

Looking Back: Rough times in Astoria



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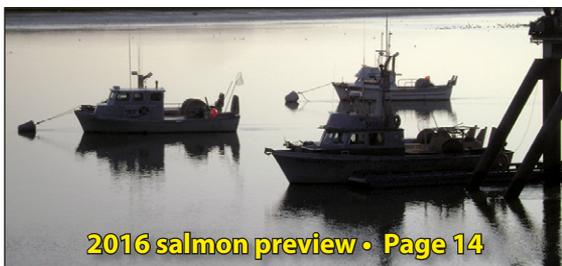
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ON THE COVER: Salmon gillnetters in Bristol Bay.
Chris Miller photo

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This issue has a marketing focus. But what is marketing? I punched the word into dictionary.com, and the site defined it as “the total of activities involved in the transfer of goods from the producer or seller to the consumer or buyer, including advertising, shipping, storing, and selling.”

Maybe the more important question about marketing is: Does it work? Definitely. Probably. Hopefully.

Seafood producers don’t dare ignore marketing, even if the results can be hard to quantify.

Alaska and its fishing industry clearly are marketing believers, plowing millions of dollars into the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to push the state’s products both domestically and abroad.

We’ve also seen, over the years, marketing activity on a regional level around Alaska.

A new effort is emerging now from the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, which commercial gillnetters support through a salmon landings tax. With the help of a marketing agency, the BBRSDA is planning to launch a campaign to build a sockeye “brand.”

The campaign will start with a trial run in a single city, the name of which remained undisclosed at press time.

“The scale of the initial work means that its success will be measurable and replicable,” the association said in an April 5 announcement. “Future expansion into new areas will be based on results and metrics from the proof of concept branding campaign.”

Now there’s some marketing talk for you. But hey, let’s wish the Bristol Bay folks every success.



Martha loves it: Did you happen to see the May issue of *Martha Stewart Living*?

The popular consumer magazine ran a glossy, eight-page spread titled “Wild About Salmon.”

The article featured dishes with fresh, frozen, canned, and smoked salmon, and the sumptuous photos made you want to eat the pages.

“Rich in flavor, beautiful in color, succulent in texture, and one of the best natural sources of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids around – we could go on (and on) about our love for this wild fish,” the article said, noting that May marks the start of salmon season in Alaska.

Naturally, ASMI had a full-page ad in the magazine, which is part of publishing giant Meredith Corp.



Direct marketing: If you’re a fisherman who fancies the idea of marketing your own catch, don’t miss our feature article on Page 10.

The writer, Shellene Hutter, is a fisheries biologist in Juneau and the seafood industry coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

She explains the steps necessary to become a direct marketer. And she emphasizes that it’s not that difficult to get started!

Wesley

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Marketing moves: The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute has added a couple of new board members and designated a new board chairman. – deckboss.blogspot.com

Kodiak salmon outlook: The preseason forecast calls for a harvest of about 3.4 million sockeye salmon and 16.2 million pinks. – adfg.alaska.gov

Building a salmon brand: The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association has picked an Anchorage marketing agency to mount a new campaign. – bbrsda.com

Alaska's plight: Economist Gunnar Knapp discusses the state budget crunch and the implications for fisheries. – kmxt.org

CFEC legislation: Discussions continue in Juneau over the future of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. – kdlg.org

Film short: The story of Juneau-based Taku River Reds. – vimeo.com

Commentary: For Alaska fisheries, the 40th anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act is reason to celebrate. – adn.com

Fish science pays: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has announced prize winners for sablefish and lingcod tag recovery. – deckboss.blogspot.com

Backing for trade agreement: Premier Christy Clark says the Trans-Pacific Partnership would help British Columbia's seafood sector by removing export tariffs. – thenorthernview.com

West Coast salmon set: The Pacific Fishery Management Council has adopted ocean salmon seasons off Washington, Oregon, and California. – pcouncil.org

Togiak herring fishery opens: The industry has another huge quota this year at 28,782 tons. – deckboss.blogspot.com

Mark your calendar: The Alaska Legislature has designated an annual date to celebrate the state's abundant wild salmon. – deckboss.blogspot.com

UFA leadership shuffle: United Fishermen of Alaska has made changes to its executive committee. – scribd.com

Salmon impasse: After negotiations with tribal leaders fail again, Washington state fishery managers decide to separately seek the federal permit necessary to hold salmon fisheries this season in Puget Sound. – wdfw.wa.gov

Herring surprise: The industry rallies after the Togiak sac roe fishery opens early. – kdlg.org

Election results: Members of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association have chosen Tony Wood for the board of directors. – bbrsda.com

Togiak grinding: More than 7,000 tons, or about a quarter of the quota, have been taken so far in Alaska's largest herring fishery. – adfg.alaska.gov

Alaska fish politics: State Rep. Louise Stutes, R-Kodiak, has drawn a hometown challenger in Duncan Fields, a longtime member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Stutes chairs the House Special Committee on Fisheries. – adn.com

Going fishing: Brett Veerhusen is leaving as executive director of the national advocacy group Seafood Harvesters of America. – scribd.com

Making progress: The Togiak herring harvest has reached 13,600 tons, or nearly half the preseason quota. – adfg.alaska.gov

That's a wrap: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has closed the Togiak herring seine season due to declining fish size and budget cuts necessitating "a more conservative management approach." – adfg.alaska.gov

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The Investor tragedy remembered at the Blessing of the Fleet

A warm and breezy spring day belied the seriousness of the event. The small town of Blaine, Washington, was hosting its annual preseason Blessing of the Fleet, as it had every year for decades, to commemorate the many local fishermen and women who had lost their lives in pursuit of the sea's bounty.

Pressed up against the British Columbia coast to the north and the Strait of Georgia to the west, Blaine has always been a fishing port, its waterfront an important focus. Nearly everyone had connections to it directly or through friends, family, neighbors. It was felt in the fish plants and boat-building and repair shops, in the churches, in the town's shoreside businesses, in the schools, in the rhythms of the seasons that passed in lockstep with the seasons of the crab, salmon, bottomfish, shellfish, and other denizens of the sea. And though time has brought many changes to Blaine, as it has to most coastal towns, at its heart and core Blaine is still strongly connected with its fishing roots.

So it was no surprise that when Blaine's Blessing of the Fleet commenced at 1:30 p.m. on May 1, the parking lots and the meeting room in the Blaine Boating Center were packed and overflowing. Similar events occur in many places along our coasts, providing opportunities for remembrance of loved ones lost at sea.

Working on the water carries some unique risks, risks that have been lessened significantly by advances in boat-building, safety devices like EPIRBs, survival suits, inflatable life rafts, weather prediction, communications, depthfinders and radars, and a Coast Guard well-equipped, capable, and committed to rescue activities. In fact, for the first time in Alaska's history, a fatality-free year occurred in 2015.

Some citizens carry a special burden of loss. In September 1982, the Blaine-registered F/V Investor, a nearly new fiberglass limit seiner, had one last fishing opening to go before the end of the salmon season. The Investor had docked in Craig, Alaska, to unload its harvest from the previous period and to celebrate in a local restaurant the captain's birthday and a successful season. But two days later, before it was expected to head to Noyes Island for that last fishing period, it was spotted anchored in an isolated cove not far from town. Soon a heavy fog moved in, obscuring it from view. When the fog cleared a day later, the Investor was still there. But shortly thereafter it burst into flames.

It must have been hard to imagine what was happening. There was no sign of anyone aboard, and the fire was intense. When efforts to quell it had some success, Alaska State Troopers entered the cabin and found four burnt bodies, later identified as the skipper and his wife, both 28, and presumably their two children, 5 and 4. As terrible as that was, they soon realized that the fire was not the cause of death. Each person had been fatally shot.

The flames reignited and the troopers were forced to evacuate. When the fire was finally quenched, they were again able to enter the vessel. This time they found the scorched remains of three of the Investor's crew, all in their teens, and later concluded that the fourth crewman had perished with them. The causes of death were determined or assumed to be the same.

Death is part of life. People age; disease and misfortune take

their tolls. Doctors misdiagnose. Carnage occurs continuously on our highways. Lead and chemicals get into our drinking water, toxins into our food. We make poor eating choices.

When we learn of a stranger's untimely death, it saddens us. When our friends or family members die, we mourn them. And when they have died pointlessly, we mourn even more deeply. And when they are complete innocents, children, we cannot help but mourn their lost lives even more yet.

I think the most difficult deaths of all are those that make no sense, that are incomprehensible. They can't be made to go away, and they can't be understood. This is the pain of Blaine.

Sept. 6, 1982, seems a long time ago to me. I was just finishing my first season on the Copper River, the beginning of a long career. But to the friends and families of those who perished on the Investor, those whose hopes and dreams can never be realized, there has been limited closure.

The Blessing of the Fleet acknowledges that. I could feel the potentially healing power of the prayers. I saw the value of the Forming of the Wreath ceremony. The names of those lost and their birth and death dates were announced and a bell rung for each, followed by a family member or friend or surrogate from Blaine plac-

There was no sign of anyone aboard, and the fire was intense. When efforts to quell it had some success, Alaska State Troopers entered the cabin and found four burnt bodies.

ing the proffered flower in the wreath. The sister of the Investor skipper had five flowers to place, and friends of the crew had three. By the time the last flower was placed, the wreath was heavy with them. The school band raised its much-practiced music, and the wreath

was carried out to the historic ferry the M/V Plover, to be deposited in the salty waters out beyond Semiahmoo Spit.

Capping the blessing, three WWII-vintage airplanes made two passes low over the harbor, with one of the three planes peeling off on the second pass to symbolize loss.

Alaskan journalist Brittany Retherford had organized an event in the Blaine High School cafeteria as a postscript to the blessing to address the Investor tragedy even more directly. About 100 people came, connecting with each other and with outsiders whose interests, like mine, mostly stemmed from shared concern over the failure to solve the crime.

Local families put together a delicious homegrown potluck, and Brittany had set up her series of photos of the Investor family and prepared a slide show and a frank statement of what she had discovered during the year and a half of her researching. She had also invited two Oregon songwriter/musicians, Jon Broderick and Jay Speakman, who have been very active in the annual FisherPoets Gathering in Astoria, Oregon. They performed their moving song about the Investor tragedy, written for the Gathering in February. They followed up with songs in praise of the spirits of fishing and of the sea.

A tragedy of the magnitude of the Investor event, for which a motive has never been discovered nor a perpetrator identified, lives forever in those still living. Blaine clearly has a strong sense of community, which helps strengthen all. ↴

Buck Meloy is a retired commercial fisherman and a former Pacific Fishing associate editor.

Oil production, trans-Alaska pipeline remain vital to state's future

Editor's note: Tom Barrett formerly commanded the U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska. He now heads the company that operates the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. Here, Barrett provides a concise update on Alaska's oil situation. Oil revenue is vital for paying the costs of state government, including fisheries management.

Recently, pronouncements about Alaska's oil and gas industry have been made daily, often loudly, by people, some of whom appear guided by misplaced passions rather than logic or fact.

The truth is, Alaska's oil industry is struggling just like Alaska's economy. Industry companies are collectively cutting back, laying off hundreds of hardworking Alaskans, and halting some operations due to frighteningly low oil prices and political hurdles.

A truth remains: The long-term health of Alaska's oil and gas industry is as connected and vital as ever to the health of our state. Another truth is that trans-Alaska pipeline system (TAPS) throughput matters a lot.

Oil throughput is a lifeblood of Alaska's economy, North Slope production is a beating heart, and TAPS is an 800-mile-long artery. Alaska's oil is transported, as it has been for nearly 40 years, from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez via TAPS by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. employees and TAPS contractors.

The TAPS workforce of 2,500 men and women operates TAPS more safely, more reliably, and more efficiently than ever. Nearly 95 percent of Alyeska employees live in Alaska and carry a deep satisfaction knowing that their work is essential to their state and communities. They have a passion for their fellow pipeline workers and TAPS. We call it "TAPS pride," and it is felt in good and tough times.

The industry employs thousands of Alaskans across the state – engineers and surveyors, pipeline technicians, welders and laborers, accountants, and safety and environmental professionals. They are mothers and fathers of families that bolster Alaska's retail industry, schools, and nonprofit agencies. They are coaches and consumers, volunteers and neighbors.

TAPS throughput matters to Alaska's residents, economy, and communities. It matters to those working in the industry. And it matters to the TAPS infrastructure and the science of operating a pipeline that travels through some of the world's most spectacular and challenging landscapes.

In April, Alaska's oil and gas industry received positive news. Alaska Department of Revenue data showed that yearlong North Slope oil production had increased for the first time since 2002 and for only the second time since 1991. From April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016, the daily production average rose 0.87 percent over the previous 12 months (512,456 barrels per day compared to 508,047). And for fiscal year 2016, the state predicts that production will reach an average of 520,200 barrels daily, up from 500,700 barrels in fiscal year 2015.

Throughput is vital to TAPS sustainability. People often say that TAPS is only a quarter full, down from its peak of 2.03 million barrels in 1988. This is not technically accurate since the pipeline is always "full" of oil. Lower throughput means that the oil moves in



The double-hulled oil tanker Eagle Bay, built in 2015 to carry Alaska North Slope crude oil. ExxonMobil photo

the pipe more slowly and in winter at lower temperatures.

Colder, slower moving oil amplifies the risk of increased wax buildup and ice inside the pipeline. That is a reality of current throughput and a battle that TAPS employees face every winter. If TAPS operations shut down in winter, cold oil will make it difficult to restart the system, and Alaska's economy and the families that ultimately depend on that economy would take a substantial hit.

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West Coast sardine closure continues

The West Coast sardine fishing season will be closed for the second straight year due to a low population estimate, but reports of strong spawning suggest near future improvement.

Closure of the July 1 to June 30 sardine season was approved by the Pacific Fishery Management Council at its mid-April meeting. The decision was automatic – directed fishing is banned when sardine biomass (the volume of fish at spawning age) falls below 150,000 metric tons. The most recent stock assessment estimates population at 106,000 tons.

The 2015 season closure was triggered by a 97,000-ton stock assessment, the lowest estimate in recent history.

But according to a press release from the National Marine Fisheries Service, there is potential for future population growth.

“Surveys in 2015 counted increased numbers of small sardines off central California and similarly found young sardines along the Oregon-California coast that would not be included in overall stock biomass estimates, and as such, would not be represented in the stock assessment,” NMFS said. “That indicates that sardines spawned along the West Coast last year and, if the young fish survive, they could add to the adult population in coming years.”

The stock assessment was drawn from offshore surveys, and NMFS scientists have acknowledged that it might have been lowballed due to changes in the timing and location of sardine spawning.

Unusually warm water conditions are believed to have caused a northern shift in sardine distribution, with last year’s spawns

shifting to the Oregon coast. The recent warm water trend could also lead to improved survival rates of juvenile fish.

Survey questions: A new round of surveying is underway and will continue through the summer.

Surveying methods have been a source of concern for the California Wetfish Producers Association, which represents fishermen and processors.

“Acoustic trawl surveys drive the stock assessments, and they’re missing the body of fish,” said Diane Pleschner-Steele, the association’s executive director.

Acoustic transmitters are hull-mounted 10 meters underwater and fail to pick up fish in the upper depth column, she said.

“So the stock assessment numbers are very precautionary, and our harvest cutoff is very precautionary – and we support that,” Pleschner-Steele said. “We just think there are more fish out there than what the stock assessment says.”

Near-future surveys have the potential to be more inclusive, she continued, as NMFS is using a new vessel that has side-scan capability. Pleschner-Steele is also advocating for nearshore surveying, and she credited NMFS scientists for updating their techniques.

“They realize things need to be changed, and I’m encouraged about that,” she said.

For now, the continuation of the shutdown is compounding the economic impacts on seiners like Nick Jurlin, who works out of San Pedro and is on the management council’s Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel.

“It’s hurting for sure,” he said. “With the El Niño, squid aren’t here and in the past, we would have had sardines to keep us going – it’s tough for sure.”

Jurlin added that anchovy fishing has provided “a little something to keep the crew busy” until his vessel, the F/V Eileen, shifts to mackerel.

He also believes population surveys can be more comprehensive.

“There are sardines around, it’s not like they’re not here,” Jurlin said. “It’s pretty evident with this last survey, they missed the fish and the recruits.”

He added, “It’s not because the scientists are bad scientists; it’s because fish change all the time and they do different things.”

Though not a staple fishery, Pacific sardine is a respectable revenue source in good years. In 2012, the most recent year for which economic data is available, West Coast ex-vessel income reached \$21.5 million. In 2010 and 2011, sardine exports were valued at \$44 million and \$34.8 million, respectively. ↓

– Daniel Mintz

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Icicle Seafoods has operations in key ports around Alaska, including Seward. Wesley Loy photo

Icicle Seafoods sold to Canadian company Cooke

Cooke, a Canadian aquaculture company, announced May 9 it had signed a “definitive agreement” to purchase Seattle-based processor Icicle Seafoods Inc.

Cooke said the deal was expected to close within 30 days “once all regulatory and legal matters have been completed.”

The announcement didn’t say whether the Icicle name would continue, or disclose the dollar value of the deal.

Cooke, a family-owned company headquartered in Blacks Harbour, New Brunswick, is a major salmon farmer. The company says it has a global sales team.

With the Icicle acquisition, the Cooke group of companies will produce more than 275,000 metric tons of seafood a year and generate \$1.8 billion in annual sales, Cooke said.

Twice sold: This marks the second time in less than a year that an Icicle sale has been announced. In June 2015, a deal was announced to sell Icicle to Indonesian interests. But that deal fell through.

Icicle began with a single cannery in Petersburg, Alaska, in 1965 and grew into one of the state’s top processors of salmon, halibut, sablefish, king crab, and other species. The company operates shore plants in Bristol Bay, Seward, Kodiak’s Larsen Bay, and Petersburg. Icicle also has a number of catcher boats and processing ships, including the Northern Victor, which anchors near Dutch Harbor and packs pollock and cod.

Icicle also farms Atlantic salmon in Washington state.

Paine & Partners, a private equity firm, has held Icicle since 2007.

In acquiring Icicle, Cooke said it would become “the only company in the world that farms salmon while holding a significant market position in wild salmon.”

“The Icicle team is excited about the opportunity to join the Cooke family of companies and to be able to focus on the expansion of our footprint in Alaska,” said Icicle CEO Christopher Ruettgers. “Cooke provides Icicle with a long-term owner that is dedicated to the seafood industry. The partnership with Cooke also means access to capital to further modernize our platform, expanded market access for the products harvested by our fleets, and a broader product offering for our customer base.”

– Wesley Loy



Alaska Gov. Bill Walker places a flower at the Juneau fishermen’s memorial during the Blessing of the Fleet event on May 7. The same day, Walker signed House Bill 128 into law, establishing Aug. 10 of each year as Alaska Wild Salmon Day. “Alaska’s constitution calls for the sustainable yield of our state’s natural resources, including our fish,” the governor said. “Alaska Wild Salmon Day will provide another opportunity to highlight the gold standard our constitution has set for sustainably managed fisheries and the world-class seafood Alaska has to offer.” Photo courtesy of the governor’s office

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Alaska produces magnificent salmon and other seafood, and commercial fishermen can take advantage of state regulations to market their catches themselves. It's not that complicated, a state official says. Kelsie Melling photo

Selling your catch

So you want to be a direct marketer. But how?

At the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, fishermen often call with very interesting questions that we don't know the answer to immediately. This is not because we don't know our regulations, but because we just have never been asked the question before. Fishermen are creative inventors, oftentimes out of necessity. It is these very traits that prove invaluable to their fishing operations.

Fishermen can harness their creativity and expand their markets by becoming what's called a direct marketer of their commercially harvested seafood.

Many fishermen might think that they are limited to selling only to canneries, or offloading to tenders, maybe throw some dockside sales in there and that's about it.

Beginning in 2005, regulations took effect that allowed commercial fishermen expanded opportunities to market their own catch. A specific license type, initiated by the Department of Revenue (DOR) called a direct marketing license, allows fishermen to sell their fish to anyone anywhere in the world.

Some fishermen have embraced this new opportunity to grow into very successful sole proprietorships. Unfortunately, many fishermen are not aware that having a direct marketer permit can be a great opportunity, or may assume the effort to obtain one is not worth the trouble.

In reality, a direct marketer permit is very simple and inexpensive to apply for and to receive. Really, the hardest part of being a direct marketer is catching the fish!

Benefits of a direct marketer permit

As a direct market fisherman, you can sell to any individual or company anywhere in the world. Fishermen can process their fish onboard their vessel or at a land-based facility. There are no restrictions on who a direct marketer can sell to.

Many companies such as hotels, restaurants, and high-end grocery stores are chomping at the bit to be able to claim that their fish was purchased directly from the fisherman and are willing to pay top dollar to do so. As the seafood industry coordinator here at ADF&G, I constantly receive calls from owners of these businesses looking for lists of fishermen who would be willing to work with them. There are markets out there, and they are a lot easier to find than one might think.

There are also many wonderful resources available to fishermen to help promote their sales. The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute has dedicated staff and services to assist in promoting the sales of Alaska seafood. In the information technology age, it's very easy to set up websites to help businesses locate you.

In fact, many direct marketer fishermen have their catch sold



Most Alaska commercial fishermen deliver and sell their catches to an established processor. Some take a different approach, marketing their fish directly to restaurants or other customers. Wesley Loy photo

before they even catch it. As the seller, you get to determine your own price and terms.

Alan Fisher, of Juneau, describes his experience as a direct marketer: "As a commercial fisherman and a self-employed owner-operator of my own business, I enjoy my independence and controlling my own destiny. Being a direct marketer enhances these attributes and makes me feel more empowered."

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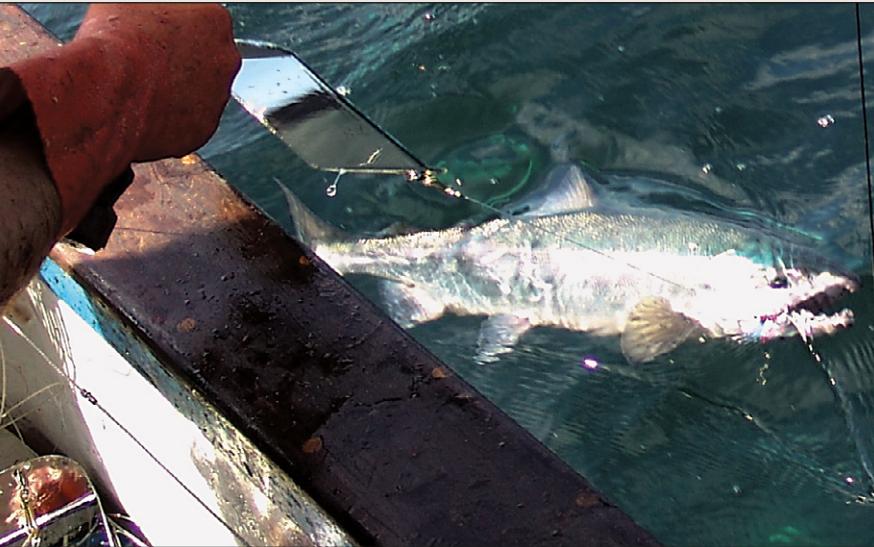
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As a direct market fisherman, you name your own price and terms.
Eric Jordan photo

Direct marketers also support local operations that perform custom processing services. Some shore-based processing facilities receive a welcome boost to their business by performing custom processing for direct marketer fishermen.

Trisha Pearson, of the Ketchikan company Fish From Trish, explains how that process works: "Come to my plant, I can help you out."

She goes on to say how fishermen react to regulations in place

from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) that allow fishermen to process their fish themselves in her DEC-approved facility. "Fishermen love being able to fillet their own fish."

How do I get a direct marketer permit and why do I need one?

The minimum qualifications to become a direct marketer are very simple to determine. The vessel responsible for the harvesting must not exceed 65 feet in length, and the fisherman must operate as a sole proprietorship.

A sole proprietorship is a business owned by an individual. The fisherman can set up a business structure such as an LLC that the direct marketer can sell to, but the initial operation itself must function as a sole proprietorship.

The fisherman must also possess an interim use or limited entry permit from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC). This is commonly known as a gear card.

If operating from a vessel, the fisherman must also have all vessel licenses required from CFEC, current registration, and assignment of an ADF&G vessel number. That's it. Most fishermen already have those things anyway.

The application process itself is not complicated. It consists of submitting an application to DOR via its Revenue Online service. The fee for an approved application is only \$25, and it takes about 10 to 15 minutes to submit. ADF&G staff are available and happy to assist with the application process.

Once an application is submitted to DOR, the information is reviewed for completeness and then, with no action on the part of the fisherman, forwarded to ADF&G for approval. Provided that all necessary information is received, approved direct marketer applications are typically issued in three to seven business days by DOR. ADF&G will then issue the direct marketer permit within one or two business days. One application satisfies both DOR and ADF&G requirements.

Both departments have a simple explanation for their direct marketer requirements. For ADF&G, a unique identifier must be associated with the fisherman so the department can associate harvest with individual fishermen, as opposed to a licensed fish buyer. This unique identifier is called the processor code. The fisherman will receive a small aluminum tag, just like the ones licensed fish buyers receive, which is then imprinted onto the direct marketer's fish tickets. A fish ticket is a form provided by ADF&G that documents commercial harvest.

DOR requires that the first processor or exporter is responsible for paying the fisheries business tax. Just as with ADF&G, a unique identifier is assigned to the individual fisherman. This identifier is called the Fisheries Business License number.

After you have ensured that you are in compliance with all regulatory requirements, now it is time to catch fish!

After the season is over

A concern that comes up quite often from direct marketer fishermen is: Now that the season is over, I'm sure I'll have a mountain of paperwork to do.

This is a false assumption that deters a fisherman from becoming a direct marketer.

Continued on page 33

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Gillnetters at Kenai, Alaska. The state is projecting a strong commercial catch of 4.1 million sockeye salmon this season in Upper Cook Inlet. Wesley Loy photo

Harvest time again

Alaska expects a smaller salmon catch in 2016, and B.C. and West Coast fishermen face plenty of adversity

Here's our preview of the 2016 Pacific salmon season, from Alaska south to California.

Alaska

If the forecasters are right, Alaska will see a much smaller salmon harvest this year.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is projecting a statewide commercial salmon catch of more than 161 million fish this year.

That would be a big decline from the 268 million taken in 2015.

The difference this year: Far fewer pink salmon are expected to return from the ocean.

The department's forecast calls for a harvest of 90.1 million pinks, compared to the 190.6 million landed in 2015.

The Southeast Alaska pink salmon harvest is projected at 34 million fish, while Prince William Sound is expected to land 23.4 million mostly hatchery-produced pinks. Kodiak is forecast with a catch of 16.2 million.

As for sockeye, the state's most valuable salmon species, the forecast calls for a statewide harvest of 47.7 million fish, compared to last year's catch of about 55 million.

Bristol Bay is the state's top sockeye producer, and the forecast calls for a strong catch of 29.5 million fish. Last year's harvest was slow to develop but finished with a bang at 36.6 million sockeye. Fishermen this year will be hoping for a rebound from last season's disappointing average base price of 50 cents per pound.

In Upper Cook Inlet, the department projects a commercial catch of 4.1 million sockeye, well above the recent 10-year average.

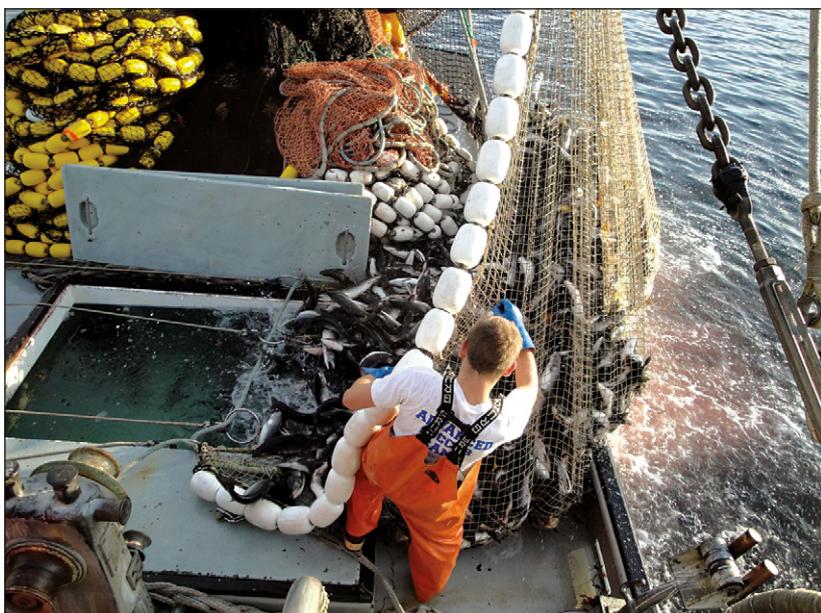
Statewide chum salmon catches are expected to total 18.7 million fish, compared to 18.2 million taken in 2015.

Coho salmon catches are projected at 4.4 million fish, substantially above last year's harvest of nearly 3.9 million.

As for Chinook, most of the action is in Southeast Alaska. Fishermen received good news in April when the department announced a Pacific Salmon Treaty troll harvest allocation for 2016 of 263,197 Chinook. It means this summer's troll catch should be much better than last year's.

The famed Copper River gillnet salmon fishery was scheduled to open for the season on May 16. Gillnetters targeting Stikine River Chinook got an even earlier start, with their fishery opening on May 2.

Once again, no commercial Chinook fishery is expected on the Yukon River due to a poor run projection.



An all-species catch of more than 161 million salmon is forecast statewide this year in Alaska. Bob Widmann photo

British Columbia

British Columbia's salmon returns are not expected to be strong in 2016.

According to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), many B.C. salmon populations remain depressed due to low numbers of brood-year spawners, partially attributed to poor survival and production during the mid-2000s.

Ocean temperatures at the entry year and over the course of the Fraser River sockeye run's life have an impact on survival and possible returns.

DFO has released a wide range of Fraser River forecasts, stating that while the mean cycle number for Fraser sockeye is 3.86 million, there is still a 50 percent chance the run will arrive at or below 2.27 million fish.

Calvin Siider, a Commercial Salmon Advisory Board area harvest representative, told *Pacific Fishing* that in recent meetings fishermen have been informed that there is very little likelihood for any sockeye fishery on the Fraser stocks.

On the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Somass river system is expected to produce average returns. Up north, the Skeena River run has experienced poor survival rates, and the Nass River is likely to get average returns. The Skeena may have a run size of 1 million fish.

Slightly above average chum returns are expected coastwide.

Troller Ron Fowler said DFO informed fishermen that the Chinook fishery had recovered to the extent that the per-vessel individual quota in the Area F troll fishery (North Coast/Haida Gwaii) had doubled over last year to 807 per license.

"As far as coho, we have no scientific method to predict abundance, until we go fishing," he said. "In-season catches are used as indicators of stock abundance, so we remain uncertain till we put gear in the water."

Kim Hyatt, ecosystem research scientist for DFO, said warm ocean conditions in recent years were not good for salmon.

"For Georgia Strait and Fraser River, there is nothing in warm ocean conditions that would lead you to expect good

returns," Hyatt said.

Already challenging salmon forecasting is going to get more difficult, he said.

"We are dealing with some really anomalous conditions," Hyatt said. "As the reality of climate warming drives us out of the range

Continued on page 16

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The salmon tender *Cornelia Marie* hauls gillnet boats toward Bristol Bay, scene of Alaska's largest sockeye fishery. Jack Molan photo

of what we are accustomed to, there are going to be surprises because we haven't seen those conditions before."

Washington, Oregon

After last year's drought in Oregon and Washington and with the prospect of an El Niño affecting ocean conditions off the West Coast this year, salmon forecasts were all over the place.

Predictions for returning Chinook are high, but predictions for coho were so low that state and tribal fishery managers considered closing all of Washington's ocean salmon fisheries.

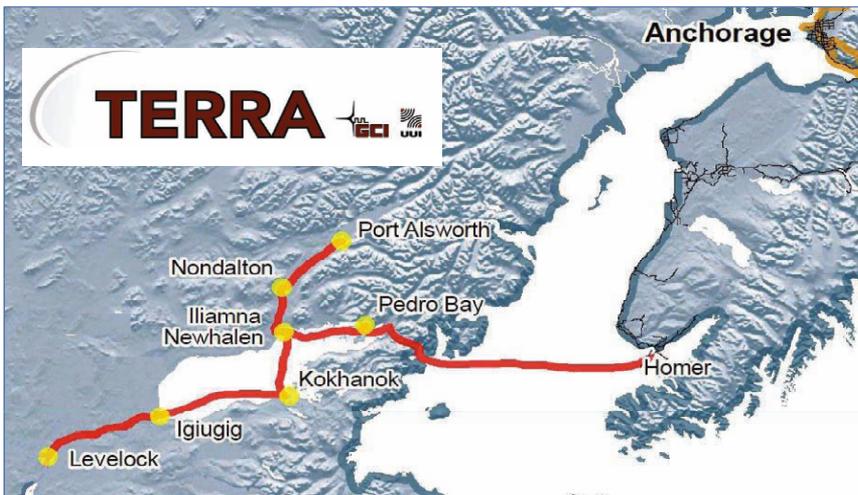
In setting salmon seasons for this year, the Pacific Fishery Management Council said it had been a more challenging process than usual.

"We have made the tough decisions and implemented fishery restrictions to give salmon stocks their best chance of rebounding from the effects of the drought and El Niño," council Vice Chair Herb Pollard said in a statement released in April.

In Washington and northern Oregon (north of Cape Falcon), non-tribal commercial fisheries will experience reduced spring and summer Chinook seasons. Under this year's guidelines, any coho caught will have to be released. The spring Chinook quota was set at 19,100, approximately half of what it was last year. The summer quota, however, will be similar to last year, set at 23,400 Chinook. Anglers will be allowed a coho retention quota of 18,900, but only in ocean areas off the Columbia River.

In both states, gillnetters face restrictions on their habitual fishing areas. On the lower Columbia River, a phased ban on gillnetting in the main stem is lumbering onwards, with fishermen

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restricted to select fishing areas like Youngs Bay near Astoria. In Washington, gillnetters struggled to work around new restrictions on Willapa Bay, following changes last year to the policies that govern fishing there.

Passage of spring Chinook at Bonneville Dam was picking up with at least 6,497 adults counted by April 20. Last year, 13,640 adult Chinook passed the dam by April 15.

With the uptick in salmon came a growing number of sea lions. According to a report from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, sea lions were feeding on salmon

at a higher rate than the 10-year average. Around 70 pinnipeds were spotted hanging out near the dam in mid-April, and sea lions had eaten an estimated 1,997 salmon and steelhead.

The Corps report said that both the number of sea lions present and the number of salmon these sea lions have been eating represent significant increases over what has been observed in past years.

Sea lion numbers have also increased near the mouth of the Columbia River, a problem the Port of Astoria is still trying to solve as

Continued on page 33

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Rebuilding plans pay off for West Coast groundfish fishery



Canary rockfish. Photo by Tippy Jackson, California Academy of Sciences

Half of the 10 West Coast groundfish species that had been determined to be overfished since about 2000 are now rebuilt, and at least two more may be rebuilt in the next few years.

The successful rebuilding of commercially important species including petrale sole, canary rockfish, and widow rockfish are a testament to the support and sacrifice of West Coast ports and fishermen who recognized the difficult actions and fishing cutbacks necessary to restore the stocks. The Pacific Fishery Management Council was instrumental in taking the steps necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the species.

"Many people gave up a lot over many years to get us to this point and deserve a lot of credit for supporting the difficult conservation actions that were necessary," said Will Stelle, West Coast regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries.

Between 1999 and 2002, nine West Coast groundfish stocks were declared overfished as surveys documented their declining numbers. Pacific whiting, for example, was declared overfished in 2002. NOAA Fisheries and the council, with support from the fishing industry, reduced commercial harvests. Combined with strong reproduction and recruitment, the fishing cutbacks led to the rapid rebuilding of Pacific whiting by 2004.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act, now in its 40th year, provided the scientific and regulatory framework to achieve this rebuilding.

Widespread closures: NOAA Fisheries and the council meanwhile developed rebuilding plans for the eight other overfished stocks, including lingcod, bocaccio, canary rockfish, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, Pacific Ocean perch, widow rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish. The plans required sharp reductions in commercial and recreational fisheries targeting groundfish, which included widespread fishing closures through the establishment of Rockfish Conservation Areas off the West Coast.

The impacts of the fishing restrictions extended beyond the overfished stocks. The groundfish fleet had to limit fishing for other more abundant species to avoid unintentional catch of the overfished stocks.

Stock assessments conducted under the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Act determined that lingcod was rebuilt in 2005. The following year the council and NOAA Fisheries amended the rebuilding plans for the seven remaining overfished stocks to meet the Magnuson-Stevens Act's mandate to rebuild overfished stocks in the shortest time possible, taking into account the needs of fishing communities and interaction of the stocks within the marine ecosystem.

In 2009 a stock assessment determined that petrale sole was overfished. NOAA Fisheries and the council adopted a rebuilding plan for it the following year.

The rebuilding successes continued. In 2012, a new stock assessment found that widow rockfish was rebuilt, which allowed for renewed harvest opportunity and helped increase the fleet's access to other healthy groundfish species.

Petrale sole, canary rockfish rebuilt: Further assessments led to a declaration in 2015 that petrale sole and canary rockfish were rebuilt, which is particularly significant because limitations on canary rockfish catch also restricted access to other more abundant and healthy groundfish stocks in both commercial and recreational fisheries.

The rebuilding of the two stocks will lead to increased harvest opportunities beginning with biennial harvest specifications and management measures the council will consider for 2017-18.

Rebuilding plans remain in place for the five remaining overfished species: bocaccio, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, Pacific Ocean perch, and yelloweye rockfish. Darkblotched rockfish are expected to be rebuilt by 2017, and recent stock assessment updates indicate that bocaccio may be rebuilt soon after.

"Both commercial and recreational fishermen know first-hand how much they have had to give up to support rebuilding of these overfished species," Stelle said. "But the recovery we have seen in these long-lived and important species demonstrates that with their support, we can sustain fish and fisheries that are both so important to West Coast fishing communities." ↴

— NOAA Fisheries

Electronic monitoring approved for three West Coast fleets

Editor's note: The following is a joint press release issued April 15 from Environmental Defense Fund and the Midwater Trawlers Cooperative.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council in April voted to allow three West Coast commercial fishing fleets to employ camera-based electronic monitoring (EM) systems.

Beginning in 2017, commercial fishing vessels can substitute cameras for human observers. This move will simplify logistics, reduce costs, and increase profits for fishermen.

As of 2017, the fixed-gear, shore-based whiting trawl and mothership catcher vessel fleets will no longer be required to carry human observers on fishing trips, as they currently do under the "full accountability" fishery management system that regulates these fleets.

Some 26 vessels have been piloting the EM system since 2015 under exempted fishing permits. The total number of vessels

eligible to carry cameras based on this decision could be as many as 45. Council action for bottom trawl vessels will take place in 2017.

"This is precedent-setting because it's the first council-authorized electronic monitoring system to move from pilot project to full implementation in U.S. waters for purposes of catch accounting," said Shems Jud, Pacific regional director for Environmental Defense Fund's Oceans Program. "The council's decision culminates several years' worth of work by fishermen, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, council staff, and NGOs. This decision represents a watershed moment in fisheries co-management in this region, and may serve as a model for others."

West Coast groundfish fleets have been operating with 100 percent observer coverage since the groundfish IFQ program launched in January 2011. Logistical challenges, uneven availability of observers

and shoreside monitors, and high observer costs shouldered by fishermen have been a significant source of frustration among the fleet.

Under the "optimized retention" approach adopted by the council, fishermen's logbook entries will be the primary data source, and they will be checked against the videos by authorized third parties.

"What this decision does is transfer responsibility for catch accounting from the federal government to vessel operators, where it should be," said Heather Mann, executive director of the Midwater Trawlers Cooperative, an Oregon-based organization representing 18 whiting vessels. "Skippers will use their logbook to track their catch, and electronic monitoring is there to verify that their logbook is accurate. This decision is a long-overdue acknowledgment that West Coast groundfish fishermen are responsible stewards of their fishery." ↴



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Astoria through Mont Hawthorne's eyes



Looking out toward the treacherous mouth of the Columbia River, I noted broken pilings as numerous as porcupine quills along the Astoria shoreline.

"Did Mont work in one of the canneries these pilings once supported?" I wondered.

Farther inland, letters fading from the front of a nondescript warehouse spell out "American Can Company." My imagination produced the glint of flat brights (unlabeled cans) and lids that once were held within. "And to think cans were each hand-soldered in his time. ..."

Mont Hawthorne is the affable protagonist of a folksy and informative series of books - "The Trail Led North" and "Alaska Silver" - about the early years of the Pacific coast salmon industry.

Mont took a sailboat from San Francisco to Astoria in 1883 because "there wasn't no railroad" to get there. He intended to learn the canning business. I arrived via airplane and rental car with the intention of learning some fish history and relishing in some fishing literary arts at the FisherPoets Gathering. It ends up that this hardworking cannery man is useful as a long-passed tour guide.

Mont was but two degrees of separation from the original Hume brothers, who founded the Pacific canned salmon industry. He apprenticed with John A. Devlin, who learned the art of canning directly from the Humes.

After five years of making cans, negotiating fish prices, and fashioning cannery equipment under Devlin, Mont became a savvy cannery foreman in his own right who went on to construct and work at canneries along the Columbia River and in Chignik,

Kodiak Island, Cook Inlet, and Southeast Alaska. Each winter he returned to Astoria to work with John Fox at the Astoria Iron Works, a business that created prototypes of equipment that revolutionized the packing of salmon over the duration of Mont's career.

Guns and girls: It's an understatement to call the Astoria that Mont sailed into in 1883 a rough town. Vessels engaged in trade and pelagic sealing stopped at Astoria, desperate for new crew.

Mont writes that shanghaiing was so rampant that he knew a woman who sold her husband for \$100. Walking home at night was always a risk. He remarked, "I never went no place without a loaded revolver. No one else did neither. When I'd meet a fellow on that stretch I knowed he could be a shanghaier with a boat tied down below. I'd walk careful-like with my hand on my revolver. And, do you know, every fellow that I met on that stretch done the same thing. We'd pass with our hands on our hips, turned sideways, keeping our eyes on each other, and sometimes backing up as we walked away."

Mont's description of the red light district is equally evocative:

"Why, there was one girl show down by the docks where, if you didn't have the money, you could throw a big fresh salmon into a sort of pen they had beside the ticket-taker and get in that way."

Astoria has cleaned up a bit since then, and in the last several years it has started to resemble a mini-Portland. However, the women's bathrooms in bars still have stickers on their mirrors alerting the victims of sex trafficking that they are people, not property, in several languages.

Wildlife wars: Astoria in the 1880s was a stinky place in the summer. Mont recalls that it was typical for him to push 500 Chinook salmon off the dock at the end of the canning day, each of them at least 40 pounds, due to oversupply. The locals complained; the local wildlife prospered: "With all of them fish on the beach it was hard to keep the bears out of town. It made the womenfolk pretty nervous. They acted like the bears was coming after them instead of the dead salmon."

Today, the most odiferous offenders in Astoria are fishermen's most tenured of enemies: sea lions. Forgive me as I take up the parlance of Mont, but to underscore the point: *I thought I'd seen sea lions at Cape Ugat, but I ain't never seen no sea lions like I've seen in Astoria.* The river boils with them. Boils!

At least a handful of Astoria residents won't be too offended by how their forefathers dealt with a similar issue. Mont writes, "One good thing the fisherman's union did was to hire Clark Lowry to hunt seals and sea lions there at the mouth of the Columbia. They had been making a blamed nuisance of themselves coming in there and eating the fish and tearing up the nets. ... That man could shoot."

Mont's niece, Martha Ferguson McKeown, wrote Mont's stories. The books are out of print but available at used book stores. I highly recommend picking one up to learn about the heyday of the salmon industry from a man who spoke Chinook Jargon, got an insider view of the Chinese tong wars in San Francisco, prospected during the Klondike Gold Rush, and "got in on most everything up North except the profits."

Anjuli Grantham writes monthly about the history of Alaska's seafood industry. She works as a curator in Kodiak and as director of the Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative. Reach her at anjuligrantham@gmail.com.



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Sitka herring disappoints, and crabbing safety improves

Sitka herring summary: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game released final numbers for this year's Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.

The seine fleet harvested herring on three days – March 17, 19, and 23 – and took a total of 9,758 tons, the department said. Overall mature roe recovery was 10.7 percent.

Coming into the season, the target harvest level was 14,741 tons.

Two spawning events were seen in the Sitka Sound area, one in late March and another in early April. Total shoreline receiving spawn was 63.2 nautical miles. This compares to a long-term average of 61 nautical miles.

All in all, it was a frustrating season for the industry. The fishery never really got untracked, and the harvest came up

Catch shares also led to consolidation of the fleet, meaning far fewer active boats.

Bering Sea crabbing remains a dangerous occupation. During the study period, 64 non-fatal injuries in the crab fleet were reported to the Coast Guard. Many of these were classified as minor or moderate, but others were more serious. Some examples:

A crewmember was cleaning the bait chopper when he inadvertently turned on the equipment. His left hand became caught in the chopper, resulting in an amputation below his wrist. (2005)

A crewmember was struck by a wave and thrown into pots, resulting in fractured ribs and abrasions. (2009)

A crewmember was struck by an unsecured crab pot after the vessel rolled, resulting in a fractured leg. (2013)

The study comes from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Download the 20-page report at tinyurl.com/h6cvkjk.

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CFEC lawsuit: In our April issue, we told you how Gov. Bill Walker had signed an administrative order transferring key functions of the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to the Department of Fish and Game.

The CFEC is a small agency that limits participation in Alaska's fisheries and issues fishing permits and vessel licenses.

Walker said his action would save the state more than \$1.3 million a year.

But many in the fishing industry oppose the move.

Bob Thorstenson Jr., a commercial fisherman and lobbyist, and United Fishermen of Alaska have filed a lawsuit in state Superior Court in Juneau to block implementation of the administrative order.

The suit contends that the administrative order was unconstitutional and unlawfully sidestepped the Alaska Legislature.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Missile mystery: On April 10, the Alaska State Troopers received a report of "a suspicious box floating in the marine waters near Craig."

Troopers responded aboard the patrol vessel *Interceptor* and discovered that the box was a military shipping container for a guided missile.

During the investigation, a mariner in the vicinity radioed to report locating a second guided missile shipping container.

Authorities determined both containers were "void of their original contents," meaning no guided missiles. So the containers were collected from the water for disposal.

No word at press time where the containers originated. Or how they ended up in the ocean. Or what became of the missiles.

"Information on tags attached to the containers was passed along to military authorities," troopers said.

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



In preparation for the Copper River salmon season, folks in Cordova offered an Alaska Marine Safety Education Association drill conductor class in late April. Word of the class was getting out, but organizers decided to stoke interest by staging this colorful array at a busy street corner. "Increased attendance by 50 percent!" said Torie Baker, of the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program. That's Michael P. McCarthy, skipper of the F/V Janell Marie, on the left. Evan Jose Ceballos photo

well short of the quota. Meanwhile, the market remained weak. Fishermen reportedly received an advance price of \$150 per ton.

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Deadliest no more: A new federal study confirms tremendous improvement in Alaska crab fisheries once known for their appalling death rate.

During the 1990s, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands crab fleet saw 73 deaths.

But during a study period covering the 2005-06 through 2012-13 seasons, only one fatality occurred. That was in January 2009, when a deckhand stepped into a coil of line and was pulled overboard as a pot was launched.

No vessel sinkings or capsizings occurred during the study period.

The study cites two big factors for the improved safety record. First, the U.S. Coast Guard in 1999 began conducting dockside checks to stem the problem of overloading vessels with pots. Second, the crab fleet switched from derbies to catch shares in 2005, cleansing the fisheries of their racing and risk-taking mentality.

Market watchers see good chance for higher salmon prices



Positive trends: Alaska’s salmon season is getting underway with lots of optimism, a far cry from the bleak feelings of a year ago.

Last year’s fishery faced unfavorable currency exchange rates, salmon backlogs, and global markets awash with farmed fish.

Prices to fishermen fell by nearly 41 percent between 2013 and 2015, years which produced the two largest Alaska salmon harvest volumes on record.

But in recent months, the negative trends have turned around.

“Based on current market conditions and harvest expectations, it appears probable that prices will begin improving in 2016 and there is an excellent chance total ex-vessel value will rebound in 2017,” said a new Seafood Market Information Service report from the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.

The report includes a salmon industry analysis, harvest and forecast summaries, salmon market news, and Alaska seafood export details.

One of the biggest turnarounds this year is with global currencies.

“Going into last year the dollar was getting stronger against our major customers and competitors. That makes our salmon more expensive to foreign buyers and the competing imports less expensive,” said Andy Wink, a fisheries economist with the McDowell Group, which produces the ASMI report.

That trend has reversed and the dollar has weakened against other currencies, notably the euro (slightly) and the Japanese yen, which has strengthened about 13 percent from a year ago.

“That will make our products less expensive to those two key Alaska salmon markets,” Wink said.

Another positive turnaround is with salmon supplies.

“If you want to see what’s happening with fish prices, look at supply and demand. Look at how much was produced in Alaska and how much our competitors produced,” said Gunnar Knapp, a University of Alaska Anchorage fisheries economist.

The loss of tens of millions of Chilean farmed salmon from an ongoing toxic algae outbreak caused by warming oceans has taken the biggest bite out of world supplies.

The United States is Chile’s largest customer, last year importing 295 million pounds of farmed salmon valued at \$1.16 billion.

“In Japan, Alaska sockeye’s biggest competition is farmed Chilean coho salmon, and it is estimated 20 to 30 percent has died in the algae bloom,” Wink said.

Japan buys 80 percent of Chile’s farmed coho salmon, and wholesale prices in April jumped to \$3.10 to \$3.35 per pound, up 20 percent from the same time last year.

A failure of Japan’s wild and farmed salmon fisheries also has spawned a surge of sockeye demand. Alaska sockeye exports to Japan at the end of 2015 were up 320 percent over the previous year, and they are expected to remain high as holdings clear out prior to the new fishing season.

That’s another plus: Backlogs of Alaska salmon, primarily sockeye, have moved briskly all year at retail.

“Promotions during Lent pretty much cleaned out the freezers,” Wink said.

“I definitely think things will be better than a year ago,” said Norm Van Vactor, president of Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp. and a former manager at processors Leader Creek and Peter Pan. “Last year we would be talking about all the frozen fish in inventory. This year things moved smoother and we’re sitting

in good shape.”

Other supply and demand indicators: Alaska’s projected salmon catch this year of 161 million fish is a 40 percent decrease, due to an off year for pinks.

Russia’s catches also are expected to be down.

Some of the supply shortfall will be made up by Norway, which is battling its own fish losses caused from salmon lice.



Crab ka-ching! The last pots were being pulled in April in the Bering Sea crab fisheries, and crews anticipated good prices for their catch.

“It’s been a really good year for crab all around,” said Jake Jacobsen, executive director of the Inter-Cooperative Exchange, a harvester group that catches 70 percent of the Bering Sea crab quota.

Boats were finishing off the snow and bairdi Tanner crab fisheries, and final prices won’t be settled for a few months after sales are made. But advances of \$2 a pound for snow crab and \$2.20 for Tanners were on par with ending prices last season.

“We expect to see a substantial increase when we complete negotiations for final prices,” Jacobsen said. “Prices for snow crab started to climb significantly last fall when it was announced the quota would be slashed 40 percent to just over 40 million pounds. And prices are still going up.”

Snow crab sales are usually split between the Japanese and U.S. markets, whereas nearly all of the Tanners are sold at home, where it’s really starting to catch on, Jacobsen said.

The Bristol Bay red king crab fishery last fall also yielded a good payday. Crabbers averaged \$8.18 a pound for their catch, compared to \$6.86 the previous year.

“That was due primarily to the crackdown on illegal fishing in Russia, which resulted in a reduced influx of Russian crab into the U.S.,” Jacobsen said.



Southeast Tanner tally: Southeast Alaska crabbers had their second-best Tanner fishery ever, topping 1.3 million pounds in just 12 days in February. The crab averaged \$2.23 a pound for 74 permit holders, 30 cents higher than last year.

Dwindling stocks of golden king crab yielded a catch of just 155,000 pounds, down by half from last year. The 17 crabbers got \$10.50 a pound, compared to \$11.86 last season.



Picking up the pace: The Alaska Board of Fisheries is looking to cut costs by streamlining the way it reviews proposals on regulating the state’s commercial, sport, and other fisheries.

The seven-member board considers hundreds of regulatory change proposals during its annual meeting cycle, and fishery management is based on board decisions.

“We want to see if there is a way to speed up the proposal review process on certain proposals at board meetings,” said Glenn Haight, the board’s executive director.

One idea would allow the board to group together technical, non-controversial proposals – often submitted by fishery managers – for approval on a “consent agenda.”

This would “allow more time to work on the more substantive proposals,” Haight said.

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

Union opposes salmon transferable quota creation



Leasing controversy: The United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union has written to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) objecting to what it says appears to be the creation of individual transferable quotas in non-ITQ fisheries.

In a letter to DFO Regional Director Rebecca Reid, union President Kim Olsen said transfer guidelines in draft North Coast and South Coast salmon integrated fisheries management plans should not be written to permit individual license holders to declare their licenses to be ITQ licenses and to lease out quota in a non-ITQ fishery. This includes leasing out "quota" to the same gear type, to different gear types, or to First Nations economic fisheries.

Olsen wrote that the union was not aware of any DFO policy that permits a non-fishing license holder to remove salmon from a non-ITQ fishery, as though they privately own it, for the purpose of leasing it.

"The practice of ITQ removals of salmon from an area fleet's allocation, without agreement by the area fleet, makes the union question why we spent two years creating fleet allocations," he wrote.

Olsen pointed out that the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board (CSAB) spent over a year determining a new CSAF (commercial salmon allocation framework). Much of the debate was over ITQ fisheries.

"None of the area harvest committees voted for 'full-blown' ITQs for all their fisheries," Olsen emphasized.

"The CSAB consensus position was that the type of fishery (regular, pooled, registered, IQ, ITQ, etc.) should be determined by each harvest area fleet for each specific fishery," Olsen said. "The CSAB agreed on a 'no one shoe fits all' approach."

The union requested that DFO change the present interim transfer guidelines to require agreement by the fleet involved before individual license holders are able to identify as ITQ holders in a non-ITQ fishery and transfer an ITQ (a portion of the fleet's allocation) to inland First Nations.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Salish Sea science: More than 1,000 delegates attended the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference held April 13-15 in Vancouver.

The conference calls itself the premier scientific and policy conference focused on the protection and recovery of the Salish Sea. The Salish Sea encompasses the waters of Georgia Strait, Puget Sound, and all the connecting channels and adjacent waters.

The number of sessions was too numerous for any one person to attend, but they included such themes as climate change and ocean acidification, fate and effects of pollutants, food and food security, habitat, policy and management, and species and food webs.

One session of interest was on harmful algae blooms and marine pathogens in a changing world.

William Cochlan, a senior research scientist at San Francisco State University, spoke on "Climate Change and the Growth and Ichthyotoxicity of *Heterosigma akashiwo* in the Salish Sea: Effects of Salinity, Temperature, and Acidity."

That's a mouthful, but what it really means is that the algae *Heterosigma akashiwo* kills fish, as evidenced in the Puget Sound area.

Recurring blooms of *Heterosigma akashiwo* have caused extensive damage (\$2 million to \$6 million per episode) to wild and net-penned fish of Puget Sound, and they are believed to have increased in scope and magnitude throughout the Salish Sea and elsewhere in the world over the past two decades.

Cochlan explained at the session how a combination of impacts from larger and earlier outflows from the Fraser River led to

increased blooms of the algae.

"There is increased toxicity with lower salinity," he said, adding that increasing ocean acidity and higher temperatures also contribute to increased toxicity.

Former *Pacific Fishing* Editor Brad Warren, now director of Global Ocean Health, spoke on "Assessing the Carbon Pollution Toolkit to Tackle Ocean Acidification."

Acidification of the waters in the Salish Sea has had a devastating effect on shellfish farms, Warren said.

"We have had a near-death experience because of the acidification causing larvae mortality," he said.

Warren criticized British Columbia's "poster child" carbon tax for not creating change but only tax breaks for polluters.

On the other hand, Warren pointed out, a cap-and-trade system in states on the U.S. eastern seaboard had resulted in a 35 percent reduction in carbon emissions and because of reinvestment in clean technologies had created 24,000 jobs.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Communications center closure: Hopes that the newly elected Liberal government would reverse the previous Conservative government's decision to close the Comox Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) center have faded as the Canadian Coast Guard told employees the base would close May 10.

The closure had been in the works since 2012 when the government of the day decided to centralize MCTS operations in Prince Rupert and Sydney, closing the Vancouver, Tofino, and Comox centers.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Ocean fertilization: A controversial ocean fertilization experiment off the B.C. coast in 2012, which remains under investigation by Environment Canada, has spawned interest in South America.

Canadian Press reported April 24 that a former director of Haida Salmon Restoration Corp., which dumped 100 tons of iron sulphate in waters off B.C. to stimulate salmon runs, was considering a similar operation in Chile.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Hiring spree: DFO plans to hire 135 research scientists, biologists, oceanographers, and technicians through a national recruitment campaign.

"The department will also acquire new and innovative technologies to collect data and share information more efficiently," the government of Canada announced May 11. "These technologies include state-of-the-art acoustic and remote sensing technologies and high performance lab equipment to better monitor our fish stocks and changing ocean conditions."

It's a \$197 million investment that will "bring real benefits to Canadians by allowing Fisheries and Oceans Canada to make more informed decisions about our oceans, waterways, and fisheries while also creating job opportunities in science," the announcement said.

The funding will allow for "more ecosystems research and improved stock assessments on commercial species and species at risk, including marine mammals and Atlantic and Pacific salmon, which will provide information for sustainable fisheries management," the government said.

Michel Drouin has been covering the B.C. fishing industry since 1990.

After last year's big haul, shrimp season starts cautiously



Shrimp review: The 2016 pink shrimp season got off to a slow start in April. Few boats were even in the water until the middle of the month.

With an El Niño affecting ocean conditions and lower numbers of 2-year-old shrimp in the water, state fishery managers say this year could mark the beginning of a downturn in a fishery that has been highly productive for the last five years.

“There are signs that the recent era of near-50 million pound seasons in Oregon (2011-15) may be coming to a close,” said a review of the fishery published by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The department had expected 2015 to be somewhat of a bust, but it proved to be the exact opposite, with Oregon shrimpers in

were landing very little shrimp by the time September and October came around.

Another point of interest in reviewing 2015 is that, though shrimpers brought in a steady stream of shrimp, pounds caught per trip “declined to the lowest level since 2009.” It took shrimpers more hours to catch an average load than in the past.

Average ex-vessel prices last year reached a high of 76 cents per pound in Oregon, the highest average price since the fishery began in the late 1950s. Total ex-vessel value for pink shrimp landed in Oregon came to \$40.3 million, another high for the fishery. In Washington, the 2015 total ex-vessel value came to \$29.7 million, with the average price per pound hovering at 72 cents, up from 53 cents the prior year.

Current prices per pound were not available by press time.



Fisherman fatality: Oregon fisherman Charles Kelly died after apparently falling overboard April 5 near the confluence of the Youngs and Klaskanine rivers.

Kelly, 52, grew up in the small community of Olney, just outside of Astoria. In his mid-20s he began working on the F/V Arrow, owned by his father, David Kelly, and later became its captain.

He was reported as “missing” after a person called the Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office to say they saw his empty boat circling at full throttle near the confluence. The caller, another fisherman, had talked with Kelly not long before the accident, had left the river, and returned to find Kelly’s boat empty.

Kelly’s body was later found roughly half a mile downstream.



Gillnetting review: At a meeting in March, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission reviewed a plan that will phase gillnet fishermen off the main stem of the Columbia River, a plan that fishermen have been fighting ever since it was passed more than three years ago.

Under the original plan – the plan that is still, slowly, moving forward, and that is generally referred to as “the Kitzhaber Plan,” after the disgraced former Oregon governor who passed it – gillnetters would be completely off the main stem by 2017.

This plan has hit many snags, though. The first major snag is that some of the alternative gear intended to replace gillnets – purse seines and beach seines – have not brought about the desired results. Initial reviews of the seine gear performance have shown higher numbers of threatened salmon mortality than would be sustainable in a working fishery.

Meanwhile, gillnetters say the phased plan hurts them economically. They are forced to fit into “select areas,” fishing areas off the main stem, places like the narrow upper parts of Youngs Bay.

On a fishing day at the end of April, gillnet boats and their net arrays resembled a patchwork quilt stretching across the bay with little room between nets and boats.

Katie Wilson reports from Astoria, Ore.



Salvage efforts were underway on the F/V Privateer, beached at Ocean Shores, Wash. The 74-foot vessel began flooding on April 15 a mile outside of Grays Harbor and washed ashore the next day. The U.S. Coast Guard rescued the three-man crew. USCG photo

particular landing the second highest volume season on record for the state.

Shrimpers landed high volumes of 2-year-old shrimp at the beginning of last season. Fishery managers hadn’t expected the 2-year-olds would be out in the ocean in such large numbers. But fishery managers also noted low numbers of 1-year-old shrimp in 2015, meaning carryover into this season could be poor, though it is still too early to say. ODFW doesn’t expect a first round of landing numbers until mid-June.

“Overall landings of pink shrimp in 2015 were simply tremendous along the West Coast,” said the 27th Annual Pink Shrimp Review from ODFW. Boats landed over 100 million pounds at ports in California, Oregon, and Washington, the highest three-state total ever.

In Washington, shrimpers landed a total of 41.5 million pounds, higher even than the record high hit in 2014. Washington saw more shrimpers participating, in part due to a fire at a Warrenton, Oregon, processing plant in 2013, causing more shrimpers to move their homeports to Westport, according to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The department also saw a surge of long inactive licenses being fished again.

Last year, the season started out with strong landings through spring and early summer, but these numbers dropped in late summer. Though the season continued through the fall, boats

'The cavalry' saves Humboldt Bay

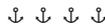
Bar busters: A season of storms and heavy sediment runoff made the Eureka bar even more treacherous than usual. But in mid-April, it was announced that "the cavalry's on its way."

That quote, attributed in a press release to Peter Mull of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, refers to a Corps dredge that was due to arrive in Humboldt Bay by May 10.

Paid for through \$7.5 million in federal funding, dredging between the north and south jetties at the bay's mouth will remove about 20 feet of siltation.

The funding is in addition to the annual \$2.5 million the Corps allocates for dredging. Water depth between the two jetties is usually in the 48-foot range, but the sedimentation reduced that by more than half, resulting in dangerously strong wave action.

Dredging will be augmented this month when a second dredge arrives to further clear the bar and the interior navigation channels.



Northern crab opener: As the magazine went to press, commercial Dungeness crabbing in most of the state's northern management region was set to begin on May 12, with a 30-mile closed section in the Trinidad area being the last area that hadn't tested clean for domoic acid.

Crabbing in the entire northern region could have begun in early May if a single crab hadn't tested positive for the naturally occurring toxin, which has severely limited this year's season.

One of six crabs tested in the southern Trinidad area sent the domoic acid meter well into the danger zone - 35 parts per million is the safety threshold's maximum - and the offending crab tested at 54 ppm.

With crabbing delayed again, fishermen from Fort Bragg and ports north advanced a proposal to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife: open crabbing in the region save for the problem area from Patrick's Point to the Humboldt Bay north jetty.

State health agencies and the CDFW approved a plan based on the proposal, opening the northern region from the Sonoma-Mendocino county line to an area near the north jetty of Humboldt Bay. A second open area extends from the Reading Rock conservation area, near the mouth of Redwood Creek, to the California-Oregon border.

The closed area in between extends 10 miles more to the north and 6 miles more to the south than what the fishermen proposed.

Meanwhile, commercial crabbing south of the Mendocino-Sonoma county line yielded 2.7 million pounds of landings, valued at \$8.2 million as of late April, after opening in late March.

The state's request for federal fishery disaster relief funding was still under consideration as the central area's landings continued to flow in.

A standard for approval of disaster relief is the loss of 80 percent of a season's ex-vessel value, based on the average of the previous five years. In this case, the five-year average amounts to \$64 million.



Klamath dams deal: A well-publicized early April event

celebrated the signing of a new pact for removal of four salmon-blocking Klamath River dams.

Tribal, state, and federal officials including California Gov. Jerry Brown spoke at a lectern as the Klamath flowed behind them, pledging to do what Congress failed to - unite in support of what's been described as the largest dam removal project in U.S. history.

Following congressional inaction on legislating dam extraction, federal and state agencies, tribes, and the owner of the dams will advance the project through a different process governed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Odds are that the agency will field the proposal warmly. If it's approved, the \$450 million removal project will proceed under a 2020 completion target, funded by hydroelectric power fees and contributions from California and Oregon.

Congress not only failed to act on the dams, it also shrugged off a separate agreement on how Klamath water will be managed. The now-moribund agreement also included \$800 million in river restoration projects, and the package will have to be renegotiated.

Taking out the dams is a big step, though, one that will open up 400 miles of salmon habitat. And long-time participants in the political process believe that Congress will be more willing to act on a water-sharing/restoration agreement if dam removal isn't linked to it.



Drought update: The end of April marked the apparent finish of a strong El Niño event that delivered above-average rain and snowfall to Northern California.

Reservoirs in that part of the state are an important overall water source, and the end of the rainy season saw them at above average levels.

Sounds good, especially after four years of skimpy snowpack and below-normal reservoir storage.

Yet last winter's water-bearing performance was getting mixed reviews as spring flowers bloomed. Though strong, the El Niño's rain and snow were patchy, leaving Southern California particularly dry. The central part of the state fared better, but rainfall was still below average there.

And despite a mid-winter boost, northern Sierra mountains snowpack - an essential source of water for the entire state - was only 62 percent of normal as of early May due to fast melting from unusually warm early spring temperatures.

Sierra snowpack levels were only 67 and 46 percent of normal in the mountain range's central and southern areas, respectively.

California's drought-watchers are getting nervous, as the El Niño has reportedly given way to a La Niña, which is noted for cooler ocean water temperatures and varying degrees of dryness.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's climate.gov website, California's longstanding drought began in 2011 during the second year of a La Niña, and an analysis of historical data shows that "dryness can linger for multiple years after a La Niña."

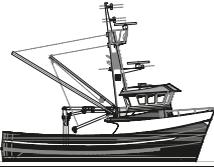
Daniel Mintz reports from Eureka, Calif.



After a monthslong closure due to elevated levels of domoic acid, commercial Dungeness crabbing was set to open May 12 across most of Northern California. CDFW photo

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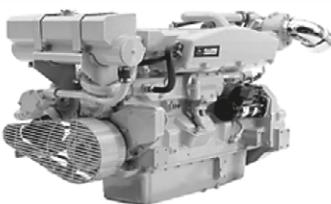


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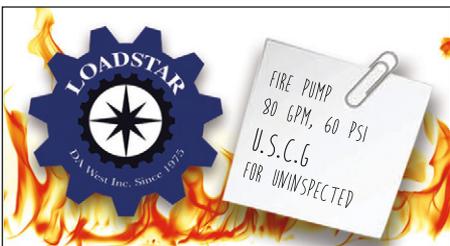
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Alaska Entry Permit Prices

(as of 6-1-16)

Species	Fishery	Asking Price*	Offer*	State Value*
SALMON	S SE DRIFT	100+	87+	80.4+
	S PWS DRIFT	170	165-	172.5-
	S COOK INLET DRIFT	58+	53	48.8+
	S AREA M DRIFT	100	95+	121.9
	S BRISTOL BAY DRIFT	120+	117.5+	96.1-
	S SE SEINE	175-	175+	226.3
	S PWS SEINE	165-	160	163.8
	S COOK INLET SEINE	70-	50	84.8
	S KODIAK SEINE	35	33	39.8
	S CHIGNIK SEINE	125-	125+	227.5
S AREA M SEINE	50	45	56.3-	
S	YAKUTAT SET	16	12	18.7
	COOK INLET SET	18	16	15.5
	AREA M SET NET	60	55	55.9
	BRISTOL SET NET	36+	35+	31.8-
	LOWER YUKON	9.5	9	10.2
S	POWER TROLL	38+	36+	34.7+
	HAND TROLL	11-	11+	10.7
HERRING	H SE GILLNET	12	N/A	13.4
	H KODIAK GILLNET	5	3	5
H	SITKA SEINE	325	225	238.8+
	PWS SEINE	22.5	16	30.9
	COOK INLET SEINE	10	8	16.8
	KODIAK SEINE	26	20	30.3
H	SE POUND SOUTH	31	30	32.3-
	SE POUND NORTH	30	25	43.1
	PWS POUND	5-	3-	3.5
SHELLFISH	S SE DUNGY 75 POT	18	17	14.4-
	S SE DUNGY 150 POT	36	36	36.4
	S SE DUNGY 225 POT	54	47	52.8+
	S SE DUNGY 300 POT	72	60	56.9+
	S SE POT SHRIMP	20-	20	19.6
	S KODIAK TANNER <60	24	22	29.7
	S PUGET SOUND DUNGY	170	155	N/A
	S WASHINGTON DUNGY	2,000-4,500/FT	1,500-3,750/FT	N/A
S OREGON DUNGY	2,000-4,500/FT	1,500-4,000/FT	N/A	
S CALIFORNIA DUNGY	300-800/POT+	250-700/POT+	N/A	
SE ALASKA DIVE	SE AK Dive URCHIN	4	3	2.2
	SE AK Dive CUCUMBER	28	23	22.5-
	SE AK Dive GEODUCK	55-	50-	70

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 were fetching close to \$120k by the end of April. Emergency transfers moved up slightly to \$16-17k. SE permits were getting scarce and prices were creeping up toward \$90k. Medical transfers were going for around \$12k. No new interest from buyers for PWS permits and listings were as low as \$170k. Cook Inlet permits were still moving right around the mid \$50s. The first offer of the spring for an Area M permit was <\$100k.

Seine: A new listing of a SE permit came in at \$175k and had an offer of the same within a day. Medical transfers are still going for around \$20k. A new PWS listing came in at \$165k, but not takers so far. Nothing doing in Kodiak. A Chignik permit was trading for \$125k. Area M permits were in the \$50-60k range.

Troll: Alaska Power Troll permits were up into the high \$30s. Hand Troll permits were still slow, with a recent trade at \$11k. A few Oregon permits were moving. Prices were down.

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	58.00-64.00	56.00-60.00
H	2C	C/B	1-3	B	60.00-63.00	58.00-62.00
H	2C	C/B	4-10	B	63.00-65.00	60.00-64.00
H	2C	C/B	ANY	U	65.00	64.00
H	2C	A		B/U	65.00	64.00
H	3A	D		B/U	48.00-54.00	44.00-50.00
H	3A	C/B	1-5	B	52.00-55.00	48.00-52.00
H	3A	C/B	5-10	B	54.00-58.00	52.00-56.00
H	3A	C/B	>10	U	60.00	56.00-58.00
H	3A	A		B/U	60.00	60.00
H	3B	D		B	30.00-36.00	30.00-35.00
H	3B	C/B	1-10	B	45.00	42.00-44.00
H	3B	C/B	>10	U	50.00	44.00-46.00
H	3B	A		B/U	N/A	44.00
H	4A	D		B/U	16.00-24.00	14.00-18.00
H	4A	C/B	1-10	B	22.00-28.00	20.00-25.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	B	28.00-32.00	22.00-26.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	U	32.00	24.00-26.00
H	4B/C/D	C/B	1-10	B	12.00-16.00	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	24.00-26.00	23.00-26.00
S	SE	C/B	>10	U	28.00-30.00	25.00-27.00
S	SE	A		B/U	32.00	30.00
S	WY	C/B	1-10	B	24.00-27.00	22.00-25.00
S	WY	C/B	>10	U	28.00-30.00	26.00-28.00
S	WY	A		B/U	30.00	30.00
S	CG	C/B	1-10	B	22.00-25.00	18.00-20.00
S	CG	C/B	>10	U	26.00-28.00	20.00-24.00
S	CG	A		B/U	30.00	25.00
S	WG	C/B	1-10	B	10.00-13.00	8.00-10.00
S	WG	C/B	>10	B	13.00-14.00	10.00-11.00
S	WG	C/B/A	>10	U	12.00-14.00	10.00-12.00
S	AI	C/B/A		B/U	1.00-4.00	.50-2.00
S	BS	C/B		B/U	1.00-5.00	.75-3.00
S	BS	A		B/U	4.00-6.00	3.00-4.00

*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



New listings of 2C smashed through \$60/lb right on up into the mid \$60s and were selling. The 3A listings are holding pretty steady over the past month with blocks going around the mid \$50s and unblocked closer to \$60. 3B listings jumped right up to \$45 for blocks and offers weren't far behind. Interest in area 4 quota remained down.

New listings for unblocked SE Sablefish IFQ were coming in at \$30 and will probably sell at that, since there is hardly any available. WY would be the same... if there was any available. Prices for CG continue to strengthen, but not many takers so far. Prices for WG haven't changed much and there are plenty of listings to choose from. A few smaller blocks of AI and BS have started to move.

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- 7,000# "B" AI BCOD UNBLKD @ \$3
- 15,000# "B" AI BCOD UNBLKD @ \$3.25
- 18,000# "B" BS BCOD UNBLKD @ \$5
- 1,000# "D" 2C HAL BLKD @ \$60
- ANY# "C/D" 2C HAL BLKD @ WANTED
- ANY# "B/C" 3A HAL UNBLKD @ WANTED
- 7,000# "B/C" 3A HAL UNBLKD @ \$60
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KODIAK SEINE.....	\$26K	PUGET SOUND DRIFT	\$20K
SE GILLNET.....	\$12K	PUGET SOUND SEINE	\$175K W/NET
KODIAK GILLNET.....	\$5K	SHELLFISH	
NORTON SOUND.....	\$2K	SE DUNGY 300 POT	WANTED
HOONAH POUND.....	N/A	SE DUNGY 225 POT	WANTED
CRAIG POUND	\$35K	SE DUNGY 150 POT	WANTED
PWS POUND	N/A	SE DUNGY 75 POT	WANTED
SALMON		SE POT SHRIMP	\$22K
S.E. DRIFT.....	WANTED	KODIAK TANNER <60'	\$28K
PWS DRIFT	\$170K	OR DUNGY 58'/500 POT.....	WANTED
COOK INLET DRIFT.....	N/A	WA DUNGY 58'/500 POT	WANTED
COOK INLET SET.....	\$50K/PKG	DIVE	
AREA M DRIFT	N/A	SE GEDDUCK	\$55K
AREA M SET	N/A	SE CUCUMBER.....	\$28K
BBAY DRIFT	WANTED	MISC.	
BBAY SET	\$60K PKG	CHATHAM BLACKCOD.....	CALL
SE SEINE	\$175K	CAL NEAR SHORE.....	WANTED
PWS SEINE.....	\$165K	CAL SQUID.....	WANTED
COOK INLET SEINE.....	\$87K	OR TROLL/30'	\$8K
KODIAK SEINE.....	\$39.5K	CAL LOBSTER.....	\$130K
		WA TROLL.....	\$30K

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P2172M – 42 X 12.5 HEAVY DUTY TROLLER BUILT IN 1960, JOHN DEERE 6068 MAIN W/4300 HOURS, TWIN DISC GEAR, 7.5KW AUX, HYD ANCHOR WINCH, HYD CAPSTAN FOR POLES, 3 SPOOL GURDIES, INSULATED/FIBERGLASSED HOLD. EXTENSIVE ELECTRONICS. JUST OUT OF THE SHIPYARD. REDUCED TO \$50K.



P2191M – 32' BAYCRAFT STERNPICKER, TAMO 71A VOLVO MAIN (JIMMY JOHNSON TUNE UP AND NEW TURBO), TWIN DISC GEAR, MMC CONTROLS. POWER STEER AND 4 STATION JOGS. CONSTANT FLOW HYDRAULICS, HYD WASHDOWN. SLIDING REEL W/LEVELWIND. PACKS 18K. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS W/NEW GARMIN RADAR. INCLUDES 20 YEARS OF GEAR AND SPARES AND FORD RANGER 4X4. TOTALLY TURN-KEY. REDUCED TO \$130K. BAY PERMIT AVAILABLE.



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Barrett commentary *continued from page 7*

Current state oil production forecasts end in 2025, when predicted daily TAPS throughput will drop to around 300,000 barrels. TAPS faces a significant operational obstacle at that throughput level. Despite some of the best and most innovative people in the industry focused on this scenario, an operational solution has not yet been identified to sustain TAPS operations below 300,000 barrels per day.

Much like how the recent production numbers beat previous forecasts, political and public support can help Alaska's oil and gas industry continue an increased throughput trend. There are still billions of barrels of oil on the North Slope ready to be developed by large and small companies. Fiscal policy that better supports the industry and its exploration and production work will increase throughput in TAPS and yield economic benefits for Alaska and the people who live here. ↴

Adm. Tom Barrett, U.S. Coast Guard (ret.), is the president of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

Selling your catch *continued from page 12*



Shellene Hutter is the seafood industry coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

After the season is over, there is one report, called a Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR), that is required to be submitted to ADF&G. This report is due by April 1 of the year following your operation and is a summary of your sales. The information required on the COAR report is straight from the fish tickets that are submitted to which an average price per pound is added by the fisherman.

The DOR requires the fisheries business tax return, which is very similar to the COAR report.

It may be helpful to take a look at the format of these reports so that your paperwork can be organized during the season, making the end-of-year process as easy as one, two, three.

Additional resources

Remember, ADF&G and other state agencies are here to help.

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fishermen sell their catch.

- DEC fact sheet on commercial marketing or processing of seafood on vessels, tinyurl.com/jr5dru4.

- Alaska Sea Grant website on direct marketing, tinyurl.com/hmxy9wc.

Please do not hesitate to call the seafood industry coordinator at ADF&G to get you started becoming a direct marketer today! ↴

Shellene Hutter is a fisheries biologist in Juneau and the seafood industry coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Reach her at (907) 465-6131 or shellene.hutter@alaska.gov.

Salmon preview *continued from page 17*



Salmon fishermen could see improved prices this year, market watchers say. See the Fish Factor column on Page 22. Wesley Loy photo

thousands of sea lions flock to the port's East Mooring Basin on a daily basis, hampering dock access and boat operations.

California

California is getting another bust-cycle ocean salmon fishing season this year, with coastwide closures for the month of July.

Protection of two key salmon stocks – endangered winter run Sacramento River Chinook and fall run Klamath River Chinook – together with reduced abundance of Sacramento River fall run Chinook are driving this year's season-shearing.

The 2016 abundance forecast for Klamath salmon amounts to 142,200 fish, far below last year's forecast of 423,800 fish. The abundance of Sacramento River Chinook is predicted to be 299,600 fish, less than half of last year's 652,000-fish forecast.

But last year's forecasts didn't translate into catches, as only 109,900 Chinook were landed statewide in 2015.

With fewer fishing days in the offing this year, fishermen are bracing for a weak season. From Point Arena to San Francisco, fishing was open for most of May but will only be open for the second half of June.

There will be no fishing in July, but most of August and all of September remain open.

Continued on page 34



Trollers are expected to have a much better summer Chinook season this year in Southeast Alaska. Ryan Adickes photo

Moving north, restrictions get tighter to avoid contact with Klamath fish. From Fort Bragg to Horse Mountain (just north of Shelter Cove), the season opens late, on June 13, followed by another July closure. August and September are mostly open.

In the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) between the Humboldt south jetty and the state line, there's a 1,000-fish quota in September. That's a reduction from last year's 3,000-fish quota, but salmon generally weren't around, and northern area fishermen gave up after a couple of unproductive days.

Last year's KMZ landings in Eureka and Crescent City only amounted to 46 fish.

On top of drought effects, ocean conditions continue to challenge salmon survival rates. What came to be called a "blob" of warm water preceded this year's El Niño, and the combination of events affected salmon distribution and feeding.

"In my case, I'm keeping my boat afloat and maybe making a little extra, but that's about it," said fisherman John Koeppen, who chases salmon from Monterey to Shelter Cove and homeports in Half Moon Bay. "I know guys who are living on credit cards and have maxed them out."

While noting that weather will probably further restrict time

on the water, Koeppen said, the abundance forecasts are "very, very conservative" and less likely to be as overly optimistic as last year's.

"You have to look for an upside to something that's close to disastrous," he said.

Except for the total closures seen in 2008 and 2009, this year's across-the-board July closures are "unprecedented," said Aaron Newman, president of the Humboldt Fishermen's Marketing Association.

Newman noted that 32 million hatchery smolts were trucked to the lower ranges of the Sacramento River in 2014 and released after being held in net pens. Those fish will comprise most of this year's returning 3-year-olds and could boost ocean salmon population beyond what's forecasted if survival rates are adequate.

The near-term outlook for Klamath Chinook doesn't leave much room for optimism, however. Last year's brood of juvenile salmon faced in-river drought conditions, leading to high infection rates from parasites, and then dealt with poor ocean conditions.

What's expected to be a relatively small group of survivors will comprise Klamath returns for the next two years. ↓



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