

Feb 27, 2015

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

RE: Proposal #176

The question was asked by a board member why actions haven't been taken for the troll fleet earlier. Each Spring the Joint RPT reviews the SE Enhanced Allocation Plan and makes a statement in regards to the current situation to the Commissioner of Fish and Game. Below are the statements from the Joint RPT to the Commissioner of ADF&G from the last five years. Within these minutes are many other actions, workshops regarding the SE Enhanced Allocation plan but a five page minimum is insufficient to show all information. These statements go back in time throughout the history of the plan.

Letter to Commissioner from RPT from Joint RPT Minutes April 8, 2014

The JRPT reviewed the final allocation estimates of the value of enhanced salmon in Southeast Alaska for 2012 and the preliminary estimates for 2013. The gillnet fleet is above its allocation range and has been for more than three consecutive years of five-year rolling averages. The seine and troll fleets continue to be below their allocation ranges for more than three consecutive years of five-year rolling averages. In the last few years the seine percentage has been increasing and the gillnet percentage has been decreasing. The troll fleet has been well below its range in five-year rolling averages since the establishment of the allocation plan, although the troll fleet increased its value substantially in 2013.

We note the following.

The seine opportunities allowed at Amalga Harbor have helped the seine fleet get closer to its range. Beginning in 2014 the first returns of an additional 10 million chum salmon release to Kendrick will help the seine fleet, and the first returns of an additional 12 million chum salmon release at Neets Bay will help all three fleets, but especially trollers and seiners.

Efforts continue to be made to improve chum salmon harvest opportunities for the troll fleet and the troll fleet is increasing its success at harvesting chum salmon.

SSRAA has established a Neets Bay Harvest Fund, which is intended to provide regular and increased chum salmon harvesting opportunities for trollers. DIPAC has contributed to this fund. The fund will also increase opportunities for net fishermen, but will likely help seiners more than gillnetters.

Hatchery operators continue to increase production of Chinook and coho salmon, which are the targeted troll species. SSRAA is pursuing operation of Deer Mountain Hatchery which could lead to the production of an additional 400,000 Chinook salmon smolts. The increased coho salmon releases at Neets Bay, Anita Bay, and Nakat Inlet were a result of an industry consensus position adopted by the Board of Fisheries in 2008. In 2014, progeny from 1.2 million additional coho salmon eggs will be returning to Neets Bay. In 2015, progeny from 800,000 additional coho salmon eggs will be returning to Anita Bay and Nakat Inlet. Increased coho salmon production at Deer Lake and changes to coho salmon

rearing strategies at Hidden Falls Hatchery should lead to increased coho salmon returns in 2015. Sawmill Creek Hatchery coho salmon broodstock development continues to build which should lead to increased coho salmon releases in the next few years. DIPAC will release an additional 750,000 coho salmon this spring in association with building improvements made to the Macaulay Hatchery.

Increases in chum salmon production have been permitted and in the future will help all three gear groups. Chum salmon releases at Crawfish Inlet are intended to significantly help trollers by giving the troll fleet some preference of harvest in the THA and exclusivity of harvest in nearby waters.

We recognize that all of the changes in production and fishing opportunities may not get the fleets within their ranges. Certainly there is substantial effort in this regard and it appears likely that the efforts will help. This is assuming things out of the control of the industry and the department (like varying prices, wild stock opportunities, and survival rates) remains stable.

The JRPT had a long and serious discussion about the allocation plan, the difficulties in getting the troll fleet in their range and that there may be a need to ask the Board of Fish to reconvene the allocation task force for an open discussion of the Southeast Enhanced Salmon Allocation Plan. This will be an agenda item for the JRPT at the fall 2014 meeting.

The JRPT will submit three placeholder proposals (5 AAC 33.376. District 13: Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan, 5 AAC 33.383 District 7: Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan, 5 AAC 29.114 District 12 and Districts 14 Enhanced Chum Salmon Troll Fisheries Management Plan) regarding the sunseting regulations by the April 10th deadline. In December the JRPT will review all proposals related to enhanced allocation and will consider recommending actions to the Board of Fisheries.

April 10, 2013 Joint RPT Minutes

Joint Southeast Regional Planning Team's comments to Commissioner Campbell regarding allocation of enhanced salmon in Southeast Alaska.

The Joint Southeast Regional Planning Team (JSERPT) reviewed the final allocation estimates of the value of enhanced salmon in Southeast Alaska for 2011 and the preliminary estimates for 2012. The gillnet fleet has been above its allocation range for more than three consecutive years of five-year rolling averages. The seine and troll fleets continue to be below their allocation ranges for more than three consecutive years of five-year rolling averages. The troll fleet has been out of its target range since the Board of Fish adopted the Southeast allocation plan in 1994. In 2012, the estimates of the distribution of enhanced salmon show an increased percentage for the seine fleet and a decreased percentage for the troll and gillnet fleets.

We note the following:

- In 2012, the allocation values appear mostly affected by the relatively high survival of chum salmon and a strong chum salmon price. Despite the troll fleet increasing its success at harvesting chum salmon in recent years, increases in chum salmon survival or chum salmon price mainly benefits net fisheries. In 2012, the high value of chum salmon meant less chum salmon were needed to reach cost recovery goals, which in turn meant more chum salmon were available for terminal fisheries that mainly benefited the seine fleet.*

- *New increases in chum salmon production at Kendrick Bay, Neets Bay Hatchery, Hidden Falls Hatchery, and Gunnuk Creek Hatchery may help the seine fleet get within its allocation range and may financially benefit the troll fleet. However, increases in chum salmon production and any increases in the success of chum salmon trolling are not likely, by themselves, to get the troll fleet within its allocation range.*
- *New increases in coho salmon production at Neets Bay Hatchery, Naket Inlet, Anita Bay, Sawmill Creek Hatchery, Hidden Falls Hatchery, and Deer Lake will mainly benefit the troll fleet.*
- *In 2013, SSRAA increased its targeted Neets Bay chum salmon allocation for the troll fleet.*
- *Major hatchery producers spend a large proportion of their budgets on troll targeted species.*

April 11, 2012 Joint RPT Minutes

The JSERPT reviewed the final allocation estimates of the value of enhanced salmon in Southeast Alaska through 2010. There is little change in the status of the distribution of the value of enhanced salmon. The gillnet fleet is above its allocation range for more than three consecutive years of the five-year rolling averages. The seine and troll fleets are below their allocation ranges for more than three consecutive years of the five-year rolling averages. The troll fleet's five-year rolling average has never been within its range since establishment of the allocation plan.

We note the following:

- 1) *In 2012, the Board of Fisheries adopted most of the regulatory recommendations of the JSERPT. These changes should help in addressing the allocation imbalance.*
- 2) *There is production in the works at Hidden Falls, Neets Bay, Kendrick, Kake, and Neck Lake that should help address the imbalance.*
- 3) *The trollers are increasing their targeting and harvesting of chum salmon. This may increase their share of enhanced chum harvests.*
- 4) *SSRAA has adopted a new Neets Bay Management Plan. This will likely provide more chum salmon to the troll fleet.*
- 5) *DIPAC is considering providing additional opportunities that will increase the proportion of their releases that get harvested by common property fisheries. This may help with the allocation imbalance.*

April 6, 2011 Joint RPT Minutes

The JRPT finalized letter to the commissioner regarding allocation is as follows:

"The Joint Southeast Regional Planning Team (JRPT) received an annual update entitled "Preliminary 2010 and Final 2009 Allocation Estimates of Enhanced Salmon in Southeast Alaska" at its spring meeting. The Southeast Alaska Enhanced Salmon Allocation Management Plan (5 AAC 33.364) establishes target allocation ranges and trigger points for when action may be taken. The troll fleet remains well below its target range. The gillnet fleet remains well above its target range. The seine fleet remains below its target range. As of 2009 all three groups have been out of their target allocation ranges long enough for actions to be considered.

Over the years the JRPT has attempted to address the current imbalance issue through recommendations of hatchery production, Board of Fisheries proposal submissions, and Board of Fisheries proposal review and comment.

In recent years the JRPT has recommended the approval of hatchery production that will target the fleets below their target range. Some of that production is in effect, but an adult return from that production has not yet been realized.

The JRPT acknowledges that by 2012 all returning pink and chum salmon will be thermally marked. A coded-wire-tag program continues to be used with coho and king salmon. Recovery of these tags in returning adults will provide more accurate information related to the allocation of enhanced fish.

JRPT recommends SSRAA continue its program of trying to provide the troll fleet an opportunity to harvest 200,000 Neets Bay chum salmon. The JRPT supports SSRAA's efforts to further develop the chum salmon troll fishery and provide seine opportunities in Neets Bay as abundance and finances allow.

The JRPT notices the efforts of the troll fleet to find additional areas to target hatchery produced chum salmon. NSRAA is submitting a Board of Fisheries proposal that will improve opportunities for the troll fleet to access hatchery Chinook salmon during the June troll fishery in Sitka Sound.

The JRPT recommends DIPAC continue to look for opportunities to produce fish that could be harvested by trollers.

The JRPT will submit two proposals to the Board of Fisheries. These proposals would maintain the one-to-one ratios between gillnet time and seine time at Deep Inlet and Anita Bay that were in place in 2009 and 2010 and will be in place in 2011. If adopted the one-to-one ratios would be extended through 2017.

At its December meeting the JRPT will review and comment on Board of Fisheries proposals that have impacts on the distribution of enhanced salmon."

April 7, 2010 Joint RPT Minutes

"The Joint RPT received the annual update on the status of allocation of enhanced salmon. Final numbers from 2008 and preliminary numbers from 2009 were presented. The troll fleet remains far below its percentage range. The gillnet fleet remains above its percentage range. The seine fleet remains below its range. As of 2008 all three groups have been out of their five year rolling averages for more than three consecutive years.

Over the years the JRPT has attempted to address the current imbalance issue through production recommendations and Board of Fish proposal submissions and comments. Some of the production that will target the fleets below their ranges are still in the water or in the planning stages.

The implementation of the industry consensus letter of 12/9/08 should help address the imbalances. In addition, for 2010, NSRAA has adopted a Deep Inlet schedule that may provide additional opportunities for the troll fleet, SSRAA will be managing their Neets Bay SHA to provide an opportunity for the troll fleet to harvest 200,000 chums, and SSRAA is providing increased opportunities for trollers to target SSRAA Chinook in the Mountain Point area.

The JRPT was informed that there is a growing interest among trollers to target chum salmon and it is expected that the troll fleet will exploit additional areas to harvest chum salmon.

The JRPT recommends that the Hidden Falls SHA be open to trolling during the troll coho closure for the harvest of coho salmon.

The JRPT recommends DIPAC look for production opportunities that could improve troll opportunities. Trollers are encouraged to exploit existing opportunities to harvest DIPAC produced chum salmon.

The JRPT will consider proposals regarding the allocation of enhanced fish for submission to the Board of Fisheries at its December 2010 meeting. Any proposals submitted would be considered during the 2012 Board of Fisheries cycle.”

During this time frame two industry consensus letters were submitted to the Board of Fish regarding Board of Fish Proposals and the effects they would have on the plan. They can be accessed on the Board of Fish website archives

2012 Southeast and Yakutat Finfish Meeting Feb 24-March 4, 2012 – PC 64

2009 Southeast and Yakutat Finfish Meeting Feb 17-26, 2009 – PC 89 consensus agreement is attached to SEAFA comments.

This brief snapshot only captures the statements sent to the Commissioner at the spring meeting in response to the yearly review of the enhanced allocation plan and does not capture the number of hours that the Joint RPT has spent on other issues in regards to the SE Enhanced Allocation Plan and task forces to review portions of the enhanced allocation plan.