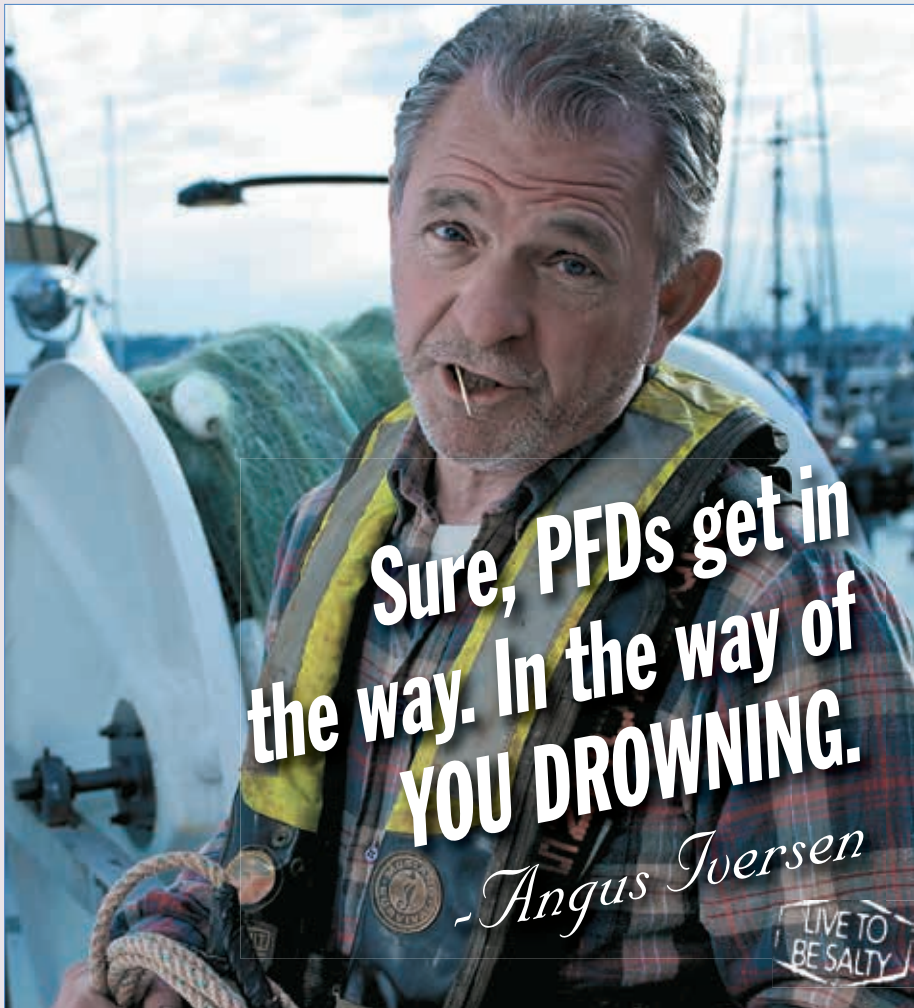
- No permanent alterations to boat – Slush bags can easily be removed after each season for storage and offer fishermen the chance to see how well a slush-ice program works for their operation with little commitment.

- High return on investment – Slush bags allow a dry boat fisherman to chill catch and receive the same quality premiums as those with more expensive chilling investments. This increase in the value of the fish delivered will often pay off a slush bag investment in less than one season, creating a very high return on the initial investment.

Cons

- Labor intensive – Slush bags are cumbersome and difficult to clean properly on the water. They also have to be pumped out after each delivery and removed from the fish hold occasionally so the hold can be cleaned. Any additional foam insulation used must also be periodically removed and cleaned, adding to the workload.

- Poor insulation, more ice required – Because a slush bag system is difficult to properly insulate, a substantial amount of ice is typically required to keep fish



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Well-insulated fish holds are important for making the best use of slush ice. Photo courtesy of BBRSDA

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Insulated fish holds

A wide range of methods and materials are available to insulate the fish holds of Bristol Bay gillnetters, and when installed properly, insulation will provide an adequate thermal barrier for use with slush ice or RSW and will last for decades. This investment not only creates the opportunity to chill using slush ice, it is also the first step in preparing your boat for the installation of RSW, making it the perfect intermediate chilling upgrade. Insulating your holds will also decrease the effort associated with slush-icing your catch in comparison to slush bags. Slush bags are a less expensive approach to improving fish quality and capitalizing on quality bonuses, but they can be labor intensive and cumbersome. With the cost of insulating a Bristol Bay gillnetter's fish holds falling in the \$6,000 to \$15,000 range, the investment can be paid off easily in a single season, providing decades of additional income potential.

Spray foam insulation

A spray foam insulation job, when finished with a durable exterior coating such as fiberglass or epoxy, is a relatively quick and inexpensive option for aluminum or fiberglass boats and provides a more than adequate thermal barrier. Typically, this foam starts out as a two-part liquid that is blended together and applied to the hold walls and floor with a spray gun. After the foam cures, a protective coating of fiberglass or epoxy is applied to its surface, creating a watertight, durable finish. One advantage of this method is that the foam easily fills small voids and contours, making it a good option for boats with hold configurations that have many angles or overhangs. If installed professionally by one of the outfits in Naknek or Dillingham, a spray foam job will require little effort or expertise on the behalf of a boat owner and can be completed in as little as a few days. As with most insulation jobs, it is important to ensure moisture does not accumulate between the foam and the hold walls and floor to prevent a potentially costly corrosion issue. Half this battle lies in good adhesion of the foam to the hold surfaces. Properly preparing and cleaning the fish holds before the foam is applied is essential, and if this job is elected to be undertaken by the boat owner or crew, it would be wise to closely follow the instructions of the professional being contracted for the work. Additionally, it is a good idea

to check the fish hold surfaces for cracks or other damage that might allow water to seep into the foam before and after each season.

Pros

- High return on investment – Insulating your fish holds is the best investment you can make in your boat.
- Quickest way to insulate your fish holds – Including hold prep time, a spray foam insulation job can be done in as little as a few days, making it a very convenient option.

- Relatively inexpensive – The cost of a spray foam job falls in the \$8,000 to \$12,000 range for most boats, making it an affordable option for most fishermen.

- High R-value – Spray foam is a very effective form of insulation, and a thicker layer can easily be applied to warmer areas like the engine room bulkhead when needed.

- Can be applied to virtually any hold configuration – Spray foam easily fills small voids and contours, making it a great option for boats with unconventional hold

Continued on page 18



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configurations that would make cutting and fitting stiff insulation sheets difficult.

Cons

- Potential for corrosion issues – If water seeps between the foam and aluminum, corrosion can cause unseen damage, leading to costly repairs.

Nida-Core insulation

Nida-Core is a honeycomb structured PVC core material that typically comes in 4-by-8-foot sheets and is available in a range of thicknesses. It is lightweight, does not absorb water, and has good insulating properties because of the air voids within each honeycomb cell. These attributes have made it a popular choice for flush decks and fish hold replacement jobs, and more recently as a supplemental layer of fish hold insulation for fiberglass and aluminum boats. As a lightweight core material with no real strength of its own, Nida-Core must be laminated with a layer of fiberglass for any fish hold application, and purchasing pre-laminated sheets from suppliers is well worth the added cost. For a typical hold insulation job where the existing hold structure is not being replaced, spacer strips of Nida-Core are spaced evenly and adhered to the hold surfaces to provide an air gap, then half-inch thick sheets laminated on one side are cut to fit, adhered to these spacers, and tabbed together with fiberglass along their adjoining seams. The air gap created by the spacers provides additional insulation and helps mitigate corrosion issues that could result from moisture buildup. With this type of insulation method it is important to install a drain or access plug in the bottom of each hold so that any water that does accumulate can be drained

periodically. Insulating your holds with Nida-Core can save you thousands of dollars over a professional spray foam job if you do most of the work yourself, but it's best suited for boats with simple hold configurations, to keep the labor of fitting, cutting, and fiberglass tabbing within a practical realm.

Pros

- Least expensive way to insulate – If the boat owner does most of the labor, a Nida-Core insulation job can cost as little as \$4,000, making it a very affordable option.
- Little risk of corrosion – As long as the air void at the bottom of each hold can be checked and drained if necessary, the gap between the insulation and the hold surfaces will prevent corrosion from occurring.
- High R-value – If done properly this insulation method will provide an R-value very close to that of spray foam for about half the price.

Cons

- Labor intensive – For a Nida-Core insulation job to be more economical than spray foam, most of the labor must be performed by the boat owner.
- Not practical for all hold configurations – Fish hold configurations that have extreme contours or require many smaller pieces of Nida-Core to be cut, fitted, and tabbed together could increase the amount of labor required beyond practicality, making spray foam a better choice.

Double-walled insulation

Many new aluminum gillnetters are being constructed with double-walled fish holds, and for good reason. The air gap between the relatively warm hull and the fish hold surface not only provides adequate insulation for an RSW application, it is maintenance free and – as long as these voids are watertight or periodically drained – the risk of corrosion is low. The drawbacks of this insulation method are that it's expensive and generally doesn't perform as well as spray foam or Nida-Core, which can be problematic if slush ice is being used to chill your catch. Insulating your fish holds in this way should be strongly considered if RSW is being installed, but it's not recommended for the frugal fisherman who intends to slush-ice his catch.

Pros

- Low maintenance – As long as the welds are in good shape, double-walled aluminum insulation requires no maintenance and is easy to clean. Plumbing the holds for RSW is also easier than with many other insulation methods and is more durable and less prone to water seepage.
- Little risk of corrosion – Because there is no foam to trap moisture against the aluminum, the potential for corrosion issues is low.
- Performs well with RSW systems – This insulation method provides an adequate thermal barrier for use with an RSW system.

Cons

- Expensive – Aluminum is not cheap and neither is welding, making this one of the more expensive ways to insulate your holds.
- Not very effective for use with slush ice – In most situations where slush ice is the primary means of chilling one's catch, the

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Builders turn out plenty of new Bristol Bay gillnetters

Astoria: Tim Hill at J&H Boatworks Inc. told *Pacific Fishing* that the yard is doing a major renovation on an Alaska/Puget Sound seiner, replacing an entire lower and upper pilothouse with a new, much larger aluminum house. J&H is also installing a new mast and fish hold and performing other retrofitting.

La Conner: Zachery Battle, president and CEO at Mavrik Marine Inc., reported in early April that the company was just finishing up with the delivery of its sixth and seventh Bristol Bay boat for the year.

In addition to already producing seven Bristol Bay gillnetters in 2015, Mavrik was wrapping up a Mavrik RT49 aluminum reef net tender with a planned May 1 launch.

“We have four seine skiffs headed for Alaska this year, making that numbers 44 and 45 over the last four years,” Battle said.

Mavrik has five more Bristol Bay boats currently under construction – two conventional PB32s, one raised tophouse RT32, and two jet boats.

In the repair department, Battle said Mavrik just finished refitting John Carle’s seiner, the Pacific Fisher. The yard also was working on converting Jerod Goodin’s crabber, the Reynard, into a seiner.



Workers in April were making modifications to the fishing vessel *Shemya*, tied up at Fishermen’s Terminal in Seattle. The muscular *Fred Wahl* boat, built in 2000, reportedly was heading to California to seine for squid. Wesley Loy photo

“We’re modifying the deck and hydraulics, adding booms, winches, a power block, and a purse winch, and then to top it off a brand new Mavrik skiff, the SS20,” Battle said.

Also at La Conner, Isaac Oczkewicz, general manager at LaConner Maritime Service, reported the yard had just launched and was about to deliver a 49-by-18-foot combination vessel for a customer in Wrangell, Alaska.

It will be gillnetting and shrimping, plus seining in the future. It’s powered by a 650-horsepower Scania, which will provide a cruising speed of about 8 knots, with an average burn rate of 3.7 gallons per hour.

The vessel is configured to hold about 74,000 pounds of salmon and is set up to blast-freeze and process shrimp. It has a 30 kW MER genset and an IMS refrigerated seawater (RSW) unit. Fuel capacity is about 1,200 gallons, and fresh water capacity is about 400 gallons.

LaConner Maritime Service also has a new model 32-by-14-foot Bristol Bay gillnetter under construction, with plans to fish it this season. It too will be powered with a 650-horsepower Scania and is configured to pack about 18,000 pounds in the hatches. It holds just under 300 gallons of fuel.

“It’s going to be a very economical platform to purchase and operate and will be available in various stages of construction from kit form to completed boat,” Oczkewicz said.

The yard is also working on a 39-by-14-foot coastal crabber for a customer in California.

“It will likely have the 330-horsepower, 6.8-liter John Deere, but that hasn’t been

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Here's a new Bristol Bay gillnetter from Kvichak Marine Industries.
John Fleck Photography

finalized yet," Oczkewicz said. "It will pack about 18,000 pounds of crab."

Anacortes: John Lovric, general manager at Lovric's Sea-Craft Inc., said that his yard recently completed annual maintenance on the 65-foot whale-watching boat Odyssey; did annual maintenance on 60-foot fish farm supply vessel Clam Digger; washed and

painted the 58-foot seiner Cypress; and washed and painted the bottom and did rudder work on the 90-foot tug Island Wind.

Other vessels scheduled for work were the 120-foot tender Autumn Dawn and a 150-foot barge. The 125-foot crab boat Handler was booked in for miscellaneous repairs and the 95-foot tuna boat Mikkette for engine replacement.

"We are taking out a 3412 Caterpillar and putting in a Mitsubishi S6A3PTA," Lovric said.

Seattle: Kvichak Marine Industries Inc., a Vigor Industrial company, recently delivered the first of three new Bristol Bay boats. This all-aluminum, jet-propelled gillnetter is a Kvichak design powered by twin Volvo D11 EVEC-E engines rated for 510 bhp coupled to ZF 305-3 marine gears and Hamilton HJ364 water jets, providing a top speed of 35 knots.

Kvichak said the new design combines shallow-draft capability with short transit times to the line and the ability to maintain planing speed when partially loaded. The unique tophouse arrangement maximizes creature comforts while maintaining a large, efficient working deck.

The gillnetters are 32 feet long, with a beam of 16 feet 1 inch, drawing 25 inches light and 35 inches with full wells.

The vessels have a fuel capacity of 400 gallons and fresh water capacity of 50 gallons. They have a maximum hold capacity of 20,500 pounds and are capable of 29 knots with 8,500 to 9,000 pounds aboard.

They have accommodations for a crew of five. Other equipment includes a Webasto diesel heater and a 7.5-ton RSW system.

Continued on page 38

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Five blades of grace – the quest for a better propeller

I have always been mildly obsessed with propellers. When a boat gets hauled, I look underneath at the running gear. Everything from hull shape to the drive type to rudder size and propeller design intrigues me. Perhaps I should've been a naval architect – if only my upper-level math skills had sufficed. For now, however, I have enjoyed standing back and watching new vessel construction during recent years and the subsequent experimentation that has taken place with propeller application by two of our colleagues in the industry – Pete Bjazevich and George Dauber.

Using Bjazevich's newly constructed Mavrik Marine PB32 Bristol Bay gillnetter as a platform, these two have spent countless hours attempting to determine the next step in propeller

smoother and efficient ride.

"With bigger horsepower and slower shaft speeds, we're all of a sudden moving to an 'over-square' wheel. Most of the big yachts are doing it. There's no room for more diameter, and with an extra blade and some torque, these props are getting rid of vibrations and have less slippage than the four-bladed wheels."

In fact, Bjazevich's five blades made such a difference that he was able to set a small paper coffee cup, full of water, on top of the prop tunnel while underway at about 1800 rpm on a calm day. It sat there, perfectly still, without any sign of the liquid spilling or vibrating off the convexity of the tunnel.

Jonathan Lucco from ZF Propellers in Florida affirmed these points: "Going to five blades is worth exploring," he said over the phone. "Less vibration, more thrust and maneuverability at low speeds, and less slip with more blade area in the water are some of the benefits. A larger blade area (with five blades instead of four) can also help reduce cavitation."

Conserving fuel: These efficiencies, depending on load and the type of vessel, also can translate into fuel economy. Pete claims that he is potentially gaining upwards of 5 percent in fuel savings with his five-bladed prop. That can translate into big bucks with the modern-day price of fuel.

Additionally, George Dauber, a longtime Bristol Bay fisherman who has worked closely with Pete throughout the testing process, adds that it's not just about five blades.

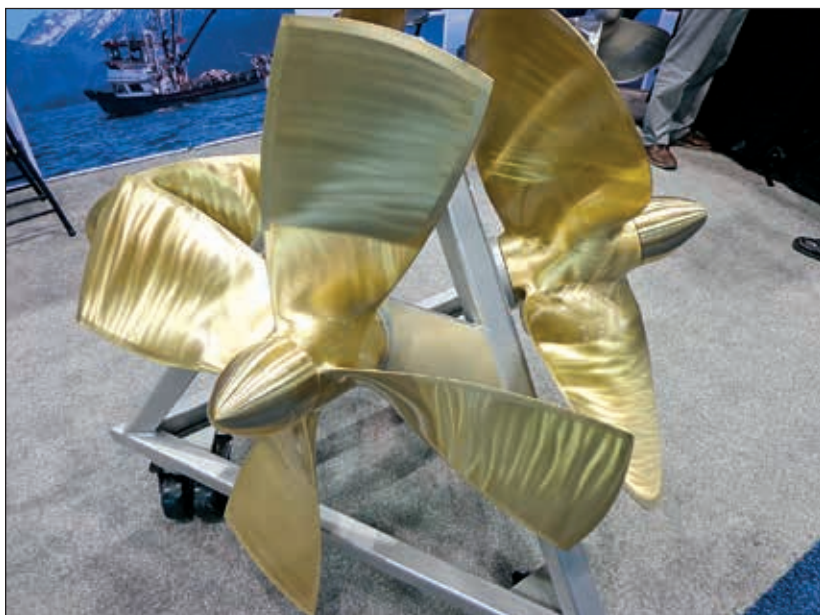
"Thickness of the blade, thickness of the trailing edge, cup configuration – these are all factors that we have to take into account when trying to come up with a propeller that works."

And Lucco added to this idea, saying that each vessel and owner is different in configurations and goals. While everyone could theoretically step up to a five-bladed wheel, ZF likes to take a look at prop applications on a case-by-case basis to determine the absolute best fit for each vessel's operating parameters.

Bjazevich and Dauber, with the help of ZF Propellers, chose to go through a sometimes frustrating trial-and-error process that bred results all of us can use when making future propulsion-related decisions. Five-bladed propellers take us a little beyond what we're used to on our commercial fishing boats, old and new. They ease vibration, guarantee torque, and mitigate wear and tear on our machinery that we see over time with "the rumble in the stern." We may even see the benefit of noticeably better fuel economy.

For these reasons and others, don't forget about considering more than three or four blades – it may be the next step in honing the overall efficiency of your fishing platform.

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.



Picking the proper propeller is no small consideration. Wesley Loy photo

efficiency for the small-vessel market. And from what I can tell, they've witnessed firsthand some exciting developments through an arduous trial-and-error process on board the F/V Lady Kate with a ZF KCA five-bladed propeller spinning beneath their feet.

Getting rid of the rumble: What problem were they trying to solve? Most folks who drive an aluminum boat especially know about the rumble in the stern through certain midrange rpms – that harmonic rattle of aluminum plate generated by elements like cavitation (the sudden collapse of air bubbles, thus creating small shockwaves and subsequent heat and stresses on metal surfaces) and vibration in the prop tunnel.

"We were getting a lot of rumbling with the four-bladed wheel," explained Bjazevich. "I wanted to see if five blades would get rid of any vibration in the tunnel. I'm tired of the rumble, and it leads to wear and tear on welds and machinery over the long term."

So, what did Bjazevich do? He hauled and launched his new Lady Kate multiple times for the sake of experimentation and progress.

Bjazevich ended up with a five-bladed propeller – 30 inches in diameter with a pitch of 34 inches – that gave him a much

Sardine shutdown resonates through Ore., Wash. ports

No sardines: When the Pacific Fishery Management Council announced in April that it would recommend a shutdown of the commercial Pacific sardine fishery set to begin in July and an immediate closure of the current season set to normally end June 30, communities in Oregon and Washington tightened their belts.

In Astoria, Oregon, a number of processors large and small push a huge amount of sardines through their doors, according to the Port of Astoria. Larger processors will now look to other parts of their business to fill the gap, though many knew earlier this year that a closure of the sardine fishery was likely. Some smaller processors that focused primarily on forage fish species like sardines reportedly shut down operations as well. They could not be reached for comment.

Not far from Coos Bay, Oregon, an Astoria-based group, Oceanic Logistics, was able to temporarily take advantage of the unexpected appearance of a sardine population in Winchester Bay when it was down there to buy live crab from local fishermen. Several other companies also headed down to the bay once the sardines were discovered, The Umpqua Post reported: five boats out of Charleston, Oregon, and one from Newport, Oregon.

As of April 20, the groups hoped to land as many sardines as they could before the fishery was shut down completely. At that point, they had roughly 10 more days of fishing open to them.

In Ilwaco, Washington, managers at that small but active port are concerned that without the tonnage regular sardine hauls provide, the port could get knocked down on federal and state priority funding lists. Sardine fishermen based elsewhere have historically sold a lot of sardines to Pacific County processors like Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Co., based out of the Port of Ilwaco. Such tonnage, whether it's fish or other cargo, counts when small ports go out seeking state or federal funding or maintenance.

Still, port manager Guy Glenn Jr. is hopeful. Fisheries are cyclical, he said in an interview in April, adding that it's possible another fishery could pick up and be extra busy this year.



Salmon seasons: The spring salmon season got off to a slow start this year on the Columbia River.

In April, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recorded 980 landings of adult Chinook for the Columbia River mainstem fishery on March 31. Another 757 followed on April 7 for a cumulative total of 1,737.

Last year, ODFW recorded 1,758 adult Chinook at the start of the spring season on April 1, an opener fishermen said was fairly typical for spring openers: poor.

A commercial seine fishery is still in the works for the Lower Columbia River, but official details have yet to be released.

On Youngs Bay, near Astoria, gillnet fishermen landed a total of 602 Chinook during the winter season, according to numbers released by ODFW April 1. The average weight from week to week hovered between 12.5 and 14.5 pounds.

And sea lions continued to maintain a presence in the Lower Columbia even into the end of April, while more seals and sea lions were observed on average daily at Bonneville dam than in previous years - more than double the 2002-14 average, according

to researchers.

The pinnipeds are typically seasonal visitors to the lower river and dam, following runs of fish. This year an abundance of both smelt and salmon has drawn them in record numbers and kept some here longer than is usually observed.



Fishermen rescued in Newport: The U.S. Coast Guard and other fishing boats responded to a sinking 32-foot fishing vessel 20 miles south of Yaquina Bay near Newport April 8.

The fishing vessel Apache 4 was taking on water and sinking. Crews aboard the fishing vessels Kristina and Silver Quest were nearby and responded to the urgent marine information broadcast issued by Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector North Bend.

A Coast Guard air facility Dolphin crew was able to send a dewatering pump to the crew of the Apache 4 via a rescue swimmer. They discovered that the source of the flooding was an open discharge valve. The Coast Guard helped dewater the vessel and escorted it and its crew back to Yaquina Bay. No injuries were reported.

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



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California salmon fishing expands as drought impact looms



Catch 'em while you can: California fishermen have more opportunity to catch salmon this season but disappointment may be only a year away.

Next year's salmon returns will reveal the impact of a drought that's into its fourth year. For now, however, fishermen have a season that includes more fishing days than any seen in recent years.

While fishing in the Klamath Management Zone from the Oregon border to the Humboldt South Jetty is still restricted to two weeks in September and a 3,000-fish quota, northern region fishermen need only travel to the Shelter Cove area to access open fishing territory.

The season started May 1 from Horse Mountain (about six miles north of Shelter Cove) to Point Arena, and the entire month was open. Last year, the region's season didn't start until June 19.

The north region will also have more fishing days in June and July this time around.

The entire month of May was also opened from Point Arena to San Francisco Bay, unlike last year.

The extra fishing time is due to an improved ocean abundance of 650,000 Sacramento River fall Chinook. The Klamath River fall Chinook forecast is 420,000 fish, also an improvement over last year.

But there is strong suspicion that the hammer will drop next season. Mike Burner, the Pacific Fishery Management Council's salmon officer, said "a double whammy" of drought-induced low water conditions and the potential emergence of a warm water El Niño pattern could downscale near-term ocean salmon populations.



Crabbing town's story told: A recently opened exhibit at the Trinidad Museum details the history of the local fishing industry, telling its story through photographs and written accounts.

It's a story peopled by past and present local fishermen who are described in the exhibit's introduction as "a cast of characters one could not make up, even with the wildest of imaginations."

One of them is Zach Rotwein, a well-known local crabber and owner of Cap'n Zach's Crab House in McKinleyville. His daughter, Grace, wrote most of the exhibit's texts and was a key part of the museum team that compiled the photos.

"It evokes a lot of memories from the many years I've been fishing," Rotwein said.

"What I reflect on is listening to all the old-timers - some who

are still here and some who aren't - tell their stories, and you can see the pictures of those stories in the exhibit."

The archival material includes photos of the original Trinidad Pier shortly after it was built in 1946. The pier was built by Earl Hallmark, father of longtime Trinidad crab fisherman and marina owner Bob Hallmark.

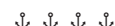
Now in his mid-80s, Bob Hallmark is one of the local legends profiled in the exhibit. He got his first crab boat in 1954 when he was 26 years old and retired from fishing about six years ago.

Commenting on how the industry has changed, he said that Trinidad was once the epicenter of the region's fishing industry.

"Trinidad boats did better per boat than most of the boats out of Eureka," Hallmark recalled. "The ones in Trinidad were pretty serious and went out in some pretty rough weather."

Also included in the exhibit is the 1947 lens of the Trinidad lighthouse, which was recently replaced with an LED light, as well as a series of photos and texts that detail the daily work of crabbers during peak season.

The exhibit will be open throughout the summer.



Entanglement awareness: In a rare occurrence, a dead 25-foot-long orca washed up on the shore of Fort Bragg on April 18. Researchers soon converged on the corpse, taking DNA samples and its pectoral fin for further study.

Something else that's being studied further is the 150 feet of crab trap line and floats tangled around the dead orca's tail.

Vertical line entanglements from derelict fishing gear are an ongoing concern, and the orca's death triggered a flurry of meetings between fishery managers and among fishermen themselves.

Pete Kalvass, a senior biologist and Dungeness crab specialist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, said that the entanglement may have happened after the orca died, and a necropsy will likely reveal the cause of death.

A board meeting of the Humboldt Fisherman's Marketing Association was held April 21, and the entanglement issue was on the agenda. The association will continue to assess and respond to the wildlife hazards posed by lost gear.

"It's a serious situation, and we want to avoid entanglements if we can," said HFMA President Aaron Newman.

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



Zach Rotwein, left, a Trinidad-based fisherman and owner of Cap'n Zach's Crab House in McKinleyville, and longtime Trinidad crabber Bob Hallmark stand by a display of the 1947 lens of the Trinidad lighthouse. The lens is part of a Trinidad Museum exhibit on the city's storied fishing industry. Daniel Mintz photo

Big halibut bycatch decision faces North Pacific Council



Bycatch be gone: Alaskans have had it with high rates of halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea, and a push is afoot to slash it by half.

At issue is 6 million pounds of halibut allowed as bycatch in the high-volume flatfish fisheries, a level that hasn't been changed for 20 years.

At the same time, declining halibut stocks statewide have seen managers cut catches by commercial, sport, and subsistence users by 70 percent.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is set to make a decision at its meeting in June, and advocates are really putting on the heat.

In a strongly worded April letter, 16 Alaskan groups and communities urged Alaska's congressional delegation to push for the 50 percent bycatch cut, saying "conservation of the halibut stock is riding solely on the backs of the halibut fishermen."

A dozen Alaska legislators also urged the council to make the 50 percent cut as soon as possible.



All done: A dozen trawlers tied up early for the year due to tripping a 2,700 Chinook salmon bycatch cap in the Central and Western Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries.

Only half of the allotted cod catch and 10 percent of the flatfish were taken when the closure was imposed in early May, the National Marine Fisheries Service said.

The closure was set to last until the end of the year, although a re-opening will be considered Oct. 1.

This is the first year for Chinook bycatch caps in the federally managed trawl fisheries, with a total cap for the Gulf of 7,500 salmon.

The pollock and rockfish fleets were far from their caps and continued fishing.



Hatchery haul: More than a third of all the salmon caught annually in Alaska originates from hatcheries.

Alaska has 31 hatchery facilities: 15 privately owned, 11 state-owned, two federal research facilities, one tribal hatchery at Metlakatla, and two state-owned sport fish hatcheries.

All salmon born in Alaska's hatcheries come from wild brood stock and are released as fingerlings to the sea. When those fish return home, they make a huge contribution to the catch.

According to the annual salmon fisheries enhancement report from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in 2014 an estimated 51 million fish, or 34 percent of the commercial common property harvest, were produced by Alaska salmon hatcheries. About 7 million salmon were harvested for hatchery cost recovery.

"The return of hatchery salmon provided an estimated \$113 million, or 20 percent, of the ex-vessel value of the statewide commercial common property harvest," the report said.

By species, 56 percent of chums, 47 percent of pinks, 23 percent of coho, 12 percent of Chinook, and 5 percent of sockeye were hatchery starts.

Prince William Sound fishermen have the highest hatchery fish catches. Last year, 45 million salmon returned from hatchery releases, accounting for an estimated 87 percent of the total number of salmon in the commercial common property harvest. By species, 93 percent of the pink salmon, 68 percent of the chums, and 45 percent of the sockeye were hatchery-produced fish.

It's a different story in Southeast Alaska, where nearly all the pinks were from wild production with 85 percent of the chums

from hatcheries.

In all, hatchery salmon accounted for 12 percent of the Panhandle harvest and contributed \$38 million, or 26 percent of ex-vessel value.

Steve Reifenstuhl, general manager of the Sitka-based Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, said he believes the hatchery programs in both Southeast and Prince William Sound are not likely to grow much more.

"We have utilized the water sources we've been able to find, and it's not easy to locate a new hatchery at all," he said. "I think we are getting to the point where we are not going to have major increases in production."

Kodiak ranks third in terms of Alaska hatchery production. Two facilities accounted for 41 percent of the island's total salmon take last summer, mostly pinks and chums. The hatchery catch value was \$10 million, or 22 percent of the Kodiak total.

At Cook Inlet, small hatchery returns of sockeyes (2 percent) and pinks (6 percent) contributed \$547,000 of the fishery value, or 2 percent.

This year nearly 63 million hatchery-produced salmon are projected to return home to Alaska, similar to last season.

The salmon enhancement report also shows that more than 180 Alaska elementary schools participate in hatchery salmon egg take and release programs each year.

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

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Copper River Seafoods to become bigger Bristol Bay player

Processor expansion: Copper River Seafoods is expanding its operations in Bristol Bay.

The Anchorage-based company announced April 21 it had acquired the former Extreme Salmon processing plant in Naknek.

Copper River Seafoods already had a facility at Togiak, in the bay's westernmost fishing district. The Naknek plant will position the company in the bay's main cannery hub.

Scott Blake, president of Copper River Seafoods, said the timing was good for the expansion, as the bay is expecting a huge harvest this season.

"Our plan is for the Naknek operations to produce a mix of frozen headed and gutted sockeye salmon and fresh sockeye fillets, increasing our total production by 4 to 5 million pounds," Blake said.

"We are working swiftly to ensure the plant is fully operational in time for the start of the 2015 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon season and plan to invest several million dollars in the Naknek plant over the next three years," said Rodger May, a partner in the new operation.

The Naknek plant will support about 70 seasonal jobs, the company said.

Blake partnered with three other commercial fishermen to establish Copper River Seafoods in 1996. The company has greatly expanded and today operates facilities in Cordova, Anchorage, Kenai, Togiak, Kotzebue, and now Naknek.

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Sitka summary: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game on May 1 issued the final results from the 2015 Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.

The harvest was 8,756 tons on a quota of 8,712 tons, and overall mature roe recovery was 11.8 percent based on fish ticket information.

This season's quota was the smallest since 2003. Last year's harvest tallied 16,976 tons.

The season ran March 18-25, and fishermen elected to work as a cooperative rather than compete fiercely as they normally do. The co-op reflected the apparent poor roe market and allowed the seine fleet to cut expenses by using fewer boats.

Just what the herring paid remained unclear.

The total shoreline receiving spawn this year was 87.9 nautical miles. That's the second highest mileage recorded since the department began recording spawn in 1964 and compares to the recent 10-year average of 61.9 miles.

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Sablefish pots: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council in April voted unanimously to allow the use of pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish individual fishing quota harvest.

Supporters see pots as a way to thwart whales adept at robbing fish from the fishery's traditional hook-and-line gear.

The council action, subject to final approval from the U.S. commerce secretary, culminated years of work toward allowing pot gear. A big consideration for the council was weighing the potential for conflicts between gear types.

"In order to limit the amount of space that pots occupy on the fishing grounds, each vessel is limited in the number of pots that it can deploy," according to the council's April newsletter. "No more than 120 pots can be used in the West Yakutat or the Southeast Outside districts of the Eastern Gulf. No more than 300 pots can be used in the Central or the Western Gulf. NMFS

will establish a system of pot tags to enforce this limitation."

To discourage "grounds preemption," fishermen will face limits on the amount of time that pot gear can be left on the grounds without being moved or tended.

It'll be interesting to see how many sablefish fishermen convert to pots. Such an investment would be a good indicator of just how bad whale depredation really is.

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Chinook bycatch: The North Pacific Council, at its April meeting in Anchorage, also voted to tighten limits on Chinook salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

The council has faced intense pressure to crack down on bycatch due to weak returns of Chinook to the Yukon and other Western Alaska rivers.

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Kosher canned salmon: The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute reports that a new Farm Bill amendment prompted the U.S. Department of Agriculture to seek more kosher and halal foods. The Alaska seafood industry responded, fulfilling the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's first order with 19,000 cases of "cost-neutral kosher canned pink salmon" in July 2014.

"AMS also purchased Alaska pollock (frozen blocks in 49-pound cartons), valued at \$3.8 million, for domestic feeding programs," ASMI said.

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Redrawn Southeast seine map: A Native corporation in March hailed a landmark "compromise" with the Southeast Alaska commercial seine fleet.

The statement from Kootznoowoo Inc. came after the state Board of Fisheries, meeting in Sitka, adopted a proposal that will close some salmon seining areas to protect the subsistence needs of people in Angoon. Kootznoowoo is the Native village corporation for Angoon.

"This has been many years in the making," Kootznoowoo said. "From the combined efforts of Kootznoowoo and the Southeast Alaska Seiners Association, a compromise has been found and accepted by the Board of Fish. This proposal will close four miles of coastline near Basket Bay (on Chichagof Island) to seine fisheries during the season. Additionally, the waters in front of the community of Angoon will be closed to seine fisheries. However, the area from the northwest shore of Admiralty Island to Point Hepburn (approximately 40 miles northwest of Angoon) will be opened up to the purse seine fishery on July 17. On July 21 the waters from Fisher Point to Parker Point will be opened to commercial purse seining."

Sharon Love, Kootznoowoo president and general manager, said that the board action would "cease commercial fish competition" for sockeye of traditional importance to Angoon households.

Angoon and the seine fleet have butted heads for years. The community previously had offered numerous unsuccessful proposals to the board, and Kootznoowoo has petitioned federal officials to extend "extraterritorial jurisdiction" around Angoon.

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



Federal law enforcement agency to re-establish local office



Fish cops coming: Finding good employees for remote site work is always a challenge in rural Alaska, aggravating enough to make some managers move everything into Anchorage. But year-round boots on the ground remains the ideal, and one agency is giving it another shot.

A federal fisheries agency office is re-opening in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor as soon as three enforcement officers are hired and trained.

In recent years, the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement has flown in agents from around the state for short tours of duty – between a week and a month, said Kevin Heck, acting deputy special agent in charge in Anchorage.

The agency now wants to try keeping agents in the Aleutians port full-time and wants to “recruit and retain quality people to staff the office,” Heck said.

Office space has been rented in the FTS building near the airport, down the hall from where the last enforcement office was located.

The local enforcement office was closed because of difficulties finding employees who wanted to stay in Unalaska, Heck said. It closed in 2006.

The return of a local office and employee housing is due to a change in administration at the top level in Washington, D.C., said Heck, noting that almost all the key players were not working for the agency when the decision was made to close the office in Unalaska.

Heck said the staffing decision is not related to state efforts to move its patrol vessel from Unalaska to a new home-port in Kodiak as a cost-cutting move. He emphasized that the decision to re-open the federal office was made last year, before the state troopers’ latest attempt to relocate the P/V Stimson.

The new federal fisheries enforcement office could mean good news for the Unalaska City School District, already facing declining student enrollment and looking at the loss of more students from families of Stimson crew members.

NMFS will pay for agents’ families to move to Unalaska, but only if the new agents were already working for the federal government, Heck said.

He noted that NMFS policy toward family members is different from that of the U.S. Coast Guard, which does not consider Unalaska as a family duty station. City officials have asked the Coast Guard to change its policy.

Unlike the state troopers, NMFS does not have its own vessel.

Agents sometimes ride on Coast Guard or other agency ships. But mostly the agents will work in port, policing various fisheries, especially halibut and sablefish, Heck said.

The re-opened enforcement office will give NMFS two offices in the same building and on both floors. The second-floor fisheries management office did not close and has remained open,

staffed by a biologist, in the Airport Beach Road building, which also houses the offices of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.



Observer death: Unalaska police have confirmed the identity of a fisheries observer who died in Unalaska while hiking in a blizzard.

Jessica Acker, 33, had been living in Sitka but was originally from Madison, Wisconsin, said Michael Holman, deputy police chief.

The search for Acker began after she failed to return Feb. 8 to Westward Seafoods, where she was a plant observer. About 12 people searched the area around Pyramid Peak, including public safety staff and volunteers and local Coast Guard personnel.

A Dolphin helicopter from the Coast Guard cutter Munro helped with the search.

Her body was located the following day, but poor weather conditions delayed the recovery until Feb. 10.

The woman appeared to have fallen down a steep slope where her body was located, said Jamie Sunderland, Unalaska public safety director.

She sustained a fractured skull in the accident, Holman said.

Acker had worked in Sitka as a seasonal employee of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and was working for a private contractor in Unalaska, he said.



From left, cleanup workers Kent Russell, Melissa Good, and Josh Good show off some of the “Rommel stakes” removed recently from Unalaska Island. Photo courtesy of Melissa Good

Stakes out: Unalaska Island’s legacy of World War II military junk recently was reduced by nearly 7 tons after local residents and contractors removed a few thousand “Rommel stakes” from the north side of Beaver Inlet.

Local resident Melissa Good gave a presentation on the project, which was funded by the Defense Department’s Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program, administered locally by the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska.

The stakes were removed between October 2013 and last July. They were installed during WWII to trip up potential invaders. A land attack never happened, though Japanese planes bombed Unalaska and Dutch Harbor in 1942.

Good said the stakes that were still standing upright often had barbed wire attached.

The stakes, also known as screw pickets, could be quietly twisted into the ground without the hammering that could attract enemy attention.

The World War I novel “All Quiet on the Western Front,” by Erich Maria Remarque, describes German soldiers carrying the stakes on their shoulders: “The burdens are awkward and heavy.”

The Unalaska project involved removing stakes from 2 to 4.5

Continued on page 38

B.C. salmon outlook is OK, but management plans draw fire



Salmon forecast: There should be some decent salmon fishing in British Columbia this season, according to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) draft integrated fisheries management plans (IFMPs) for north and south coast salmon fisheries released in mid-March.

IFMPs for salmon are developed with feedback from First Nations, commercial and recreational fishermen, and the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee including environmental interests. The draft plans undergo further consultations with stakeholders coastwide and are then finalized in June.

Conservation measures are in place to reduce fishery impacts on Skeena River chum, steelhead, and wild sockeye stocks. These measures include non-retention of some species, gear and fishing modifications, and specific timing closures or sockeye harvest rate reductions when weak stocks are present.

On B.C.'s North Coast, Nass River sockeye returns are expected to be average, with an expected total return from 638,000 to 938,000 and a 50 percent probability of 774,000.

Pink returns are expected to be average, with limited harvesting opportunities anticipated. Chum returns are expected to be very poor. Fisheries will be managed to reduce harvest impacts on chum.

Nass sockeye will be managed to achieve an aggregate spawning escapement target of 200,000. Returns in excess of the escapement target are harvested in food, social, and ceremonial (FSC), Nisga'a Treaty, and commercial harvest opportunities. Management measures will be in place to reduce impacts to specific stocks of concern. Opportunities for a gillnet fishery are evaluated during the pre-season planning process based on predicted returns.

In the Skeena, the sockeye aggregate escapement target is 900,000, and First Nation FSC fishery requirements are in the range of 150,000.

If the pre-season forecast for the Skeena sockeye return is greater than 1.05 million, then fishery openings are planned. If the pre-season run size forecast is below 1.05 million, fisheries will not take place until the in-season run size prediction is greater than 1.05 million. Any gillnet fisheries on or after Aug. 1 will be short-net, short-set.

The total Skeena sockeye return is expected to be above average, with a pre-season return forecast from 1.7 million to 7.3 million and a 50 percent probability of the run reaching 3.5 million.

In Area 6, farther south down the coast from the Skeena, an above-average commercial opportunity for pink salmon is anticipated for 2015, based on brood year escapements in 2013.

For Fraser River sockeye, forecast numbers fall in a broad range of 2,364,000 to 23,580,000 at the 10 percent to 90 percent probability levels. The 50 percent probability forecast is 6,778,000.

DFO said fisheries are expected to be directed at early summer run sockeye, but the majority of the harvest may occur while trying to harvest the more abundant summer run, which makes up approximately 70 percent of the total return at the median forecast. Directed harvest on summer run stocks is expected in 2015 throughout the forecast range.

Some fisheries will be directed on the summer run timing group, but harvest may be limited by constraints on co-migrating groups (early summer and late run sockeye) and stocks of concern, such as Cultus Lake sockeye.

The ink on the IFMPs was barely dry when opponents of commercial fishing started attacking them as they went into the consultation phase with stakeholders.

Conservation group Watershed Watch claims that small co-migrating runs such as the Cultus Lake sockeye and Thompson River coho that join more abundant runs in the Fraser River would be threatened by commercial fishing openings.

But Carl Walters, professor emeritus at the University of British

Columbia, argues that babying weak stocks by cutting back on commercial fishing hasn't worked.

"Reduced fishing doesn't always lead to increased returns; it just means harvest losses," he said in a speech to the fishermen's union last year. In fact, he added, "Smaller stocks can be sustainably overfished without causing an extinction risk. An overfished stock can be biologically healthy."

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Herring hassle: Following on the heels of a controversial herring fishery this past season, B.C.'s fishermen's union said the Herring Industry Advisory Board (HIAB) is effectively controlled by corporate interests.

"The government thinks it is getting consensus advice from a broad range of stakeholders, when in fact it is only getting one or two corporations' advice, does this situation lend itself to good governance with inclusive and transparent decision-making?" wrote UFAWU-CAW President Kim Olsen to Canada Minister of Fisheries Gail Shea April 9.

"There are claims of consensus-based recommendations to government, but in reality whose interest does HIAB represent?" the letter continued.

The Terms of Reference Mandate for HIAB put five elected seine representatives, five elected gillnet representatives, four unelected processors, and one Herring Conservation and Research Society representative on the membership.

"When one company (Canfisco) owns some 226 herring licenses and controls a good deal more and independent fishermen own on average one or two licenses each, who is electing the seine and gillnet representatives?" Olsen wrote. "When almost every herring processor of any size has been consolidated under one company, what interests do the four processor members represent? It appears that one interest dominates HIAB."

The union letter goes on to say that last summer HIAB was asked by DFO if it would support establishment of a more inclusive advisory process to build the collaborative understanding with First Nations that is needed to manage the herring, but HIAB refused.

It seems as if without collaborative management, DFO and First Nations continue to butt heads.

Members of the Heiltsuk Nation blockaded a DFO office in Bella Bella on B.C.'s central coast March 29 to protest a proposed roe herring gillnet fishery, claiming that there were not enough fish to conduct a commercial fishery. Fisheries officials maintained that scientific research indicated that stocks were sound enough to warrant a fishery.

A two-day seine fishery March 22 and 23 took 689.9 tons of herring. Eventually the DFO closed the area and the gillnet fleet left the area.

Coastwide, the fishery was spotty, with roe herring gillnetters landing 4,064.8 tons of the 13,975-ton quota in the Gulf of Georgia and seiners 9,278.2 tons of the 15,440-ton quota in the area.

A First Nations injunction against commercial fishing on the west coast of Vancouver Island was overturned, but DFO didn't open the area due to poor fish quality. The Haida Nation won an injunction against a fishery on Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands), but there was no objection to commercial fishing on B.C.'s north coast in the Prince Rupert area.

Still, with an overall quota of 37,200 tons this year, only 15,980.4 tons were caught.

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

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From left to right: Dylan Capjohn, Macarius Agnot, and Owen Tuckfield.

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PWS DRIFT.....	\$235K	KODIAK TANNER <60'.....	\$28K
COOK INLET DRIFT.....	N/A	DIVE	
COOK INLET SET.....	\$60K/PKG	SE GEODUCK.....	\$70K
AREA M DRIFT.....	\$160K	SE CUCUMBER.....	\$25K
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Alaska Entry Permit Prices

(as of 6-1-15)

Species	Fishery	Asking Price*	Offer*	State Value*
SALMON	S SE DRIFT	95	92	90.7
	S PWS DRIFT	220-	210	233.5
	S COOK INLET DRIFT	72+	70+	63.8
	S AREA M DRIFT	138-	100-	119.5
	S BRISTOL BAY DRIFT	145-	135-	169.9
	S SE SEINE	270-	270+	262.5
	S PWS SEINE	180-	175-	198
	S COOK INLET SEINE	75	70	86
	S KODIAK SEINE	40	38	47.1
	S CHIGNIK SEINE	225	200	227.5
S AREA M SEINE	55	50	65.9	
HERRING	S YAKUTAT SET	16	12	18.6
	S COOK INLET SET	16	13	14.9
	S AREA M SET NET	55+	50+	55.6
	S BRISTOL SET NET	40	40	41.3
	S LOWER YUKON	9.5	9	9.9
	S POWER TROLL	41	40-	38.8
	S SHAND TROLL	12-	11	11
	H SE GILLNET	12	10	13.4
	H KODIAK GILLNET	5	5	5
	H SITKA SEINE	300	225	309.6
H PWS SEINE	25	20	30.9	
H COOK INLET SEINE	15	12	16.8	
H KODIAK SEINE	26-	20	30.3	
SHELLFISH	H SE POUND SOUTH	35-	30	35.6
	H SE POUND NORTH	38	25	43.1
	H PWS POUND	6	5	3.5
	S SE DUNGY 75 POT	18	17	14.1
S SE DUNGY 150 POT	34+	32+	27.5	
S SE DUNGY 225 POT	50	47-	39	
S SE DUNGY 300 POT	65	60	43.8	
S SE POT SHRIMP	22	20	22.8	
S KODIAK TANNER <60	24	22	29.7	
S PUGET SOUND DUNGY	140	140	N/A	
S WASHINGTON DUNGY	1,500-3,500/FT	1,500-3,000/FT	N/A	
S OREGON DUNGY	1,500-3,500/FT	1,250-3,000/FT	N/A	
S CALIFORNIA DUNGY	200-600/POT	200-600/POT	N/A	
SE ALASKA DIVE				
SE AK Dive	URCHIN	4	3	2.4
SE AK Dive	CUCUMBER	25	22	27.8
SE AK Dive	GEODUCK	70-	65-	86.6

Prices in JUNE vary in accordance with market conditions. *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 slipped even further during April, with asking prices dropping as low as \$145k. Buyers are starting to offer in the \$130s. Strong demand for leases had offers holding at \$23k. SE permits were slow to move and holding in the range of \$90k to \$95k. PWS permits dipped to a low of \$220k and buyers were offering \$210k. Cook Inlet permit prices were up a bit in the low to mid \$70s. Area M permits dropped to a low of \$138k over the last month.

Seine: A few SE permits traded over the last month, mostly in the \$260k to \$280k range. PWS permits firmed up a little with low prices around \$180k and offers at \$175k. Nothing new with Cook Inlet permits. Kodiak permits are holding at \$40k. No recent activity in Area M permits.

Troll: SE Power Troll permits still trading right around \$40k. Hand Troll permits were available at \$12k. Washington troll permits were selling as quick as they come on the market at around \$30k. Unlimited Oregon permits are looking like they are headed up with only one left at \$22k. California permits were still available in the mid to high teens.

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	44.00-48.00	44.00-48.00
H	2C	C/B	1-3	B	46.00-48.00	46.00-48.00
H	2C	C/B	4-10	B	48.00-50.00	48.00-50.00
H	2C	C/B	ANY	U	52.00	50.00
H	2C	A		B/U	50.00	48.00
H	3A	D		B/U	40.00-47.00	37.00-42.00
H	3A	C/B	1-5	B	43.00-44.00	42.00-44.00
H	3A	C/B	5-10	B	44.00-46.00	43.00-45.00
H	3A	C/B	>10	U	48.00-50.00	40.00-48.00
H	3A	A		B/U	50.00	48.00
H	3B	D		B	20.00-26.00	16.00-22.00
H	3B	C/B	1-10	B	24.00-28.00	20.00-25.00
H	3B	C/B	>10	U	32.00-35.00	28.00-32.00
H	3B	A		B/U	N/A	24.00
H	4A	D		B/U	14.00-16.00	12.00-14.00
H	4A	C/B	1-10	B	18.00-20.00	16.00-20.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	B	18.00-20.00	16.00-20.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	U	20.00-22.00	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	21.00-24.00
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	24.00-28.00	18.00-22.00
S	WY	C/B	>10	U	28.00-30.00	25.00-27.00
S	WY	A		B/U	30.00	30.00
S	CG	C/B	1-10	B	18.00-22.00	16.00-20.00
S	CG	C/B	>10	U	24.00-26.00	21.00-23.00
S	CG	A		B/U	30.00	25.00
S	WG	C/B	1-10	B	11.00-13.00	8.00-10.00
S	WG	C/B	>10	B	13.00-14.00	10.00-12.00
S	WG	C/B/A	>10	U	14.00-20.00	12.00-13.50
S	AI	C/B/A		B/U	1.50-6.00	1.00-4.50
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



The halibut quota market remains strong. There was a recent sale of a 2C block for around \$50. Unblocked 3A is going at \$48-\$50 and blocks are into the mid \$40s. Offers for unblocked 3B jumped to over \$30/lb in the last month. 4A is selling at around \$20. 4BCD are still slow to catch up to the rest of the world.

SE quota is getting hard to find and prices there are in the mid \$20s for blocks, upper \$20s for unblocked. Nothing new in WY, with very limited listings. Prices have increased CG as the least expensive quota has sold, with unblocked now \$24-\$26. A little recent activity in WG had a block moving at less than \$10 and unblocked at \$13.50. Not so much interest further west yet.

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 California Market Squid Boat. Boat holds 75 ton of RSW squid. Priced to sell quickly. Comes with market and captain. Great producer every year. Price is 3.1 million including net and skiff. Recent survey and recently painted. New machinery and hydraulics in last few years. Call Don (949) 279-9369.

PERMIT FOR LEASE
 Puget Sound Seine permit. Call for pricing. Also, fall gill net, 6-1/8" x 220 deep x 400 fathoms: \$3200. (360) 224-6411.



FOR SALE - F/V PACIFIC SON
 1993 37' fiberglass Troller. 6 cylinder John Deere engine with Twin Disc reduction gear. Two radars, 4 gps plotters, two depth sounders and Comnav auto pilot. Hydraulic anchor puller and 4 spool simplex gurdies. Current safety equipment. \$140,000 including OR troll permit. Mike Becker (541) 574-6985, or Mark Newell (541) 270-4715.



FOR SALE
 Commercial squid light boat with permit. Priced below market value. \$429,000. Call Donny (949) 279-9369.



FOR SALE
 Mel Martin combo. Gillnetter-crabber, twin Volvo AD41's, duo-props, all bells and whistles, fast. \$85,000 without spare engine. (360) 391-2832 or (360) 856-2930.

GEAR AND ENGINE FOR SALE
 Marine gear is ZF 325a-1 with 272 hrs. 2.4 to 1 reduction, still warranted. \$11,000 (CAD). Engine 6v92 Turbo good running condition \$3000 (CAD). Call John (604) 740-7863.

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



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Sardine fishery shutdown *continued from page 6*

emphasized the effects of non-productive environmental conditions.

"The biomass is going to be reduced after four years of really bad recruitment, with or without fishing," she said.

West Coast water temperatures have warmed in the last two years, and fishermen believe a population rebound is emerging but hasn't been factored into the abundance forecast.

"It's still early in the spawning season, and we're seeing quite a lot of recruitment now," said Pleschner-Steele. "We're seeing small fish, and we're seeing eggs in the water."

Controlled fishing: The July 1 to June 30 sardine season - and its total catch allotment - is divided into three periods.

When the combined landings from California, Oregon, and Washington meet per-period limits, fishing is closed until the next period begins. The volume of landings in each state can vary with sardine migration patterns, and a recent trend has seen Oregon and Washington catching much of the total.

While periodic fishery closures have been common, this is the first time an entire sardine season has been shut down since federal management of the fishery began in 1998. But in a decision that has drawn criticism from environmental groups, the PFMC has set a 7,000-ton allowance for incidental, tribal, and research catches of sardine.

"The council took a moderate approach," said Kerry Griffin, the PFMC's staff officer for coastal pelagic species. Allowing some bycatch prevents the shutdown of other key fisheries such as mackerel and anchovy, he said.

But with sardines out of the mix, fluctuations in other fisheries could compound economic impacts.

"This will be a really tough year for us," Pleschner-Steele said. "An El Niño could affect squid, and if mackerel don't show up, our guys will be tied to the docks." ↓

Alaska Legislature *continued from page 7*

Votes for and against Ruffner crossed party lines, creating unfamiliar alliances among some Democrats and Republicans.

Ruffner is the longtime executive director of the Kenai Watershed Forum, which is concerned with protecting salmon habitat along the Kenai River.

Critics said Ruffner favored commercial fishing interests and represented a prospective imbalance on the board.

Finding replacements for Rupright and Ruffner was hardly an immediate priority for Walker, who two weeks after the board confirmation hearings was still battling the Legislature over Medicaid and the state budget. ↓

Steve Quinn is a journalist based in Juneau.

Salmon preview *continued from page 10*

CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN OREGON

Lack of water is dominating California's environmental consciousness, but this year's salmon runs consist of fish that reached the ocean when a multiyear drought was in an early stage.

Improved fall runs of Chinook salmon are expected for California's Sacramento and Klamath rivers, with the

state's central coast areas getting plenty of extra fishing time this season.

The commercial ocean salmon fishing season started early from Horse Mountain (a few miles north of Shelter Cove) to Point Arena (Fort Bragg). Unlike last year, the month of May was opened to fishing, with a 27-inch minimum size limit being the only restriction.

Similarly improved fishing conditions have been set for the region from Point Arena to San Francisco Bay.

South of the San Francisco area, fishing time has been reduced from last year to control impacts on winter run Sacramento River Chinook.

From San Francisco to Point Sur, fishing opened May 1 for the entire month. The rest of the season is from June 7 to 30, July 8 to 31, and Aug. 1 to 15.

The season in the southernmost region, from Point Sur to the Mexico border, also included the month of May, then June 7 to 30 and July 8 to 31.

Fishing in the state's northern region, from the Oregon border to Humboldt South Jetty - the California Klamath Management Zone - is restricted to the month of September as it was last year, with a smaller quota of 3,000 fish.

But Eureka-based fishermen don't have to travel too far to access the expanded fishing time in the Shelter Cove area.

The season for Southern Oregon's Klamath Management Zone - from Humbug Mountain to the Oregon-California border - started April 1 and runs through the end of August. There are quotas for June, July, and August, but they're less restrictive than last year's, allowing a total of 800 more fish to be caught. ↓

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Salmon quality *continued from page 18*

higher R-value of Nida-Core or spray foam makes them more effective options.

Refrigerated seawater systems

RSW systems chill fish through a mechanical process that pulls heat from the catch within the fish holds into an evaporator that then discharges that heat overboard through a condenser. Most RSW units require between 5 and 15 horsepower, and this energy is supplied to the unit either hydraulically, electrically, or through an auxiliary diesel engine.

RSW systems are regarded by most fishermen as the ultimate fish quality upgrade because they provide consistent results, create independence from an ice supply, and require little additional effort to operate. RSW system maintenance costs are also generally low if cared for properly, with the largest annual expense generally the preseason "startup," should you decide to pay a technician to perform this service for you.

The benefits of installing an RSW system are obvious, but there is one barrier that prevents many fishermen from going this route. It's expensive. A 7.5-ton hydraulically driven unit from IMS or Pacific West Refrigeration will run \$20,000 or more, and that doesn't include installation costs. Add a new 4-cube hydraulic pump, related plumbing, plus insulation, and the total could fall in the \$40,000 to \$70,000 range, depending on your boat. These numbers can be daunting, but for most fishermen an investment in RSW will provide a solid return over the long run.

A more manageable approach to installing RSW is investing in the necessary upgrades over a period of a few years: insulating and plumbing your holds first (say, \$14,000); upgrading your hydraulics the next year (about \$12,000); and the following year going for the unit itself (say, \$25,000). Taking smaller bites out of the project helps maintain your fishing income and reduces the potential of losing early season fishing time by overcommitting to a large project.

Another option for budget-conscious fishermen is the self-installed, belt-driven RSW unit offered by Sea Cool Refrigeration. These units draw around 5 horsepower, do not require any hydraulic system upgrades, and cost less than \$6,000. They might not have the chilling performance of other RSW systems, but their low cost and compact size make them a good choice for fishermen with smaller boats who are willing to supplement the system with ice on heavier fishing days. When considering any RSW investment, it is a good idea to talk to fellow fishermen who have had firsthand experience with the unit to obtain a better understanding of its installation costs and performance.

Pros

- Good return on investment – For most fishing operations, RSW will provide a good return on the initial investment long term.
- Consistent chilling results – If operated properly, an RSW system will generally have no problem getting your fish down to temp, opening after opening.
- Independence – RSW allows you the freedom of not having to worry about getting ice before each opening, granting your operation more flexibility.

- Little effort required – RSW systems are easy to operate and require very little effort to operate on behalf of the captain or crew.

- No ice purchases – Not only does an RSW system save you the hassle of having to track down ice, it also eliminates that pesky ice bill.

Cons

- Expensive – The primary drawback to an RSW system is the cost of the unit and related systems. Working up to RSW by investing in smaller upgrades over the course of a few years can make this more manageable.

- Increases fuel bill – RSW units require between 8 and 20 horsepower to operate, and this extra work burns up to a gallon an hour more fuel, depending on the drive configuration. With high fuel prices this adds up fast. ↴

Around the Yards *continued from page 21*

Tacoma: Vigor Industrial's Tacoma shipyard has delivered three 60-foot breasting barges to Foss Maritime. The barge system will be used to moor Shell's drill rigs at Terminal 5 in Seattle, where the company is scheduled to ready its fleet for Arctic drilling this summer.

The project was completed in less than two months and created 60 jobs for the Tacoma yard and its subcontractors.

"We are so pleased that our Tacoma shipyard is now building new vessels," said Vigor's Bryan Nichols. "Over the years, Tacoma teams have earned a stellar reputation for quality commercial ship repair and major refits. Adding new builds to its résumé increases our capacity in the region."

Vigor reports that in the last few years, the yard has completed a number of major refits, including mid-body extensions for two Coastal Transportation vessels.

Vigor teams added 164 tons of steel to the freight carrier Coastal Progress, increasing its length by 46 feet. Similar work was later done on its sister ship, the Coastal Nomad.

The Tacoma yard also handled a major refit of the Trident Seafoods fishing vessel Pacific Ram. Sponsoning added 5 feet to each side of the vessel, and a new bulbous bow was installed for added efficiency. The fish hold capacity was increased by 35 percent, and its seakeeping and stability improved.

"Tacoma offers the responsiveness of a smaller yard with the resources of the broader Vigor family," Nichols said. ↴

Dutch Harbor report *continued from page 27*

feet long. The rusty, pointy metal stakes look like big corkscrews, with the longest weighing 7.5 pounds.

Beaver Inlet is an undeveloped and roadless part of Unalaska Island, accessible by hiking trails from town. Commercial fishing activity in the area includes Icicle's floating seafood processor, the Northern Victor.

The 2,811 stakes were stacked in piles and then loaded onto Trevor Shaishnikoff's fishing boat, the Kalekata, for delivery to a metal recycler, Good said.

Hundreds more stakes remain on the island, she said, advising people to watch out while hiking and walking dogs.

Rommel stakes also were screwed into the tundra on other Aleutian Islands, including Amchitka and Adak during WWII.

Jim Paulin is a longtime Unalaska/Dutch Harbor journalist.

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- fires
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