

Jeff Regnart's exit interview



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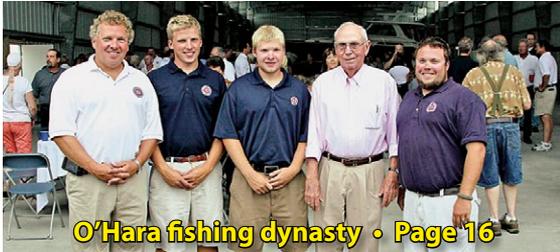
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Food fads and fish

INSIDE:



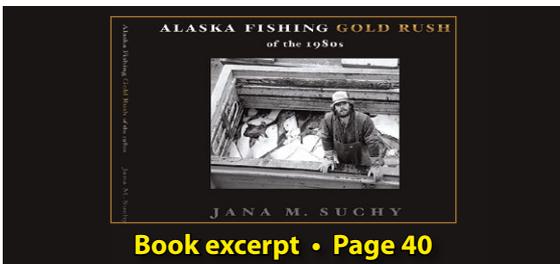
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ON THE COVER: The seiner Skagerrak during this year's herring fishery at Togiak, Alaska. See page 55 for the 2016 Togiak herring forecast. Kai Raymond photo

VOLUME XXXVI, NO. 11 • NOVEMBER 2015

Pacific Fishing (ISSN 0195-6515) is published 12 times a year (monthly) by *Pacific Fishing Magazine*. Editorial, Circulation, and Advertising offices at 1028 Industry Drive, Seattle, WA 98188, U.S.A. Telephone (206) 324-5644. □ Subscriptions: One-year rate for U.S., \$18.75, two-year \$30.75, three-year \$39.75; Canadian subscriptions paid in U.S. funds add \$10 per year. Canadian subscriptions paid in Canadian funds add \$10 per year. Other foreign surface is \$36 per year; foreign airmail is \$84 per year. □ The publisher of *Pacific Fishing* makes no warranty, express or implied, nor assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the information contained in *Pacific Fishing*. □ Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, Washington. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Pacific Fishing*, 1028 Industry Drive, Seattle, WA 98188. Copyright © 2015 by *Pacific Fishing Magazine*. Contents may not be reproduced without permission. POST OFFICE: Please send address changes to *Pacific Fishing*, 1028 Industry Drive, Seattle, WA 98188

Funny how trendy so many industries are, the players all swimming in one direction or another. A television industry once focused on sitcoms and crime dramas is suddenly all about reality shows. A tech industry that once pushed personal computing now wants us all together in “the cloud.”

It's the same in the food industry, with restaurants and grocers quick to follow the pack. Everybody, it seems, is touting Angus beef, pretzel buns, applewood smoked bacon, green tea, Asiago cheese, pumpkin spice, Sriracha, and gluten-free everything.

The herd mentality explains how we can buy a cappuccino or latte not only at Starbucks but at most any gas station in America. It's why caramel no longer cuts it – it has to be *salted* caramel.

Here at *Pacific Fishing* we focus mainly on the upstream of our industry – the catching part. Looking downstream, we find the processing sector avidly chasing the food fads.

You've probably noticed the pulled pork craze, with outlets such as Wendy's offering a BBQ pulled pork sandwich.

Now Canadian seafood company High Liner Foods has trotted out pulled BBQ salmon. The foodservice product, made with fully cooked Atlantic salmon, comes in two variations: traditional BBQ and Sriracha BBQ.

Elsewhere, tuna giant StarKist has added a new mango chipotle pouched salmon product to its lineup featuring wild-caught pink salmon. (You know a food fad such as chipotle has reached maturity when you need a dash of mango to dress it up.)

Not to be outdone, Chicken of the Sea has introduced pouched, wild-caught, Sriracha-flavored pink salmon.

Sriracha spicy! And so original!

We don't mean to poke fun here. The seafood industry's efforts to innovate, to keep up with food fashion, are no doubt vital. You can bet competing protein producers – the beef people, the chicken people, and so forth – feel the same.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Heading south: The Alaska industry is losing a respected regulator in Jeff Regnart, the state's commercial fisheries director.

Regnart was to leave the position Oct. 2, capping a long career with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He and his wife are relocating to Louisiana.

As a journalist, I always appreciated Jeff's willingness to take my calls and candidly answer my questions. In that spirit, he was good enough to grant us an exit interview, which begins on page 12.

The sweeping Q&A includes some insight on how Alaska's budget crunch could impact commercial fishing. It's a must read!

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

The big show: The November issue is our largest of the year, geared up for the Pacific Marine Expo trade show in Seattle. Our team will be there waiting for you. Turn to page 49 for details.

Wesley

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

B.C. tragedy: A fishing vessel owned by Pacific Seafood sank Saturday off the west coast of Vancouver Island, killing three of the four aboard. – *theprovince.com*

Leadership change: Jeff Regnart is leaving as Alaska's commercial fisheries director. – *deckboss.blogspot.com*

The dead: B.C. authorities have released the names of three fishermen lost in a trawler sinking off Vancouver Island. – *timescolonist.com*

Crab clues: Results of this year's Eastern Bering Sea bottom trawl survey suggest quotas for key species might take a fall. – *deckboss.blogspot.com*

Fighting fish pirates: U.S. and Russian negotiators have signed a bilateral agreement to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. – *state.gov*

Joining forces: Cordova District Fishermen United is now a member of Seafood Harvesters of America. – *seafoodharvesters.org*

Coho continuation: Managers have extended the Southeast Alaska summer troll fishery through Sept. 30. – *adfg.alaska.gov*

Reds rout: Fishermen in Alaska's Area M enjoyed a strong sockeye catch this season. – *kdlg.org*

Anticipation: The Alaska Permanent Fund dividend amount will be announced Monday. – *alaskapublic.org*

\$2,072: That's the amount of this year's Alaska Permanent Fund dividend. – *pdf.alaska.gov*

Mark your calendar: Oct. 8 is now "National Salmon Day," Chicken of the Sea says. – *businesswire.com*

Southeast Alaska urchin increase: The 2015-16 quota for Southeast Alaska red sea urchins is 3.8 million pounds, a substantial increase from last season's 3.3 million pounds. – *theprovince.com*

Government buys \$22.5M worth of sockeye: Seattle packers Icycle and Peter Pan made the winning bids to sell canned red salmon to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for distribution to child nutrition and other domestic food assistance programs. – *ams.usda.gov*

255 million and counting: With some commercial fisheries still scratching, Alaska's salmon harvest has clicked over 255 million fish, well beyond the preseason forecast of 221 million. – *adfg.alaska.gov*

State victory: The Alaska Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the Department of Fish and Game in a case involving Cook Inlet salmon setnetters. – *courtrecords.alaska.gov*

Help wanted: United Fishermen of Alaska is looking for a new executive director. – *ufafish.org*

Passing the gavel: Abe Williams is the third man this year to serve as board president for the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association. – *kdlg.org*

Deadline looms: The U.S. Coast Guard is urging fishing vessel owners to get their mandatory dockside safety exams prior to the Oct. 15 enforcement date. – *uscgnews.com*

Watching you: The U.S. Coast Guard this week conducted a fisheries surveillance flight between the Canadian border and central Oregon, documenting 32 fishing vessels. – *d13.uscgnews.com*

Rising tide: Norton Sound Seafood Products paid more than \$4.5 million to local fishermen this season, more than triple the payout of 10 years ago. – *nsedc.com*

Another huge herring forecast: Nearly 28,800 tons will be up for grabs in next year's sac roe fishery at Togiak, Alaska. – *adfg.alaska.gov*

*You can subscribe to **Fish Wrap** by sending an email to circulation@nwpublishingcenter.com. Write your first name, your last name, and the words "Fish Wrap." Do it now, before you go another month without **Fish Wrap**.

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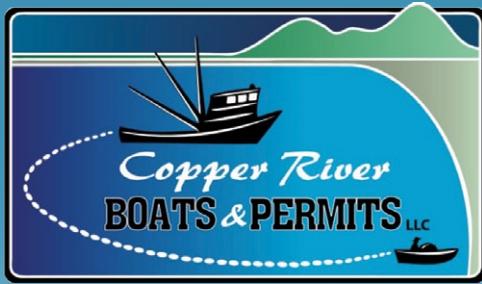
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Let's keep our perspective on seafood certification

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was the first organization to develop global environmental standards for sustainable fishing. When first certified in 2000, Alaska salmon became the flagship fishery for MSC, and it was a cornerstone of marketing strategies to contrast the uniqueness of wild Alaska salmon over farmed salmon. Regrettably, the calculus shifted with changing MSC assessment standards and growing frustration by Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers and industry leaders, ultimately causing a 2012 withdrawal from the program.

The withdrawal was predicated on two separate bases: First and most importantly, growing disagreements over the standard to assess hatchery management practices would result in loss of certification for Prince William Sound (PWS) pink and chum salmon. Second, concerns that MSC was monopolizing sustainability required Alaska to develop an alternative certification program. Let's examine each.

Hatchery operations have a long history in the fisheries programs of all states and nations that have indigenous salmon populations. Surrounded by controversy, their perceived benefits have ebbed and flowed with changing public attitudes and scientific advances in their operations. The scientific community is divided. There are studies demonstrating that hatchery salmon can support the recovery of declining populations without impacting wild stocks, while other studies indicate that hatchery salmon pose unnecessary risks to the productivity and sustainability of wild populations. These latter studies formed the basis for the initial MSC hatchery standards and presumptive detrimental effects.

Hatcheries have played a critical role in the recovery of the Alaska salmon industry, especially in PWS, where by the mid-1970s, there were not enough salmon to annually prosecute a viable commercial fishery. Today PWS is enjoying robust salmon returns. This year's pink salmon harvest was an all-time record 98.6 million, including an estimated 30 million wild stocks. But the scale of PWS hatchery production and corollary harvest refocused the MSC standard on the "straying" of hatchery pink salmon into PWS streams and the potential impacts on wild salmon. To address this concern, ADF&G launched the most aggressive research program ever undertaken to answer the question of whether hatchery salmon are adversely impacting the genetic composition and diversity of wild spawning salmon. That is, do hatchery salmon interbreed with wild salmon to the extent that their "fitness" or productivity is diminished and, if so, does the loss of fitness extend to future generations?

This study and companion research into genetic structure, combined with ADF&G practices to ameliorate potential risks, should have provided the basis to recertify PWS salmon. Instead, MSC announced a more stringent standard requiring a showing that hatchery activity is "highly unlikely" to have any significant impact on the productivity and diversity of wild salmon stocks. This new standard and associated higher burden of proof was tantamount to a non-rebuttable presumption, effectively placing PWS beyond MSC recertification. Having certified fisheries with little scientific data, such as the Canadian and Florida swordfish fisheries, MSC held Alaska to a standard not even attainable with its world-class fisheries management.

Alaska's hatcheries are accounting for steady and durable increases in the statewide commercial salmon harvest. Whether all Alaska hatchery salmon are labeled as MSC-certified is of nominal economic importance in the overall marketplace. Arguments to significantly alter ADF&G management or decrease or even freeze hatchery production levels to achieve MSC "sustainability" status should be rejected at all costs.

The paradox of sustainability: Four in five American and European consumers say it is important that their seafood is sustainably caught. To meet this demand we see an explosion of sustainable seafood guides and ecolabels, each with its own assessment process and criteria. But with demand already outstripping supply, there are simply not enough truly sustainable fisheries on earth to sustain the demand - that's the whole point of sustainably fishing. Bottom line, the consumer is demanding unsustainable levels of sustainable seafood. Even a steak lover can see the paradox.

To bridge this shortfall, retailers are hedging their promises. For example, in 2006 Walmart announced it would sell only MSC-certified seafood. Nine years later it's still selling seafood without any sustainability certification. Instead, Walmart suppliers need only participate in a fisheries improvement plan requiring the development of a plan to improve ocean management, but they need not implement the plan.

Against this backdrop, we should closely examine the efficacy and ongoing costs of the sustainability program developed by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. With a few exceptions, Alaska's major fisheries are and will remain certified by MSC. The MSC undeniably has the most comprehensive and rigorous standards for assessing the management and sustainability of

Continued on page 69

Adapt: "To make fit for a specific or new situation"
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Alaska crab quotas go sideways, down, and up

Quotas for this season's major Alaska crab fisheries are a mixed blessing with one stock holding steady, another down 40 percent, and a third up 30 percent.

Managers set the 2015-16 total allowable catch (TAC) for Bristol Bay red king crab at 9,974,000 pounds, about the same as last season. Most of the TAC, or 8,976,600 pounds, is allocated to the individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery, with 10 percent reserved for the community development quota (CDQ) program, which benefits Western Alaska villagers.

The fishery opened on Oct. 15.

The story for Bering Sea snow crab is far less cheerful, with managers setting a TAC of 40,611,000 pounds – a 40 percent cut from last season's 67,950,000 pounds. Again, 10 percent of the TAC is reserved for the CDQ program.

Although the snow crab fishery also opened on Oct. 15, the industry usually waits until after the first of the year to harvest snow crab, also known as opilio crab.

Big bump for bairdi: The news is brightest for Bering Sea Tanner crab, with a 2015-16 TAC of 19,668,000 pounds, up 30 percent from last season.

Tanner crab, also known as bairdi crab, is a browner version of the snow crab. Once again, 10 percent of the TAC is set aside for the CDQ program.

Managers in October also issued announcements concerning two minor Bering Sea crab fisheries.

For St. Matthew Island blue king crab, the overall TAC is a modest 411,000 pounds.

The Pribilof District red and blue king crab fishery will remain closed this season. This is due to very low abundance of Pribilof blue king crab, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said.

Big and rich: In recent years, millions of television viewers have become familiar with Alaska's crab fisheries due to the popular reality show "Deadliest Catch," which follows the adventures of a handful of crab boats.



*The Bristol Bay red king crab quota is about the same as last season.
Nic Dammarell photo*

The fisheries once had a legitimate reputation as deadly, with frequent capsizing and other tragedies as boats raced one another for crab. The safety record has improved greatly with the conversion to catch shares beginning in 2005.

The crab harvests generally are

quite lucrative.

Last season, Bristol Bay red king crab paid an average ex-vessel price of \$6.36 per pound, with 63 vessels registering for the fishery. Bering Sea snow crab paid an average of \$1.64 per pound, with 71 vessels signing up. ↓

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Norton Sound crab catch notches third-highest value

Way up north, Norton Sound fishermen enjoyed a fine 2015 summer red king crab season.

The open-access fishery opened June 29 and ran for only 26 days, compared to 40 days in 2014, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said.

“For the 2015 season, the harvest rate was excellent from the start and, with no major storms, continued to be superb throughout the four-week period of the season, making it the shortest season since the Norton Sound registration area became superexclusive in 1994, which effectively made it a small-boat fishery,” the department said. “The daily CPUE (catch per unit of effort) never dropped

below 13 crab per pot and went as high as 27 crab per pot.”

Fishermen met their quota with a harvest of 133,531 red king crab or 371,520 pounds.

The average ex-vessel price was \$5.40 per pound, the third-highest amount ever paid. Total fishery value (including the small community development quota catch) was \$2.13 million, also the third-highest ever.

In terms of fishery participation, 36 vessels made landings.

Crab were sold to Norton Sound Seafood Products in Nome, to Aquatech in Anchorage, and to a live market in Korea. Three fishermen made dockside sales, Fish and Game said. ↓

– Wesley Loy

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Southeast Alaska red king crab fishery closed – again

Another season, another disappointment for Southeast Alaska crabbers.

The Southeast commercial red king crab fishery will not open during the 2015-16 season, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced Sept. 23.

This marks the fourth consecutive season that the fishery has been closed.

By policy, the fishery opens only if the stock can support a harvest of at least 200,000 pounds of legal male red king crab.

“The estimate of available harvest, based on 2015 stock assessment survey results, is well below the minimum threshold,” Fish and Game said.

“Regionally, the biomass estimate did increase from last season, but is still at historically low levels,” the department added.

The Southeast red king crab fishery last opened on Nov. 1, 2011, with a quota of 201,000 pounds. ↓

– Wesley Loy

Senators want permanent ban on West Coast offshore drilling

Six U.S. senators on Oct. 7 introduced the West Coast Ocean Protection Act of 2015, which would permanently ban offshore oil drilling on the outer continental shelf of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Sponsors of the bill (S. 2155) include Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein of California, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley of Oregon, and Maria

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Washington pink shrimp qualifies for MSC ecolabel

Washington pink shrimp has won Marine Stewardship Council certification as a sustainable fishery.

The Washington fishery joins the Oregon pink shrimp fishery in achieving MSC certification. Oregon pink shrimp was certified in 2007 and recertified in February 2013.

"Washington state's pink shrimp fishermen are proud that this is the first Washington state-managed fishery to earn certification to the MSC standard," Charles Kirschbaum, Pacific Seafood Group product manager, said in an Oct. 8 news release from the MSC. "Efforts by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, working closely with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, to develop and adopt reference points and implement bycatch reduction measures are key to making the fishery one of the most sustainable shrimp fisheries in the world."

"Washington pink shrimp fishermen have a record of being willing to adopt sustainable fishing practices, often ahead of regulatory action, so I'm very pleased to see recognition of the fishery through MSC certification," said Lorna Wargo, senior fisheries biologist with WDFW.

Pink shrimp, also known as ocean shrimp, are generally considered to have a clean, sweet flavor and are commonly served on salads, in a shrimp roll, or as whole cooked peel-and-eat shrimp, the MSC said.

"Since the late 1990s, fishing for pink shrimp in Washington has steadily improved with recent landings increasing from approximately 10 million pounds per year to a record 30 million pounds, with a value of more than \$16 million, in 2014," the news release said.

The MSC noted that fishing for Washington pink shrimp is allowed only in federal waters. Fishermen use trawl gear.

"The expansion of the MSC-certified pink shrimp fishery to include Washington pink shrimp is a significant advancement," said Brian Perkins, MSC regional director for the Americas. "In 2007, Oregon pink shrimp became the first pink shrimp fishery in the world to achieve MSC certification, and the addition of Washington demonstrates that this fishery continues to be committed to sustainably harvesting pink shrimp." ↴

Cantwell and Patty Murray of Washington. All are Democrats.

The legislation was offered previously, in 2010, but didn't clear Congress.

"We owe it to current and future generations to protect our coast from a disaster like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill," Boxer said in a press release.

Cantwell, the ranking member on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, noted "the

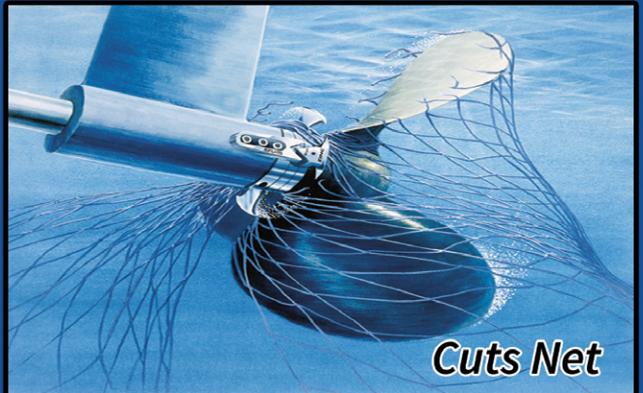
threat of seismic activity along the Cascadia Subduction Zone increases the probability of a catastrophic oil spill in the Pacific Northwest."

The two-page bill states "the Secretary of the Interior shall not issue a lease for the exploration, development, or production of oil or natural gas in any area of the outer Continental Shelf off the coast of the State of California, Oregon, or Washington."

- Wesley Loy

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A humpback whale off the coast of Hawaii, dragging gear from Alaska. Photo courtesy of NOAA, taken under MMHSRP permit 932-1489

West Coast whale entanglements put crabbers on alert

For years, West Coast fishery regulators have been tracking whale entanglements with Dungeness crab trap lines and other gear. Now that entanglements have spiked, agency officials, crabbers, and environmentalists are convening on ways to solve the problem before a regulatory approach becomes necessary.

Though new regulations aren't in sight now, the issue of whale entanglements is gaining attention. The situation is of particular concern in California, where most of the recent entanglements have occurred.

Since the late 1980s, the numbers of confirmed West Coast entanglements have been modest, often falling below 10 per year. Numbers jumped somewhat in 2010 and 2012, but a sense of alarm emerged last year.

There were 26 confirmed entanglements in 2014, with central California accounting for many of them. The trend is escalating this year, and California saw 35 confirmed reports from 2014 through the first half of 2015.

In comparison, Oregon logged seven confirmed entanglements during the same time period, Washington logged three, and British Columbia recorded only one.

In California, most of the entanglements have involved the Dungeness fishery, and an endangered species – the humpback whale – is most often affected.

The trend has been flagged by environmental groups, and earlier this year, Oceana, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Earthjustice sent a letter to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) asking for “urgent action” before the upcoming crabbing season.

The state's Dungeness crab fishery is regulated through legislation, and new rules aren't looming. Instead, a collaborative process has been launched that aims for voluntary actions.

Focus on Dungeness: The meeting of the minds began at a workshop held in Oakland last August, when biologists from federal and state agencies presented data on the issue to fishermen and members of the environmental groups.

The gillnet, sablefish, and spot prawn fisheries account for some entanglements, but the Dungeness fishery is where initial focus has been placed.

“There are a lot of unknowns, but with the data we do have, that seems to be the most efficient and reasonable starting place,” said Craig Shuman, CDFW Marine Region Manager.

Shuman added that a better definition of the problem is a first step to charting solutions. The requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act are overarching.

All involved want to take action even though the issue hasn't reached a legal trigger point.

“There's also the public perception side,” Shuman said. “We want to sustain a healthy Dungeness crab fishery that isn't tainted as a fishery that kills whales.”

A month after the August workshop, a working group was formed and held its first meeting. Though in an early stage, the effort to advance collaborative solutions shows promise.

Promising start: Working group member Jim Anderson, a crabber from California's Half Moon Bay and a member of the state's

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Dungeness Crab Task Force, was upbeat following the initial meeting.

“There was a lot of history in the room – people who have been crabbing for a long time and who had a lot of knowledge to share,” he said.

Anderson said the group’s diverse members worked well together, and discussion focused on prioritizing solutions that can be carried out voluntarily in the near future. Long-term goals are also being considered, but Anderson believes that there’s potential for making relatively quick progress.

“What I’m hoping for is that we’ll be able to find the low-hanging fruit – things we can start doing right now,” he said. “We, as an industry, are all quite concerned about this issue.”

The Dungeness Crab Task Force will soon be taking up the working group’s suggestions. Task force member Mike Cunningham, a California crabber who works out of Eureka, said that readily doable “practical approaches” have yet to be determined, but there are some ideas that seem to be nonstarters out of the gate.

Attaching two pots per line would reduce the number of lines in the water by 50 percent but would also present logistical and safety challenges.

Installation of break-away links has been used with some success in the East Coast lobster pot fishery. Cunningham said there would probably be many needless line breaks if that approach was used in California, however, because crab traps are relatively heavy.

Other measures, such as establishing spatial guidelines for gear-setting, have more practical value, Cunningham continued. He’s confident that the task force will be able to make recommendations that are viable.

“I know the crab fleet is not in denial about this issue,” he

said. “We want to do something about it, but we don’t want a shoot-from-the-hip approach.”

Trap recovery: One of the most effective ways to reduce entanglements is getting derelict crab gear out of the water. There’s been success with that in Oregon and Washington, where incentives for pulling lost gear include allowing fishermen to keep or sell the traps they recover.

California hasn’t enacted legislation allowing that, but the state is promoting gear recovery. Between July and October of 2014, a grant-funded Gear Retrieval Pilot Program worked out of ports in Eureka, Trinidad, and Crescent City.

The program succeeded in recovering 666 derelict traps. Using the grant funds, the Humboldt Fishermen’s Marketing Association (HFMA) paid the participating fishermen a total of \$41,675 for the traps they recovered.

The association then sold the traps back to their original owners – if they agreed to pay. HFMA was obliged to return the recovered traps to their original owners with payment for them being strictly voluntary, so only \$25,805 was gained through buybacks.

Financial viability: Pete Kalvass, a CDFW Dungeness fishery biologist, said a crab trap retrieval program has to be self-sustaining to work. To make a gear recovery program financially viable, California would need legislation negating property rights claims.

There are also logistical issues to iron out, such as establishing storage for recovered traps and a system for contacting owners of the retrieved traps.

Based on requests for replacements of lost buoy tags, Kalvass estimates that about 10,000 traps were lost last year. Getting some

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Q&A Alaska's outgoing commercial fisheries director addresses salmon size, state budget crunch, the MSC, hatcheries, and more

Jeff Regnart was expected to depart Oct. 2 as Alaska's commercial fisheries director, wrapping up a long and distinguished career with the Department of Fish and Game.

As a college student, Regnart fished commercially for salmon and halibut.

His first full-time job with the department was a big one – managing the Naknek-Kvichak salmon district in Bristol Bay. He would rise to Central Region supervisor with responsibility for all management and research activities across a vast area including Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound.

It was no surprise that Regnart found his way into fisheries management.

“My father worked for the department from statehood until 1986 in the northern region for the Division of Commercial Fisheries,” he said.

Going forward, he and his wife will live in Alexandria, Louisiana, close to ailing family.

Regnart, 50, agreed to take a few questions from *Pacific Fishing* in what you might call an exit interview. Our conversation covered a lot of ground including the recent trend toward smaller salmon returning to Alaska, the state budget crunch, the salmon industry's reconciliation with the Marine Stewardship Council, and hatchery policy.

Q: We saw a lot of smaller sockeye salmon this season. In Bristol Bay, the average sockeye weight was 5.2 pounds, the

smallest in 20 years. What do you make of this trend? And did any other species also return smaller than usual around the state?

A: We have seen smaller sockeye salmon in several areas of the state including Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. Several of our salmon scientists published a paper this summer where long-term harvest and escapement data suggest that Chinook salmon are also getting smaller at age. It's hard to say at this point whether recent observations represent trends, but we are witnessing some fairly dramatic oceanographic events in the North Pacific, especially with respect to increasing temperatures, that could have broad implications for food webs and prey for salmon. Abundance of salmon in the North Pacific, especially pink and chum salmon, is near all-time highs, so interspecific competition could play a role. Exactly what might be responsible for observations of smaller fish is uncertain, but research focused on changing ocean conditions will undoubtedly provide some insight.

Q: In 2012, the governor announced a five-year, \$30 million research initiative on the poor Chinook salmon returns to some Alaska river systems. Today, the state faces a serious budget crunch. How has the initiative been impacted, and what has been learned from the research so far?

A: Funding for the Chinook Salmon Research Initiative was significantly reduced, so we had to review, consolidate, and eliminate some projects to ensure our most important projects could be completed successfully. Our focus is on improving assessments of 12 Chinook salmon indicator stocks throughout the state to assist managers and provide insight on mechanisms behind trends in abundance and productivity.

Q: The Kenai River is home to Alaska's hottest Chinook stock, politically speaking. How has this stock fared the past couple of seasons?

A: The escapement of Chinook salmon on the Kenai River was better this year compared to the previous two years, so that is certainly encouraging. Our 2015 preliminary escapement estimate of 22,641 late-run Chinook salmon lands squarely in the middle of the sustainable escapement goal (15,000 to 30,000 Chinook salmon) and the early-run escapement goal was also met. I found it encouraging that data collected from the Chinook salmon netting project at river mile 8.6 and the in-river creel survey of Chinook salmon harvest indicate that



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the size and gender composition of the 2015 late-run more closely resembled historic size and gender compositions rather than those compositions of the most recent years (2013 and 2014).

Q: After abandoning the Marine Stewardship Council certification program in 2012, Alaska's major salmon processors are now rejoining the program. Is this good news for the salmon industry, or evidence that it is now beholden to a third party? Also, is the Department of Fish and Game able and willing to meet the MSC's certification demands?

A: It is good news if Alaska salmon has improved market access (and prices) because of MSC certification. Alaska's salmon management program is the best in the world, and while we expect some fluctuations in stock abundance and productivity, our track record since statehood demonstrates a sustainable model. For the most part, we've had no difficulty meeting sustainability standards of MSC and RFM (Responsible Fisheries Management) programs because our management system is robust and based on data-rich science. And rather than making demands, MSC places conditions on criteria for certification, which we strive to meet over a period of time. Current problems are mainly focused on hatchery production and several unanswered questions about potential impacts to wild stocks. Our ongoing Alaska hatchery research projects should provide needed insight to address those issues.

Q: Speaking of budget challenges, how and to what extent has the Division of Commercial Fisheries been affected by funding cuts?

A: State funding for our division was cut by about 12.5 percent

this year, which forced us to scale back or eliminate quite a few projects and programs across the state. Our divisional leadership team put a great deal of effort into evaluating the impacts of potential cuts in order to protect our fishery resources, maintain our mission-critical projects, and minimize impacts to users. We also scaled back the size of our workforce – mostly by not filling positions vacated through attrition and by reducing the number of months worked by some seasonal employees. If we are faced with additional cuts, we'll continue to implement them as strategically as possible, but the impacts will invariably become more and more painful to users.

Q: We've heard for years that the department faces challenges in keeping top employees. We also understand many senior people could soon retire. How are these issues being addressed?

A: I've often said that our dedicated and enthusiastic workforce is the department's greatest asset. Unfortunately, recruiting and retaining employees will be one of the toughest challenges facing the department. We have a lot of bright and hard-working biologists coming up through the ranks, but it's getting harder to keep them, especially when they can earn significantly higher salaries elsewhere (notably with federal natural resource agencies). In the past, employees were more likely to stick it out through times of austerity because of the state's traditional pension plan, but that won't necessarily be the case with Tier IV employees as their 401(a) retirement plan is highly portable if they leave state service. Even though our hands are tied in terms of salaries and benefits, we

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Jeff Regnart in the early 1990s while on a sampling trip on the Alagnak River at Bristol Bay.

need to do everything we can to take care of our employees and try to maintain the culture that has made the department such a great place to work throughout my career.

Q: Do you see any chance that either budget cuts or staff losses could result in more conservative management of our commercial fisheries?

A: Yes, the budget cuts in particular will result in fewer stock assessment and research projects across the state, which means our managers will have less information to manage fisheries. Greater uncertainty in population estimates and forecasts will require more conservative management strategies to ensure that we are not putting our fish populations in jeopardy.

Q: Is it possible the fishing industry could see new or higher fees to pay for state fisheries management? Might we also see the state mount new or increased cost recovery fisheries?

A: We are starting to explore options to bring in more revenue; this includes potential fee increases and new or expanded cost recovery fisheries. We will be working with the industry on the appropriate path forward to cover critical agency functions.

Q: In August, unhappy fishermen and other interests asked that the Chignik salmon fishery be placed under a different set of managers. How was this addressed?

A: A couple of the allocation plans dealing with management of salmon fisheries near Chignik have been controversial for years. Restructuring our organization

in response to allocation concerns is not the preferred solution. There are no stocks of concern in the Chignik area, escapement goals are being met, and pink and sockeye salmon harvests in 2015 were above average. Staff has pledged to meet with the users in the fisheries and discuss their concerns.

Q: You've had a 30-year career with the state. What are the biggest changes you've seen in the fisheries during your tenure?

A: I feel that communications and the speed in which fishery data is relayed are the biggest changes I have seen during my tenure. Today information travels so quickly in fisheries around the state. Our staff has to be able to react not only to questions from the users about something that transpired literally minutes before, they also have to make decisions in a very expedited manner. While for the most part this makes for a more robust, better-informed decision, the capacity required for such a system is much greater than in the past.

Q: The job of management biologist seems to be difficult and thankless, especially in some of the state's more feisty fishing areas. How do the best managers deal?

A: It helps that managers understand the significance of each and every management decision - they know fishermen are passionate because they depend on the resource to make a living. Managers realize they can't please everyone, so they have to simply focus on evaluating the best

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Five generations of O'Haras have worked in the marine industry spanning 111 years. Pictured are three generations, left to right: Frank O'Hara Jr., Frank O'Hara III, Casey O'Hara, Frank O'Hara Sr., and Nicholas O'Hara. Photo courtesy of The Free Press in Rockland, Maine

The O'Hara fishing dynasty

Maine family entered Alaska's trawl fisheries 25 years ago and soon will send a high-tech new boat up north

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Aug. 13, 2015, edition of The Free Press, a weekly newspaper based in Rockland, Maine. It is reprinted here with permission of The Free Press.

On July 31, O'Hara Corp. launched the first American fishing vessel that will be able to chase fish through polar ice off the coast of Alaska.

Now in its fifth generation, the O'Hara family business has shown the ability to adapt as fishing technology, two world wars,

and changes in international fisheries laws upended the industry.

"Every generation had its bad thing to deal with," said Frank O'Hara Jr. from the O'Hara Corp. headquarters on Tillson Avenue in Rockland, Maine. Born in 1960, he is actually the fourth Francis J. O'Hara and is the company vice president. One of his three sons is the fifth-generation Frank. His father, who was Frank Jr. and is now Frank Sr., 84, is the company president.

All of the fifth generation is in the family business and working in management.

How it started: Frank Jr.'s great-grandfather started the fishing family dynasty in 1904 when he launched a Gloucester sailing vessel, the Francis J. O'Hara Jr., which fished for cod, haddock, and halibut off Georges Bank until it was sunk by a German U-boat in 1918.

The vessel's namesake got a \$5,000 family loan to start his own business: the Atlantic and Pacific Seafood Co. in Boston.

That was the first real step toward becoming the O'Hara Corp. Frank O'Hara number two expanded into providing ice for a growing fishing fleet that shrank dramatically during World War II - when the company turned 13 of its 17 fishing vessels over to the U.S. government for the war effort.

The O'Hara company expanded from Boston to Portland, Maine, then Portland to Rockland in mid-century. The bait business got underway, the fishing fleet was growing and working hard, ice was needed for the fish, and fish was needed for the factories that were going strong on the Rockland waterfront. In the 1970s, the O'Haras took advantage of another opportunity. They formed a partnership, started Eastern Fisheries Co., and began fishing for scallops out of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Things looked good.

Then they didn't.

Confused seas: "My dad's bad thing was the 200-mile fishing limit," said O'Hara Jr. National laws in the 1970s to regulate international fishing near American coasts, followed by international fishing agreements in the 1980s, were meant

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Frank O'Hara Sr., left, and Frank O'Hara Jr. with the brand-new 120-foot Defender, built by Goudy & Stevens in East Boothbay, Maine, in 1984. In 1994, she would be converted to a catcher-processor and sent to the Alaska fishing grounds. She will be retired next year. Photo courtesy of O'Hara Corp.

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The Enterprise at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, with her trawl doors at rest. The vessel will retire next year when the new trawler Araho joins the fleet. Photo courtesy of O'Hara Corp.

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to stop free-for-all fishing and establish conservation measures. They also established that O'Hara's boats could no longer fish for groundfish - cod, flounder, and haddock - off Canada. A massive regulatory foul-up followed at the national level when fishermen were encouraged to borrow money at low rates to upgrade to high-tech fish-finding gear. The result was too many heavily indebted fishermen with the ability to catch a lot more fish competing for dwindling groundfish stocks in a smaller geographic area.

The New England groundfishery collapsed. Disputes over management continue even now. O'Hara's could have gone out of business with a whole lot of other New England groundfishermen in the '80s.

"We already had a lot going on," said Frank Jr. "We were heavily capitalized too."

They refit their biggest fishing vessel, the Constellation, into a catcher-processor - shorthand in the fishing industry for a boat that can haul nets and then process the catch in a below-decks factory and flash freeze it onboard.

O'Hara's new plan was to send the Constellation after squid, butterfish, and mackerel, marine species that were not being targeted by other fishermen. But the mackerel disappeared, the butterfish were plagued by a disease, and squid was overfished.

The O'Haras regrouped. It wasn't just Frank Sr. and Frank Jr. A good part of each generation worked in the marine industry.

In 1988, they decided to go after summer flounder near Newfoundland. Meanwhile, they sold a couple of boats. After two seasons of fishing off Newfoundland, they brought the 155-foot Constellation to port.

"I was about 30 years old then," said Frank Jr. "We sat down and talked it over. What were we going to do?"

This was their premium fishing vessel. She could haul. She could freeze. The O'Haras were heavily in debt, there were no fish, and the Rockland fish processing plants were closing down.

Frank Jr. was young enough to take on risk. He said his father, Frank Sr., knew what was at stake.

North to Alaska: They had a confident and competent captain aboard the Constellation who was willing to take a risk too. In 1990, they sent the Constellation down through the Panama Canal and up to the Bering Sea. She put in to Dutch Harbor, Alaska, a rough-and-ready frontier fishing town halfway down the Aleutian Island chain that would become the No. 1 fishing port in the world in a few short years. From there, the Bering Sea fishing grounds opened up to the north all the way to the polar ice. The Gulf of Alaska opened up to the south of the Aleutian Island chain. The Gulf of Maine, by comparison, could fit in the Bering Sea's back pocket.

To the O'Haras, it was all brand new.

"It was a big decision to go to Alaska," said Frank Jr. "Dutch Harbor was an unknown. There was no Internet, there were no cell phones. It cost \$10 a minute to make a phone call."

It paid off. Yellowfin sole, flathead and rock sole, pollock, and Pacific cod were hauled back and the 30-metric-ton nets winched up the stern ramps, the fish headed and gutted onboard in the below-decks factory, then flash frozen within two hours of catching.

The O'Haras sent two more catcher-processors to Alaska: the Defender and the Enterprise. All three have been working together for the past 20 years, fishing and processing fish around the clock when they are at sea. The crews come from Mexico, the Philippines, Iowa, and Rockland to Seattle, where they sign on for a 75-day contract to work 16-hour shifts, seven days a week for a percentage share of the catch. There's a bonus, a 401(k) account, and health insurance, said Frank Jr.

Depending on the catch, a share can be

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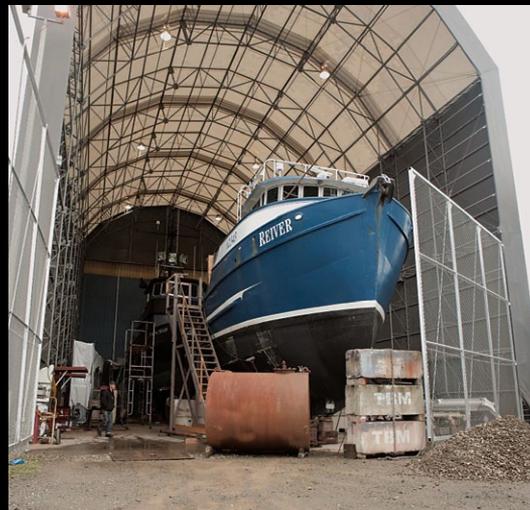
The ice-cutting hull of the new 194-foot catcher-processor Araho, on display at Eastern Shipbuilding in Panama City, Fla. She will be able to fish in ice floes 2 feet thick. Photo courtesy of O'Hara Corp.

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Every week or so a freezer cargo ship, known as a trumper, comes up from Tokyo, and the O'Hara boats unload frozen fish. The trumper distributes it to China, Korea, and Japan. Most of the fish is thawed, processed more fully into fillets or other products and refrozen before being shipped back to American Walmarts and Costcos and Long John Silver's. Potentially, the frozen cod from the local Walmart was caught by an O'Hara boat, did a semi-navigation of the globe, then ended up on your plate for dinner.

What about fresh haddock or flounder in Rockland?

Frank Jr. shook his head.

"Maybe if they get it from Boston," he said. Cod? There isn't much left to fish. Most is flown into Boston fresh from Iceland.

"Just about all fish caught is frozen, and that's not necessarily a bad thing," said Frank Jr. "If you are flash-freezing two hours after it's caught, that's a fresher fish than one caught anywhere from four to 12 days before it ends up on a fresh fish counter."

"Really fresh fish is translucent," he said.

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An artist's rendering of the F/V Araho.

If it's quick frozen and stored properly and thawed properly, the once-frozen fish can still be translucent.

Together, the three Alaska catcher-processors make up 50 to 55 percent of O'Hara Corp.'s business.

New vessel coming: The new ice-cutting catcher-processor, the 194-foot Araho, will replace the Defender and the Enterprise, both of which are ready to be retired, according to Frank Jr.

The Araho was designed by the Norwegian naval architectural firm Skipsteknisk and will be able to fish through 2-foot-thick ice floes, with ice davits that divert the weight of the ice from the trawl net. Propellers that directionally push water will enhance the vessel's power, thereby reducing fuel use by 35 to 40 percent over O'Hara's current Alaska fishing vessels.

She will head to the fishing grounds in mid-winter.

While fish are abundant off Alaska and the resource is considered well-managed overall by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the North Pacific is facing conservation challenges that will continue to change how commercial fisheries operate.

Frank Jr. said O'Hara Corp. has stayed in step with the conservation measures and oversight of the fisheries they work in. They use lighter nets that skim above the bottom, and they've reduced their waste and reduced the number of fish species caught accidentally that are of conservation concern. They plan to keep changing with the conservation requirements, he said.

Scallops and more: Another 20 to 25 percent of the O'Hara business comes from Eastern Fisheries – anchored by their New Bedford scallop fleet of 25 boats, the largest in the world. They also operate three waterfront scallop-processing plants in New Bedford and another in China, along with a Chinese scallop farm. North Atlantic scallops are shipped for sale in Asia, and there are daily shipments to Europe. Asian scallops are shipped back to the United States and sold by O'Hara in the wholesale American market.

Since expanding into lucrative Alaska fishing, O'Hara's has bought up much of Rockland's Tillson Avenue waterfront.

O'Hara's currently employs 55 people at their various Rockland marine businesses, they run two herring boats out of the north end of Rockland, are the largest lobster bait dealer in Maine, operate a marina in mid-town, with related boat services, and house more boats during the winter inside their 300,000-square-foot storage facilities than any other boat storage company in the state.

They are just completing a heated and ultra-ventilated boat-painting facility on Tillson Avenue, where paint can dry in record time, even in mid-winter, and three new work bays at the end of the street. The largest new boat service work bay will be used to finish off new boats built by Back Cove/Sabre yachts, with which O'Hara Corp. has established a partnership. The location allows for easy launching at O'Hara's Journey's End Marina just across the street.

When the Rockland activities of the O'Hara Corp. are put together, it adds up to about 10 percent of the business.

Frank Jr. said the company had two studies done to see if it made sense to expand into hotels or other types of development on Tillson Avenue. It didn't. The company's Rockland real estate is almost 100 percent utilized right now, he said. Commercial, marine-related business is what it will stay. There are no plans to sell, to change, or to buy more.

If this O'Hara generation has a bad thing to deal with, it will be market competition from pond-raised tilapia, which can be grown in oxygen-poor ponds not much bigger than a large mud puddle.

"Competing with aquaculture products, their low price, their low labor costs, that's our challenge," said Frank Jr. "I don't even know if they feed tilapia. The taste can't compete with freshly caught, cold-water flounder that's frozen within two hours of catching."

"That's what we have to emphasize," said Frank Jr. "We've got some marketing work to do." ↓

Christine Parrish is a staff writer with the The Free Press in Rockland, Maine.

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Known fish species living in Salish Sea increase with new report

Coho salmon, Pacific halibut, and even dogfish shark are familiar to many people in the Salish Sea region. But what about the Pacific viperfish, northern flashlightfish, dwarf wrymouth, or longsnout prickleback?

These colorfully named species and others are compiled in a new, 106-page report that documents all of the fishes that live in the Salish Sea, a roughly 6,500-square-mile region that encompasses Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Strait of Georgia, the San Juan Islands, and the Canadian Gulf Islands.

In total, 253 fish species have been recorded in the Salish Sea, and that's about 14 percent more than in the last count, said Ted Pietsch, co-author of the new report and a University of Washington emeritus professor of aquatic and fishery sciences.

Previous surveys never fully captured the total number of fish species, though Salish Sea bird and mammal species are documented in full.

"It's quite astonishing to think that people haven't really known what's here in any detail," Pietsch said. "In preparing this report, we've really turned over every stone to make sure we have every fish species ever recorded from our inland marine waters."

The paper's other author is Jay Orr, a scientist with the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and a former graduate student of Pietsch's. Their exhaustive report represents the first thorough survey and analysis of Salish Sea fishes in 35 years.

Vivid illustrations: "Fishes of the Salish Sea: A compilation and distributional analysis," published online in September by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, includes a full taxonomic list as well as an analysis of geographic distribution and relative local abundance, along with common and scientific names and key references to learn more about each species. Some of the fishes are depicted in hand-drawn images by artist Joe Tomelleri, so accurate and lifelike that they are easily mistaken for photographs.

The report is a precursor to a book coming out in a year or two that will feature Tomelleri's drawings of all 253 Salish Sea fish species.

This report and the eventual book will be useful for scientists, anglers, educators, and others in identifying Salish fishes, tracking the distribution and abundance of known species, assessing the health of their habitat, and determining when these populations might be in danger of disappearing.

"If you don't first know what you have, it's impossible to know what you might be losing," Pietsch said.

Extensive research: Pietsch and Orr scoured multiple sources to determine whether each species listed in the report lives or was known to live in the Salish Sea region, also known as the inland marine waters of Washington and British Columbia. Their primary source was the vast fish collection of the UW Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture – which now contains more than 11 million specimens – and they looked also at other major fish collections along the West Coast, including those at the University of British Columbia,

Continued on page 70



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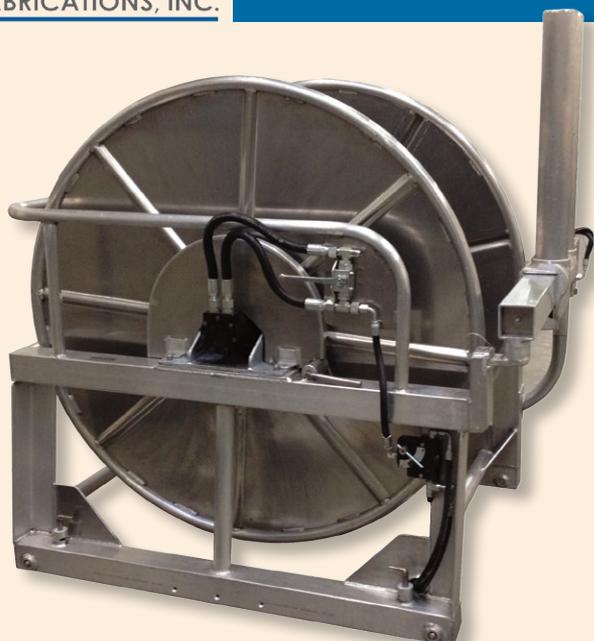
Salmon forest



Southeast Alaska's vast Tongass National Forest is a major contributor of salmon for the commercial fishing industry. Mark Kaelke photo



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Alaska's rainy Tongass is a major salmon producer, and fish habitat could gain new priority status

Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest evokes images of old-growth trees, humpback whales, glaciers, and cruise ships. While tourism is one of the region's top employers, the Tongass' most valuable product is salmon. That's according to the U.S. Forest Service, the lead federal agency responsible for managing the 17-million-acre rainforest, an area roughly the size of West Virginia.

Ron Medel, who manages the Forest Service's fisheries program in the Tongass, has tracked the region's salmon for about a decade and has become something of an evangelist for the iconic fish and the habitat upon which it depends. Since July 2010, Medel has given about 30 presentations jammed with statistics touting the Tongass as one of the world's most biologically productive places for salmon.

"This is a salmon forest. There's no doubt about it," said Medel, a Ketchikan resident, in a recent interview with *Pacific Fishing*.

Southeast Alaska, largely blanketed by the Tongass, comprises a

minute portion – about 5 percent – of Alaska. That’s about 35,000 square miles – about the size of Maine. And about 40 percent of Southeast Alaska, also known as the Panhandle, is made up of small, forested islands, often drenched by rain or shrouded by low-hanging clouds. Although a tiny sliver of a mega-sized state, Southeast Alaska and the Tongass contribute an oversized portion of the salmon catch in Alaska and the North Pacific Ocean as a whole.

Big numbers: According to Medel’s research, Southeast Alaska produced about 35 percent of Alaska’s salmon harvest from 1994 to 2014. During the same period, the region also contributed about \$110 million per year out of Alaska’s overall harvest value of \$391 million.

The numbers specific to the Tongass, which makes up 80 percent of the Southeast Alaska region, are equally impressive. Since 1994, about 28 percent of Alaska’s annual salmon harvest has come from the lakes, streams, and rivers of this American rain forest. That’s about 49 million of the 175 million wild salmon caught annually.

Another big takeaway from Medel’s research is that 25 percent of commercially harvested salmon on the Pacific coast are born in waters of the Tongass National Forest.

“This is a testament to how well these fish are managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,” said Medel. “We, the Forest Service, manage the habitat. But Fish and Game manages the fish populations, and they do a terrific job.”

Commercial fishermen tend to agree with Medel’s assessment of Fish and Game.

“The health of our stocks depends on frontline fishery professionals who constantly analyze real-time data and make adjustments to ensure enough fish reach the rivers, while also maximizing harvest. The yin and yang of this system is the direct result of Alaska’s founders making sustainability a constitutional mandate and designing a system to keep politics out of biological decisions. Alaska is one of the world’s best places for fishing. I’m grateful to our state’s fishery managers,” said Dale Kelley, executive director of the Alaska Trollers Association.

Unspoiled habitat: So what makes the Tongass such a natural fish factory? Remoteness and geography are key. Much of the region is laced with streams, rivers, lakes, and intertidal zones that are largely intact, meaning they haven’t been tarnished by human factors that have decimated salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere – things like dams, agricultural runoff, urban sprawl, and pollution.

The Tongass is part of the Alexander Archipelago, a jagged coastland off British Columbia defined by 1,100 islands, emerald fjords, and over 4,100 lakes and ponds, according to Medel’s presentation. The Forest Service counts 15,764 miles of salmon-producing streams in the Tongass.

Combined with the myriad lakes and ponds, the Tongass boasts a total of 17,690 miles of salmon-producing habitat, the federal agency estimates.

Steve Merritt is a second-generation troller who lives in Craig on Prince of Wales Island. His father, Ron, still trolls and his brother, Brian, trolls and gillnets out of Wrangell.

Tongass salmon underpin the family’s lifestyle and income.

“Prices are low right now but the value of our salmon runs, economically speaking, you have to put that in perspective. They have a value no one can put a price on,” said Merritt, who has trolled for about three decades.

“I strictly depend on salmon for a living. My daughter has been fishing for 10 years. She went to college. Fishing has funded that,” he said.

Commercial fishing also financed Merritt’s college degree, in teaching, but he decided to make his living on the water.

“I prefer fishing,” he said.

Logging legacy: Although the Tongass’ old-growth stands of cedar, hemlock, and spruce grow largely undisturbed, the forest is far from virgin. Many decades of industrial-scale logging scarred many biologically productive salmon watersheds that the Forest Service is now working to restore. In 2011, the Forest Service identified about 70 watersheds that need restoration to be productive for fish to use again, and the agency is working to complete those projects as funding allows. Some say the agency

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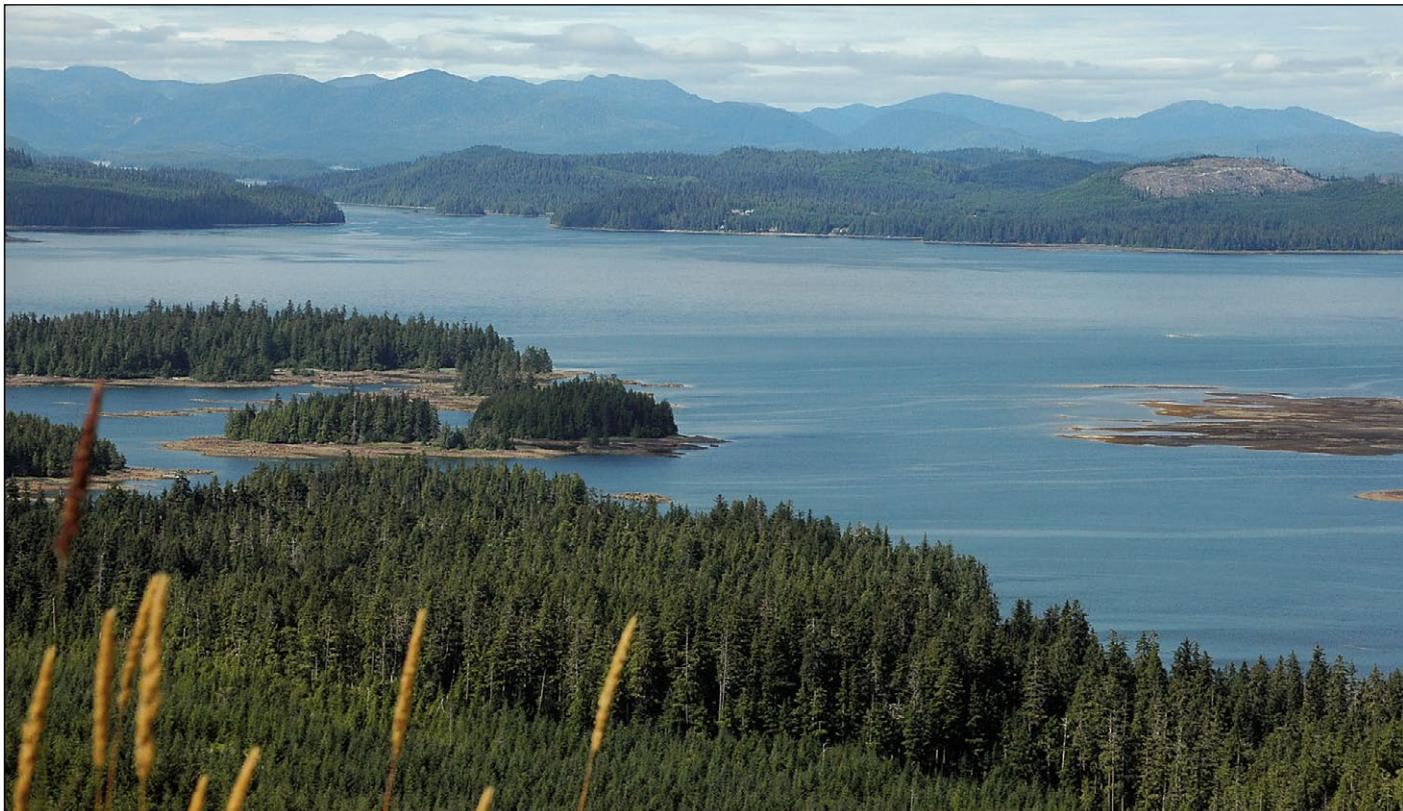
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"Maintaining healthy habitat and fish stocks in the Tongass should be both an economic and social mandate," says Dale Kelley, executive director of the Alaska Trollers Association. Ashley Hegewald photo

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still spends disproportionately on logging and roadbuilding while shortchanging restoration, recreation, and fishing projects that support private-sector employment and local use.

"Maintaining healthy habitat and fish stocks in the Tongass should be both an economic and social mandate," Kelley said. "Fish and wildlife feed our region's families, directly and through jobs. Aggressive logging and poor stewardship practices can compromise everything from finding a safe place to anchor to putting deer meat on the table."

Speaking by cell phone from his fishing vessel in Craig, on Prince of Wales Island, Merritt said he couldn't agree more.

"This island has been logged to death. You just have to fly over it to see," said Merritt, referring to the many industrial-sized clearcuts that feature prominently among Prince of Wales' wild landscapes.

Medel would like to see more Tongass watersheds restored, but it all comes down to budget priorities, he said.

Setting priorities: Although the Forest Service is transitioning away from controversial old-growth logging to managing for second-growth trees, the

► Ron Medel, fisheries program manager for the Tongass National Forest, shows off a king salmon. Photo courtesy of Ron Medel

agency still has not made fisheries, and salmon in particular, priority number one, some fishermen say, noting the Forest Service budget and staffing for the Tongass continue to emphasize logging and roadbuilding.

In Medel's shop, his staff of biologists and technicians devoted to fisheries work has shrunk in the last decade.

"I had 44 people in 2003. I think I'm down to 29 now," he said.

That said, Medel has been a strong advocate for Southeast Alaska's healthy salmon runs, and his presentations have garnered media coverage. He's heartened that the public is starting to realize how valuable a place the Tongass is for salmon production.

"It's nice to see Tongass salmon being recognized as the gems that they are," he said.

A federal advisory panel for the Tongass recently recommended that more biologically productive salmon habitat in the forest be managed with fish as the top priority. These key salmon watersheds are called the Tongass 77. The Forest Service was to consider that recommendation, among others, this fall during a public process to amend its Tongass land management plan. Commercial and sport fishermen, tourism operators, the timber industry, conservationists, and others with a stake in the region are expected to bird-dog the process closely. The plan amendment is an opportunity for anyone who cares about fish, wild landscapes, and sustainable economies to weigh in. ↴

Paula Dobbyn is a freelance writer based in Anchorage.



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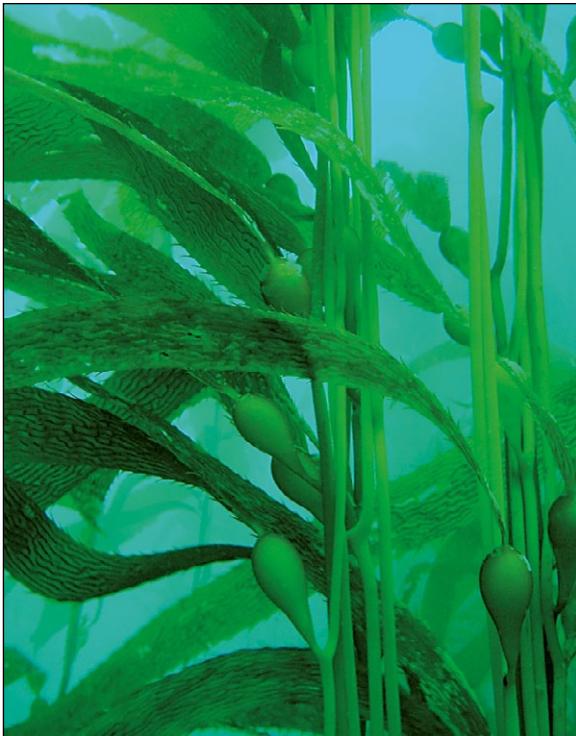
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Analysis of Channel Islands MPAs dispels one fear of fishermen, scientists say



Giant kelp off Santa Barbara Island in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Claire Fackler photo

More than a decade ago, California established marine protected areas (MPAs) in state waters around the northern Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara. Several years later, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration extended these MPAs into the federal waters of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

To evaluate whether the MPAs are meeting their ecological goals, marine scientists from the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) have been monitoring these rocky reef and kelp forest communities. Three UC Santa Barbara PISCO scientists have now published an analysis of 10 years of monitoring data for the MPAs in the Channel Islands network. The results appear in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

“The Channel Islands MPAs appear to be fulfilling their role as refuges for many fish and invertebrate species,” said lead author Jennifer Caselle, a research biologist at UC Santa Barbara’s Marine Science Institute (MSI). “2013 marked the 10-year anniversary of the Channel Islands MPAs. A snapshot view in 2008 indicated that the MPAs were enhancing ecological communities, but we didn’t have enough data to assess the long-term changes. Now, for the first time, we can compare long-term trends in the protected areas with areas open to fishing.”

Greater fish numbers, biomass: After the first five years of protection, scientists found that fish species targeted by fishermen had both greater density (numbers of fish per area) and biomass (total weight per area) inside MPAs as compared to reference sites outside – and this was still true in 2013.

“We expected to find an increase in biomass inside the MPAs for fish species that are the targets of fishing, and that did occur across the MPA network,” Caselle said. “Perhaps more important, we also found increases in fished species outside in the unprotected areas. That means that one of the most common fears of fishermen was not realized – and that’s huge.”

According to co-author Robert Warner, when fishing is prohibited in one area,



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fishermen naturally turn their attention to less protected areas.

"It was feared that this extra effort would deplete the fish stocks outside of MPAs," noted Warner, a research professor in UCSB's Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology. "Happily, there is no evidence of depletion. In fact, fish stocks outside of MPAs have increased over time, although at a slower rate than inside MPAs."

The scientists don't know if fish population increases beyond the MPA borders are related to reduced fishing pressure, spillover from MPAs, favorable environmental conditions, or a combination of all three.

MPA network: This study represents one of the first opportunities marine biologists have had to examine a network of MPAs rather than a single location. Even though the northern Channel Islands comprise a relatively small geographical space, the data showed spatial variation. The responses were strong in the eastern part of the channel but negligible in the west, where waters are colder.

"The northern Channel Islands lie within a transition zone where cold waters from the north meet warm waters from the south," said co-author Andrew Rassweiler, an MSI assistant research biologist. "Distinct groupings of marine life are associated with different parts of this spectrum of water temperatures throughout the islands, and these diverse areas can respond differently to the establishment of MPAs."

In warmer water surrounding the eastern islands, biomass of targeted species was higher within MPAs compared to areas outside. In contrast, at San Miguel Island, where MPAs are located in colder waters, the biomass of targeted species showed no significant difference between the MPA and unprotected areas. According to Caselle, these dissimilar responses could be due to differences in the amount of fishing across the islands combined with differences in growth rates of the animals.

"The implications of this are important because the state of California has recently implemented a statewide network of MPAs through the Marine Life Protection Act," she said. "We now have a large number of MPAs in a variety of habitats and ocean conditions. Our work in the Channel Islands creates expectations for what will be seen throughout the state. All MPAs are not going to perform equally."

"By following the trajectories of protected and unprotected areas through time and across space, we've been able to document the effects of MPAs in unprecedented detail," Caselle concluded. "This is the sort of information that management desperately needs."

Primary funding for this work was provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Additional funding and/or vessel time was provided by Channel Islands National Park; NOAA; the California Ocean Protection Council; the Resources Legacy Fund; the National Science Foundation and the National Marine Fisheries Service via the CAMEO program; California Sea Grant; the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary; and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. ↴

- UC Santa Barbara



An aerial view of Anacapa Island.
Robert Schwemmer photo



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Researchers work on excavation at the Upward Sun River site in Interior Alaska. Images courtesy of Ben Potter, UAF

How old is salmon fishing in North America? At least 11,500 years

Researchers in Alaska have found the earliest known evidence that Ice Age humans in North America used salmon as a food source, according to a new paper published in September in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The findings counter traditionally held beliefs that Ice Age Paleoindians were primarily big-game hunters. They are based on analysis of 11,500-year-old chum salmon bones found by University of Alaska Fairbanks anthropologist Ben Potter and colleagues at the Upward Sun River site in Interior Alaska. Excavation of the site has revealed human dwellings, tools, and human remains, as well as the salmon bones.

“Salmon fishing has deep roots, and we now know that salmon have been consumed by North American humans at least 11,500 years ago,” said lead author Carrin Halfman, a UAF anthropologist who helped analyze the fish bones with co-authors Brian Kemp of Washington State University, Potter, and others.

Ancient chums: The findings also suggest that salmon spawning runs were established much earlier and much farther north than previously thought, at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, also known as the last Ice Age.

Ancient DNA and stable isotope analysis verified the fish remains as sea-run chum salmon that migrated upriver some 1,400 kilometers from where the mouth of the Yukon River now exists.



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Salmon bone specimens from the Upward Sun River site.



These analyses indicate that modern salmon migrations may have ancient roots, dating back to at least the end of the last Ice Age.

“We have cases where salmon become landlocked and have very different isotopic signatures than marine salmon. Combining genetic and isotopic analyses allow us to confirm the identity as chum salmon, which inhabit the area today, as well as establish their life histories,” said Potter. “Both are necessary to understand how humans used these resources.”

The salmon were found in an ancient cooking hearth in a residential structure. Fish remains pose a challenge to archaeologists because their bones are very small and fragile and typically do not preserve well. Because of these challenges, their remains are likely underrepresented in global archaeological studies and findings.

Following the fish: Findings show that ancient Beringian diets were broader than earlier thought and that Ice Age humans used complex strategies and specialized technology to obtain their food, Potter said. He also noted that there is no evidence to suggest that salmon runs weren’t also present in the area a few thousand years prior to the time when people were living at the Upward Sun River site.

“This suggests that salmon fishing may have played a role in the early human colonization of North America.”

The excavation and analysis were funded in part by the National Science Foundation. Other contributors to the paper include UAF postdoctoral researcher Holly McKinney, Bruce Finney of Idaho State University, and Antonia Rodrigues and Dongya Yang of Simon Fraser University. ↓

– University of Alaska Fairbanks

An advertisement for Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) featuring a fisherman, Angus Iversen. The background is a photograph of Angus Iversen, a man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a blue denim jacket, sitting on a boat. A red circular graphic in the upper right corner contains the text "WIN PFDs BOOTH #1124". Overlaid on the image is the text "Can you talk fishing? Then you can win PFDs for your crew." followed by "Angus Iversen" in a script font. A small logo that says "LIVE TO BE SALTY" is visible on his jacket. In the bottom right corner, there is an image of an orange and black PFD. Below the PFD image, the text reads: "Win free, high-performance PFDs for your crew and help them live to be old salts, like me. Look for me, Angus, at the CDC/NIOSH booth #1124 and get the details on how you can win. See you at the Pacific Marine Expo, Nov. 18-20 in Seattle." At the very bottom of the advertisement, a small disclaimer reads: "Mention of any company or product does not constitute endorsement by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)."

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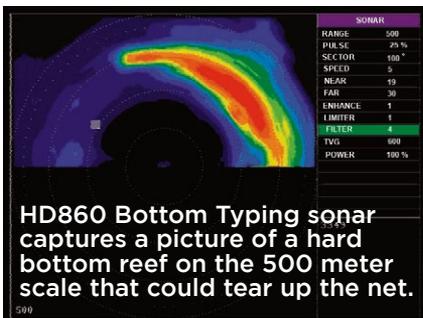


La Conner Maritime recently launched this new 39-foot boat for use in the Dungeness crab fishery in California. Ozzie Wiese photo

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La Conner launches new crabber; Fred Wahl builds 58-foot combo vessel

La Conner: Isaac Oczkewicz at La Conner Maritime Service and Maritime Fabrications Inc. reports that the yard has just launched a new model 39-by-14-foot crabber for use in the Dungeness crab fishery in California.

"It performed great on sea trials, achieving 14 knots with a 330-horsepower John Deere 6068 AFM 85 engine," Oczkewicz said. The boat is set up for a crew of four and packs approximately 600 gallons of fuel and 70 gallons of water. It has a bait hold plus two product holds capable of packing over 17,000 pounds of crab.

Oczkewicz said two Bristol Bay boats are coming into the yard this fall/winter for refrigerated seawater installation and upgrade work, and one will be repowering and getting other work done too. Several Bristol Bay refit projects are going on at the company's seasonal shop in Naknek.



Reedsport: Fred Wahl Marine reports that the yard was in full swing all summer.

The new construction F/V Oracle was delivered in June and has been tendering in Prince William Sound. The owner reports that the 58-by-28.5-foot boat easily packs 250,000 pounds of pink salmon.

The company has started on its next new construction: a 58-by-28.5-foot combination vessel. The new boat will be powered by a 750-horsepower Caterpillar C32 main engine coupled to a 6:1 Twin Disc MGX-5225. Electrical power will be supplied by two 150 kW John Deere and one 40 kW Northern Lights gensets. The vessel is for sale.

The F/V Oceans Invictus (built by Fred Wahl Marine and previously named F/V Alpine Cove) is in the yard for a complete overhaul, mid-body extension, and conversion to trawl fisheries. The 76-foot vessel will be lengthened to 81 feet 10 inches. Propulsion overhaul includes a rebuilt main engine with horsepower increase, new AQ 22 HS shafting, and a Kort nozzle with stainless steel wheel. Hydraulic systems are being overhauled and reconfigured as needed. All living spaces and the wheelhouse are being completely revamped.

The Miss Berdie sponsoring project was completed in September. The 80.5-foot trawler ended up with all systems being completely rebuilt and with a new wheelhouse, living quarters, mast, and gantry. It was also widened from 28 to 39 feet.

The 67-by-21-foot F/V Dynamic was in the yard for haulout, shafting overhaul, repowering, and painting. The main engine was replaced with a Cummins K-19. Shaft work included conversion from rabbit to split roller bearings and installation of a new dripless shaft seal.

The fishing vessels Erla-N, Vixen, Pearl J, Sarah Belle, and Eddie N Rod were in the yard for annual haulout, inspection, and miscellaneous small projects.

Kiska Sea, a 125-foot Alaska crab fishing vessel, was at the yard for routine maintenance, paint, and inspection of shafts and wheels.

The 110-foot tugboat Teclutsa, owned by Coos Bay Towboat, was in for routine haulout and paint.



Wrangell: Pat and Kelly Ellis at the Wrangell Boatshop LLC reported that the 92-foot steel tender Grace C was scheduled to be in the shop in October for blasting and painting. The 46-foot wooden power troller Carrie was coming to take care of a hole from a grounding, and the Aaralyn, a 42-foot fiberglass gillnetter, was coming in for modification to the sides of its fish hold.

The Cora J, a 58-foot fiberglass Delta, was scheduled for a paint touch-up as well as fuel and water tank plumbing repair. The 58-foot steel vessel Hailey Lynn was scheduled to have the steel and windows on both sides of the pilothouse replaced.

In November, another 58-foot fiberglass Delta, the Logan T, was coming in for bait

Continued on page 34



The newly built F/V Oracle. Photo courtesy of Fred Wahl Marine

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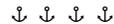
Victoria Shipyards
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The trawler Miss Berdie after sponsoring and other improvements. Photo courtesy of Fred Wahl Marine

hold modifications. Also in November, the 75-foot wooden tender Marine Star was coming in for stern caulking.



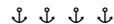
Victoria: Seaspan's Victoria Shipyards had the American Seafoods factory trawler American Triumph in dock in April and May.

The work carried out included regular drydock maintenance and survey items.

The American Triumph received underwater and topside hull paint, a new propeller and propeller shaft, and Kort nozzle and rudder surveys.

Valve and sea strainer inspections and cleaning were done, as well as a stern ramp steel plate refurbishment and a cargo crane overhaul.

Victoria Shipyards also did a partial installation of new ammonia freezer plant piping, with the project completed by the owners at their facility in Seattle.



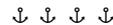
Everett: At the Hansen Boat Co., the 58-foot seiner/longliner/trap boat Odin, built by Hansen in 1991, was in the yard in October for a repower, replacing a Tier 1 Cummins QSK19M engine with a Tier 3 660-horsepower QSK19M engine supplied by Piston & Rudder Service Inc. Once the engine is out, explained company vice president Rick Hansen, the saltwater circulation as well as inaccessible areas can be inspected.

"We check the piping, and once the engine is out you can check the bilge and repaint it," Hansen said. "As far as any more, mainly we want to get the engine out and look around for obvious stuff."

Also in the yard was the 130-foot crabber/salmon tender Kari Marie for a keel-up paint job and general maintenance. There was some galley work to be done with some cabinets replaced. Some leakage around the windows and some corrosion had to be dealt with as well, Hansen said.

A built-in potable water tank in the forward section of the vessel also was suffering corrosion, Hansen said, so the yard was planning to cut a hole in the bottom so the crew could get inside and sandblast it.

"With a steel boat you just cut a round hole in it, and when you're done you just weld it back up again," Hansen said.



Seward: Carol Reid, marketing manager for Vigor Industrial, reported the 99-foot Guardian, owned by Seldovia Shellfishing Co., was in Vigor's Seward yard for yearly maintenance including hull blasting and coating. The project was anticipated to take three weeks. ↓

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The 191-foot cod freezer longliner Blue North, under construction at the Dakota Creek Industries shipyard in Anacortes, Wash. Photos courtesy of Blue North

Blue North's comfy, cutting-edge freezer longliner nears completion

Blue North, a Seattle-based fishing company, is introducing a pace-setting freezer longliner vessel to its fleet, one that will feature a slew of technological and harvesting innovations.

The company will add the new 191-foot-long, 42-foot-wide F/V Blue North to its five-vessel fleet in early February, capping a two-year construction project at the Dakota Creek Industries shipyard in Anacortes, Washington.

The longline cod fishery in Alaska's Bering Sea is worked predominantly by older vessels, and Kenny Down, Blue North's president and CEO, said the new vessel is being built with an eye on the future. When his company decided to update its fleet, it aimed to "build a vessel for the next 25 to 30 years, or likely longer."

There's been a lag in U.S. shipbuilding, said Down, and though the F/V Blue North's innovations will be new to America, they've actually been used in Europe for almost a decade.

Designed by the Norwegian consulting firm Skipsteknisk, the Blue North will feature a molded hull that Down likened to America's Cup sailing yachts. A twin-propeller dual-azimuth drive system enables full maneuverability.

But when asked about the new vessel's most striking aspect, Down named its internal moon pool harvesting technology. Longline gear will be hauled up through a tunnel at the bottom of the vessel, with crew members working indoors in a climate-controlled environment.

Crew comfort: "The crew issue can't be overlooked," said Down. The Blue North will accommodate 26 crew members in one- to two-person staterooms with individual

Continued on page 36

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The F/V Blue North's most striking feature is its moon pool. The internal haul station will allow crewmen to work comfortably indoors.



The F/V Blue North is equipped with a diesel-electric twin-propeller dual-azimuth propulsion system for full maneuverability.

bathrooms and shower facilities.

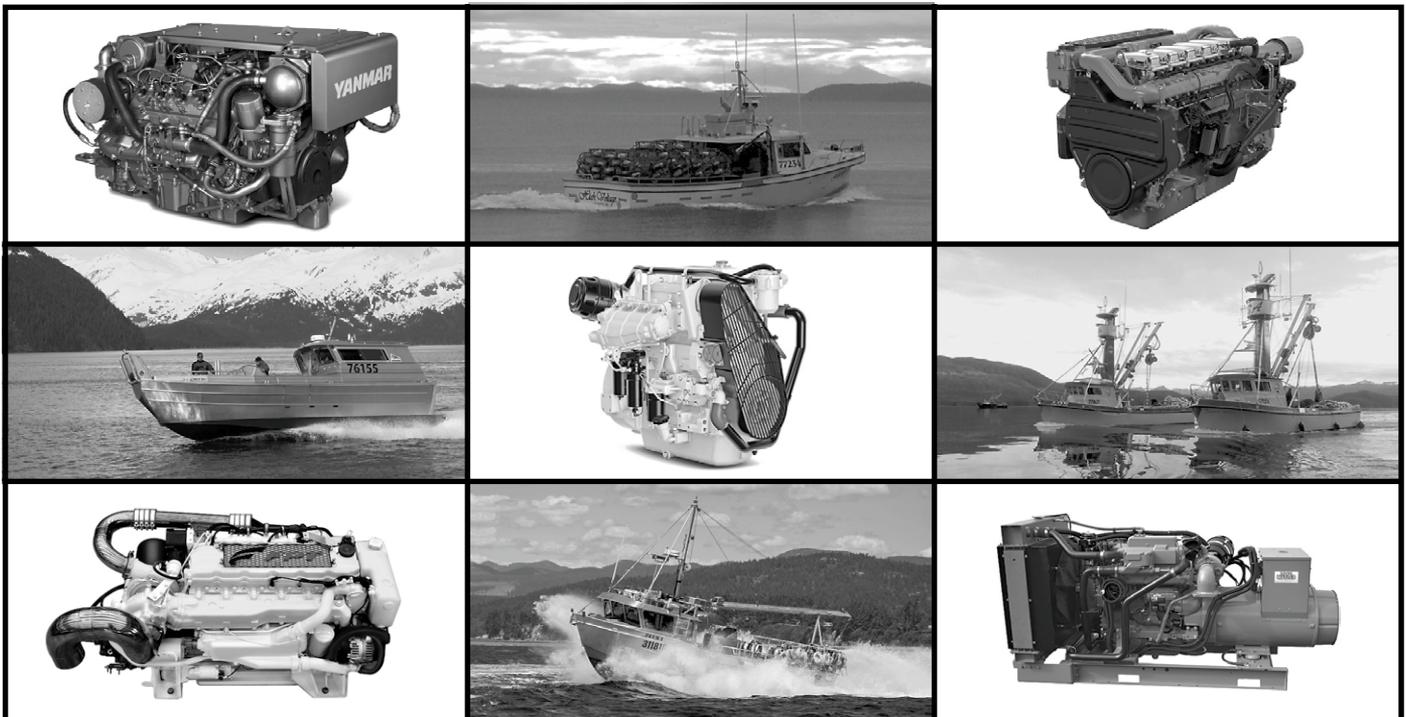
A small movie theater, a gaming area, and an exercise room round out the crew amenities.

"This is a huge advancement from a crew comfort standpoint, and we're doing it because it's hard to find crews for this type of fishing," Down said. "We will be attracting the very best crew members in the Bering Sea."

The vessel's comfortable indoor working environment also furthers another key goal – to reduce bycatch.

The Bering Sea's often savage weather makes handling and releasing halibut and other bycatch species a challenging task, and with an insulated work area, Down expects "a mortality rate that will be less than any other vessel fishing in Alaska."

Continued on page 38



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◀ A digital mock-up of the F/V Blue North

Improved recovery rate: Maximum use of every target fish that's caught is also sought. Down said most vessels have a 50 percent product recovery rate, while the Blue North will achieve a 90 percent rate.

An automated plate freezer system with 1.3 million pounds of storage capacity will ensure that there will be room for a variety of marketable byproducts such as cod livers.

Freezer loading and unloading will be fully mechanized, and Down said the Blue North will be the first hook-and-line catcher-processor equipped to produce retail-ready fillets onboard.

Efficiency is carried through to the vessel's diesel-electric power generation. The total electrical output of the vessel's bank of generators will be computer-controlled, and Down expects to achieve a 30 percent reduction of fuel use and emissions.

Another innovation involves a philosophical shift on how to treat fish when they're harvested.

Humane harvest: Blue North announced and launched its Humane Harvest Initiative in 2014 at the Seafood Expo North America in Boston.

"Every fish that comes off this vessel will carry the Humane Harvest label," said Down, adding that all the company's vessels will follow suit, and he hopes others will adhere to the initiative's standards as well.

The company's take on fish is that they are "sentient beings deserving of ethical treatment at harvest," he said.

Fish brought onboard are either electrically stunned or percussion-stunned with blows to the head, so they're unconscious when they're bled out. There's a market-oriented incentive to doing that, said Down, as a less stressful, pain-free harvesting process has been shown to elevate quality.

Stacked with innovations, the F/V Blue North is a year behind its construction schedule, which Down said isn't unusual for a project of this scale and complexity. He estimates that by the time the vessel is sea-ready, \$35 million to \$37 million will have been spent.

Down also believes the investment will be more than recovered.

"An older vessel would never find the storage or accomplish the efficiencies that this vessel will," he said. ↴

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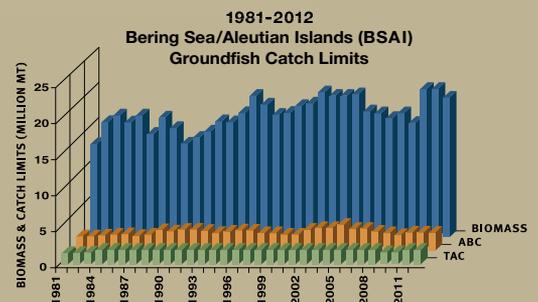


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A terrifying moment as water – way too much water – inundates the deck of the halibut longliner Lualda in May 1987. Most everything went overboard, but the boat got her freeboard back. Jana M. Suchy photos

Trends in Alaskan Longline: Bigger, Better, Faster – More

Editor's note: The following article, originally published in 1987 in Pacific Fishing magazine, is now part of a handsome new book, "Alaska Fishing Gold Rush of the 1980s." The author, Jana M. Suchy, crewed on commercial boats and then freelanced for fishing trade publications, chronicling the wild decade before individual quotas tamed the halibut and sablefish fisheries. The book collects Suchy's articles and photos and covers not only the longline derbies but also salmon trolling and other fisheries. The photos we reprint here are just a small sample of the Smithsonian-worthy images in this hardcover coffee-table book, available for \$95. More information at fishingforalivingalaska.com.

Pacific Fishing magazine, December 1987

Fishing bigger, better, faster is a direct result of one thing: shorter seasons. Halibut and sablefish fishing that used to stretch nearly year-round, providing both livelihood and lifestyle to longliners, has compressed in the extreme this year down to a 24-hour Chatham black cod opening and a 12-hour shot at halibut out west – at night. These abrupt, intense, and inhuman longline fisheries are decreed by Council and Commission,

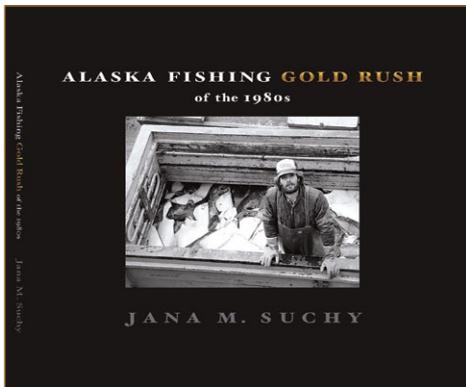
but fishermen too must take responsibility for the greed and waste that only helps feed this vicious cycle.

Black cod pioneer and Pelican patriarch Jake Phillips laments the loss of the lifestyle, of the camaraderie amongst early longliners who'd never even think of cutting another's gear if set-down without retying or buoying it off. Now, he says, he's told he's too nice a guy, that to make it anymore "you gotta be a mean sonuvabitch."

"If that's what it takes to be a successful fisherman nowadays I don't want any part of it," and on that note Jake stepped out of an active role in fisheries politics some 18 months ago, choosing to fish the *Lea* in a scaled-back version reminiscent of the old lifestyle days. A once honorable profession for a hard-working lot of the hearty few has succumbed to the clamor of the money-hungry masses. These longline trends – they're not a pretty picture.

From Dory Days to Big Bucks

"When I first started out in 1935," recalls 70-year-old union crewman Jim Clarke, "I started on a sailing schooner. The



Belgrave. She was a six-dory schooner, and Clarke tells of hauling the halibut gear by hand - virtually the same gear he still fishes aboard the Seattle-based *Vigorous*. The man has never missed a season, fishing these traditional Alaskan waters, but other than gear similarities, he says, "everything is different."

"They're doing in one day what used to take 16, 17 days to do." Like news of another Klondike, the high halibut prices of 1979, '80 breaking the \$2 mark lured many. "And that's when the boats started coming out of the woodwork," adds the *Vigorous'* skipper, Gary Bogen, fishing as his father and grandfather have before him.

Seattle union counterpart Art Hodgins, skipper of the 70-foot seine-style *Alrita*, talks of the traditional halibut industry out of Seattle - an industry of "iron men and wooden boats" celebrating its centennial next year. "A 24-hour fishery - that's pretty much of a joke." Speaking from Kodiak earlier this season, he resents that Seattle fishermen in these waters are now called the "foreigners."

"We're the bad guys. When the fish came back we should've grown with it, but we've been squeezed out."

Hodgins, 41, points to his crew as example of the trend. "They're older gentlemen," union men feeling security, tradition, equitably settled arrangements: one inbreaker 22, two men in their 40s, two in their 50s, one in his 60s. Professionals. "Now go down and look at the halibut fleet," he urges. Kids. "They don't give a shit. They'll never die. Hey kid, you want a job? Hop on." But the shorter the opening and more infrequent the fishing, less chance to acquire the necessary skills.

"The whole history of halibut is being duplicated (with black cod), but instead of being 100 years it's three years. So now," Hodgins concludes, "my attitude is - it's pretty much ruined. That's how I feel."

"It's a terrible way to have to fish," agrees



Dan Falvey of the *Seaboy* unloading a halibut trip at the Kalinin Bay scow after a 36-hour opening.

Bogen. "Everything started getting radical after 1979."

We're In 'Em

Maybe it's only for the short duration of a derby fishery, but more fishermen are catching lots more fish. Lifelong Sitka

longliner Greg Cushing, 31, explains this trend:

"Well, we got short seasons because of ultra-conservative management. Managers don't know, managers don't have any idea how much fish is there. The only thing

Continued on page 42

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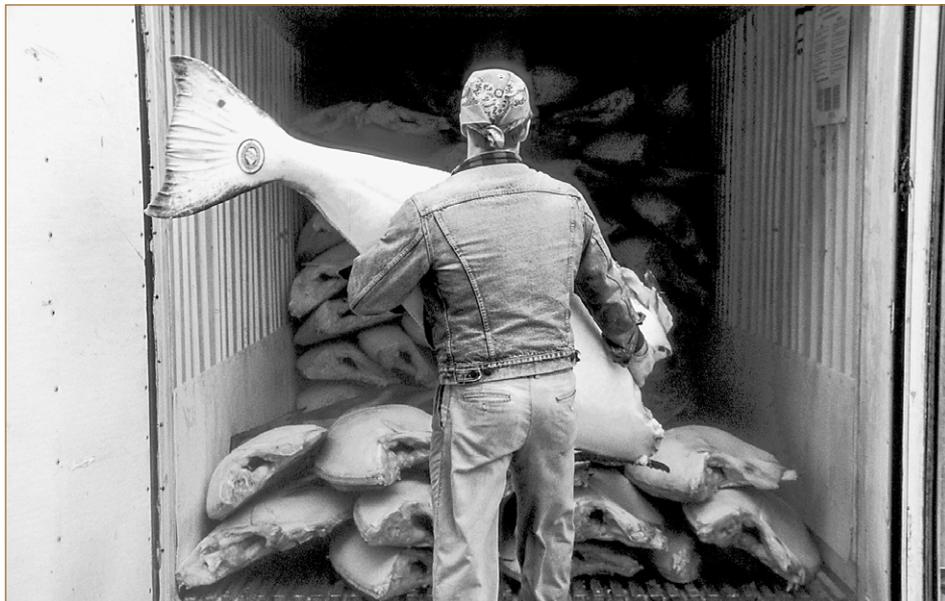
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Tommy Thompson, youngest of the Sitka Sound Seafoods Thompson clan, with a halibut "surfboard."

they know is that there's lots of fish."

With removal of foreign fishing, he says, "All that incredible pressure was relieved - naturally the stocks are just gonna go wild."

"The stocks have gone up to the point where it's easy to catch a fish." So easy, Cushing continues, "a lot of people are going to

do it," resulting in an overabundance of fishermen. He says managers see all these fishermen and say, "Oh no, we're gonna catch too many fish."

"How do they know what's too many?"

So they make short seasons, says Cushing, which drives the price up - and even more want to fish. As long as this ultra-conservative management prevails, he contends, "We're going to be stuck in the same rut."

Cushing wonders what they base resource estimates on: With "short little choppy openings" how can they gather enough data to assess impact to the stocks? The solution, he says, is to have a fishery "where we make an impact."

"If we were allowed to fish consistently to where we could see an impact on the stocks, we could say, 'O.K., now we know where we're at.'" When the stocks

were down and the price was low, he says, "There were longliners making a living longlining."

"Just let us fish like we used to until the stocks are at a point where it's not so easy to catch a fish anymore, and you'll see a mass exodus out of the fishery - a lot of people that don't belong there."

"The fishery would limit entry naturally, and it would be a sane fishery again." Otherwise, Cushing contends, it'll never get better, it'll only get worse - the average fisherman's not going to get a smaller boat and scale down his operation: "He's gonna maximize."

To the Max, To the West

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"Circle hook changed everything," maintains Paul Clampitt, skipper of the Seattle schooner *Majestic*. "It immediately made seven-day halibuts into three days. It turned black cod profitable. Made it easier to catch 'em. Lost a lotta' fish trying to get 'em up from 300 fathoms. And that's what made everybody a longliner."

An automatic baiting system for circle hooks eventually followed, much to the chagrin of some who bought into the spendy but often chronically temperamental technology. The idea

Continued on page 44

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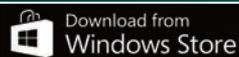
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A trio of salmon trollers – Gary Mulligan’s *Sandra Jo*, Norm Pillen’s *Faithful*, and Ricco Mulligan’s *Sea Lark*.

was to eliminate the hindrance of longline’s slow and labor-intensive baiting process, but persistent problems with baiting success – and alleged indiscriminate cutting of the groundline while setting – discouraged some fishermen after their major investment.

While Seldovia fisherman Gene Cameron reports success in his homeport – claiming the auto-equipped *Deliverance*



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doubled halibut production fishing alongside his *Joann Marie* where they used to keep up in poundage hand-baiting – others remain unconvinced.

“Problem is,” says *Lindy* crewman Shawn Foust, “by the time you figure out how to fix it, you could’ve baited up a helluva lot of gear.” Sitka schooner skipper David Kelly just says, “The *Arrow* and the baiter are an actual saga.” Fishing out of Unalaska he readily admits the baiter baited (“It’s a fair-weather machine”), but it didn’t cut down on crew as thought although, Kelly continues, “the baiter didn’t get drunk and the baiter never had a hangover.” Perhaps indicative of longliners’ advancing sophistication in technology, he adds that taping a video of the operation finally revealed the system’s true performance and trouble spots.

But nothing quite matches the trends in gear, a classic case of bigger, better, faster – and more. Lots more.

Some run much more than they can possibly haul in the allotted time, maybe 120 skates, simply cutting off the line after-hours at the sound of a Coast Guard chopper or abandoning it as expendable just to move to higher production strings strategically set in different areas. Gear has become the relatively cheap means to a lucrative end. As for hauling high-speed, “What do we care if we trash the gear?” asks Girard. After all, not working it over to dump in the next day. “We’ve got a month to work the gear. A (halibut) is worth \$80, a hook costs 35 cents.” Figure it out. Gangions get shorter – hooks often a cross between halibut and cod – spacing gets tighter. More fish, faster, and more money.

Sitka’s Buzz Schreiber of the *Evening Star* has referred to the tangled mass of dead gear lost on the narrow black cod grounds as a “spiderweb,” but *Arrow’s* Kelly says “look at it like barbed wire.”

“It’s not the Japanese gear that you worry about on the bottom,” he claims, “it’s the American.” Snagging till you part fosters bigger and stouter gear. “The edge is the edge, and where there’s edge there’s boats,” says one, and where there’s lots of boats there’s bound to be gear conflicts.

If you didn’t fish black cod before you had to fish shallow to deep, Kelly claims, you haven’t fished black cod. Used to be able to go sideways on the edge and follow it, he says; nowadays people even want to split your berths – setting in-between – no matter how tightly laid or swift the current. Obviously, gear conflicts abound, and with it the shortsighted, selfish solution to cut and slash the offender’s gear only escalates flared tempers and wanton waste into a war zone.

One Sitka fisherman venturing west this year said of Kodiak: “These guys don’t know what gear pressure is,” and estimates a four-fold increase in Southeastern effort over the last two years. “More boats, more gear on the boats.” Inexperienced newcomers – crabbers, seiners, trollers – still flock to the monied longline fisheries left virtually unprotected by wide-open access.

“What you’re dealing with is human greed,” says the

Rocky B's Neil Huff out of Sitka. "Everybody's talkin' about having 200 skates next year."

Quality Came First

"I object to the quickness of the harvest," says Sitka Sound Seafoods President Harold Thompson. "There's too much fish being caught too fast. I don't think it hurts the resource, it's just a dumb way to run things." He tells of trends on the processing end too: tremendous volumes of fish dumped on a plant at once, increasing handling while lowering quality; problems with sporadic rather than steady employment for the crew; expanded plant capacity sitting idle in-season between openings; dissatisfied crews and problems "maintaining a viable business under those conditions."

The derby-mentality monster that management has created pressures many fishermen to choose quantity over quality. Under the circumstances it seems a legitimate trend, but in the end the market suffers, reputations tarnish, price drops, and fishermen lose.

"They're fresh fish," Thompson continues, but in some cases it's "a real travesty to quality considerations."

The most glaring example arises from the black cod fleet's drift toward delivery of a round product – guts-in, sometimes merely dry-iced and increasingly unbled. But Thompson also cites problems with slush and RSW systems either used improperly or incapable of pulling down temperature with the



Mike Angus, left, and Linda "Hovey" Hoven work the back deck fishing halibut on the Lualda.

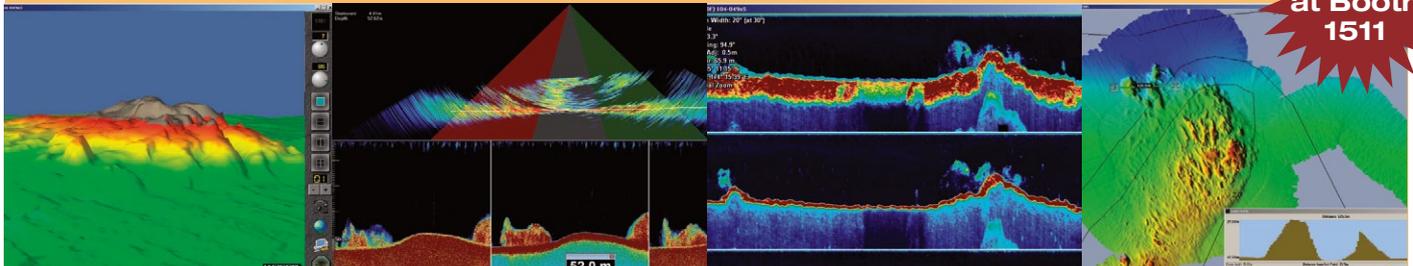
sudden large volumes. Granted, the lightened onboard workload is welcome relief in a round-the-clock fishery, yet even allowing for market absorption of an iced, round, unbled sablefish, hard-earned Alaskan seafood quality becomes a farce when the quickly delivered product sits slushed in some plants for days and days before finally dressed and processed.

In halibut, the alarming trend this year calls for dropping fish

Continued on page 46

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down in the hold uncut while racing to haul mass gear nonstop till the closing gun, then pulling the fish back up to clean on the run in, anchored-up or even tied to the dock. The bellies get blood-shot and some pretty tired-looking 'buts surface hours or days later for cleaning.

"The short openings," says Sitkan Mike Mayo of the *Oceanus*, "are in direct proportion to the greed of the industry taking care of their product."

Pete Carlson, veteran crewman of the Port Alexander-based *Lualda*, tells of delivering a 65,000-pound trip after a 24-hour opening early this season. The experienced seven-man longline crew kept up with the fish – so it can be done – but due to an emergency at sea six fish were inadvertently dropped down round and went undetected until unloading next day.

"Just the six undressed fish we had, they were terrible." Carlson recounts. "Cut 'em open, they were real rank. Just six. Can't imagine 20,000 pounds."

Poached Fish and Piracy

"It's not Sunday School out there," says one Sitka fisherman about another's notoriety for blasting flags and buoys with a shotgun. "It's just a game. It's getting to be a cutthroat game now."

"Some of these guys with big trips are cheating," concedes Sitka Sound's Thompson. He calls it a vicious cycle itself, with more and more people justifying it because "everybody else is doing it." Many fishermen playing by the book to land comparably modest trips harbor anger and growing resentment, but take little action against their neighbors in the fishing

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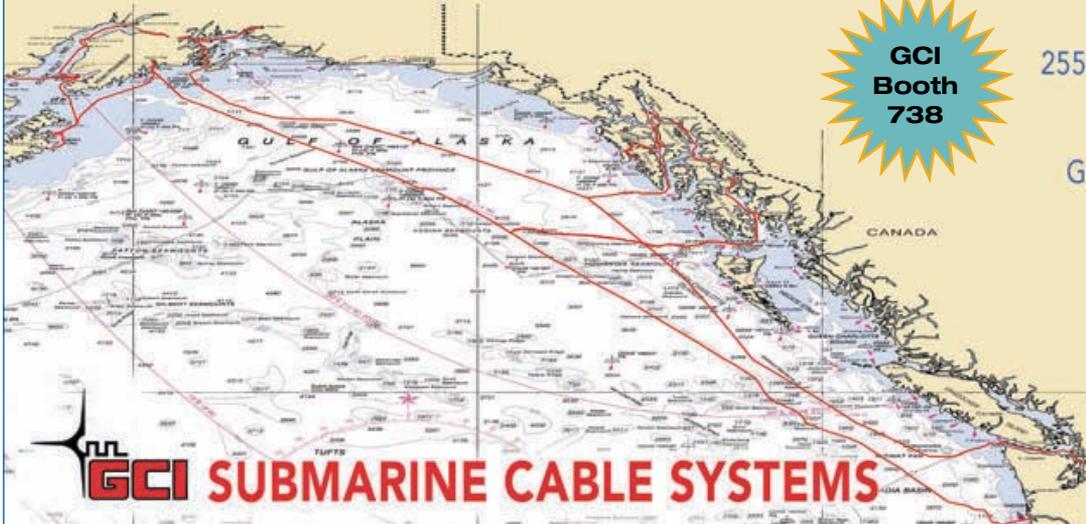
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community. Some charge irresponsible or “sloppy” management with creating criminals: financial pressures to produce in short periods and bad weather, often insufficient notice and closing fisheries suddenly by field announcement.

One longliner says someone told him poaching is easier than robbing a bank – little advance planning, don’t get thrown in jail 10 years and make \$50,000. With enforcement monies tight, piracy on the high seas may yet prevail.

Waste, Weather, and the New Wave

Kelly calls today’s fisherman “New Wave”; if fished halibut before two-week openings then you’re of the older guard. He cites current catches of 1,000 pounds-per-skate of gear compared to the meager 50 pounds per skate of yesteryear. “That’s the New Wave mentality – a fish on every hook, I guess.”



Unloading a cavernous fishhold is a daunting task – never-ending cod, it seems, full bins, tote after tote – and then the old dead ice to shovel out. A fat paycheck helps immensely.

“When you take it to a one-day fishery,” says Rocky B’s Huff, “you take all the skill out of it. No more professionalism.”

“I don’t feel like a fisherman anymore,”

agrees Cushing of the *Neptune*. “I feel like a deckwork efficiency expert. Only thing that matters is how many hooks you run.”

Continued on page 48



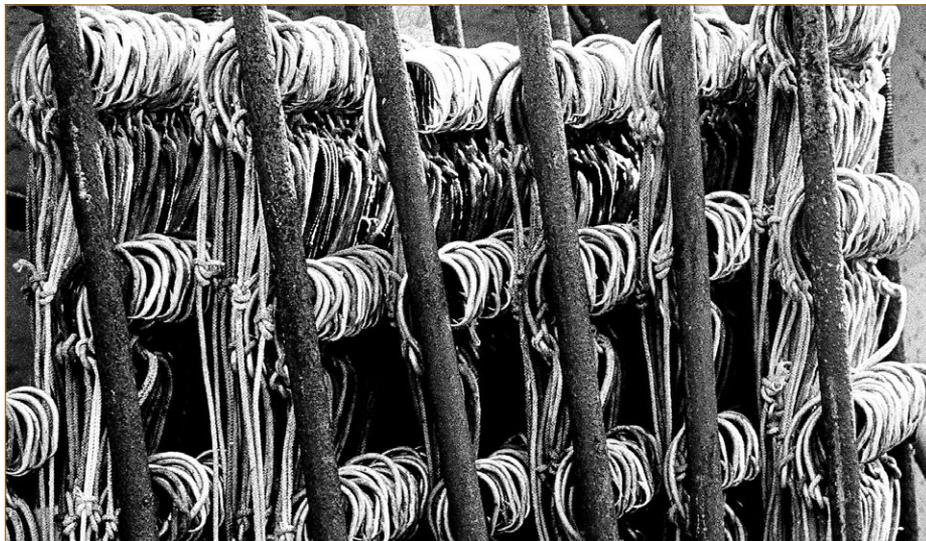
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“The attitude alone has really changed,” adds Pelican’s Phillips. “No such thing as looking out for the other guy anymore. They can’t be nice guys, I guess, and survive.”

Sad longline trends. Others include a dramatic increase in wasted resource, greed, and danger. Single-species management automatically wastes non-targeted fish, but incidental, legal bycatch often loses to no time and short space: Waters run red with dead rockfish in floating trails behind longline boats.

Fish till you sink or the season closes, whichever comes first. New Wave fishing from new fisheries management. “If you

don’t have too many fish, you don’t have enough,” says one New Waver.

But the inherent danger of forced fishing in extreme weather will yet come back to haunt us. Powerbroker managers have been known to respond, “You don’t have to go fishing.” Sure, tell that to the bank, the landlord, and the grocer. One Southeast crewman recounts the marine weather broadcast he heard in the middle of the Gulf on his way west, an ominous forecast calling for storm warnings and high seas gulfwide. “It’s like they were saying, ‘O.K., everybody outta’ the pool.’”

The Buck Stops Here

“For once people are going to have to say the system is not working,” Jake Phillips says with characteristic candor. The 1987 Alaska longline season makes his case. Sablefish regulatory areas closed with little warning, in-season maneuverings left fishermen too long in the dark about what would open when, where, for how long,

and with what limits. Fishing is a business, fishermen are businessmen, and they need this vital information to plan their season, their expenses, their outfitting, their crew.

“If they’re making the rules they have to be accountable for them,” says an irate Southeast fisherman, pointing to the sablefish fish-ticket fiasco which kept everyone guessing till season’s end if each area’s quota had actually been filled.

“You’d think,” agrees Kathy Kinnear, vice-president of Kodiak Longliners Association, “they could have one person to keep track of the black cod fishery. It’s worth 40 to 50 million dollars.”

The very fact a teleconference was held Sept. 1 to determine longline interest and need for a mop-up sablefish opening in certain under-quota areas speaks for itself in Alaska’s longline dilemma. Of the Area-3B early September halibut mop-up Mike Mayo of the *Oceanus* says, “I felt they were completely out to lunch with a 12-hour, nighttime opening,” and Huff calls it “about the most stupid thing the halibut commission has ever done.” It blew a stiff gale, with fishing both scratchy and dangerous, and yet another mop-up opening was called. Mayo notes the opening landed only “2.3 million pounds when they thought we’d catch 8,” but adds that he’s “almost positive they didn’t have any criminal malice involved.”

Programming for fleet inefficiency seems an unwarranted adversarial approach in an occupation already listed with the Department of Labor as the most dangerous in the nation. Sitka longliner Dennis Hicks figures somebody must’ve gotten together a few years back to invent the most unsafe fishery possible yielding the poorest quality product.

Surely, gentlemen, the Alaska longline industry deserves better. ↓

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The show floor at Pacific Marine Expo. Wesley Loy photo

Catch the *Pacific Fishing* team at Pacific Marine Expo!

It's time again for Pacific Marine Expo, and *Pacific Fishing* magazine, the leading commercial fishing journal for the North Pacific, will have a prominent spot as usual on the show floor.

Also known as Fish Expo, the massive PME trade show offers a great opportunity to shop for the latest gear and to connect with fishing colleagues, regulators, and safety officials.

Find the *Pacific Fishing* team at booth No. 639. You can visit with our editorial staff and sales people, and grab complimentary copies of the most recent issues of our magazine.

This is your chance to subscribe at the special show price of only \$1 per monthly issue. So, that's \$12 for 12 issues, or \$24 for 24 issues. For your best deal, pay only \$30 for 36 issues. Each new or renewed subscription earns you a free *Pacific Fishing* hat!

Also, be sure to register for Fish Wrap, our free daily email news service.

Pacific Marine Expo runs Wednesday through Friday, Nov. 18-20, at the CenturyLink Field Event Center in downtown Seattle, right between the Seahawks and Mariners stadiums. Parking is easy in the spacious garage located next to the Event Center.

Show hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday.

Go to pacificmarineexpo.com for exhibitor information plus the lineup of educational sessions on marine safety, regulatory affairs, technical advancements, and more. ↓

— Wesley Loy

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Our Alaska fisheries history, packed and canned

Editor's note: We're pleased to introduce Anjuli Grantham, of Kodiak, as a new columnist for Pacific Fishing. She's a historian who will write about – you guessed it – Alaska's seafood industry history.



From the slime line to the boardroom, from Akutan to Ketchikan, from salmon to pollock, one thing unites the often diverging interests of the Alaska fishing industry – our history.

But for too long that history has been neglected. As the industry is hailed for sustainability, old-timers are dying before their stories and wisdom are recorded. As state-of-the-art vessels are launched each year, the old processing plants are slipping into the sea before they are documented. As fishermen and superintendents are constantly looking forward toward the next season, few have taken time to look back at the legacy of the industry and taken steps to actually document and preserve that history.

It is for these reasons that I'm so excited to have a conversation with readers of *Pacific Fishing* about the history of the seafood industry. I'm steeped in that history personally and professionally; I'm the daughter of fishermen, and I work as a historian and museum curator in Kodiak. Fisheries history is not just about nostalgia. It is more than pulling heart strings while evoking the unfurling sails of Bristol Bay double-enders or recalling the cowboy escapades of Bering Sea joint ventures. (Although listen up, marketers: Consumers gobble up these stories, and you'd be smart to highlight them.)

The thing is, we've been through so much of this before: shifts

in management regimes, loss of markets, technological revolutions, depletion of fish stocks. These new stories are actually old stories. But they are stories not necessarily captured in economic reports or in stock projections. The soul and the culture of the industry cannot be quantified scientifically, but it is the soul and the culture of the industry that keeps many people in it and defines our sense of place and sense of self.

Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative: It is time to recognize the importance of the history of Alaska's seafood industry and to document and preserve that history for future generations. This year, I'm working on a project with the Alaska Historical Society that aims to do just that. The Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative is a grassroots project dedicated to inspiring individuals, communities, and businesses to take steps to document and preserve seafood industry history and historic seafood processing plants. Within our old canneries are the stories of tenders, fishermen, marketers, and cannery workers. Canneries encapsulate the stories of Bristol Bay, Kodiak, Prince William Sound, Southeast, and elsewhere. Ask any coastal Alaskan to tell you a story about their local cannery and you are sure to get an earful.

Consider your own experiences with canneries, for example. Perhaps you are thinking of the plant manager with whom you've shaken hands and given the finger. Are you remembering the girl in the mess hall with whom you had a summer fling, or the guy on the tender that you married? The time you went on strike, the time the cannery helped to finance a new boat? Are you thinking of the fishy smell of money, both in-hand and illusive?

Now, consider the fact that hundreds of onshore and offshore plants have employed countless individuals and processed an inconceivable number of metric tons of fish over the last 137 years (the first canneries in Alaska were founded in 1878 in Sitka and Klawok). Few players have made such an impact on the nature, the geography, the culture, the politics, and the economy of the North Pacific as processors – and their not always delicate dance with fishermen.

I encourage you to work within your town, your trade association, or your own business to improve the stewardship of this history. Donate old photos and archives to a museum or historical society; create a preservation plan for those old buildings. For more information and to access resources that can help jump-start projects, check out the initiative webpage at alaskahistoricalsociety.org.

Moreover, come over and say hi during the Pacific Marine Expo. The Alaska Historical Society is sharing Booth 154 with the Kodiak Maritime Museum. Come listen to the session "Fishing for Alaska History" on Thursday, Nov. 19, beginning at 11:45 a.m. I'm presenting with fellow Alaskan "fishtorians" Bob King and Toby Sullivan. We look forward to sharing resources with you and learning about your own history.

Historian Anjuli Grantham works as a curator in Kodiak and as director of the Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative. She can be reached at anjuligrantham@gmail.com.

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Support for Klamath River dam deals falling apart

Jumping ship: The agreements that call for Klamath River dam removal are highly in doubt now that one of their leading proponents – the Yurok tribe – has threatened to abandon them.

News of the Northern California tribe's intent to withdraw from the Klamath deals broke in mid-September, as legislation that would enact them continued to languish in Congress. If the tribe's opposition to the agreements isn't resolved, the forum for restoring the river and settling water use could shift from the legislature to the courts.

This is a sharp turn from the optimism buoyed by last year's Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement. The upper river basin's irrigators and ranchers – who staunchly resisted previously forged deals – signed onto it, making congressional action the final step to resolving longstanding water wars.

But Congress hasn't acted. And according to the tribe's notice of intent to withdraw from the deals, the Upper Basin pact has a fatal flaw.

The notice states that its diverse parties had "assured the Yurok tribe that they would address how the tribe would be involved" in Upper Basin planning.

Despite requesting to be part of the Upper Basin negotiations, the Yurok tribe "wasn't invited to participate," the notice states, which "represented a return to the old Oregon-California/Upper Klamath-Lower Klamath division of the Klamath River system."

According to the notice, the Upper Basin pact alters the conditions of the previous deals, whose benefits have now become "unachievable."

The interrelated deals include removal of the river system's four dams (an action that would reopen hundreds of miles of fish habitat) and a river restoration plan.

The pacts also propose a water-sharing plan that isn't ideal for any of the parties. The Upper Basin's irrigators and ranchers only compromised after their water rights had been deemed in court as secondary to those of the Upper Basin's tribes.

Conflict over water has a deep history, and as the Yurok tribe's notice points out, Congress itself has failed to unite on legislation. Approving federal funding for removal of muscular infrastructure like dams is a bitter pill for some House Republicans.

The 2010 Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement is subject to approvals of two-year extensions by its signatories. If federal legislation doesn't emerge before year's end, approval of another extension will be necessary.

The more drawn-out alternative for river advocates is to litigate. The Hoopa Valley tribe is already advancing legal action to force the owner of the dams, the PacifiCorp company, to go through a federal relicensing process that would apply more stringent conditions than those in the agreements.

With a persistent drought pressure-cooking the competitive atmosphere, the Klamath accords will probably disintegrate if they aren't affirmed by Congress before the end of the year.

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'Forward thinking' on salmon: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) met in mid-September, and discussion of potential changes to salmon management was on the agenda.

Mike Burner, the PFMC's salmon staff officer, reported that the agency's Salmon Advisory Subpanel is considering whether to split California's Klamath Management Zone into two management sections.

Burner said there isn't sufficient data to warrant a full-on

evaluation of that option. But there may be in the future – a test fishery is being considered for next year to collect data on the differences between the KMZ's northern and southern sections.

Another potential management change involves the harvest control rule applied to Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, a stock that's listed as endangered.

Harvesting is now reduced to zero when the stock's escapement levels are low, but the National Marine Fisheries Service has been asked to consider alternatives to that.

Burner reported that "a more forward-thinking approach" has been requested, one that would take juvenile out-migration into account rather than relying only on a three-year rolling average of spawning escapement numbers.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Crab catch snapshot: The Dungeness crab season ended on July 15, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has released a preliminary tally of landings and value.

The statewide catch amounted to 15.9 million pounds, with an ex-vessel value of \$58.1 million.

The catch was dominated by the state's central region – primarily the ports of San Francisco, Monterey, and Bodega Bay – which accounted for 12.7 million pounds of the haul.

Last year, the state's crab landings totaled 17 million pounds, valued at \$59.2 million, with 10.4 million pounds of it landed in the central region.

Daniel Mintz reports from Eureka, Calif.





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LNG opposition rises, and a sinking takes three lives



Lelu Island occupied: Sm'ooget Yahaan (Don Wesley Sr.), a hereditary chief from the Lax Kw'alaams Band, set up an occupation camp on Lelu Island near Prince Rupert on the proposed site of the Petronas liquefied natural gas terminal.

Lelu Island sits in the Skeena River estuary, where from 100 million to 1 billion juvenile salmon are estimated to use the area annually. The terminal would require a causeway across Flora Bank, also an important area for herring and waterfowl.

"We are here to protect Flora Bank and Lelu Island from development," the chief said in a video produced by SkeenaWild.

Calling the camp a "peaceful occupation," the chief said his people have been using the island for 10,000 years.

The members of the Lax Kw'alaams Band rejected an offer in May of \$1.15 billion in compensation for placing the terminal on traditional territory. They said the project threatened salmon stocks and other marine resources.

The province of British Columbia has approved the terminal and a pipeline, but a federal review over concerns about a bridge and pier skirting Flora Bank remains to be completed.

Anyone wanting to participate in the protest for the day or overnight was invited to meet at the Aero fish plant in Port Edward to catch a daily shuttle bus out to the camp. The local United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union-Unifor office was helping to coordinate transportation.

Despite the protest vessels in the area, Petronas started test drilling Sept. 13. Prince Rupert Port Authority vessels ordered the protesters to stay 50 meters away from the drill vessel.

The Lax Kw'alaams First Nation announced Sept. 18 it would proceed with a formal aboriginal land claim on Lelu Island.



Deadly sinking: Three B.C. fishermen died after their 100-foot trawler, the Caledonian, capsized and eventually sank west of Estevan Point off the west coast of Vancouver Island while fishing for hake Sept. 5.

The crew was handling a bag of fish aboard when the vessel listed and rolled over. Two crewmen were trapped under the overturned vessel, while the captain and another crewman managed to get up onto the hull.

The deckhand, who was the only one wearing a personal flotation device, managed to stay aboard the hull with the captain. The vessel eventually sank and the 55-year old captain, Wesley Hagglund, was later found deceased by search crews.

The bodies of Doug White, 41, and Keith Edward Standing, 48, were later recovered as well.

There was no distress signal from the vessel.

Pacific Seafood, the owner of the vessel, contacted the Canadian Coast Guard when the Caledonian missed its regular hail-in call.

The lone survivor, whose name was not available, managed to swim to a life raft when the vessel sank and was able to get aboard and deploy flares.

A 24-foot Coast Guard rescue boat responded to the search area some 28 nautical miles offshore. After about 10 hours, the survivor was picked up and transferred for immediate medical attention to the passing cruise ship Statendam, on its way to Victoria.

With six deaths, this year is the worst for fishing fatalities in over a decade, said Glenn Budden, senior marine investigator with the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

The agency was doing a full investigation of the Caledonian sinking.



Fraser River documentary: Marine writer Alan Haig-Brown passed on a note about a 1949 National Film Board of Canada documentary called "Red Runs the Fraser."

The vintage color film describes the importance of the salmon industry in British Columbia and Alaska and includes footage of purse seining, gillnetting, and canning. It describes the joint work of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, in which Canada and the United States joined forces to build fish ladders in the narrow Fraser River canyon at Hell's Gate where the river was blocked by rockslides.

One flaw in the film is that it neglects to mention that the rockslides had been caused by railway construction in 1913 and '14.

The omission is not surprising considering that the film was made in 1949 in an era of the wonder of megaprojects "taming nature." Only two years later, the Kemano project for generating electricity at a new aluminum plant in Kitimat flooded 339 square miles of land with the building of the Kenney Dam on the Nechako River, a substantial tributary to the Fraser, cutting the volume of its flow by 75 percent.

See the 11-minute film at nfb.ca/film/red_runs_the_fraser.

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Big challenges for the little port at Chinook, Wash.



Money woes: Fishermen who live in Chinook, Washington, and work out of the unincorporated area's tiny port breathed a sigh of relief after John Demase, the port manager, announced that dredging in the port's marina would go forward as planned in October. Without regular dredging, the marina silts in and could quickly become unusable.

But Demase said he isn't sure how the port will sustain itself into the future. Currently, it owes more money in bills each month than it has money in the bank.

Demase, a former commercial fisherman, became port manager after former manager (and before that, port secretary) Ashley Davis announced her resignation in early September. She said she needed to spend more time with her young family.

Demase was hired in January to run the port's small dredge and to handle maintenance projects. Then he was asked to take over the role of manager. In turn, he asked the port commissioners to make sure that the port's books were in order before he took on that role.

Within a few days, it was clear the port was in trouble, Demase said. He called an emergency meeting Sept. 11 with the three port commissioners and the Pacific County treasurer. He and the treasurer's office staff told the port commissioners and the standing room-only crowd of Chinook residents, fishermen, and others that the port owed more than \$154,000 in various bills but had only \$110,937 in the bank. The books, going back for years - in some cases predating Davis' time as manager - were in disarray. A current budget, drawn up by Davis, didn't even list dredging work.

The port cut its staff from five down to two, and the commissioners, reluctant at first, have agreed to request an accountability audit from the state at the urging of Demase and other Chinook residents. Demase has since paid off the port's small bills and worked out a payment plan for the larger bills and will be able to dredge this fall. But, he said in October, it may not be enough.

The port's two main money-making months are August and January. Revenues in August were short of what Davis projected by thousands of dollars, and Demase said he can't count on January's crabbing traffic to make up the difference. In October, revenue streams had slowed to a trickle; the port was still getting money from businesses that lease port-owned land, and the occasional transient boat would bring in \$20 to \$100 every couple of days.

The port can't even afford to stock the main office with toilet paper. Recently, some community members donated that and other necessities, Demase said.

Rates will go up next year, for annual and transient moorage, and the port will begin to charge for parking.



Crab outlook: At the end of September, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reopened the southern portion of the coast to recreational crabbing as levels of domoic acid, a natural marine toxin, began to drop.

The commercial fishery officially ended Sept. 15, but it had been closed for much of the summer due to high levels of domoic acid in crabs and razor clams. At one point, 90 miles of Washington's 157-mile-long coastline were closed to crabbing as one of the largest algal blooms on record (which included the algae that produces domoic acid) persisted off the entire West Coast.

The state will begin testing crab in November, following the molting period, to determine when the commercial Dungeness fishery will open. The traditional opener is Dec. 1, but that date often gets pushed out. In some years, the fishery hasn't opened until early January.

Meanwhile, state fishery managers are keeping a close eye on razor clams, a staple of the Dungeness crab's diet. For some reason, the clams seem to hold on tightly to domoic acid once it's in their systems.

Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager, said he has seen high levels persist in the clams for up to a year following a large bloom. If levels remain high in the clams going into the winter and the regular crab season, this could affect both recreational and commercial crab fisheries.



Salmon numbers: Salmon predictions kept going up as summer ended and the fall runs swept through.

By the end of September, the U.S. v Oregon Technical Advisory Committee had twice upgraded its run projection of fall Chinook into the Columbia River.

On Sept. 21, the committee upped the forecast to 1.16 million fish. That was up from a forecast of 1 million the committee had made only the week before. More than 852,000 of these fish had already passed Bonneville Dam as of Sept. 30.

Katie Wilson reports from Astoria, Ore.



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Salmon permit prices dive while halibut quota soars



Permit markets: “Unsettled” best described the mood among brokers in the business of buying, selling, and trading Alaska salmon permits and quota shares of various catches.

For salmon permits, “the dust hasn’t really settled” since the season ended, said Doug Bowen of Alaska Boats and Permits in Homer, but prices were tanking across the board.

“There were a few bright spots, but several areas in the state did not do well, either because of production or price or both. That’s put a downward press on permit prices,” he said.

Bristol Bay drift gillnet permits have taken the biggest hit after another huge sockeye run ran into a perfect storm of backlogged markets, depressed global currencies, and record imports of foreign farmed fish. Bay fishermen were shocked to get a base price of 50 cents a pound, down from an average \$1.20 last summer.

“Those permit prices in the spring were as high as \$175,000, and (recently) we sold one for \$112,000. That’s a big drop in just a few short months. And we see a similar pattern with other salmon gillnet permits,” Bowen said, adding that “there is almost no interest – not yet, anyway.”

Likewise, there was little action in the salmon seine permit market.

“It will be interesting to see what happens at Prince William Sound,” Bowen said. “They had a record year with 97 million pinks but got just 20 cents a pound. So great production, lousy price. There are several permits on the market at \$200,000, but no interest. And at Kodiak, several seine permits are listed at under \$40,000, but again, no interest yet.”

Salmon power troll permits were the only ones moving in Southeast Alaska, according to Olivia Olsen at Alaskan Quota and Permits in Petersburg. At listings of \$35,000 to \$46,000 “those are still down \$5,000,” she said.

Both brokers agree that as salmon forecasts come out for next year, buying interest is likely to tick up. But a bad fishing season means there is not a lot of excess capital floating around to upgrade, buy a new boat, or add another permit to a fishing portfolio.

“It was a dismal season the way the prices were,” said Olsen. “They might be catching more fish, but prices were too low to come out ahead. And if salmon prices stay down, guys are going to turn their interest to other areas.”

“It’s still early,” said Bowen. “We’ll see how this plays out.”



Halibut shares higher than ever: Anticipation that Alaska’s

halibut catch limits might increase again next year has brought quota share sales to a “wait and see” standstill.

Halibut quota is valued by region and various categories, all of which affect offer and sale prices.

“You can survey all the broker sites, and sometimes you won’t see one pound of (Area) 2C (Southeast) or 3A (Central Gulf) and very little 3B (Western Gulf) quota on the market,” Bowen said. “And sellers who do decide to sell quota want top dollar for it. And there are enough buyers out there who believe the catch limits in those areas are going up, and they are willing to pay record high prices.”

The price spike is driven by continuing high dock prices for halibut that this year have often topped \$7 a pound at major ports.

Recently, Bowen’s shop sold Central Gulf halibut quota shares for \$50 a pound, which is “definitely the highest it’s ever traded for,” he said.

For the Southeast region, Olsen said, there is “big demand, but no quota to sell,” adding that prices have gone up to \$55 a pound in some categories.

“I hope these folks who think these catch limits are headed up are right, but I’m not convinced,” Bowen said. “It’s been a long downward trend, and just last year in the Central Gulf we took a 34 percent cut. We did get a little bit of an overall increase, but I don’t know if that signals that we are out of the woods and the resource is rebounding.”

The industry will get a first glimpse at preliminary halibut catch limits at the International Pacific Halibut Commission’s interim meeting in early December. The final numbers will be announced at the IPHC’s January meeting in Juneau. This year’s individual fishing quota allocation for Alaska was 17,136,920 pounds, up from 15,954,370 last year.



Crab quota crunch: New rules for owning shares of Bering Sea crab are prompting more sales action, especially for skippers and crew holding quota.

A federal requirement went into place this year that restricts quota share ownership to active participants in the crab fisheries.

“In the past, there were no restrictions as far as participation and future ownership. But if you are not participating now and don’t participate in the future, a revocation of quota could occur by July 1, 2019,” said Jeff Osborn, the “go to” crab share expert at Dock Street Brokers in Seattle.

“There are a number of guys who were awarded or purchased crab shares and have since gone on to other careers or had health issues, and they’ve been able to have their annual shares harvested and receive a royalty,” he explained. “But if they are unable to fish anymore, they can’t continue to do that. The new rules require them to get rid of the shares, or they’ll be taken back and redistributed among existing shareholders.”

That has prompted the recent uptick in listings, he said, and pushed down prices.

“I think the intent of the rule change is to provide people who are continuously

Continued on page 70

Another big herring haul possible next year at Togiak



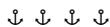
Togiak herring forecast: Herring have been plentiful in recent years at Togiak, and 2016 figures to bring more of the same.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is forecasting an allowable harvest of 28,782 tons for the sac roe herring fishery, which typically gets underway in late April or early May.

Seventy percent of the quota, or 20,148 tons, will be allocated to purse seiners, with the rest to gillnet boats.

Last season, the industry took 21,594 tons on a forecast of 29,012 tons. Because of continued weakness in the roe market, the catch brought a poor grounds price of \$50 per ton for a total fishery value of just over \$1 million.

Only 16 seine vessels, six gillnetters, and four buyers participated, a far cry from the glory days when Togiak attracted 300 seiners, 400 gillnetters, and numerous processors. Togiak harvest value peaked in the mid-1990s at \$17 million.



Sockeye buys: The U.S. Department of Agriculture gave a big boost to the salmon industry, buying large lots of canned red salmon for use in child nutrition and other domestic food assistance programs.

The industry and elected officials supported the purchases as important for alleviating a glut of sockeye.

On Sept. 23, the USDA announced it had purchased a total of 666,400 cases (7.5-ounce cans, 24 per case) from two Seattle-based processors: Icicle and Peter Pan. The buys amounted to about \$22.5 million.

On Sept. 29, the department said it had purchased 212,800 cases from four processors – Icicle, Ocean Beauty, Peter Pan, and Trident – for almost \$7.5 million.



Still opposed to Pebble: Following a change in board leadership, the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association made a point of clarifying its stance on the Pebble copper and gold mine.

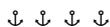
The BBRSDA uses fishermen funding to promote and enhance Bristol Bay’s prodigious sockeye catch. The Pebble mine, proposed for a site in bay headwaters, is seen by many gillnetters as a pollution threat to the fishery.

In mid-September, Abe Williams was elected as the association’s board president. Williams believes Pebble should at least have a chance at winning the permits necessary for development.

The association issued a statement in response to what it called “inaccurate assertions in the media and elsewhere that imply a 180-degree shift” in the BBRSDA’s opposition to the Pebble project.

Williams becoming president “had nothing at all” to do with Pebble, the association said. Rather, Buck Gibbons had resigned from the position, and the board voted 5-2 for Williams to succeed him.

“The position of the BBRSDA and the near-unanimous views of its 1,650 members are unchanged,” the association said. “A resolution passed by the board of directors in 2014 stating that the BBRSDA opposes large-scale mining in Bristol Bay’s watersheds is, and continues to be, the position of this organization.”



Cook Inlet conflict: The Alaska Supreme Court has ruled against a commercial fishing group claiming that the Department of Fish and Game mismanaged the 2013 Upper Cook Inlet salmon fishery.

During that season, sockeye runs were strong but Kenai River king salmon returns were very weak. To preserve kings

caught incidentally in the target sockeye fishery, managers curtailed and ultimately closed the setnet fishery.

Cook Inlet Fisherman’s Fund sued the department, seeking additional fishing time for setnet fishermen. It argued the department’s actions amounted to an unconstitutional reallocation of sockeye, as the driftnet fleet was not similarly curtailed.

In a 30-page opinion issued Sept. 25, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court’s rejection of the setnetter claims. The justices observed that the department had the discretion under state salmon policy to manage as it did.

A key consideration for managers was that Upper Cook Inlet setnetters tend to catch far more king salmon than driftnetters.

“Recognizing the complexity of Alaska’s fisheries, we repeatedly have refrained from substituting our judgment for that of the trained biologists and other scientists hired to manage Alaska’s fisheries,” the justices wrote.

The Supreme Court also upheld the award of \$19,400 in attorney fees to the department.



Free money: This year’s Alaska Permanent Fund dividend was the biggest ever at \$2,072. The payments go to qualified Alaska residents only. Most of the dividends were paid on Oct. 1.

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

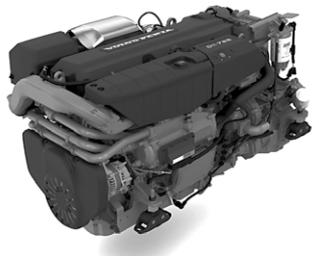


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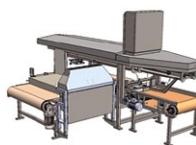
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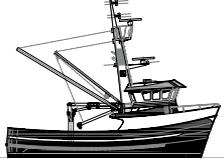
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P2173M – 57 X 16.2 COMBO BUILT BY SAGSTAD, GMC 12V71 MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, ISUZU AUX, INSERT TANK HOLDS 18.5K W/EXTENSION, READY FOR CRAB. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. BOAT ONLY \$137.5K. 300 POT OREGON PERMIT AVAILABLE. OR CONSIDER TRADE OF BOAT AND PERMIT FOR 500 POT WASHINGTON PERMIT.



P2177M – 27' ALUMINUM COMBO RIGGED FOR CRAB, TWIN 225HP HONDAS GIVE EASY 25 KNOT CRUISE, POWER PACK, ARTICULATING CRAB DAVIT, FULL ELECTRONICS, GALVANIZED TRAILER. ONLY \$99K FOR COMPLETE PACKAGE.



P2183M – COMPLETE PACKAGE INCLUDES BOWPICKER, SPLIT REEL, INSULATED FISH BOXES, KING TRAILER, 8 NETS, WILLAPA AND GREYS HARBOR/COLUMBIA PERMITS. READY TO FISH. ONLY \$42.5K.



P2184M – 33' ROBERTS TOPHOUSE CRABBER, PERKINS MAIN, BORG WARNER GEAR. LOTS OF ROOM ON DECK. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. READY TO GO FOR FALL. ASKING \$75K.



P2185M – 50' TOPHOUSE LECLERCQ, 550HP LUGGER MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, LUGGER AUX, 19 TON RSW. PICKING BOOMS W/WINCHES, VANGING, SLIDER AND TOPPING ON MAIN. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS INCLUDE DUAL RADARS, GPS, COLOR SOUNDER, WESMAR SONAR, WAGNER MKIV PILOT, 5 STATION MMC CONTROLS, NOBLETEC ON DELL COMPUTER. VESSEL IS IMMACULATE INSIDE AND OUT. ONLY \$650K.



P2186M – 40 X 14 ALUMINUM COMBO, TWIN CUMMINS 6BTA 5.9, ZF GEARS, KONRAD DRIVES, BIG OPEN DECK WITH BUILT IN SLIDE TRACK FOR REEL, COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. EASILY RIGGED FOR MULTIPLE FISHERIES. \$159K INCLUDES TRUCK AND TRAILER.



P2187M – 47' DELTA/LECLERCQ TOPHOUSE SEINER, TMD-120A VOLVO MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, 20KW ISUZU AUX, 20 TON RSW W/NEW CHILLER, COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. WELL MAINTAINED WITH REGULAR UPGRADES. TURN-KEY. ASKING \$395K.



P2188M – CLASSIC HEAVY DUTY HANSEN LIMIT SEINER, CUMMINS 855 MAIN W/1500 HOURS SMOH, TWIN DISC GEAR, 35KW ISUZU, 15 TON ANDERSON RSW. PACKS 58K IN 2 HOLDS. KNUCKLEHEAD BOOM. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. COMPLETE SE PACKAGE AVAILABLE WITH SKIFF, SEINE AND PERMIT. ASKING \$300K FOR BOAT ONLY.



P2191M – 32' BAYCRAFT STERNPICKER, TAMD 71A VOLVO MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, MMC CONTROLS. CONSTANT FLOW HYDRAULICS, SLIDING REEL W/LEVELWIND. PACKS 18K. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. BOAT AND BAY PERMIT FOR \$290K OR BOAT ONLY \$160K.



P2192M – 32 X 14 HFS COMBO, CURRENTLY RIGGED FOR LONGLINE, 2600 HOURS ON TWIN JOHN DEERE 6068 MAINS, TWIN DISC 5050 GEARS. HYDRAULIC GENSET. MMC CONTROLS. FURUNO ELECTRONICS. FLUSH DECK. ALL DECK GEAR FOR LONGLINE, EASY CONVERSION BACK TO GILLNET. \$180K.



P2193M – 38' LEDFORD, LUGGER MAIN, TWIN DISC GEAR, IMS 10TON RSW NEW IN 2014, NEW SS HYDRAULIC LINES, 20' ALASKA POWER SKIFF W/VOLVO DIESEL JET, 2 STRIP SEINE. TURNKEY OPERATION WITH PWS SEINE PERMIT, ASKING \$425K. BOAT, SKIFF AND NET AVAILABLE WITHOUT PERMIT.



P2194M – 58' LITTLE HOQUIAM COMBO, TOTALLY GONETHRU IN 2010, LOW HOURS ON ALL MACHINERY, ECONOMICAL TWIN 330HP JOHN DEERE MAINS, TWIN DISC GEARS, ISUZU 14KW AND ISUZU 40KW AUX, 20 TON RSW W/TITANIUM CHILLER, RIGGED FOR SEINE, LONGLINE AND TENDER. COMPLETE ELECTRONICS. GREAT ACCOMMODATIONS. EVERYTHING IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. ASKING \$1.3M.



P2195M – 58 X 24 CUSTOM STEEL COMBO, 600HP C-18 CAT MAIN, 100KW JOHN DEERE AUX AND 125KW JOHN DEERE W/HYDRAULICS, BOW THRUSTER. COMPLETE SEINE SET UP. RIGGED FOR CRAB AND LONGLINE ALSO. ALL SS HYDRAULICS. PACKS 9300 FUEL, 1890 WATER. FULL ELECTRONICS. 27 TON AND 40 TON RSW W/2 35 TON CHILLERS. VESSEL IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. READY FOR ANYTHING. \$2.5M FIRM.

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Alaska Entry Permit Prices

(as of 11-1-15)

Species	Fishery	Asking Price*	Offer*	State Value*
SALMON	S SE DRIFT	85	80	91.8-
	S PWS DRIFT	220	210	218.5-
	S COOK INLET DRIFT	48-	45-	71.3+
	S AREA M DRIFT	130-	100	119.5
	S BRISTOL BAY DRIFT	120-	110-	145.1-
	S SE SEINE	225-	180-	278.8
	S PWS SEINE	200	170	176.8
	S COOK INLET SEINE	75	50	86
	S KODIAK SEINE	39	35	39.8
	S CHIGNIK SEINE	190	180	227.5
S AREA M SEINE	60	50	56.9	
S YAKUTAT SET	16	12	18.9	
S COOK INLET SET	13	12	15.3-	
S AREA M SET NET	65+	55	55.6	
S BRISTOL SET NET	35-	32-	40.5+	
S LOWER YUKON	9.5	9	9.9	
S POWER TROLL	36	35+	38.3-	
S HAND TROLL	12	11	11.5+	
HERRING	H SE GILLNET	12	N/A	13.4
	H KODIAK GILLNET	5	3	5
	H SITKA SEINE	300	200	243.3
	H PWS SEINE	25	16-	30.9
	H COOK INLET SEINE	11	8	16.8
	H KODIAK SEINE	26	20	30.3
H SE POUND SOUTH	35	30	35.6	
H SE POUND NORTH	38	25	43.1	
H PWS POUND	6	5	3.5	
SHELLFISH	S SE DUNGY 75 POT	18	17	15.4
	S SE DUNGY 150 POT	36	36	35.2+
	S SE DUNGY 225 POT	50	47	50
	S SE DUNGY 300 POT	65	60	49.8
	S SE POT SHRIMP	22	20	22
	S KODIAK TANNER <60	24	22	29.7
	S PUGET SOUND DUNGY	150	135-	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	200-600/POT	200-500/POT	N/A	
SE ALASKA DIVE				
SE AK Dive	URCHIN	4	3	2.4
SE AK Dive	CUCUMBER	28+	27	24-
SE AK Dive	GEODUCK	66+	60	74.6-

Prices in NOVEMBER 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: New offers on Bay permits are trickling in. Recent sales have been in the \$110k to \$115k range. Current offers are closer to \$100k. SE permits are holding at around \$85k. More new sellers in PWS at \$220k. No new buyers. A recent sale of Cook Inlet permit went for a low of \$47k. Area M prices are coming down. Permits available as low as \$130k.

Seine: SE permits are still coming down, with a recent listing at \$225k. PWS permits are available at around \$200k, but buyers are holding off. Nothing new in Cook Inlet or Kodiak, where prices are the same as a month ago. Area M permits are available starting at \$60k.

Troll: Alaska Power Troll permits are moving slowly in the upper \$30s. No new activity in Hand Troll permits. Recent activity in Washington permits was just above the mid \$20s. No recent activity in Oregon. Buyers are looking for California permits, but offers are about 1/2 of asking prices right now.

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	47.00-52.00	46.00-50.00
H	2C	C/B	1-3	B	50.00-52.00	50.00-52.00
H	2C	C/B	4-10	B	50.00-52.00	50.00-52.00
H	2C	C/B	ANY	U	52.00-54.00	52.00
H	2C	A		B/U	54.00	52.00
H	3A	D		B/U	42.00-48.00	42.00-45.00
H	3A	C/B	1-5	B	42.00-48.00	42.00-46.00
H	3A	C/B	5-10	B	48.00-50.00	46.00-48.00
H	3A	C/B	>10	U	50.00-52.00	48.00-50.00
H	3A	A		B/U	52.00	52.00
H	3B	D		B	26.00-30.00	24.00-38.00
H	3B	C/B	1-10	B	34.00-38.00	30.00-34.00
H	3B	C/B	>10	U	37.00-40.00	34.00-35.00
H	3B	A		B/U	N/A	36.00
H	4A	D		B/U	20.00-24.00	16.00-18.00
H	4A	C/B	1-10	B	20.00-26.00	8.00-20.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	B	26.00-30.00	20.00-24.00
H	4A	C/B	>10	U	30.00	24.00-26.00
H	4B/C/D	C/B	1-10	B	10.00-16.00	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	24.00-28.00	21.00-24.00
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	23.00-28.00	20.00-24.00
S	WY	C/B	>10	U	28.00-30.00	25.00-27.00
S	WY	A		B/U	30.00	30.00
S	CG	C/B	1-10	B	20.00-25.00	18.00-20.00
S	CG	C/B	>10	U	24.00-26.00	22.00-24.00
S	CG	A		B/U	30.00	25.00
S	WG	C/B	1-10	B	11.00-14.00	10.00-12.00
S	WG	C/B	>10	B	13.00-14.00	10.00-12.00
S	WG	C/B/A	>10	U	14.00-16.00	11.00-13.00
S	AI	C/B/A		B/U	1.50-4.00	1.00-2.00
S	BS	C/B		B/U	1.50-5.00	1.00-3.00
S	BS	A		B/U	5.00-7.00	5.00

*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.

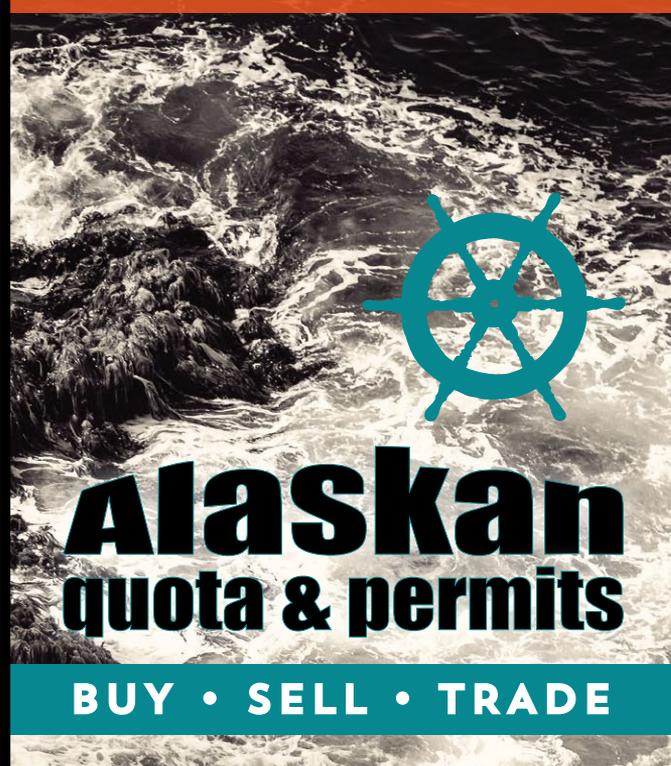
By Mike Painter and the Permit Master



No 2C available at this time. Prices would be in the low \$50s. 3A continues to move, with prices for blocks in the mid to high \$40s and unblocked right around \$50. 3B is moving better and prices are up, into the low \$30s for blocks and \$35+ for unblocked. 4A priced at \$20 and up, but interest has died over the last couple months. A recent sale of a 4B block moved at <\$10.

The Sablefish market is pretty much done until the new recommendations come out. A few new listings have come on the market in the past month and a recent sale of a block of CG and that's about it. Interest will pick up again toward the end of November.

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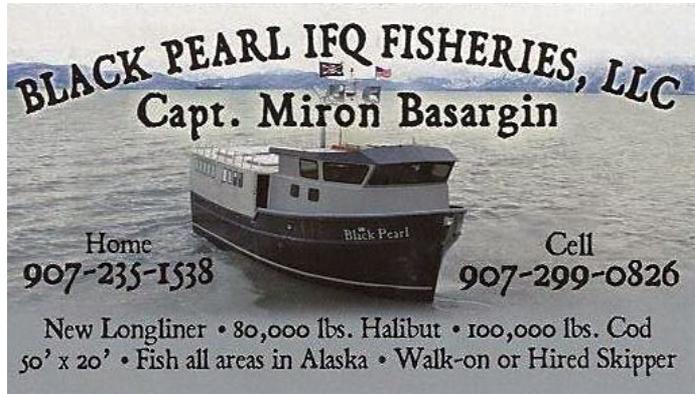


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BB15-025 32'x12' flush deck, RSW, Bristol Bay sternpicker built in 1980 by Marco. Cat 3116 main. 10 inch bow thruster. 7.5 ton Port Townsend RSW system chills 16,000 pounds. 22" narrow reel drum w/ auto level wind with SeaMar hydraulic motor and Maritime power roller. Asking \$200,000.

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TE15-008 121'x28'x9.8' steel crabber/tender, built in 1981 by Marine Fabricators. Twin Cummins KTA 19-M3 mains rated at 640 hp ea. 225 kw, 100 kw, and 65 kw gen sets. Bulbous bow w/ hydraulic thruster. Packs 330,000# salmon, 150,000# crab in 4 holds. (2) 50 ton RSW systems. 30k gal fuel, 3.3k water. Fully rigged for crab and tendering. Auruora knuckle-boom crane, deck crane, and picking boom. Pot launcher, coiler, crab block, and full tendering setup included. Asking \$1,600,000.

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SE15-018 58'x17.2'x7.8' Hansen built combination seiner/longliner/crabber. John Deere main rated at 450 hp. John Deere 45 kw generator. 60,000 pounds capacity in two tanks. 15 ton RSW system with a titanium chiller and condenser. Browns skiff with a Cummins main and a spare Cummins main with gear. Asking \$399,000.

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 SE-B-U: 1,700 lbs.....asking \$25.00
 WG-B-U: 12,000 lbs.....asking \$13.00
 WG-C-B: 4,000 lbs.....asking \$11.00
 WY-C-U: 6,500 lbs.....asking \$27.50
 WY-C-B: 4,200 lbs.....asking \$26.00



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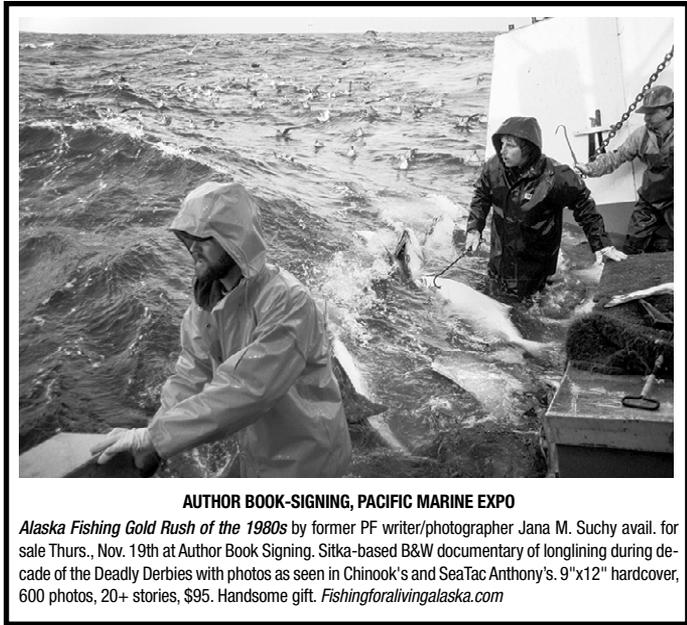
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Watching you: Lt. Allison Majcher pilots a U.S. Coast Guard C-130 aircraft during a Pacific Northwest fisheries surveillance flight on Sept. 30. The flight covered 6,000 square miles of ocean between the Canadian border and central Oregon. The crew documented 32 commercial fishing vessels, the Coast Guard said. The surveillance focused in part on ensuring no Canadian vessels were fishing in U.S. waters after Sept. 15, in violation of the tuna treaty between the two countries. At the request of NOAA and other enforcement agencies, the C-130 crew also "observed specific areas and vessels under investigation for potential criminal activity," the Coast Guard said. "The Coast Guard will share findings from the flight to further those investigations." USCG photo by Seaman Sarah Wilson



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That's why the University of Alaska Southeast, Sitka campus, offers basic, self-paced, online courses in both areas to fishermen and other mariners.

"There's no class meetings, so whenever you have the time to get online and work through the material, as long as you have it finished in three months, you're good to go," said Teal Gordon, a UAS program support specialist.

Fishermen brought the need for the training courses to university program planners, said Paul Rioux, who teaches the hydraulics course – the first of its kind, launched in 2011.

"We jokingly refer to the hydraulics as the 'ghost of the machine' because a lot of fishermen have a real understanding of their engines and most of their gear, but few have a really good working knowledge of the technical side of how the hydraulics actually work," Rioux said. "The real simple trollers or gillnetters only have an anchor winch or a set of gurdies or a net reel, but some boats have multiple systems with components controlling water pumps and freezer compressors and deck cranes and all sorts of things."

The Marine Hydraulics course takes six hours to complete on average and costs just \$90.

The Boat Electrical course covers basic theory, power generation and distribution, safety, and wiring. It takes up to 15 hours to complete and costs \$125.

"You get a 30-year-old boat and somebody adds something or takes something out and they leave the old wiring behind. Some of the wiring is just amazing," said Alan Sorum, a former longtime Valdez harbormaster and port director who collaborated on the electrical course, now in its second year.

A top feature, Sorum said, is the focus on troubleshooting. Just knowing the rights and wrongs of basic bonding and grounding, for example, could prevent a harbormaster's biggest headache.

"Boats have AC and DC systems, and if they're not wired correctly you end up getting voltage or current in the wrong places and it causes all kinds of problems – for your boat and your neighbor's boat – such as electrolysis," Sorum said. "For me, that was always the biggest hassle – someone would complain about having a hot harbor or a prop getting eaten up, and it's so hard to track down who's causing the problem."

Both courses count for continuing education credits and are available now. For more information, go to tinyurl.com/od6cd4y or call (907) 747-7762 to register.

– Laine Welch

Zuanich commentary *continued from page 6*

a fishery. If Alaska needs a separate, third-party certification program, we should simply incorporate MSC standards with a separate section for salmon hatcheries. Sustainability standards will continue to slip, and there will be growing consumer awareness that seafood harvested in Alaska or anywhere in the United States is inherently sustainable as a result of rigorous management and continued monitoring. That, far more than a myriad of sustainability credentials, will ultimately keep Alaska salmon at the forefront with the seafood consumer. ↓

Rob Zuanich is the managing partner of Silver Bay Seafoods in Sitka. He is a member of the Alaska and Washington State Bars and maintains a limited practice in maritime, commercial, and regulatory matters.

Whale entanglement *continued from page 11*

of them out of the water would mark progress, but derelict gear is only part of the problem – last season, a crab fleet of about 460 permitted boats set 150,000 traps.

The working group's second meeting was held in early October and, as of press time, the Dungeness Crab Task Force was poised to consider recommendations.

"I think what you will see is something along the lines of defining what the best practices are to minimize the risk of entanglement," said working group member Dan Lawson, a National Marine Fisheries Service biologist.

Lawson's agency isn't involved in the crab fishery, but the CDFW referred the issue as an endangered species concern. He said a "significant twist" for his agency is that a petition to change the listing for humpback whales from endangered to threatened has been filed.

The outcome of that will "answer the question of where we stand" on taking action in response to entanglements, said Lawson.

West Coast humpback whale populations are rebounding, which may be a partial reason for the increase in entanglements. Regardless of the regulatory possibilities, everyone involved wants to see entanglements prevented.

"Even though this is not our fishery, we're hoping people will hear these messages and think about what they're doing," Lawson said. ↓

Regnart Q&A *continued from page 14*

available information (which is often quite limited) along with any regulatory guidance before making decisions.

Q: Are fishermen in Alaska generally supportive of the state's management, or do some constantly complain about your decisions and science?

A: Most fishermen are supportive of the department and recognize that we do good science, but some misunderstand the roles of the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the department. The board is charged with making allocative decisions (which are often controversial), and the department is responsible for the management based on those decisions. We sometimes receive complaints about allocative issues that arise when implementing the board's intent; we try to redirect these folks by encouraging them to participate in the board process.

Q: In your estimation, what is the state of Alaska's fish stocks overall today?

A: As I mentioned earlier, fluctuations in stock abundance and productivity are normal, but overall our fish stocks are doing

Continued on page 70

very well. One of the key reasons that Alaska's salmon stocks are healthy is because the habitat is generally in good shape. In the Lower 48 and other places where salmon populations are threatened or endangered, the primary cause is almost always related to habitat degradation. The health of our stocks is borne out by productivity we have seen in recent years, with salmon harvests in 2013 and 2015 being the two largest on record.

Q: Very large salmon hatcheries operate in Alaska. Some argue the hatcheries work to depress fish prices through overproduction. Others cite potentially harmful mixing of hatchery and wild stocks. Do you have any misgivings about these hatcheries?

A: There are two overarching aspects to Alaska's hatchery production to always keep in mind. First, hatchery-produced salmon represent a significant economic engine in many regions of the state. In some areas, such as Prince William Sound and the Southeast region, hatchery salmon represent a large percentage of commercial harvests.

Specific market impacts from hatchery production is a complex issue, and it is important to note that Alaska produces a relatively small percentage (about 15 percent) of the supply of salmon to world markets. In terms of risk related to hatchery production, protection of wild stocks has always been our foremost priority. I am confident that our program safeguards against potential negative effects on natural production, as shown by over 40 years of hatchery production alongside stable or increasing natural production.

Q: Congratulations on your career with the state. What do you plan to do next?

A: I will be moving out of state in the near future to assist my aging in-laws. I will, however, still be involved with Alaska fisheries, working with the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute on the Responsible Fisheries Management program. ↴

Salish Sea *continued from page 23*

the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, B.C., and the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.

Each species described in the report had to have a corresponding specimen or a good-quality photograph to ensure its existence, past or present. The Burke Museum contains

archived specimens of nearly all of the 253 species.

Some of the newly added species include the prickly sculpin, Bering eelpout, spotted cusk-eel, and halfbanded rockfish. Including them in the full report means these species were seen and documented in the region sometime in the past but weren't represented on the last survey list, which was published in 1980.

In total, 37 new species were added, and five species were removed from the list because researchers couldn't find evidence of their presence in the Salish Sea.

The online publication and upcoming book capture knowledge gained from Pietsch's 37 years of teaching and archiving specimens at the UW. The professor and curator of fishes at the Burke Museum retired this past summer.

Funding for the work came from the SeaDoc Society, a marine science conservation program of the Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Center, a center of excellence at the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

— *University of Washington*

Fish Factor *continued from page 54*

involved in the fishery better access to crab. Although the intent is admirable, I think the effect is negative," Osborn said.

There is an assumption that a big pool of people are interested in acquiring quota shares, he said, but he believes that is wrong on two counts.

"For one, you've got to be able to come up with financing in order to purchase it. And if you're working on a crab boat now and interested in picking up some crew quota, but you know you'll be forced to sell it if you have a career change, it takes a bit of the shine off the prospect of ownership," Osborn said.

The Bering Sea crab shares fall into four different categories, and the value for crew shares is down roughly 20 percent. Recent Dock Street listings showed Bristol Bay red king crab at \$45 per pound, snow crab ranging from \$14 to \$20 a pound, and Tanner crab at \$8 to \$14 per pound.

"But those prices are not representative of the current market and are based on last year's catches," Osborn clarified. Everything was expected to change based on this season's catch numbers.

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

Statement of Ownership Management and Circulation

1. Title of publication: Pacific Fishing. 2. Publication No.: 514-830. 3. Filing Date: September 29, 2015. 4. Frequency of issue: Monthly. 5. Number of issues published annually: 12. 6. Annual subscription price: \$14.00. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1028 Industry Drive, Tukwila, WA 98188. 8. Complete mailing address of the headquarters or business offices of the publishers: 1028 Industry Drive, Tukwila, WA 98188. 9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher and editor: Publisher, Mike Daigle, 1028 Industry Drive, Tukwila, WA 98188; Editor, Wesley Loy, 1028 Industry Drive, Tukwila, WA 98188. Owner: Pacific Fishing LLC, 1028 Industry Drive, Tukwila, WA 98188. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagee or Other Securities: None. 15. Extent and nature of circulation: A. Total number of copies printed (net press run): 12 month avg: 4493; number of copies published nearest filing date: 4650. B. Paid circulation: 1. Paid outside county: 12 month avg: 1866; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 1833. 2. Paid in county: 12 month avg: 177; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 168. 3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and non-USPS distribution: 12 month average: 530; number of single issue published nearest to filing date: 510. 4. Other classes mailed through the USPS: 12 month average: 102; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 100. C. Total paid circulation (sum of 15B 1,2,3 and 4): 12 month avg: 2675; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 2611. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 1. Free outside county: 12 month avg: 809; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 743. 2. Free in county: 12 month avg: 45; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 111. 3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS: 12 month average: 61; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 84. 4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail: 12 month avg: none; number of copies published nearest to filing date: none. E. Total free or nominal rate distribution (sum of 15D 1,2,3 and 4): 12 month avg: 915; copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 938. F. Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e): 12 month avg: 3590; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 3549. G. Copies not distributed: average number of copies: 12 month avg: 903; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 1101. H. Total (sum of 15f and 15g): 12 month avg: 4493; number of copies published nearest to filing date: 4650. I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete.

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